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.

McKINLEY COUNTY

Quad: Ambrosia Lake 7½'

Quad: Bluewater 7½'

Date visited 1/31/80

Mine name(s) Dysart No. 2 County McKinley

Section SE¼ 11 (SW¼ 12) Twnsh. 14 N R. 10 W

Quadrangle sheet Ambrosia Lake, 7½'

Mining district Ambrosia Lake

Elevation 7,070'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Ambrosia Lake junction, 9½ mi. southeast

The Dysart No. 2 is located in the SE¼ of sec. 11 at the west end of the physiographic feature called Ambrosia Lake. It may be reached via highway no. 509; from the junction of no. 53 and no. 509 proceed northwestward on highway 509 for 9 mi., or .60 mi. past the end of the pavement, and turn right (north) for an additional 1/2 mi. to the mine site. United Nuclear-Homestake Partners currently controls the mining interests on this property, including all but the NE¼ of sec. 11.

The mine consists of a 450' deep vertical shaft, collared in Mancos shale, bottomed in the Westwater Canyon member. It was operated from 1959-1963 (Hilpert, 1969), by Sabre-Pinon Corp., however, the last registration with the State Mine Inspector's Office is dated September, 1961. A 30' headframe remains at the shaft; a fenced ventillation shaft is located 100' west of the headframe (see photos a & b). A 36" diam. ventillation shaft is located 800' north of the headframe. Approximately 1/3 mi. to the east of headframe is Cobb Nuclear Corporation's sec. 12 mine. Cobb has leased the Dysart No. 2 shaft from United Nuclear-Homestake Partners to use as a ventillation shaft and escape way for the section 12 mine. The mine is therefore part of an active mine operation and no physical or radiometric measurements were made at the shaft site.

The mine dump area is sprawling and extends northwestward from the mine shaft for over 500' consisting of clusters of conical piles and elongate ridges. One prominent 200' long ridge intersects the present access road and at the intersection (see photo c) scintillometer readings of 1,500 cps (or 20 x background) were recorded. Immediately northeast of this ridge is a compact dump area, 3'-5' high, up to 250' in maximum dimension, with scintillometer readings up to 1,100 cps.; the site has now been partially revegetated and cattle graze in and about the area (see photo d).

References: (1) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S., Prof. Paper 603.
(2) United Nuclear-Homestake Partners, oral communication with Mr. Gary Boyer, 1/29/80.
(3) Field notes 1/31/80.
(4) New Mexico State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.

Photo (a) Dysart No. 2 headframe, approximately 30' high; shaft is used as an upcast ventillation shaft by Cobb Nuclear at the Sec. 12 Mine. Cobb equipment is visible in background.

Photo (b) Dysart No. 2 ventillation shaft in foreground, and headframe 150' to east.

Photo (c) Looking southeastward toward the Dysart No. 3 Mine dump area; note portion of dump intersecting road at center photo. Headframe is at right with Mt. Taylor in background.

Photo (d) Compact dump area northeast of ridge shown in photo (c); note cattle grazing in background.