

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.

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MINES IN NEW MEXICO

Orin J. Anderson

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
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| | | \$ 153.60 |

RIO ARRIBA COUNTY

Quad: Arroyo del Agua 7½'

1. NM-82-2-1 Page 1
Lucky Strike (Mid Continent?)
2. NM-82-2-2 Page 4
Hillfoot (Serrano)
3. NM-82-2-3 Page 6
Red Head (Tinney #2) Claims, Red Bird

Quad: Burned Mountain 7½'

1. NM-36-2-1 Page 8
Tusas East Slope #5
2. NM-36-2-2 Page 10
J.O.L. (Royal)

Quad: Ghost Ranch 7½'

1. NM-59-3-1 Page 13
Lucky Dog/Horny Toad (Onego?)

Quad: La Madera 7½'

1. NM-60-1-1 Page 15
La Paloma
2. NM-60-1-2 Page 20
Pineapple

Quad: Regina 7½'

1. NM-81-2-1

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Whiteflow (Corral #3)

2. NM-81-2-2 *found under Sandoval County; Quad: Regina

Sla-Tex Open Pit (Corral #3 Claim)

Quad: Youngsville 7½'

1. NM-82-1-1

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Box Canyon (Box Canyon Claims) (Wasson)

Date visited 10/17/79

Mine name(s) Lucky Strike (Mid Continent?) County Rio Arriba

Section SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 1 Twنش. 22 N R. 2 E

Quadrangle sheet Arroyo del Agua

Mining district N/A

Elevation 7,000'-7,020'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Arroyo del Agua is 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the east.

To reach the Lucky Strike, proceed west on New Mexico 96 from Arroyo del Agua approximately 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Agua Sarca Creek. Four hundred feet past the bridge is an abandoned farm and a road leading southwest to the workings. The workings are 300' southwest of the highway.

The workings at the Lucky Strike consist of a northern and a southern rim cut. The northern cut (photo a), is 300' long x 20' wide, and is as much as 6' deep. The southern cut is 250-300' southwest of the northern cut (photo b). It is 200-250' long x 20' wide x 6' deep. Some prospecting was done above the bench cut (photo c). A road continues beyond the southernmost cut for several hundred feet, but no further workings were encountered. No dumps of any appreciable size were located.

Both cuts are in the Agua Sarca Member of the Chinle Formation, and mineralization seems to be associated with carbonized plant debris. Faint traces of yellow mineralization may be uranium oxides.

Small trial shipments in 1955 from the Mid-Continental 1 and in 1957 from the Lucky Strike contained 0.05 and 0.07% U₃O₈, respectively (Chenoweth, 1974).

- References:
- (1) Chenoweth, W., 1974, Uranium Occurrences of the Nacimiento-Jemez Region, Sandoval and Rio Arriba counties, New Mexico, in N.M. Geol. Soc. Guidebook, 25th Field Conference.
 - (2) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. Paper 603, p: 45.
 - (3) U.S. AEC, uranium mine records.
 - (4) Field notes, 10/17/79.



Photo (a) Looking southwest at the northern Lucky Strike cut.



Photo (b) Looking southwest at the southern Lucky Strike cut. Note scintillometer (circled) for scale.



Photo (c) Prospecting above the bench cut in photo (b) on the southern Lucky Strike workings.

Mine name(s) Hillfoot (Serrano) County Rio ArribaSection NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ 8 Twnsh. 22 N R. 3 EQuadrangle Sheet Arroyo del AguaMining district Arroyo del AguaElevation 6,820'Nearest City and/or dwelling 3 miles south of local dwellings, 1.5 miles west of Coyote.

The deposit is reached via New Mexico 96 west out of Coyote. Approximately 100 yards west of the concrete bridge crossing the Rio Puerco is a dirt road leading south, along the east side of the Rio Puerco. The property is a quarter mile to the south of the highway, on the dirt road.

The workings at the Serrano are negligible. There is evidence of drilling activity, and possibly a trial shipment was made from a 200' x 15' bulldozer cut (photo a). According to Chenoweth (A.E.C., P.R.R.) there has been no production (at the time of his report). However, Woodward, et. al., (1974) state some ore was produced from a 200 foot open cut in 1954, and site Chenoweth as a reference.

