

Abandoned Uranium Mine Site Assessment for the Paran Mine (NM0251)

FINAL REPORT

Prepared For:



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

INTERA Incorporated (INTERA) has prepared this Abandoned Uranium Mine (AUM) Site Assessment Report for the Mining and Minerals Division (MMD) of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) in compliance with the Professional Service Agreement dated November 2, 2009. INTERA visited the Paran Mine Site (AUM Site), MMD ID: NM0251, on December 21, 2009.

1.1 PREVIOUSLY KNOWN INFORMATION ABOUT THE SITE

The AUM Site was mined by surface mining methods in 1955. An alias for the AUM Site is Derry. This AUM Site produced a total of 9 pounds of U_3O_8 ore at an average production grade of 0.07 percent from this deposit. The AUM Site is characterized as a Jeter type deposit, a vein-type uranium deposit, along the Garfield fault in Permian and Pennsylvanian sedimentary rocks (McLemore and Chenoweth, 1989).

This AUM Site was included in the Anderson Report as NM-392-0-1. The Anderson Report described this Site as having workings that consist of a 6 feet wide, 10 feet long, and 6 feet deep open cut in altered Pennsylvanian limestone along the Garfield fault. The limestone has been altered and brecciated. Minerals noted were limonite, hematite, siliceous vein and fracture fillings, and traces of yellow mineralization which could be uraniferous (Anderson, 1980).

1.2 SITE LOCATION AND DIRECTIONS

The Paran Mine Site is located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land on the edge of Section 26 and 27, Township 17 south, Range 4 west. This Site is located in Sierra County and is approximately 1.5 miles northeast of Interstate 25, exit 51, and 23 miles south of the city of Truth or Consequences (please see Figure 1).

From Albuquerque drive south on Interstate 25 about 174 miles to Exit 51, for Garfield/Salem, turn left at County Road B108/NM-546 E and continue over the interstate. The pavement ends, continue up a hill and turn right onto a dirt road about 0.2 miles after crossing over the interstate. Drive 0.25 miles along the dirt road through a wide drainage and stay left at the fork in the road. From the fork continue approximately 1.4 miles to the end of the road. Another prospect will be visible across the drainage from the vehicle. Proceed on foot down through the drainage and toward the prospect up an old access road about 0.1 miles. Continue past this prospect to the west another 0.15 miles to the Paran Mine, approximately 0.25 miles west of the end of the road. Alternative approach; at approximately 1 mile from the fork in the road (1.25 miles from the turn-off) is a very steep hill, the vehicle can be parked at the base of this hill and then one may proceed on foot, following a rough road, down into the drainage northeast and then turning back west up the opposite side of the drainage. A prospect will be encountered about 0.4 miles along the access road to the Paran Mine. Continue past this prospect another 0.2 miles to the AUM Site.

1.3 SITE GEOLOGY

The AUM Site falls on the southeastern edge of the Rincon Valley Basin, or the Palomas Basin, and the west side of the Caballo Mountains. The Rincon Valley Basin is a down-dropped basin bounded by normal faults that has filled with clay-rich sediments bounded by the Caballo Mountains to the east. The AUM Site is located in the foothills of the Caballo Mountains, a fault-block range with steep escarpments along the rift, the west side of the range, and gentler slopes on the east side (Julyan, 2006). The Caballo Mountains rise more than 3000 feet above the Rio Grande Valley.

The AUM Site is located in the Pennsylvanian Magdalena Group limestone. Interfingering of the Magdalena limestone and Abo redbeds is present in the area surrounding the Site (Kelly, 2007). The Magdalena Group (also known as the Madera Group) consists of fossiliferous limestone, cherty limestone, shale, dolomite, and conglomerates deposited in shallow ocean environments (Kelly, 2007). The AUM Site uranium deposits are found in veins formed at low temperatures along faults, such as the Garfield Fault (McLemore and Chenoweth, 1989).

1.4 SITE HYDROGEOLOGY

The drainages located west and south of the AUM Site are seasonally active and both flow southwest to a catchment approximately 1.5 miles from the AUM Site and then into the Rio Grande Valley, another 2 miles to the southwest.

The AUM Site is located on the southeastern edge of the Rincon Valley Basin, or the Palomas Basin. The Santa Fe Group deposits in the Rincon Valley Basin are very clay-rich and do not form a good aquifer. The main aquifer formations in this area are the valley alluvium of the Rio Grande and tributaries. In the immediate location of the AUM Site, groundwater is localized in fractures and faults within the Precambrian bedrock and Pennsylvanian and Permian sedimentary rocks (Terracon et al., 2003).

1.5 REGIONAL TOPOGRAPHY AND TERRAIN

The AUM Site can be found on the McLeod Tank Quadrangle 7.5 minute United States Geological Series topographic map at an elevation of approximately 4600 feet above mean sea level (please see Figure 2). The regional topography around the AUM Site is hilly and steep, with changes in elevation of up to 700 vertical feet within a one-mile radius of the AUM Site. Figure 3 shows an aerial photograph of the terrain surrounding the AUM Site.

2.0 MINE FEATURES

The mine features described below are based on the features provided to INTERA by MMD in the GIS Data Dictionary (MMD, 2009). INTERA marked the locations of the AUM Site features using a Trimble Global Positioning System (GPS) and entered details about the features into the GPS using the MMD data dictionary. The AUM Site consists of one cut, one pile, and two roads. The offsite features include one erosion area, two cuts, two benches (parallel cuts in the hillside), and four roads. Please see the Photo Log in Appendix A, Table 1 for a list of all AUM Site features, and Figures 4a and 4b for the locations of the AUM Site features.

