



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
SUPERFUND SITE STRATEGY RECOMMENDATION - REGION 06**



**Site Name:** Blackhawk, Bunney, Red Bluff Nos 7, 8, 10 & UDC Mine – NM0074 **CERCLA ID#:** N/A

**Alias Site Name:** Section 4; Bunney Group

**Address:** 35.294494 N, 107.788675 W

**City/County or Parish/State/Zip:** Cibola County, New Mexico

**Report Type:** Pre-CERCLA Screening / File Review **Date:** September 3, 2024 **Author:** EPA

**RECOMMENDATION/MISC:**

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. No Further Remedial Action Planned Under Superfund (NFRAP)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Further Investigation Needed Under Superfund <input type="checkbox"/> PA <input type="checkbox"/> HRS                      Priority: <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> SI <input type="checkbox"/> RI/FS <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> ESI <input type="checkbox"/> RA <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ To be performed by: _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3. No further assessment (i.e., not a valid CERCLA site)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Action Deferred to: <input type="checkbox"/> RCRA <input type="checkbox"/> NRC	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Site Being Addressed Under the State Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. EJScreen analysis for the site area shows one or more EJ Indexes is at or above the 80 <sup>th</sup> percentile in the nation.	

**NOTIFY AUTHORITY:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Removal	<input type="checkbox"/> RCRA	<input type="checkbox"/> TSCA	<input type="checkbox"/> CAA	<input type="checkbox"/> SMCRA
<input type="checkbox"/> Remedial	<input type="checkbox"/> State/Tribe	<input type="checkbox"/> NPDES	<input type="checkbox"/> NRC	<input type="checkbox"/> Resource Trustee: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> CERCLA Enforcement	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Facility	<input type="checkbox"/> UIC	<input type="checkbox"/> SPCC	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
SEND SSSR COPIES TO: <input type="checkbox"/> SEDAE <input type="checkbox"/> WDDG <input type="checkbox"/> ATSDR <input type="checkbox"/> State Agency <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Agency				

**DISCUSSION:**

The New Mexico Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department, Mine and Minerals Division (MMD) prepared an initial Pre-CERCLA screening report for the Blackhawk, Bunney, Red Bluff Nos 7, 8 & 10 and UDC No 1 Mine in May 2010 using information collected during a site assessment conducted in April 2010. Information from both the MMD site assessment and Pre-CERCLA screening report were reviewed for this Pre-CERCLA screening.

The Red Bluff Nos 7, 8 & 10 were in production from 1952 to 1958 and produced 39,284 tons of ore. The Red Bluff No. 10 claim was last registered in 1964 with the State Mining Inspector’s Office. The Black Hawk and Bunney claim were mined together in 1952, 1956, 1958-1963 and 1965-1967, producing a total of 13,908 tons of ore from open pits. The Black Hawk claim was restaked and renamed Tycoon 2 in 1976, then became the New Black Hawk in 1980. The UDC Nos. 1-5 claims produced 927 tons of ore. The location of UDC No. 5 was unable to be determined, but only minor activity occurred on UDC Nos. 1-4 claims.

The Blackhawk, Bunney, Red Bluff Nos 7, 8 & 10 and UDC No 1 Mine (Site ) are located within the Ambrosia Lake locality of the Grants uranium region and located approximately 2.5 miles east of NM 605 northeast of Grants, New Mexico. The Site is located on mixed ownership lands; Bureau of Land Management (BLM) controls part of the surface land and part of the Site is privately owned. Records indicated that the mineral estate

is controlled by the BLM. Pursuant to the August 2011 Memorandum of Understanding between EPA and the New Mexico State office of the BLM, the Site will be addressed either by BLM or EPA.

The Site operated as a dry uranium mine with mining done by open pitting and stripping along benches; these shallow mines are above the groundwater surface. During the April 2010 site assessment MMD observed the following: nine adits (eight adits on the Blackhawk/Bunney claims and one adit on the Red Bluff No. 8 claim); one vent shaft on the Blackhawk/Bunney claims; three open cuts located on the western portion of the Blackhawk/Bunney claims; twenty pits (eight pits on the Blackhawk/Bunney claims, four pits on the Red Bluff No. 7 claim, four pits on the Red Bluff No. 8 claim and four pits on the Red Bluff No. 10 claim); and eighteen piles consisting of overburden, waste rock or a combination of both (six piles on the Blackhawk/Bunney claims, seven piles on the Red Bluff No. 7 claim, four piles on the Red Bluff No. 8 claim and one pile on the Red Bluff No. 10 claim). MMD observed no evidence of erosion, and there are no nearby permanent surface water features. The maximum gamma radiation reading at 0 feet above ground measured 5000 microrentgens per hour ( $\mu\text{R/hr}$ ) at one of the pits in the Red Bluff No. 8 claim. The background gamma radiation recorded at 0 feet above ground was 26  $\mu\text{R/hr}$ .



In October 2011, EPA conducted an aerial radiological survey in the Poison Canyon area of the Ambrosia Lake sub-district by using the Airborne Spectral Photometric Environmental Collection Technology (ASPECT). The Site was included in the ASPECT survey. The gamma radiation readings at the Site were statistically greater than background readings in the area.

Based on the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (OSE), Water Rights Reporting System database, from a total of 50 well records, 22 private/domestic wells are within a 4-mile radius of the Site. The area surrounding the Site is predominately range land, with no residences within one mile of the Site. However, one domestic well and one non-domestic well are located south of the mine within one mile of the Site. The wells are 300 feet deep, but the depth to water and installation date are unknown.

An Environmental Justice (EJ) Screening was completed using the EPA's Environmental Justice Screening Mapping Tool. According to the information provided by the screening, an EJ screen chart or report cannot be generated within a one-mile radius of the Site due to the area being too small or sparsely populated, or the data are not available in the national dataset.

Although there are elevated levels of uranium at the Blackhawk, Bunney, Red Bluff Nos 7, 8 & 10 and UDC No 1 Mine, at this time the Site is not a candidate to be added to the active Superfund inventory due to the remoteness and lack of targets within the various pathway target distant limits of the Site. EPA recommends that no further action is required, and the Site receive a designation of no further remedial action planned in the SEMS database. EPA may revisit this recommendation should additional information become available that indicates that an imminent threat to human health or the environment exists such that further action under CERCLA is warranted. EPA also proposes to review new data as it becomes available and incorporate it into the conceptual model for the Grants Mining District.

**APPROVALS:**

<b>Report Reviewed by:</b> <u>Karen Berecz</u> <small>(Site Assessment Manager)</small>	<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> <u>09/03/2024</u>
<b>Disposition Approved by:</b> <u>Michelle Delgado-Brown</u> <small>(Acting Section Supervisor - SEDAS)</small>	<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> <u>09/03/2024</u>