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.

*Dos Lomas Quad reports #26 - #35 found under Valencia County

Quad: Gallup East 7½'

Quad: Goat Mountain 7½'

Date visited 12/13/79

Mine name(s) Silver Spur 1 & Silver Spur 5 County McKinley

Section E½, 31 Twnsh. 14 N R. 10 W

Quadrangle sheet Goat Mountain 7½'

Mining district Grants

Elevation 7,200'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Scattered single family dwellings within 2 mile radius of the mine.

The mine is located on the west bank of a small north-south trending drainage in the E½ of sec. 31. It may be reached via the Haystack Mountain-Two Fault Butte road that extends northward along the east side of these two topographic features. The mine is indicated by a stipled pattern along the 7,200' contour on the Goat Mountain quadrangle sheet (1957).

The mine consists of 5 separate recognizable shallow pits or trenches in basal Dakota sandstone, the largest being at the north end of the workings with a small, 22' long adit driven at the north end of it. Several other areas up to 100' across have had soil overburden stripped off, but no bedrock disturbed.

The southern area open cuts range from 35'-60' long, 8'-25' wide, and up to 5' deep, see photos (a) and (b). The north end cut is 15' wide, 110' long, and 9' deep at the face where the adit is driven, see photo (c). The adit portal is 5' high, 6' wide, with one set of timbers just inside, see photo (d). Scintillometer response at the southern pits was 750 cps to 1,800 cps, at the larger one on the north 2,000 cps.

Photo (e) shows several small scattered tailings piles along the west side of the workings; they are generally not over 3' high and less than 10' in diameter. Photo (f) is a view of the tailings dump from the north cut and adit. Readings of up to 900 cps were recorded on the dump, which measures about 200' by 20' and 5' in height.

The mine was one of the earliest producers in the district (Melancon, 1963); it produced between 1952-1959; operator was Febco Mines. Inc. It was last registered with the State Mine Inspector's Office in February, 1968 by the Farris Brothers.

Some recent drilling has been done at the site, but it is not known if the section is under active lease. Sec. 31 is owned by the Berryhill family.

References: (1) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S., Prof. Paper 603.
(2) Melancon, Paul, 1963, History of Exploration, in Geology and Technology of the Grants Uranium Region: New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources, Mem. 15, p. 5.

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(3) State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.
(4) U.S. AEC PED-1, 1959, Mine Operation Data Report, GJO/AEC; p. 65; (microfiche only).
(5) Field notes, 12/13/79.

Photo (a) Looking south into 8' x 35' trench at southern edge of Silver Spur workings; note range pole for scale.

Photo (b) Looking northward near middle of workings, 200' north of photo (a); poorly defined cut is about 25' x 60'.

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Photo (c) Looking northward at northernmost cut; trench is 110' long with adit at far end.

Photo (d) Close-up of adit shown at end of trench in photo (c). Portal is 5' x 6', workings go in about 22'. Note range pole for scale.

Photo (e) Panorama looking northwestward from near middle of Silver Spur workings, showing numerous small overburden and tailings piles from the small open pits described in text. Note range pole at far right for scale.

Photo (f) Looking eastward at tailings dump from long cut with adit.