2.1 MINING AND EXPLORATION PITS AND OPEN CUTS

The Paran Mine AUM Site consists of one cut (cut-3) extending about 10 feet north into the hillside. The cut dimensions are approximately 6 feet wide, 10 feet long, and 6 feet deep. The cut was made perpendicular into the hill to access veins of secondary mineralization formed in the fault zone.

Two open cuts (cut-1 and cut-2) were found offsite near the AUM Site. The material from one of these cuts (cut-1) was used to create a bench (bench-1), and a flat area for mining activities. The other cut (cut-2) was perpendicular to the main cut (cut-1) and followed a mineralized zone into the hillside. Another bench (bench-2) is located below the cuts, and appeared to be a staging area for mining activities.

2.2 WASTE AND ORE PILES AND DISTURBANCES

One waste rock pile (pile-1) was found at the AUM Site. This pile is located at the entrance to the cut (cut-3), and the material appears to have been removed from the cut during excavation. This pile extends in a thin layer down the hill to the southwest for about 50 feet. There is no evidence of soil staining or runoff below this pile.

2.3 MINING RELATED BUILDINGS AND FOUNDATIONS

No mining related buildings and foundations were evident at the AUM Site.

2.4 OTHER MINE FEATURES

Other features that were found at the AUM Site include two roads (rd-5 and rd-6). Rd-5 is a ramp that runs from the southeast down to the northwest to cut-3 (see Figure 4a). Rd-6 is an access road that leads south-southwest away from the site.

Offsite mine features included an erosion area (erospt-1), formed by water drainage above the access roads (rd-1, 2, and 3); three access roads leading to a prospect site; two cuts at the prospect; and two benches parallel to the hill side. All of these offsite features were located at a prospect approximately 0.25 miles east of the AUM Site.

2.5 BOREHOLES

There were no visible boreholes at this AUM Site.

2.6 RECLAMATION ACTIVITIES

No apparent reclamation activities have taken place at this AUM Site.

3.0 ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

No apparent archeological sites were identified at or near the AUM Site.

4.0 SITE GAMMA RADIATION READINGS

The background gamma radiation readings at the AUM Site were measured approximately 600 yards from the southeastern end of the site. The background gamma readings were measured at approximately 10 to 15 microrentgens per hour ($\mu\text{R/hr}$) at the ground surface and 10 to 15 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ at 4 feet above the ground surface. Please see Table 2 for all of the gamma radiation readings taken at the AUM Site.

The gamma radiation readings at the AUM Site were highest inside of cut-3. The highest reading in the cut was rad-5, recorded above loose rock on the floor of the cut and had readings of 200 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ at the ground surface and 50 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ at 4 feet above the ground surface. Gamma radiation readings were taken along the vein inside cut-3 as well (rad-6 and rad-7). The highest was 140 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ on the vein and 50 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ 4 feet away from the vein. Readings for the pile of rocks (pile-1) just outside of the cut were 120 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ at ground surface and 50 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ 4 feet above the pile.

The offsite gamma radiation readings for the prospect site to the east ranged from 120 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ (rad-4) at the ground surface inside cut-2 to 12 $\mu\text{R/hr}$ (rad-1) at the erosion area near the access roads.

5.0 CURRENT LAND USES

5.1 HUMAN ACTIVITY AND RECREATIONAL SITE USE

No evidence of recent human activity was found on the AUM Site.

5.2 NEARBY RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES

There are no residential or commercial structures within a 1-mile radius of the AUM Site. Approximately 0.85 miles east-southeast of the AUM Site is an active gravel pit.

5.3 NEARBY DOMESTIC WELLS

There are no domestic wells within a 1-mile radius of the AUM Site.

5.4 EVIDENCE OF GRAZING OR AGRICULTURE

Cattle were present on the land during the AUM Site assessment.

5.5 EVIDENCE OF WILDLIFE

There was very little evidence of wildlife in the area. There were, however burrow holes visible, which could be home to rodents or other burrowing animals. Birds that may be present this time of year include geese, sparrows, warblers, quail, hawks, nighthawks and owls, although none were observed during the site visit.

6.0 VEGETATION

The vegetation of the Paran Mine Site is characterized as Chihuahuan Desert ecosystem. The vegetation identified at the AUM Site includes Juniper trees (*Juniperus*), Barrel Cactus (*Ferocactus wislizeni*), Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia*), Ocotillo cactus (*Fouquieria splendens*), Pincushion Cactus (*Escobaria*), Candelabra Cholla (*Cylindropuntia imbricate*), Smooth Sotol (*Dasyliirion leiophyllum*), Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentate*), and Mesquite (*Prosopis*). Other small unidentified woody shrubs and forbs as well as various types of grasses were also present throughout the AUM Site (Carter, 1997).

7.0 POTENTIAL OFFSITE IMPACTS

7.1 EROSION

There is one notable erosional feature near the AUM Site, above the intersection of roads 1, 2, and 3. This erosion is due to water runoff on the steep road banks created when the roads were cut into the hillside.

7.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

There is no evidence of soil staining from chemicals potentially brought to the AUM Site, or from constituents present in the ore or waste rock. Gamma radiation levels at the AUM Site are not imminently dangerous to humans, livestock, or wildlife potentially present at the AUM Site.

8.0 REFERENCES

- Anderson, Orin J., 1980. Abandoned or Inactive Uranium Mines in New Mexico. New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources Open File Report 148.
- Carter, Jack L., 1997. Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico. Johnson Books; Boulder, CO.
- Julyan, Robert, 2006. The Mountains of New Mexico. University of New Mexico Press.
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- Lozinsky, Richard Peter, 1982. Geology and Late Cenozoic History of the Elephant Butte Area, Sierra County, New Mexico. Master Thesis, The University of new Mexico.
- McLemore, Virginia T. and William L. Chenoweth, 1989. Uranium Resources in New Mexico. New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resources, Resource Map 18.

