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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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.

HIDALGO COUNTY

Quad: Victoria Ranch 7½'

1. NM-484-3-1

Napane Claims

Date visited 8/28/79

Mine name(s) Napane Claims County Hidalgo

Section S½ 25 Twnsh. 29 S R. 14 W

Quadrangle sheet Victoria Ranch 7½'

Mining district Fremont

Elevation 5,050' to 5,100'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Hatchet Ranch, about 5 miles west; Bill Everhart, owner.

The Napane Claims are located in the S½ of sec. 25 on the north slope of the Sierra Rica near the International Boundary. Before driving on to the claim area it is necessary to stop and get permission from Mr. Everhart at the Hatchet Ranch; telephone no. 436-2511.

The claim area is indicated on the Victorio Ranch sheet by numerous shafts, adits, and prospect pits and the name "Occidental Mines." The workings are quite extensive and some of the shafts may be 100' or more in depth. No scintillometer was available during the investigation and therefore it is not known which of the workings contained radioactive minerals. The photographs which follow are intended to show only the nature and size of some of the more important workings; they are not to be interpreted as uranium mines as it is doubtful the area ever produced any uranium ore. It is primarily a base metal deposit with some gold and silver associated (see photos a-j for the nature and description of workings).

The rocks of the region consist of Pennsylvanian and Cretaceous limestone cut by intrusions of granite porphyry and lamprophyre. The ore deposits on the U.S. side of the Boundary occur as replacement bodies in the limestone and as quartz veins along faults (Anderson, 1954). The replacement bodies are generally oxidized and contain copper, lead and zinc minerals intermixed with quartz and oxides of iron and manganese. The quartz veins follow a northeast trending fault system. Valuable ore minerals associated with the veins are galena, chalcopyrite, and gold (Anderson, 1954). Silicified zones in the Cretaceous limestones contain the uranium minerals (Hilpert, 1965).

The district has long been idle, and no production records exist prior to 1947 when 54 tons of high grade Cu-Au-Ag ore was shipped from the Yucca claim? (somewhere in section 25).

The Napane Claim was registered under that name with the State Mine Inspector's Office in June, 1955, with Hawkins, Kelly, and Butterworth as the owner/operator.

References: (1) Anderson, E. C., 1954, The Metal Resources of New Mexico and Their Economic Features through 1954; New Mexico Bur. of Mines and Mineral Resources, Bull. 39; p. 84.
(2) Hilpert, L., 1965, Uranium, in Mineral and Water Resources of New Mexico: New Mexico Bur. of Mines and Mineral Resources,

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Bull. 87; p. 222.
(3) New Mexico State Mine Inspector's Office, 1956, Forty Fourth Annual Report; p. 49.
(4) New Mexico State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.
(5) Field notes, 8/28/79.

Photo (a) Looking northward at incline shaft 250' to west of access road in SE¼ sec. 25 as mining district is approached; site is nearby an abandoned trailer house. Sign on approach advertises the Cruz Blanca Mining Co.

Photo (b) Vertical shaft, 4' x 6', 50' deep; in cluster of workings east of abandoned trailer house near the International Boundary, in SE¼ sec. 25.

Photo (c) Entrance to 30° decline with a due east heading; workings are 100' west of shaft shown in photo (b).

Photo (d) In 8' x 12' open pit with small decline at east face; underground workings only 10' - 12' long. Area is immediately south of decline shown in photo.

Photo (e) Tailings dump from workings shown in photos (c) and (d).