The prospect is located at the base of a pink conglomeratic sandstone, somewhat arkosic, in the Cutler Formation (Chenoweth, 1956), although Chenoweth (1974) considered all uranium occurrences in Permian rocks in this area to be in the Abo Formation. Mineralized zones are in arkosic sandstone lenses containing carbonized plant debris, with copper minerals, malachite, azurite, very common, (Chenoweth, 1974). No uranium mineralization was recognized in the field during this investigation.

- References:
- (1) Chenoweth, W. L., 1956, Preliminary Reconnaissance Report on Serrano Prospect, U.S. AEC, file no. ED: R-624.
 - (2) Chenoweth, W. L., 1974, Uranium Occurrences of The Nacimiento-Jemez Region, Sandoval and Rio Arriba Counties, New Mexico, U.S. AEC, TM-194.
 - (3) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of Northwestern New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. Paper 603, p. 45.
 - (4) Woodward, L., Fassett, J., and Talbott, L., 1974, First day road log in Ghost Ranch, 25th anniversary guidebook, N.M.G.S.



Photo (a) Looking north at workings on Hillfoot (Serrano) property.

Mine name(s) Red Head (Tinney #2) Claims, Red Bird County Rio Arriba

Adit

Section NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 8 Twنش. 22 N R. 3 EQuadrangle Sheet Arroyo del AguaMining district Gallina (Coyote)Elevation 6,810'1.25 miles west of Coyote, 1 mi. SE of ArroyoNearest City and/or dwelling del Agua. 1000' south of local dwellings.

The Red Head Mine is located 1/4 of a mile south of New Mexico route 96, between Arroyo del Agua and Coyote. The mine is near the head of a small canyon, on low foothills at the north end of Mesa Ojitos. A dry creek bed west of the mine runs into the Rio Puerco 1/2 mile to the north. Access is by dirt road near several local dwellings to the NW of the mine.

Workings consist of drill roads (Photo a), and a small adit (Photo b). A claim post in photo (a) was dated August 1, 1978, and was located by Minerals Mining Co. of Craig, Colorado. A letter to the company was sent, but no response as of this date (3/28/80). The drilling activity is east and south of the mine and encompasses several hundred square feet. The adit (Photo b), trends N 50° W, is 5' high, 5 feet wide, and 50 feet deep. The adit is driven in Cutler Formation sandstone and conglomerate (Chenoweth, 1957). Mineralization consisted of green copper carbonates and white calcium carbonate coating grains. No uranium minerals were visible, but readings inside the adit measured 6,000 cps. and 3,500 at the entrance.

In a later paper (Chenoweth, 1974) all the uranium occurrences in rocks of Premian age in this area were assigned to the Abo Formation.

The property was operated by the Bolivar Uranium Corp. in 1954 and 1955, who mined 67 tons with an average grade of .14% U₃O₈, .12% V₂O₅, and .14% CaCO₃ (A.E.C.).

- References:
- (1) Chenoweth, W. L., 1957, Preliminary Reconnaissance Report on Red Head Claims, U.S. AEC, file no. ED: R-737.
 - (2) Chenoweth, W. L., 1974, Uranium Occurrences of The Nacimiento-Jemez Region, Sandoval and Rio Arriba Counties, New Mexico, U.S. AEC, TM-194.
 - (3) New Mexico State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.
 - (4) Field notes, 10/16/79.



Photo (a) Red Head Claims with local dwellings in center of photo.