Terracon, John Shomaker & Associates, Inc., Livingston Associates, LLC, Inc., Zia Engineering and Environmental, Inc., and Sites Southwest, 2003. The New Mexico Lower Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. Prepared for: The Lower Rio Grande Water Users Organization and others.

TABLES

**Table 1
Site Features**

**Paran Mine – NM0251
Abandoned Uranium Mine Assessments**

Feature Name	Feature Type	Material	Activity	Associated Photo	Depth or Height (ft)	Lenght (ft)	Width (ft)	On Site?	Collapsed ?	Open?	Associated Feature	Notes
erospt-1	erosion3	--	Water Drainage	Photos 4,6,7	4	--	--	No	--	--	rad-1	--
cut-1	openCuts	--	--	--	30	--	--	No	--	--	--	--
cut-2	openCuts	--	--	Photos 11-12	20	--	--	No	--	--	rad-4	perpendicular to cut-1
cut-3	openCuts	--	--	Photo 24-25	10	--	--	Yes	--	--	rad-6,-7,-8	--
pile-1	piles	--	--	--	5	--	--	Yes	--	--	rad-11	next to cut-3, pile continues as a thin veneer down hill 50 feet
bench-1	Area_generic	--	--	Photo 8	--	--	--	No	--	--	rad-3	Material from cut-1
bench-2	Area_generic	--	--	Photo 13	--	--	--	No	--	--	--	--
rd-1	roadcntr	dirt	--	Photo 4	--	--	--	No	--	--	--	--
rd-2	roadcntr	dirt	--	Photo 3	--	--	--	No	--	--	--	--
rd-3	roadcntr	dirt	--	Photo 5	--	--	--	No	--	--	--	--
rd-4	roadcntr	dirt	--	--	--	--	--	No	--	--	--	--
rd-5	roadcntr	dirt	--	--	--	--	--	Yes	--	--	--	referred to as "ramp" in Anderson Report
rd-6	roadcntr	dirt	--	Photo 28-29	--	--	--	Yes	--	--	--	Below cut-3

Notes:

-- No Information Available



Table 2
Gamma Radiation Survey Results

Paran Mine – NM0251
Abandoned Uranium Mine Assessments

Reading ID	Reading at 0ft Above Ground (μR/hr)	Reading at 4ft Above Ground (μR/hr)	Associated Photos	Associated Features
background	10-15	10-15	none	none
rad-1	18	12	Photos 6-7	erospt-1
rad-2	70	28	Photo 9	bench-1
rad-3	100	20	Photo 10	rock on bench-1
rad-4	120	40	Photo 11	north end of cut-2
rad-5	200	50	Photo 24	cut-3
rad-6	60	50	Photo 25	vein inside cut-3
rad-7	140	50	Photo 25	vein inside cut-3
rad-8	15	13	Photo 28	rd-6
rad-9	10	12	Photo 28	rd-6
rad-10	15	15	Photo 28	rd-6
rad-11	120	50	Photo 29	pile-1

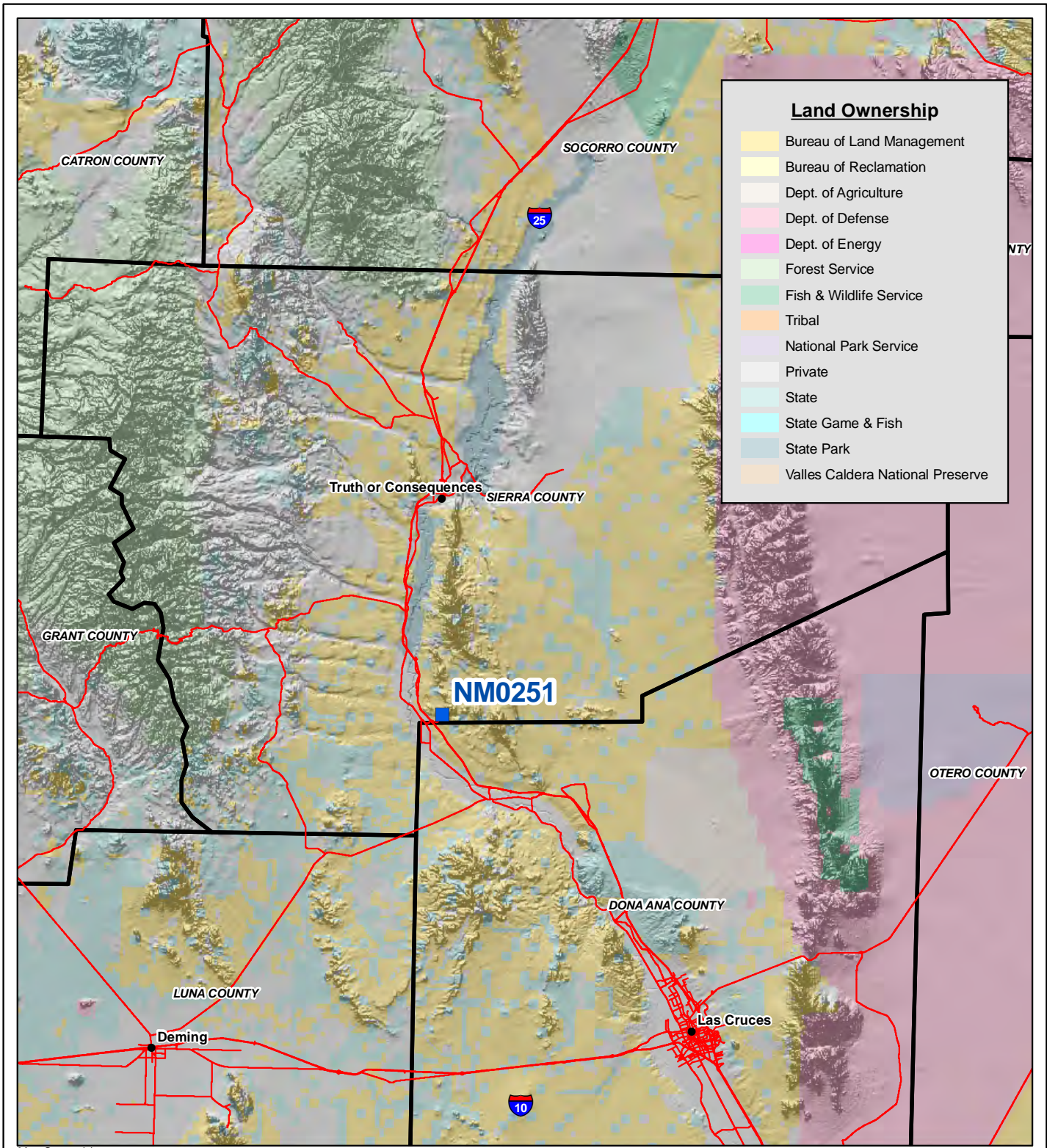
Notes:

