

ABANDONED OR INACTIVE URANIUM  
MINES IN NEW MEXICO

A report of investigation carried out  
between August 1979 and May 1980 under  
contract with the New Mexico Energy and  
Minerals Department.

by

Orin J. Anderson

New Mexico Bureau of Mines and  
Mineral Resources  
Open-File Report 148

## INTRODUCTION

During the course of this investigation approximately 200 uranium mine sites were visited. Although these sites are distributed throughout 20 counties the majority are in McKinley, San Juan, and Valencia Counties, along the western and southern margin of the San Juan Basin. Other counties with an appreciable number of sites are Grant, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, Sierra, and Socorro.

Field work commenced in August, 1979 and extended although not continuously, into May, 1980. Information obtained during the on-site visits included location, type and size of mine, condition of mine, host formation, dimensions of remaining structures, proximity to residences or villages, water quality data, and radiation levels, although a gamma ray scintillometer was not obtained for the project until October 20, 1979. An effort was made to contact landowners whenever and wherever possible, however, no systematic attempt was made to determine land and mineral ownership during this phase of the investigation.

Mine operation data has been included where available. This consists of information on ore grades, production history mineralogy, and mine operator. Old publications of the U.S. AEC and the State Mine Inspectors office were helpful in this area.

The mine reports are arranged alphabetically by county with each county having its own index. A NM- or AZ-mine identification number is given with each mine name in the index. It is an AML numbering system devised by Don Baker, Jr. The first part of this

identification number is based on a U.S. Soil Conservation Service numbering system of 15' quadrangles beginning with 1 in the northwest corner of the state to 24 in the northeast corner, then returning to the western border to start a new tier. The second part refers to a 7½' quad within the 15' quad; these are numbered counterclockwise from 1 in the NE quadrant to 4 in the SE. The last part of the number refers to a particular mine within the 7½' quad. An AZ- prefix indicates the 15' quadrangle is an Arizona quad that overlaps the New Mexico state boundary.

Acknowledgments - The writer wishes to thank the following people for their valuable assistance in the field: Lars (Skip) Skotte, Richard Chamberlin, JoAnne Osburn, Mary Ann Anderson, and Cheryl Kyllonen.

A special thanks is extended to Mr. William Chenoweth of the U.S. Department of Energy, both for his time in the field as well as the claim maps and A.E.C. mine production records he provided. Mr. John Blagbrough provided helpful information about the Chuska district. The editorial assistance of Wyatt Brewster and Lars (Skip) Skotte is gratefully acknowledged.

The help and cooperation of the Navajo Tribe Office in Window Rock, Arizona permitted a statewide investigation to be completed; a note of thanks goes to Mr. R. Zaman and Mr. William Armstrong of that office.

HARDING COUNTY

Quad: Chinaberry Canyon 7½'

1. NM-141-2-1

Page 1

Polita #2

Date visited 9/12/79

NM-141-2-1

Mine name(s) Polita #2 County Harding

Section SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$  6 Twنش. 17N R. 29E

Quadrangle sheet Chinaberry Canyon 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ '

Mining district \_\_\_\_\_

Elevation 4760'

Nearest city and/or dwellings 5 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles SE of Mosquero

The Polita #2 is located in the center of a horseshoe bend along Mosquero Creek, on the NW corner of a small knoll.

The prospect consists of trench trending N68°E, and is 75' long, 15' wide, and 6-10' deep (see Photo A). The total disturbed area is 100' NE-SW x 75' NW-SE. Observation of the prospect from below on the canyon road is most difficult, as it blends in with its surroundings. (see center Photo B).

Mineralization in the form of yellow and red oxide streaks were observed. Some uranium mineralization may be related to wood fragments although no scintillometer readings were available. About 0.8 tons of silicified wood containing 0.15% U<sub>3</sub>O<sub>8</sub> and 0.31% V<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> was removed in 1955 (Finch, 1972, p. 15). The prospect occurs in the Morrison Formation.

- References (1) Finch, W. F., 1972, Uranium in Eastern New Mexico, US.G.S. open-file report, p. 15.
- (2) Hilpert, L. S., 1965, Uranium in Min. and Water Resources of New Mexico, N.M.B.M. Bull. 87, p. 216.
- (3) Dane, C. H., and Bachman, G. O., 1965, Geologic Map of New Mexico.



Photo A - open cut at Polita.



Photo B - Polita open cut.

#55 HA-2