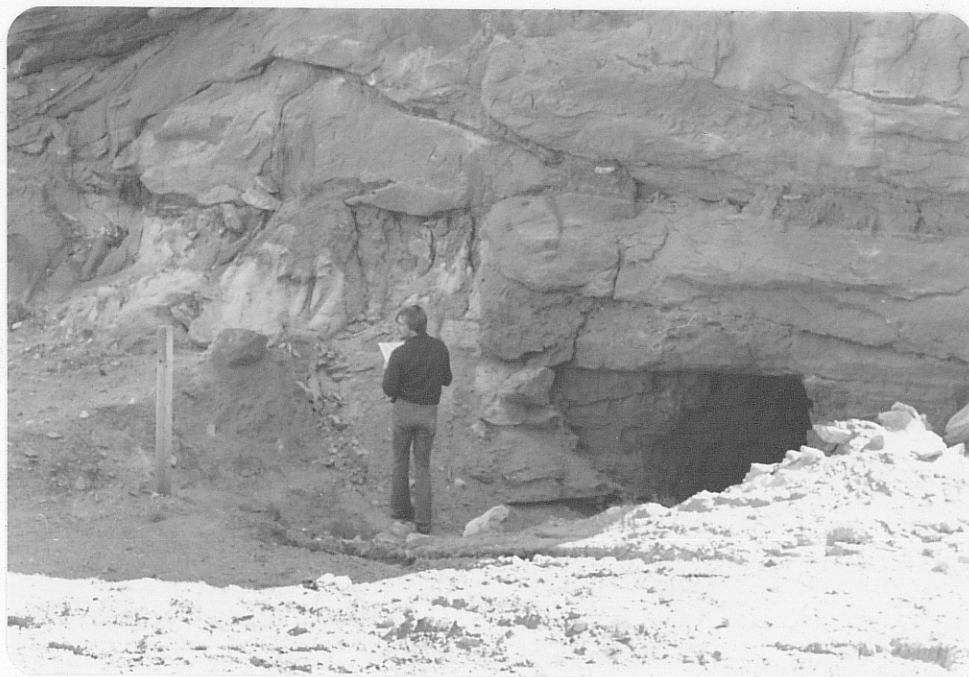


Photo (b) Red Bird adit on the Red Head Claims.

Date visited 10/11/79

Mine name(s) Tusas East Slope #5 County Rio Arriba

Section NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 24 Twish. 28 N R. 7 E

Quadrangle sheet Burned Mountain

Mining district Bromide #2

Elevation 9,620'

Nearest city and/or dwellings 7 miles E-SE of Hopewell Lake

The Tusas East Slope is located on the eastern side of Tusas Mountain. Access to the mine is from the NW, on a logging road south from New Mexico 111, through Cunningham Gulch, and then by dirt road south of Tusas Mountain.

Workings at the prospect consist of a series of bulldozer cuts (photos a & b). The total disturbed area was 40' x 60'. The cuts had removed the topsoil, which is piled up in dumps, and exposed the bedrock. The bedrock is the same as at the J.O.L., a Precambrian schist, granite, and intrusive dike. Readings at waist level were 300 cps maximum, in several traverses of the cut. No uranium mineralization was visible.

A claim post 1/2 mile to the west read:

Urania Exploration Co.
1800 Jackson Street
Golden, Colorado 80401

and was dated 29 October, 1975. The post was for the discovery of claim #41.

- References:
- (1) Hilpert, L.; 1969, Uranium Resources of Northwestern New Mexico, U.S.G.S., Prof. Paper 603.
 - (2) U.S. AEC, uranium mine records.
 - (3) Field notes 10/11/79.



Photo (a) Bulldozer cuts-Tusas east slope.



Photo (b) Bulldozer cuts.

Date visited 10/11/79

Mine name(s) J.O.L. (Royal) County Rio Arriba

Section SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ 24 Twنش. 28 N R. 7 E

Quadrangle sheet Burned Mountain

Mining district Bromide #2

Elevation 9,840'

Nearest city and/or dwellings 7 miles E-SE of Hopewell Lake campground

The J.O.L. Mine is located on the south side of Tusas Mountain, which is between Cunningham and Cleveland Gulch's. Access is by logging road south from New Mexico 111, through Cunningham Gulch, and then by dirt road south of Tusas Mountain.

Workings consist of a collapsed adit, which trends N 50° W (Photo a). The collapsed area is 15-20' wide, 25-30' deep and approximately 15' high. A dump extends to the south and west of the opening. It's dimensions are 50' N-S x 25-30' E-W and it has a maximum height of 15-20'.

The mineralization occurs as fract fillings in the Precambrian Petaca schist (Bingler, 1968). The mineralization is associated with a granitic intrusion and fluorite veining (Hilpert, 1967). Scintillometer readings at the collapsed area read up to 2,500 cps.

A claimpost at the sight read - Bruno Claims #5 and 6, and were apparently end centers.

- References:
- (1) Bingler, Edward C., 1968, Geology and Min. Res. of Rio Arriba Co., N.M. N.M.B.M. Bull. 91.
 - (2) Hilpert, Lowell, 1965, Uranium, in Min. & Water Res. of N.M. N.M.B.M., Bull. 87.
 - (3) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uran. Res. of N.W., N.M., U.S.G.S., Prof. Paper 603.