All gamma readings at this Site were taken using a Ludlum 19 μR/Ratemeter.

μR/hr = microroentgens per hour



FIGURES



Map Source(s):
Ownership - BLM, 2007

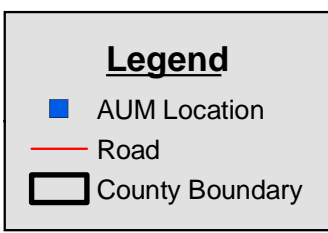
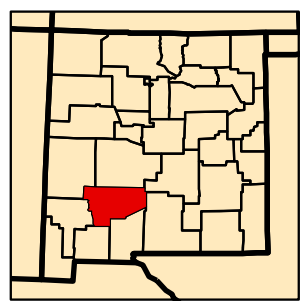
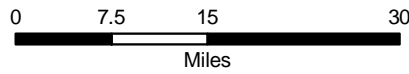
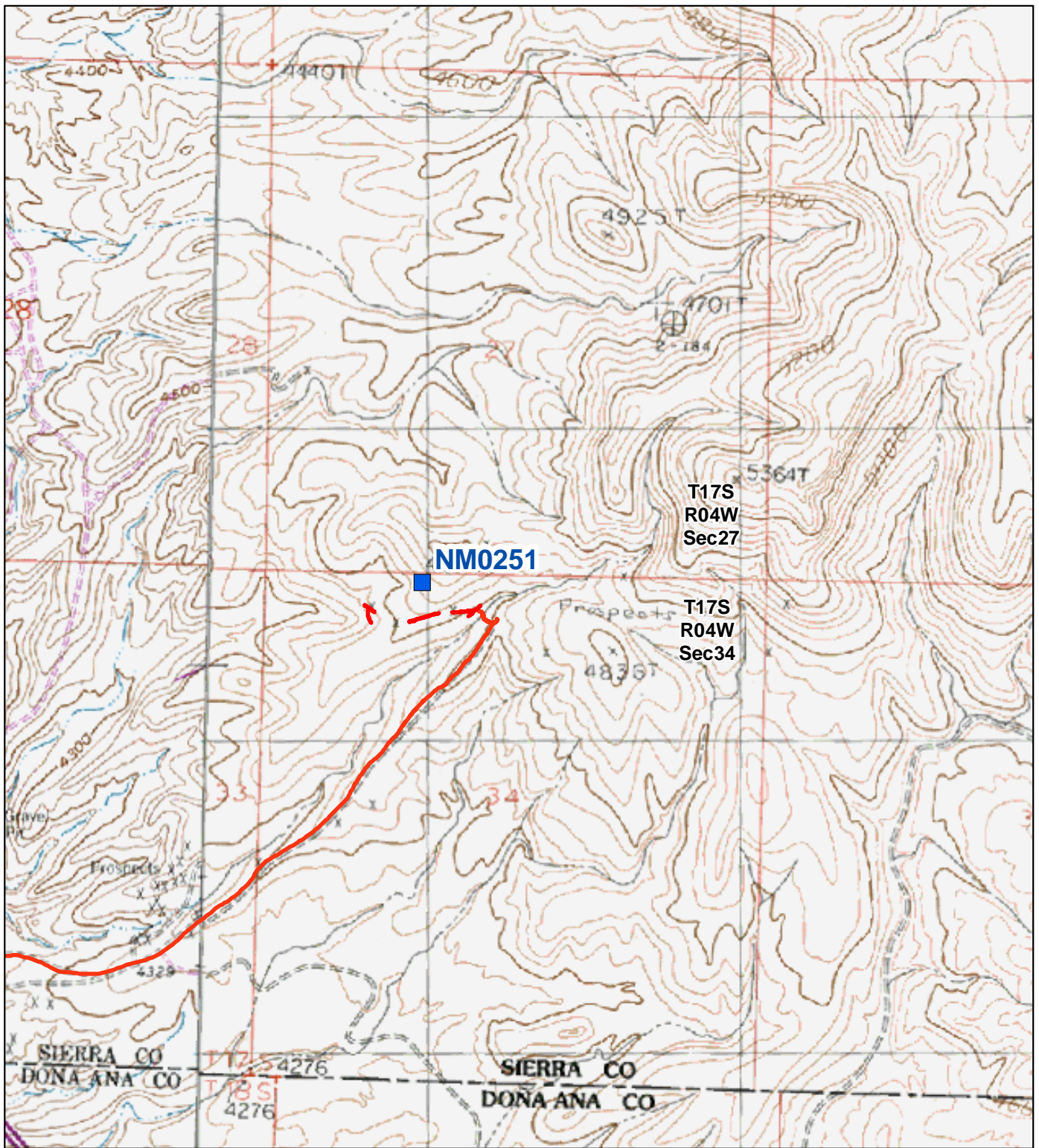
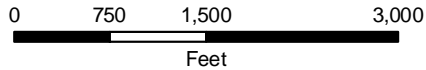


