

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

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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.

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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.

VALENCIA COUNTY

Quad: Dos Lomas 7½'

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------|
| 26. | NM-149-4-26 | Page 1 |
| | Double Jerry (Vallejo) | |
| 27. | NM-149-4-27 | Page 4 |
| | Christmas Day | |
| 28. | NM-149-4-28 | Page 8 |
| | Red Bluff Claims 1,2,3,4,5,9 | |
| 29. | NM-149-4-29 | Page 15 |
| | Black Hawk, Bunney, Gay Eagle, Red Bluff, and UDC | |
| 30. | NM-149-4-30 | Page 28 |
| | Last Chance | |
| 31. | NM-149-4-31 | Page 31 |
| | Section Nine | |
| 32. | NM-149-4-32 | Page 39 |
| | Taffy (Bonanza) | |
| 33. | NM-149-4-33 | Page 41 |
| | La Jara | |
| 34. | NM-149-4-34 | Page 45 |
| | Zia | |
| 35. | NM-149-4-35 | Page 52 |
| | Linear Prospecting Trenches | |

Quad: Dough Mountain 7½'

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---------|
| 1. | NM-199-1-1 | Page 54 |
| | Sandy (South Laguna Mines) | |

Date visited Jan. 30, 1980

Mine name(s) La Jara County Valencia

Section NW-1/4 SE-1/4 15 Twnsh. 12N R. 9W

Quadrangle sheet Dos Lomas 7½'

Mining district Mt. Taylor

Elevation 7,060'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Ambrosia Lake Junction, 5½ mi. N.; the Roundy Ranch, 2½ mi. NW

The La Jara mine is located on a Todilto limestone capped mesa near the center of Sec. 4. Access is via the U.S. Forest Service Road that leaves State Highway No. 53 about .75 mi. north of the UN-HP uranium mill. Follow the access road eastward for approximately 3.6 mi. to the Cibola National Forest boundary then turn left (north) for another 2.0 mi. Mine is just to left as road swings abruptly westward.

The workings on the La Jara consist of (1) an open pit nearly 250' across, up to 10' deep, with prominent waste piles on 3 sides (see photo a), and (2) a 120' long bench cut immediately to the northwest of the pit (see photo b). Scintillometer readings in the open pit did not exceed 200 cps and were generally about 150; only a trace of yellow uranium mineralization noted on limestone fragments in waste piles. A 3' wide linear prospecting trench runs eastward from the open pit; no elevated counts recorded in the trench.

The bench cut, shown again in photo (c), is up to 10' deep near the middle at the prominent intraformational fold. A dark greenish mineralization forms a crust on the face in the vicinity of the fold; maximum scintillometer readings along the face are in the 140-160 cps range. A close-up of the fold showing inter-laminations of darkly colored carbonaceous zones is shown in photo (d). The mine dump extends westward from the base of the cut for over 70'; the toe of the dump (see photo e) is over 9' high in places. Scintillometer readings on the dump were not significantly above background, which is 70 cps. A drainage line continues westward from the dump; no elevated counts were recorded in the drainage line below dump.

The mine has been inactive since May, 1957. (New Mex. State Mine Inspector's Office). However, Hilpert 1969, stated that the deposit was mined from 1952-1960.

References:

1. Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. Paper 603.
2. Hilpert, L. 1965, Uranium Section, in, Mineral and Water Resources of New Mexico: New Mexico Bur. of Mines and Mineral Resources, Bull. 87.
3. New Mexico State Mines Inspectors Office, inactive uranium mine file.
4. Field notes, 1/30/80.



Photo (a) Looking NW at 250' long open pit at La Jara workings; note range pole at left center for scale. Waste piles at left up to 10' high.

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Photo (b) Looking SE at 120' long bench cut; waste piles from open pit shown in background. Note range pole at right center for scale.



Photo (c) Looking NE at same bench cut; note fold at center behind range pole. Also note exploration roads climbing south slope at La Jara Mesa in background.

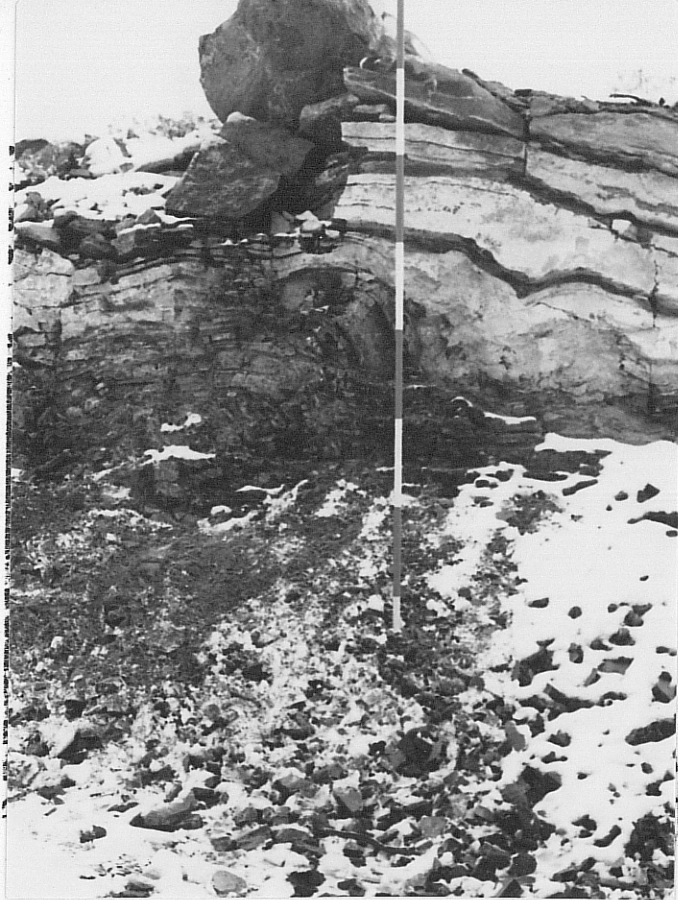


Photo (d) Close-up of intraformational fold shown in photo (c).



Photo (e) Looking S at toe of dump at bench cut; note range pole at right center for scale.