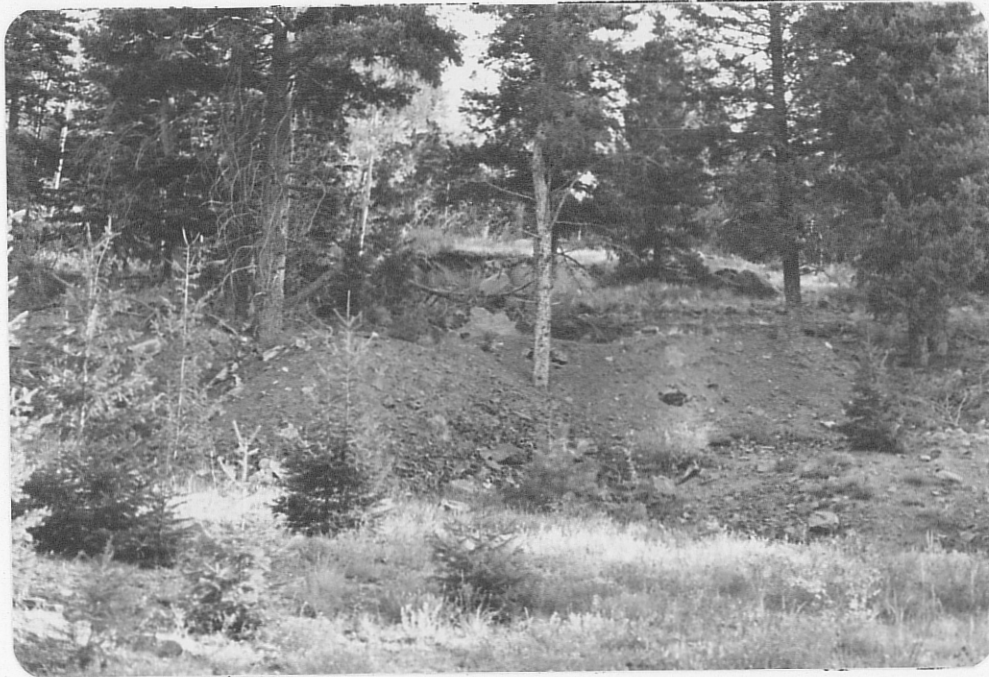


Photo (a) J.O.L. Mine-collapsed pit and dump. Small pine tree in center of photo is 3' high.



Photo (b) Collapsed workings J.O.L.

Date visited 10/15/79

Mine name(s) Lucky Dog/Horny Toad (Onego?) County Rio Arriba

Section Border of 29 & 32 Twnsh. 25 N R. 5 E

Quadrangle sheet Ghost Ranch

Mining district N.A.

Elevation 7,750'

Nearest city and/or dwellings 3 miles NE of Ghost Ranch

The Lucky Dog/Horny Toad is located on the north side of Arroyo del Yeso, on the line between sections 29 and 32. Access to the prospect is by dirt road leading southeastward from Canjilon.

Workings consist of a series of drill roads and the beginnings of a small adit on the north side of the Arroyo (photo a). The adit trends N 60° W, and is 10' deep, 5' high, and 4' wide. A small dump lies to the south of the adit, and its dimensions are 10' x 5' x 3' high. It appears from the small size of the dump that some of the material has been removed.

The adit is in the base of the Dakota Sandstone, at the contact of an upper tan to buff unit and a lower white tuffaceous unit. The contact is marked by streaks of uranium mineralization and iron stains. Mineralization follows fractures which parallel the trend of the adit. Scintillometer readings measured 1,500 cps at waist level 5' inside the adit. Background was 80 cps, as measured on the mesa above the adit.

- References: (1) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of Northwestern New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. Paper 603.
(2) New Mexico State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.