Figure 1
Site Location Map
NM0251-Paran
Abandoned Uranium
Mine Assessment





Map Source(s):
 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-Minute
 Topographic Map
 -Garfield, 1961-1980
 -McLeod Tank, 1985



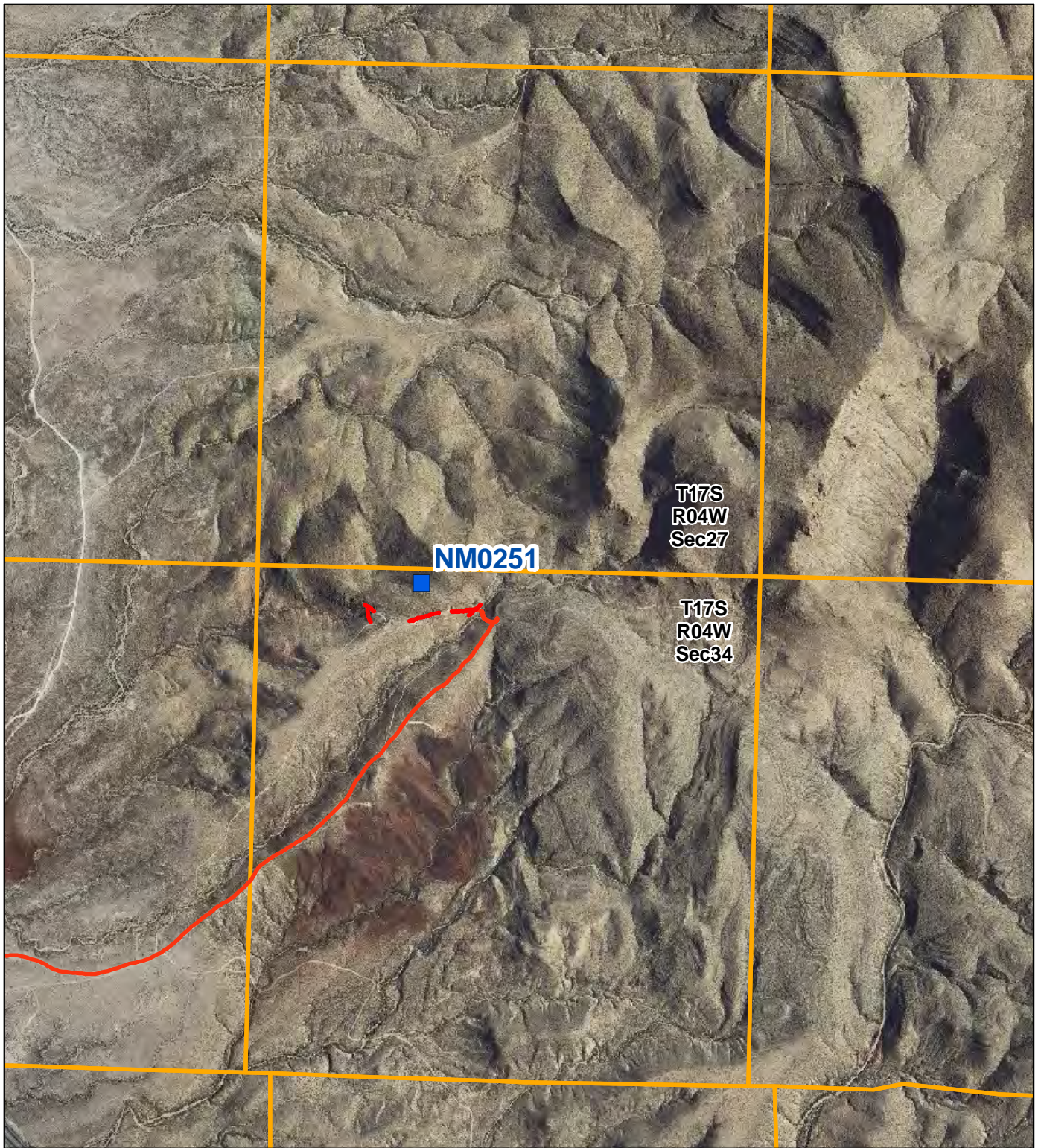
Legend

- Approximate AUM Location
- Access Road

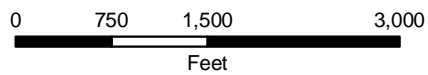
**Figure 2
 Topographic Map
 NM0251-Paran**

Abandoned Uranium
 Mine Assessment





Map Source(s):
 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-Minute
 DOQQ County Mosaic
 -Sierra County, 2009



