

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) |         |

Mine name(s) Taffy (Bonanza) County Valencia  
 Section SW/4, SW/4, 11 Twنش. 12N R. 9W  
 Quadrangle sheet Dos Lomas  
 Mining district Mt. Taylor  
 Elevation 7,700'  
 Nearest city and/or dwellings Ambrosia Lake junction, 5 mi N.; Roundy Ranch,  
2 1/2 mi W.

The Taffy mine is located in the southwest corner of sec. 11 on the south slopes of La Jara Mesa. It is accessible by the U.S. Forest Service access road that leaves State Highway No. 53 at a point .75 mi north of the UN-HP uranium mill. Travel eastward on the access road about 3.6 mi. to the Cibola National Forest boundary and turn left (north) for 2 mi. At this point road will swing abruptly westward (La Jara mine on immediate left) and a lesser road forks off to the north toward La Jara Mesa. Take this north fork and the Taffy mine access road on the mesa slope will come into view. Road from base of mesa up to mine is in poor condition, and last 1/2 mi. of trip must be made on foot.

The mine consists of a 300' long bench cut in the Poison Canyon sandstone tongue of the lower Brushy Basin member, (see photo a). Bench is up to 45' wide at maximum and the face is 20' high and stable. The highest scintillometer readings were obtained along a mudstone lens about 5' above the base of the cut; the lens contains bluish to greenish gray clay galls and some carbonized plant debris. Readings of up to 4,500 cps were recorded near the southeast end of the cut at the location shown in photo (b). The dump extends for 70' downslope below the cut; scintillometer readings in dump average about 200 cps (or 3x background).

The mine was operated briefly in 1961 by the Trustco Corporation. It ceased operations in December, 1961; total production is unknown.

## References:

1. Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S. Prof. paper 603
2. Field notes, 3/18/80
3. Granger, H.C., 1963, Mineralogy, in, Geology & Technology of the Grants Uranium Region: New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources Memoir 15; p. 29.



Photo (a) Looking NW at Taffy mine bench cut; note range pole at right for scale.



Photo (b) Close up at ore bearing mudstone lens indicated in photo (a) by the range pole.