

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.

SAN MIGUEL COUNTY

Quad: El Porvenir 7½'

1. NM-135-2-1 Page 1
Sparks - Stone (Sparks Stone #1)

Quad: Honey Boy Ranch 7½'

1. NM-131-1-1 Page 2
High Peak(High Peak Claims)

Quad: Sabinoso 7½'

1. NM-139-2-1 Page 6
Sabinoso Uranium Coop. (Lujan Ranch) (Asco Mine)
2. NM-139-2-2 Page 10
Windy 9
3. NM-139-2-3 Page 12
Bish Claims
4. NM-139-2-4 Page 14
Verde (Hunt Oil Co. Sab)
*Unlocated on Sabinso Quad.

Date visited 9/20/1979

Mine name(s) Sparks-Stone (Sparks Stone #1) County San Miguel

Section 5 & 6 Twنش. 16 N R. 14 E

Quadrangle sheet El Porvenir 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ '

Mining district N. A.

Elevation 8,000' (estimate)

Nearest city and/or dwellings Blue Haven Youth Camp; 3 mi E.

The present investigators were unable to reach the Sparks-Stone mine site because of locked gates, no trespassing signs, and unavailability of landowners. The nearest point reached was the Blue Haven Youth Camp which is 3 miles away.

A July 1960, Office Memorandum of the U.S. AEC stated that officials of that agency tried to reach the mine during the month of July, but ran into blocked roads and signs stating "Road closed by court order." The memorandum further stated that reports made earlier by an agency certification engineer indicated previous road problems at "distances of 3 or more miles from the property." The memorandum concluded by stating, "No reserve is assigned the property as only 4 tons of .06% U_3O_8 and 13 tons of .13% U_3O_8 were shipped from it. Controller lost interest after the second ore shipment in mid-1956."

AEC records show the workings consist of a small open pit about 20' x 50', and 5' deep (Wm. Chenoweth, written communication, Nov. 1979).

References

1. U.S. AEC Office Memorandum, July 11, 1960
2. Wm. Chenoweth, U.S. Dept. of Energy, written communication, Nov. 1979