Legend

- Approximate AUM Location
- Access Road
- Section Boundary

Figure 3
Aerial Photo
NM0251-Paran
 Abandoned Uranium
 Mine Assessment

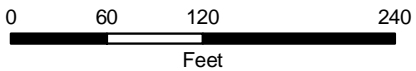


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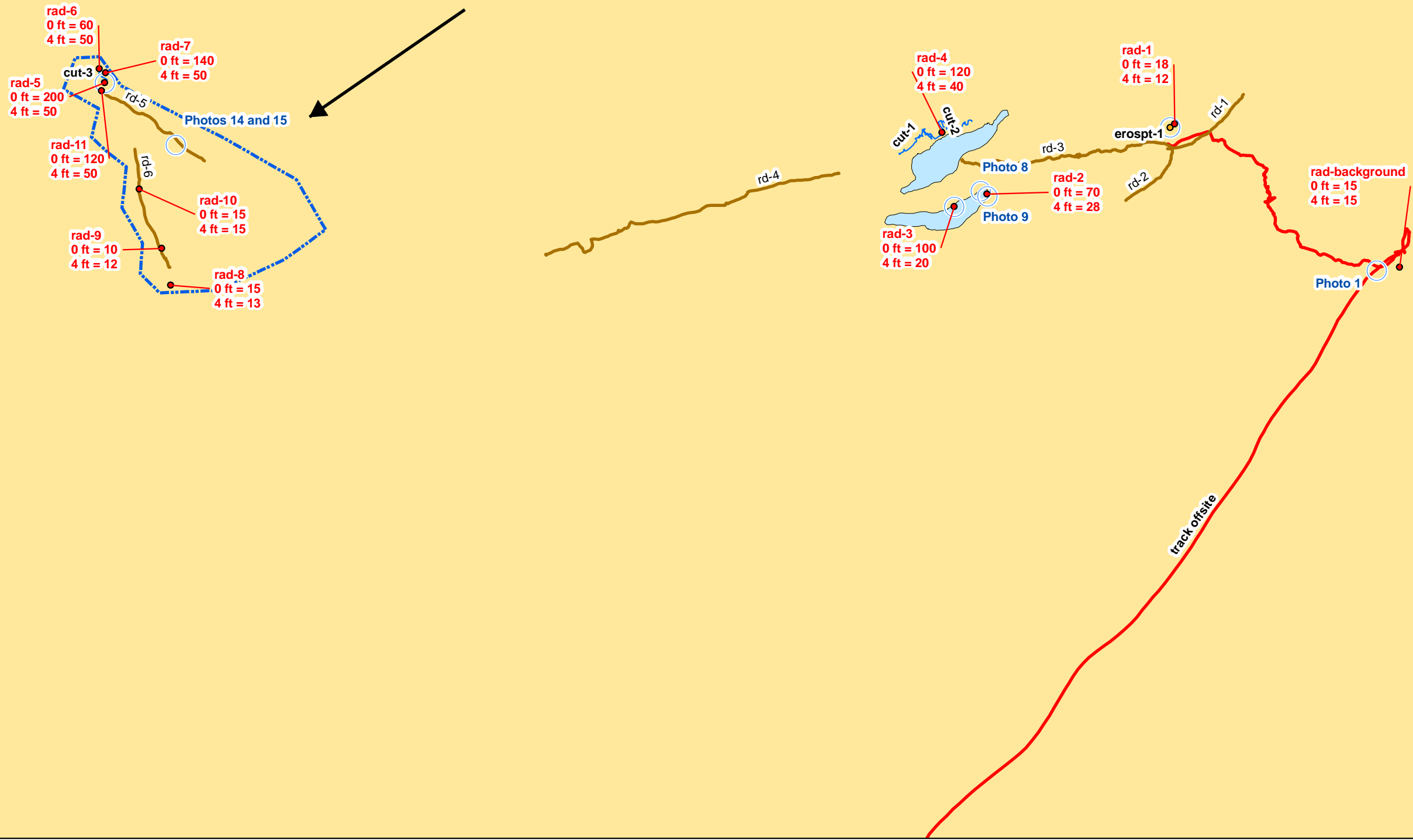
- Radiation Readings ($\mu\text{R/hr}$)
- Photo Location
- Access Road
- Offsite Prospect
- Approximate AUM Boundary

Surface Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management



Paran Mine Prospect



Map Source(s):
Ownership - BLM, 2007
Note: See Table 1 for Site Feature descriptions.

Figure 4a
Site Map with
Surface Ownership
NM0251-Paran
Abandoned Uranium
Mine Assessment

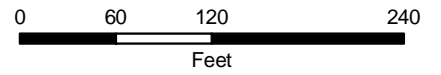




Paran Mine Prospect

Legend

- Radiation Readings ($\mu\text{R/hr}$)
- Photo Location
- Access Road
- Offsite Prospect
- Approximate AUM Boundary



Map Source(s):
 U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-Minute
 DOQQ County Mosaic
 -Socorro County, 2009

Note: See Table 1 for
 Site Feature descriptions.

Figure 4a
Site Map on
Aerial Photo
NM0251-Paran
 Abandoned Uranium
 Mine Assessment



APPENDIX A

PHOTO LOG

Note: Gaps in the numbering sequence of the photos is the result of removing photos not suitable for the report. A full set of photos will be provided in the final deliverable.



Photo 1 – Photo from the parking area, looking at offsite features, east of the AUM Site, looking north.



Photo 3 – View of road (rd-1) from road (rd-2) east of the AUM Site, looking east.



Photo 4 – View of road (rd-1) in foreground and erosion (erospt-1) on slope southeast of the AUM Site, looking north.



Photo 5 – View along access road (rd-3), looking west.



Photo 7 – Erosion area (erospt-1), looking north.



Photo 8 – Bench (bench-1), looking west.



Photo 9 – AUM Site from the bench (bench-1), looking north.



Photo 10 –Ludlum reading of 50 μ R/hr (rad-3) on a rock on the west side of the bench (bench-1).



Photo 12 – Open cut (cut-2), looking north.



Photo 13 – Bench (bench-2), looking east.



Photo 14 – AUM Site (replicating the Anderson Report photo), looking west-northwest.



Photo 15 – AUM Site, looking west-northwest (replicating the Anderson Report photo).



Photo 16 – Prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) on the slope below the AUM Site.



Photo 17 – Creosote Bush (*Larrea tridentate*).



Photo 19 – Pincushion Cactus (*Escobaria*).



Photo 20 – Smooth Sotol (*Dasylirion leiophyllum*).



