

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.

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.

Quad: Thumb Tank Peak 7½'

1. NM-366-1-1

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Red Tiger (Bobby Johnson)

Quad: Upham 15'

1. NM-392-0-1

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Paran (Paran Claim)

Date visited 5/14/80

Mine name(s) Paran (Paran Claim) County Sierra

Section 27 Twنش. 17 S R. 4 W

Quadrangle sheet Upham 15'

Mining district -

Elevation 5,000'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Tipton Ranch (3 mi. N-NE)

The Paran Claim is located in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  sec. 27 about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles east of I-25 near the Sierra-Dona Ana County line. To reach the claims from I-25 take the Derry and Garfield exit and proceed east about 3/4 mi. on dirt road. Then take side road to the right, cross stream bed, and proceed northeastward to claim/mine site.

The workings consist of a 6' wide, 10' long, and 6' deep open cut driven northwestward in altered Pennsylvanian limestone (see photos a & b). The Garfield fault trends east-west through the site, with Bliss sandstone on the north faulted against Penn-Perm strata on the south (probably Abo & Madera). Mineralization is in the limestone; limestone is altered and brecciated. Minerals noted were limonite, hematite, siliceous vein and fracture fillings, and traces of yellow mineralization which could be uraniferous. Maximum scintillometer reading in the cut was 300 cps; the small ore pile at the entrance to cut (at left in photo b) read up to 350 cps.

No production is recorded from the site and the "mine" is not on file at the State Mine Inspector's Office.

A small 6' x 6' open pit was found approximately 1/3 mile northeast of the above pit. Scintillometer response was not above background. Additional prospecting is evident  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the east, but may not be in sec. 27.

- References: (1) U.S. AEC RME-160, 1970, Preliminary Reconnaissance for Uranium in New Mexico, 1950-1958; GJO/AEC, p. 191.  
(2) Field notes, 5/14/80.

5/14/80



Photo (a) Looking W-NW down ramp leading to small open cut (left center) on Paran Claim.

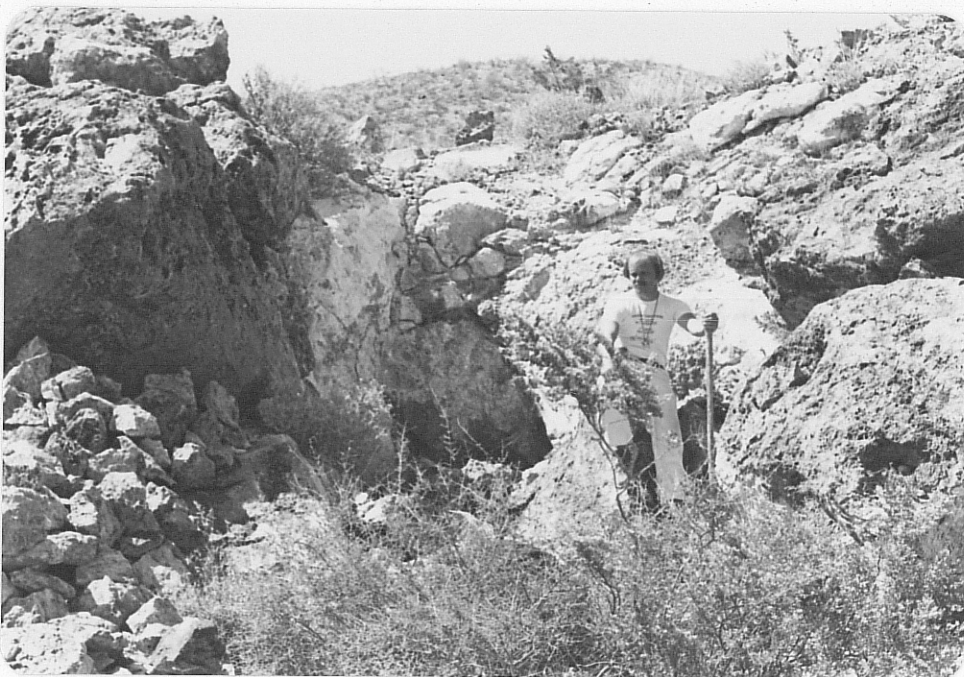


Photo (b) Looking NW into 6' wide, 10' long, open cut shown in background in photo (a).