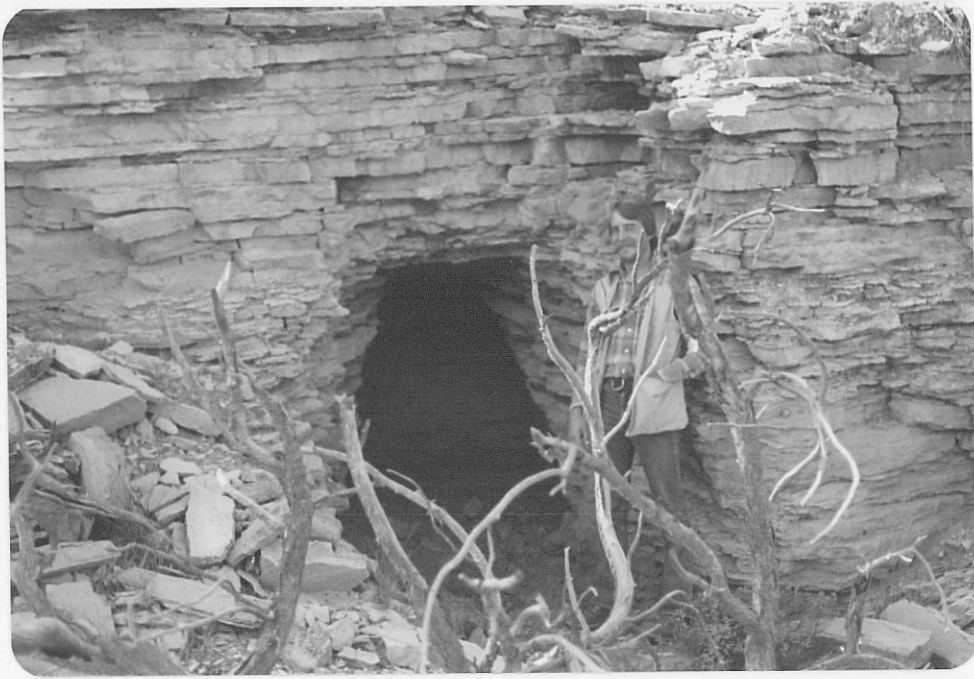


Photo (a) Lucky Dog/Horny Toad Adit.

Date visited 10/12/79

Mine name(s) La Paloma County Rio Arriba

Section N $\frac{1}{2}$ 30 Twنش. 26 N R. 9 E

Quadrangle sheet La Madera

Mining district Petaca

Elevation 7,600'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Petaca is 3 miles to the north

The La Paloma can be reached by going north on the Petaca road from La Madera 6 miles, to the northern half of Sec. 29, T. 26 N., R. 9 E. Take a dirt road leaving the Petaca road west for one mile to the workings.

The La Paloma consists of a shallow shaft, and several small open pits and bulldozer cuts. The shaft is 6' x 6' at the surface, and water filled. The depth to the water is 4'. The total depth is not known, however, it probably does not exceed 10' (photos a and b). A water sample was taken, and the analysis is attached. The smaller pits and bulldozer cuts are located in a small drainage trending southwest from the main shaft (photo c). The pits are generally shallow, ranging from 1-5' in depth (photo d). The bulldozed areas have removed topsoil and exposed bedrock (photo c). The total disturbed area is 500' northeast/southwest x 100' northwest/southeast.

The workings at the La Paloma are on pegmatite veins in a quartz, mica schist. The pegmatites contain microcline, quartz, albite, and muscovite, with minor amounts of columbite, beryl, samarskite, and monazite (A.E.C.).

No uranium minerals were visible. Scintillometer reading taken along several traverses of the property averaged 75 cps. Background readings were 70 cps, and a maximum reading of 100 cps was registered in a small pit to the northeast of the water filled shaft (photo d). The radioactivity at the La Paloma was attributed to samarskite and monazite (Chenoweth, 1974).

There has been no recorded production from the La Paloma, but a trial shipment was made late in 1954, which was found to be uneconomic (Chenoweth, 1974).

- References:
- (1) Chenoweth, W., 1974, Uranium in the Petaca, Ojo Caliente, and Bromide Districts, Rio Arriba County, New Mexico, in New Mexico Geol. Soc., 25th Field Conf. Guidebook, p. 315.
 - (2) U.S. A.E.C., 1970, Preliminary Reconnaissance for Uranium in New Mexico, 1950-1958, RME-160, 223 p.



Photo (a) Looking west at surface openings of small pit.
Field geologist is taking a water sample.



Photo (b) Close up of the small, water filled shaft on the La Paloma workings. Note hammer for scale.