Photo 24 – Inside open cut (cut-3) (replicating Anderson Report photo).



Photo 25 – Vein inside open cut (cut-3, rad-6).



Photo 26 - Barrel cactus (*Ferocactus wislizeni*).



Photo 27 – Ocotillo cactus (*Fouquieria splendens*).



Photo 28 –Road (rd-6) towards the AUM Site, looking north.



Photo 29 – AUM Site from road (rd-6), looking north.

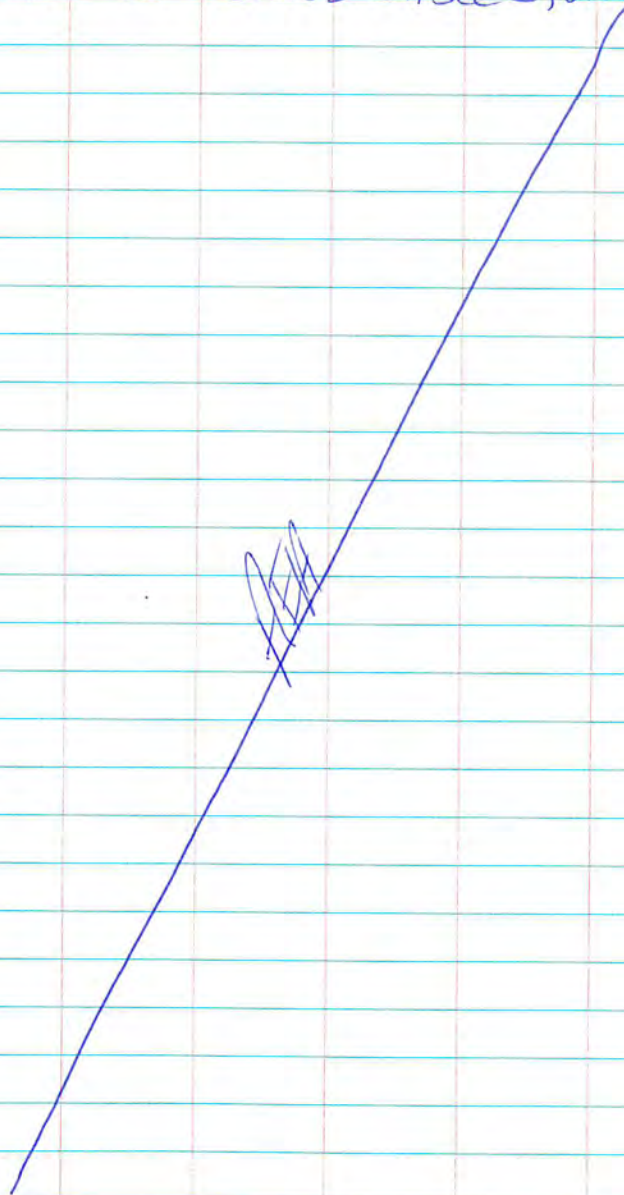
APPENDIX B
FIELD NOTES

11 12/17/09 AEA Abandoned Uranium Mines
1558 headed back to truck

Fence 1 - runs along upper mesa ridge,
above site

1604 off site to Abq

Photos 43-45 tanks off site, on the route out



12/21/09 ALT Abandoned Uranium Mines 12

Site Name: NMO251, Paran Mine

Objective: Site Assessment

Personnel: Annelia Tinklenberg - INTERA
Amy Andrews - INTERA

Equipment: Rental truck, ~~borrowed~~ ^{rental AT} Trimble
GeoXH (SN: 4712432334, PN: 60950-00,
IC: 1756A-612, 2005 Series), borrowed
Ludlum (SN: 175926, Model 19), rental
GPS camera (IC: 1441-S00SEW1, Ricoh,
Caplio S00SE-W), backup digital
camera, backup Garmin GPS, cell
phone amplifier, and field laptop

10:00 Left Albuquerque for site

13:00 Arrived at general site location and
tried to determine safest access route.

14:10 Parked car and packed equipment for
hike to site.

Photo 1 Site from across drainage (S-SW of
the site) looking N-NE.

Photo 2 Site name from same location as
photo 1. looking N-NE

14:36

RadAir

Background Rad - below site - off: 10-15 mR/hr
and 4ft: 10-15 mR/hr

15 12/21/09 ACT Abandoned Uranium Mines
Photo 14 - Looking W-NW, looking down ramp
at site, replicating Anderson Report

