



Enforcement News

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
CENTRAL VALLEY REGION**

11020 Sun Center Drive, #200, Rancho Cordova, California 95670-6114
(916) 464-3291 □ FAX (916) 464-4645
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley>

**CENTRAL VALLEY WATER BOARD ISSUES CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT
ORDER TO ATLANTIC RICHFIELD COMPANY FOR THE WALKER MINE**

For Immediate Release
April 9, 2014

Contact: Robert Busby
Phone: 916-464-4666

SACRAMENTO – The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board has issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order (CAO) to the Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) for cleanup of the historic Walker Mine northeast of Quincy in Plumas County.

The Walker Mine is an underground copper mine which operated from 1916 to 1941. The mine continues to release elevated concentrations of copper into the Feather River Watershed above Lake Oroville. Starting in 1958, the Central Valley Water Board adopted multiple resolutions and issued several Waste Discharge Requirements to owners of the Walker Mine property. ARCO was named as a discharger in the CAO because it is the successor by merger to mining companies that directed operation of the mine during its 1916 to 1941 operating period.

“Through its action, the Board found ARCO to be a responsible party for the Walker Mine,” said Central Valley Water Board Executive Officer Pamela Creedon. “ARCO must assume responsibility for the cleanup and ongoing maintenance to minimize environmental impacts caused by this historic mine. The Feather River Watershed is home to some of our Central Valley’s most pristine water bodies, making it vitally important that the Feather River Watershed be protected from the serious water quality damages caused by the mine discharges.”

Discharges of acid mine drainage and other pollutants (notably copper) from the Walker Mine following shutdown in 1941 killed aquatic life in downstream creeks for approximately 10 miles. The creeks are tributary to the North Fork of the Feather River.

In 1986, after determining that the then-owners of the site could not stop the discharges, the Central Valley Water Board authorized the installation of an underground concrete mine seal in the main Walker Mine tunnel. The mine seal, which was installed by the Central Valley Water Board in 1987, prevents acid mine drainage from discharging from the underground mine workings. The rest of the site continues to discharge copper well in excess of water quality standards. The CAO directs ARCO to clean up the contamination on the rest of the site, and to assume responsibility for the mine seal.

The Central Valley Water Board's Cleanup and Abatement Order for the Walker Mine is available [here](#).

The [Central Valley Water Board](#) is a California state agency responsible for the preservation and enhancement of the quality of California's water resources.