PRP Searches

Client Centered

TLI Solutions, Inc. (a TechLaw Company) has provided research support (in particular, Potentially Responsible Party Searches and Cost Allocation) in developing the extent of responsibility under the CERCLA and/or allocation of costs for over 2,500 hazardous waste sites, and identifying those responsible for site impact.

TLI Solutions, Inc. (TLI) has provided research support in developing the extent of responsibility under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and/or allocation of costs for over 2,500 hazardous waste sites. Potentially Responsible Parties (PRP) searches provide a basis for understanding the enforcement framework and associated liability issues attached to an environmentally impaired property. They can be used to identify those responsible for site contamination, determine allocation of costs and cost recovery, develop the site land use history, research corporate relationships, develop ownership and operations histories, and develop ability-to-pay scenarios. Information from a PRP search can be used to identify the different types of PRPs (owners, operators, generators, and transporters) and to bring other parties to the table to help fund cleanups at Superfund sites.

Our approach of using environmental scientists, historians, and environmental attorneys to conduct PRP search projects provides a client with assurance that technical and legal issues are properly addressed, and that information is accurate.

TLI has conducted PRP searches for the following clients:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- Other Department of Defense (DoD) agencies
- Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
- Department of Interior (DOI)
  Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
  National Park Service (NPS)
  Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
- State of California, Delaware, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, South Carolina, and Texas
- Local governments
- Law Firms
- Engineering Firms
- Commercial Clients

To fully develop the history of a site during the PRP search process, we undertake a wide variety of research tasks. We developed a research methodology—used effectively on thousands of PRP projects. Following our standard PRP search operating procedures, while still allowing modification and innovation to the research process, enables us to maximize the information collected and conduct the research in a comprehensive and efficient manner.

PRP search tasks include, but are not limited to the following:

- Agency record collection and file review
- Interviews with government officials/ individuals with site knowledge
- Site ownership/title search
- Aerial photograph interpretation
- Review of technical data
- Enforcement history
- Develop operational history
- Contract analysis
- Liability analysis
- Corporate research
- Financial research
- Cost allocation development
- Graphics
- Cost evaluation
- Record compilation
- Report preparation

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- Assist in CERCLA Section 104(e) information request letters

TLI Project Examples

New York Mine Complex Site, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Grant County, OR

TLI conducted a PRP search on the two abandoned mines and one mill site for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Northwest Oregon Contracting Area. The New York Mine Complex Site is between five and eight miles from Granite, OR and adjacent to Granite Creek which flows into the North Fork John Day River. The Site consists of three abandoned mining sites within two miles of each other: the New York Mine, the East Eddie Group, and the Independence Mill. The sites are located in the Granite Mining District in the Elkhorn Mountain area of the Blue Mountains in northeast Oregon and were active between 1909 to the present. Heavy metals including arsenic, barium, beryllium, chromium, lead, mercury, and zinc were found in elevated levels in soil and waste rock samples at the mine sites. Arsenic, barium, lead, and mercury were found in surface water samples.

TLI conducted research into the ownership history of the Site itself as well as the operational history of the whole Granite Mining District. TLI also conducted corporate and financial research into the corporate parties as well as the individuals identified by USFS and TLI as involved in the Site. TLI summarized the information collected into a PRP search report.

The research involved the following:

- Extensive Internet research locating the individuals involved in the Site from 1900s to the present
- Corporate research in Oregon, Delaware, Colorado, and Georgia
- Research at county clerk and recorder's and assessor's offices in Grant County, Oregon

Tuba City Open Dump, Uranium Processing Mills and Uranium Mill Waste Disposal Sites, Navajo and Hopi Reservations, AZ

TLI conducted a PRP search on the Tuba City Open Dump Site on the Navajo and Hopi Reservations and operational and corporate research on four uranium processing mills on the Navajo Reservation for the BIA. The Tuba City Open Dump is 26 acres and, since the 1940s, was a dumping area where local businesses, BIA, the Indian Health Service (IHS), schools, and the public dumped waste. During this time, the dump was not regulated or supervised as a solid waste disposal facility. The BIA periodically provided maintenance by constructing and back filling trenches at the dump site.

Shortly after the development of the Tuba City Open Dump, four uranium ore processing mills were established within the Navajo Nation: Monument Valley Processing Site near Kayenta, AZ; Tuba City Rare Metals of America, Inc. Mill near Moencopi, AZ; Mexican Hat Mill near Mexican Hat, UT; and Shiprock Uranium Mill outside of Shiprock, NM.

In 1995, BIA initiated assessment studies to determine the waste deposition, characterize suspect radioactive wastes within the landfill, the status of the hydrology, and local soil impacts at the Site. Sample collection and analyses from 35 groundwater monitoring wells show contamination of several elemental, isotopic, and/or radioactive constituents that exceed EPA maximum contaminant levels. These contaminants include uranium, arsenic, chromium, nitrate, selenium, vanadium, radium-226/228, and gross alpha and beta activity. There

is empirical documentation to support the landfill was used for disposal of radioactive wastes, possibly from the nearby Rare Metals uranium ore processing mill.

Under Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) authority, the EPA requested BIA to close the landfill in accordance with RCRA Subpart F. BIA subsequently closed the landfill and fenced the two most recently used landfill cells in August 1997. These two cells were graded and covered with a sand/topsoil "interim" cap.

In addition to concerns surrounding the possible disposal of radioactive waste at the Site, the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) expressed concerns for human health and the environment due to purported "wildcat" dump sites throughout the Navajo Nation that may have been used for disposal of radioactive milling and processing wastes from the uranium ore processing mills.

TLI conducted extensive research at the National Archives and Records Administration facilities in Denver, CO; Laguna Niguel, CA; College Park, MD; and Washington, DC. In addition, TLI conducted research at the Colorado School of Mines, Hopi Environmental Protection Office, Navajo Nation Real Estate Office, and on the Internet. TLI also collected relevant documents from the EPA Region 9 and BIA.

TLI personnel traveled to Tuba City, AZ to interview 54 individuals knowledgeable about the operations of the Tuba City Open Dump and locations of other uranium mill waste disposal sites.

TLI also conducted extensive corporate research on the corporations that operated the four uranium mills investigated during this project.

All information was compiled into the PRP search report.

Rocky Flats Industrial Park Site, CO

TLI assisted the EPA in developing a transactional database for use in preparing a de minimis settlement for the cleanup of the Rocky Flats Industrial Park (RFIP) Site and developed a PRP search for the Site.

The RFIP Site consists of five properties, three of which were solvent recycling facilities. In 1988, EPA conducted a removal action to address contamination at the Site, but subsequent investigations indicated widespread groundwater contamination beneath the Site.

TLI developed transactional database consisting of records of waste sent to the three recycling facilities using weigh tickets, receipts, invoices, and hazardous waste manifests as supporting documentation. With this database, TLI assisted EPA in settlement negotiations with generators, preparation and mailing of two de minimis settlement offers, tracking correspondence generated during the de minimis settlement offers.

TLI also conducted a PRP search for the RFIP Site. This research included site operational and title research for all five properties included in the Site; and corporate and individual research on the identified owners and operators. The PRP search report included operational and title histories, PRP identification, corporate histories, and an index of the supporting documents.

Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
TLI has conducted PRP search work for the USFS under three contracts, one each with the Pacific Southwest, Rocky Mountain, and Intermountain Regions. These projects have primarily involved mining sites, focusing on record collection and corporate research. Owner and operator PRPs were identified, along with parties that have liability as corporate successors or parent corporations.