Photo (c) Looking south at typical small pit (arrow) along a drainage on the La Paloma workings. Note the growth of pine along the drainage and on the dump south of the pit.

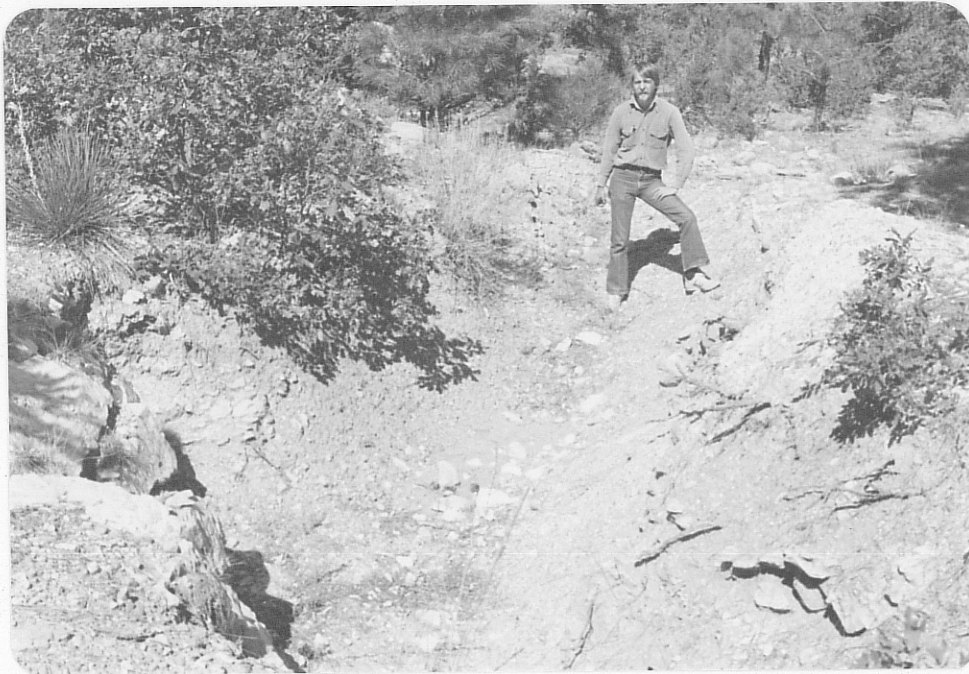


Photo (d) Shallow pit northeast of water filled shaft. Maximum scintillometer readings at this pit were 100 cps.



Photo (e) Bulldozed area on the La Paloma workings. Note rejuvination of area by pines and grasses.

Date visited 10/12/79

Mine name(s) Pineapple County Rio Arriba

Section SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 30 Twنش. 26 N R. 9 E

Quadrangle sheet La Madera

Mining district Petaca

Elevation 7,460'

Nearest city and/or dwellings La Madera is 5 miles to the south.

The Pineapple can be reached by going north on the Petaca road 6 miles from La Madera, to the northern half of Sec. 29, T 26 N., R 9 E. Then go west on a dirt road for one mile, to a road intersection. Take the left fork, and south for 1/2 a mile to the mine.

Workings at the Pineapple are restricted to shallow bulldozer cuts (photo a) in an area 100' square. Maximum depth on any cut is 3'. A low dump, 40' long x 20' wide x 5' high is located on the northern end of the workings (photo b). In comparing the size of the dump versus the size of the bulldozer cuts, it is possible there may have been a small shaft which has since been obliterated, as there appears to be more material on the dump than can be accounted for in the small cuts. No mention of a shaft has been found in the literature.

The open cuts are in a light green to white muscovite rich pegmatite. No uranium minerals are visible. Several traverses of the dump and the workings registered a maximum scintillometer reading of 100 cps.

References: (1) U.S. AEC, uranium mine records- New Mexico.



Photo (a) Looking NE at small bulldozer cuts and the dump on the Pineapple property.



Photo (b) Looking north at the Pineapple dump.

Date visited 10/26/79

Mine name(s) Whiteflow (Corral #3 Claim)* County Rio Arriba

Section SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ 19 Twنش. 23 N R. 1 E

Quadrangle sheet Regina

Mining district Vegitas Cluster-Gallina

Elevation 8,100'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Gallina Plaza is 4 miles to the northeast

To reach the workings, go west on New Mexico 96 from Gallina High School $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Then proceed south on a dirt road through Gallina Plaza and along the Rio Gallina for $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles to the intersection of Corral Canyon. Go west along Corral Canyon for 2 miles. The open pit is on the north side of the road.