Road 4 - leading west from ^{offsite} site to 2nd Site

Road 5 - ramp, on SE of site

Photos 16-22 - Vegetation at site

Road 5 - cut 3 - off: 200 uR/hr, 4ft: 50 mR/hr

~~ACT~~ Photo 16 - cut 3, looking N, replication
Anderson Report ACT

~~ACT~~ Photo 18 ^{ACT} 24 - inside cut 3, looking N, Anderson
Report

Road 6 - inside cut 3, off: 60 uR/hr, ~~off~~: 50 uR/hr
on vein

Road 7 - still inside cut 3: 140 uR/hr:
on waste pile ACT

Photo 25 - vein inside cut 3

Photo 26 + 27 - vegetation; Barrel Cactus & Ocotillo

Road 6 - Below site, south west of site

Photo 28 - Looking North along road 6, towards
site

Road 8 - Road 6; off: 15 uR/hr 4ft: 13 mR/hr

Road 9 - Road 6; off: 10 uR/hr, 4ft: 12 mR/hr

Road 10 - Road 6; off: 15 uR/hr, 4ft: 15 mR/hr

12/21/09 ACT Abandoned Uranium Mines 16

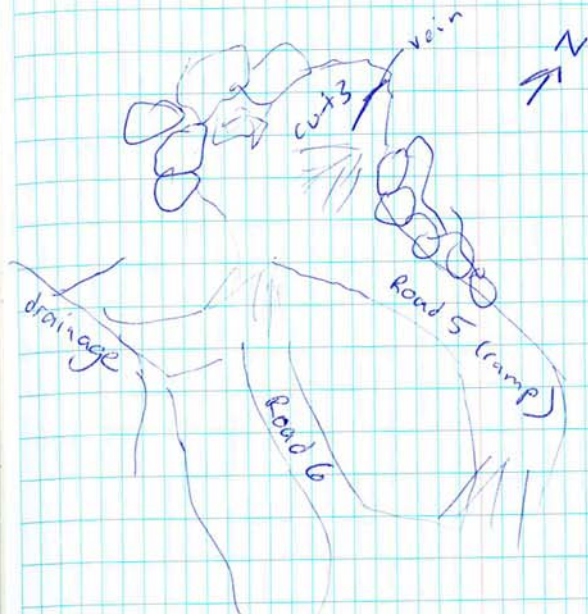


Photo 29 - Looking north at site from Road 6

Road 11 - ~~off~~ ^{ACT} Pile 1 - off: 120 mR/hr, 4ft: 50 mR/hr

Pile 1 - waste pile, at cut 3

Terrain does not allow for site boundary trace.

15:00 ACT

1700 Back at truck to leave site

No buildings or foundations on site

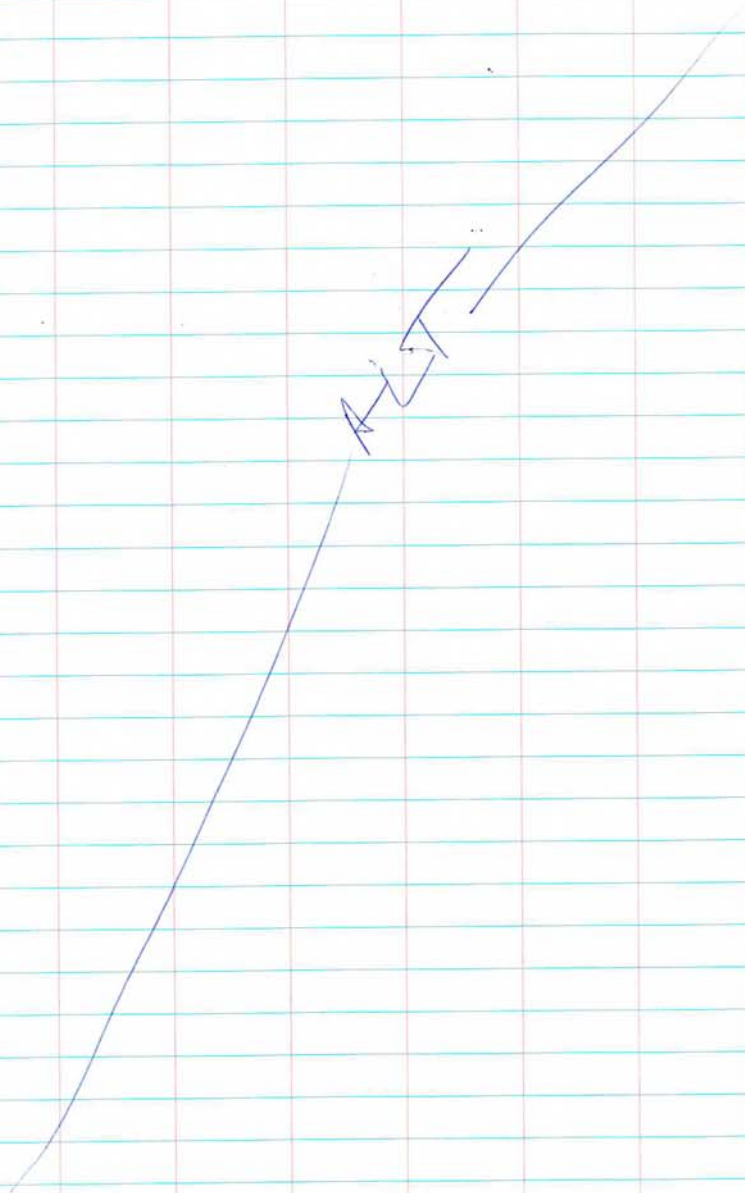
Small amounts of recreational waste were
present; tire, cans, ~~pe~~ ^{ACT} ballpoint pen.

No evidence of vegetation die-off due to
the mine and related activities.

Evidence of grazing and saw cows

17 12/21/09 ALT Abandoned Uranium Mines

Soils: sandy, gravel, iron staining localized throughout the site, some ^{ALT} red clay soils



12/22/09 ALT Abandoned Uranium Mines

18

Site Name: NM250, Mitchell Price Prospect

Objective: Site Assessment

Personnel: Annelia Tinklenberg - INTERA
Amy Andrews - INTERA

Equipment: Rental truck, borrowed Trimble
GeoXH (SN: 4712432344), PN: 60950-00,
IC: 1756A-612, 2005 series), borrowed
Ludlum (SN: 175926, model 19), rental
GPS cam ALT, digital camera,
backup Garmin GPS, cell phone
amplifier, field laptop

7:15 Left hotel for NM 250

7:45 Arrived at parking for NM 250

8:25 Arrived at approximate location for NM 250 site.

Background gamma at site - 10 μ R/hr

Given Site Location - GPS point for NM 250 site

~~No ^{ALT} visible features.~~ ^{ALT}

No visible mine features

Bad 1 - Given Site Location - off: 12 μ R/hr, 4ft 9 μ R/hr

Photo 1 - ^{East ALT} ~~West~~ of Given Site location, looking ^{West} ~~East~~

Photo 2 - Looking north at Given Site Location,
south of site