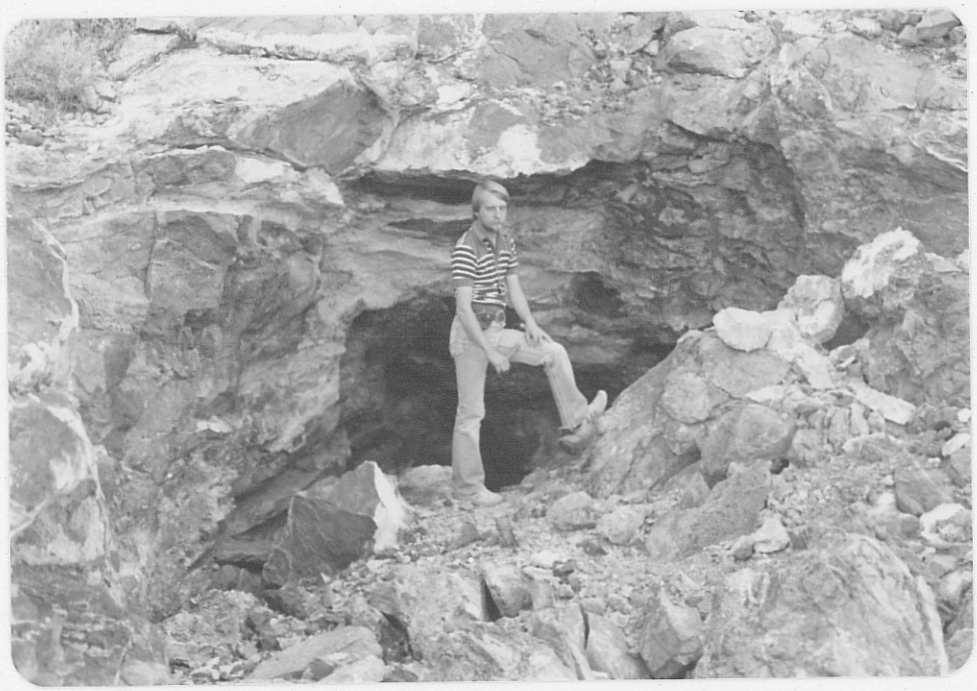

Photo (f) Small inclined shaft, 5' x 6', in E½ SE¼, sec. 25.

Photo (g) Adit 4' high, 5' wide, 25' long in E½ SW¼ sec. 25; negative slope at entrance is causing adit to backfill.

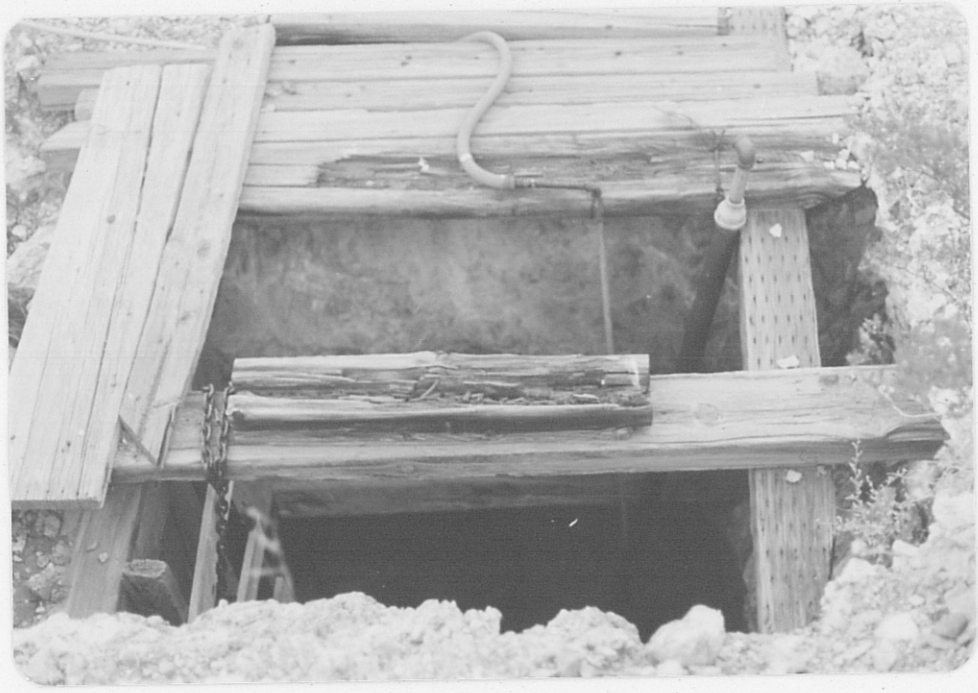

Photo (h) Vertical shaft, 6' x 6', 50' deep, with some "plumbing" left in place; note log chain at left for scale. In SE¼, sec. 25.

Photo (i) Vertical shaft, 6' x 6', at least 50' deep, in E½ SW¼, sec. 25.

Photo (j) Small adit with a heading of 335°, portal 5' high, 6' wide, in E½ SW¼, sec. 25. Ore in tailings pile is iron rich.