The Whiteflow is an open pit which trends northeast. The cut is 100' long x 20' wide and has a maximum depth of 6' (photo a). The bench of the cut is poorly exposed (photo b), has been overgrown by low grasses, rocky mountain juniper, ponderosa, fir, and oak. The dump (photo c) is below and to the south of the bench. It has a conical shape, 125' long x 10-12' wide with an average height of 4'. The dump is marked by a stand of Ponderosa 6'-12' high.

The bench cut is in a light gray and red arkosic siltstone, and mudstone along channel scours in the Cutler Formation (Hilpert, 1969). No uranium mineralization was observed. Scintillometer readings of 60-70 cps were recorded at the face of the cut, and a maximum of 200 cps registered on the dump.

According to Hilpert (1969), some material was mined from the bulldozer cut.

* The Whiteflow and Sla-Tex deposits are both located on the Corral #3 claim (see attached map). The Whiteflow is in Rio Arriba County, and the Sla-Tex is in Sandoval County.

- References:
- (1) Chenoweth, W. L., 1956, Preliminary Rec. Report on Sla-Tex open pit (Corral #3 Claim), U.S. AEC file no ED: R-610.
 - (2) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of Northwestern New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. Paper 603, p. 46.
 - (3) Field notes, 10/26/79.



Photo (a) Looking east at the bulldozer cut on the Whiteflow workings.



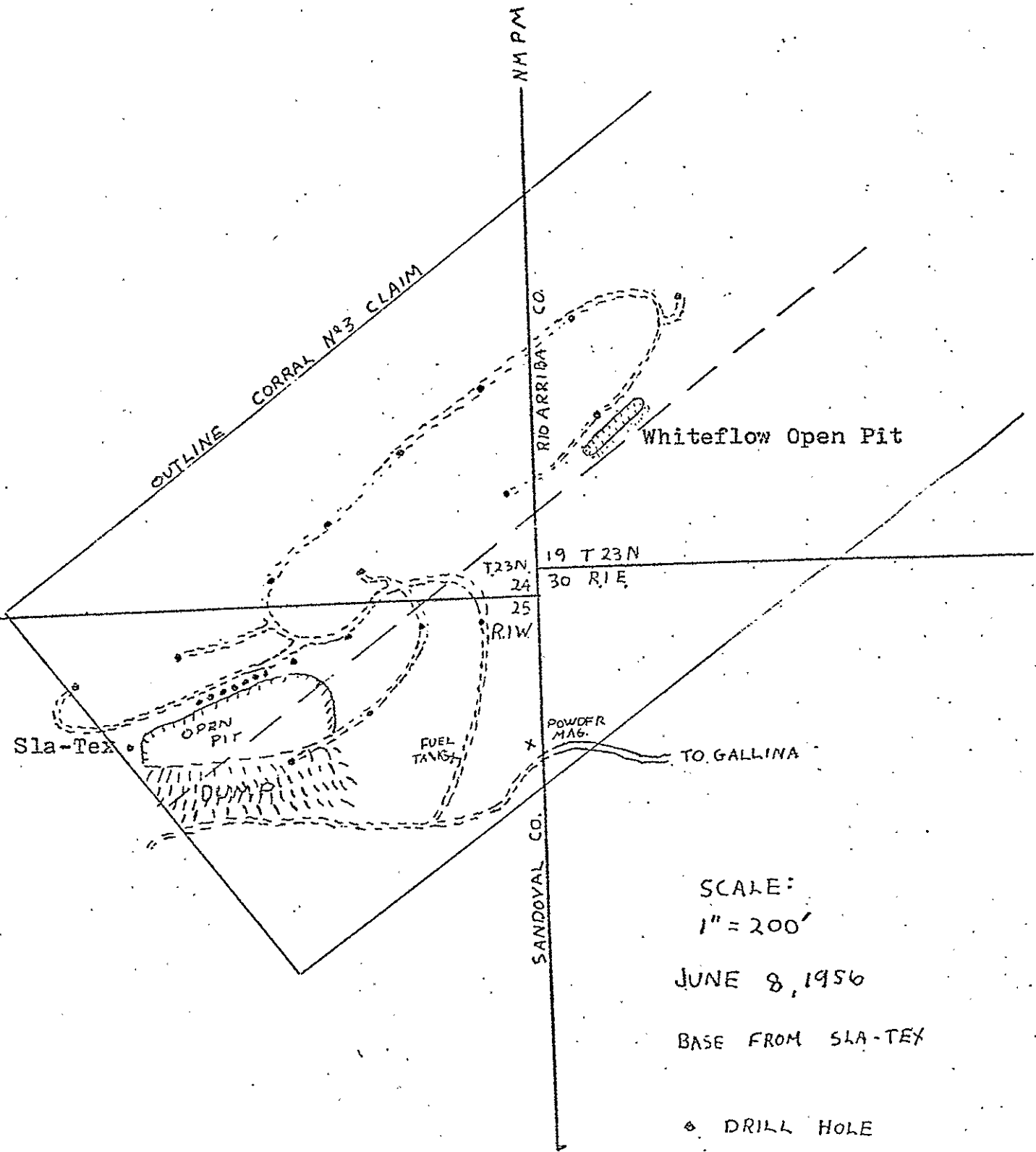
Photo (b) Looking NW at access to, and bench cut of the Whiteflow.

