

Everybody is trying to get air samples from the cement quarry, but nobody seems to be paying attention to the water run-off. The quarry counters this concern by saying they re-use the water going into Permanente Creek to keep dust down and for processing in the factory - they conveniently ignore the fact that probably the most significant run-off goes into another creek altogether - north of them - and into the bay where their fish are uneatable due to mercury accumulation.

Below are two photos to illustrate the point:

a) An aerial picture of the western end of "the scar" that you can see from the valley - this is the very end of where they have been tipping the excess "overburden". This picture was taken a few years ago before they negotiated/promised to modify the strategy of distributing the spoils in this area. (i.e. build-up to max height at far end and work back towards the east allowing an earlier start on revegetation, as opposed to adding small layers over the full length for next 20 years or so - meaning we'd have to wait the full duration before even starting to re-vegetate. As it is, re-vegetation in their minds meant hydro-seeding the rock spoils and acting surprised when it didn't work). But the point of this picture is the water collected in and then flowing over a small dam at the right hand end - this would be a mixture of surface run-off as well as water that has percolated through the (fairly permeable) dumped overburden and that has probably leached out all kinds of wonderful stuff including Mercury. Remember - this overburden comes from the same geologic source as the Almaden mines a little to the east - originally a coral island in the Pacific many eons ago - a world-class source of mercury.

b) A map to show that "using the water from Permanente creek" (to keep dust down or for processing or whatever) needs to be clarified - what is meant by "Permanente Creek"? As you can see, the name Permanente Creek applies primarily to the water source that runs behind (south) of the quarry and cement plant. This is likely what they are referring to - it runs right by the plant. But closer examination shows that most all of the runoff from the spoils dump area (the big scar) runs north into Ohlone Creek which (eventually together with "West Branch Permanente Creek") joins the main creek just before it gets to Hiway 280. The issue here is that taking any samples of water in "Permanente Creek" upstream of this point (close to the main plant) is pretty much a waste of time as most all the runoff from quarry workings that are piled on the ridge will drain north into Ohlone creek.



Bottom line - if you take any water samples, be sure they are taken close to 280 after all the tributaries have joined the main stream - or (even better) take some from each tributary - especially including the Ohlone.