370 R-23



Photo (c) is looking NW at the dump of the Whiteflow.

Sla-Tex and Whiteflow open pits on the Corral #3 Claim



ED: 613

Date visited 10/19/79

Mine name(s) Box Canyon (Box Canyon Claims) (Wasson) County Rio Arriba

Section NE $\frac{1}{4}$ 28 Twnsh. 23 N R. 4 E

Quadrangle sheet Youngsville 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ '

Mining district Chama Basin

Elevation 7,080'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Youngsville, 3 air miles SW

The Box Canyon Mine is located on a Todilto limestone capped spur in the E $\frac{1}{2}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 28. It is accessible by dirt road leaving N.M. highway no. 96, 4 mi. east of Youngsville. Proceed south on dirt road for approximately 2 mi. then turn right and follow jeep trail that begins climbing the mesa. The claim is on Santa Fe National Forest land.

The mine itself is a rectangular open pit or trench 260' long, up to 50' wide, and up to 30' deep, oriented N 60° W. It is a notch in the sense that it goes completely across the spur (see photo a), with an abrupt drop off into adjacent canyons at either end of the cut. The east end of the cut is the widest.

The face of the cut exposes a lower Morrison fm. sequence of sandstone, mudstone, and claystone (see photo b), with the host rock Todilto limestone presently exposed only along the base of the south wall in a low amplitude fold (see photo c). Scintillometer readings at this limestone outcrop ranged up to 1,700 cps. The only other significant readings registered in the mine area were found at the waste piles shown in the foreground in photo (a)-up to 1,200 cps. The major portion of the waste was bulldozed into the canyons on either side of the cut.

Grab samples of Todilto limestone taken by the U.S. AEC in 1956, 1 year before the mine was developed, were assayed and showed U₂O₈ contents in the 0.03-0.05% range with chemical assays being slightly lower than radiometric grades. A small but unknown tonnage of low grade ore with a 1:1 U:V ratio was mined in 1957 (Hilpert; 1969).

A portion of the mine access road and the local topography are shown in photo (d).

- References:
- (1) Chenoweth, W. L., 1956, Preliminary Reconnaissance Report, Box Canyon Claims; U.S. AEC PRR-file no. ED:R-633.
 - (2) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. Paper 603.
 - (3) Field notes, 10/19/79.



Photo (a) Looking northwest into Box Canyon Mine; cut is generally 35' wide (wider at east end), and 260' long. Small waste piles in foreground produced scintillometer readings up to 1,200 cps.



Photo (b) Looking E-SE from inside cut at Morrison fm. exposed on north face; note hammer (circled) for scale. Access road (arrow) is visible across canyon at east side of cut.



Photo (c) Looking south at south face of cut; showing fold and small fault near top; note hammer (circled) for scale.



Photo (d) View northwestward just east of mine site, showing mine road (center and upper left) and the La Joya del Pedregal plain 400' below in the distance.