

New Mexico Environment Department Presentation to Indian Affairs Committee

September 25, 2012
Navajo Technical College, Crownpoint, New Mexico

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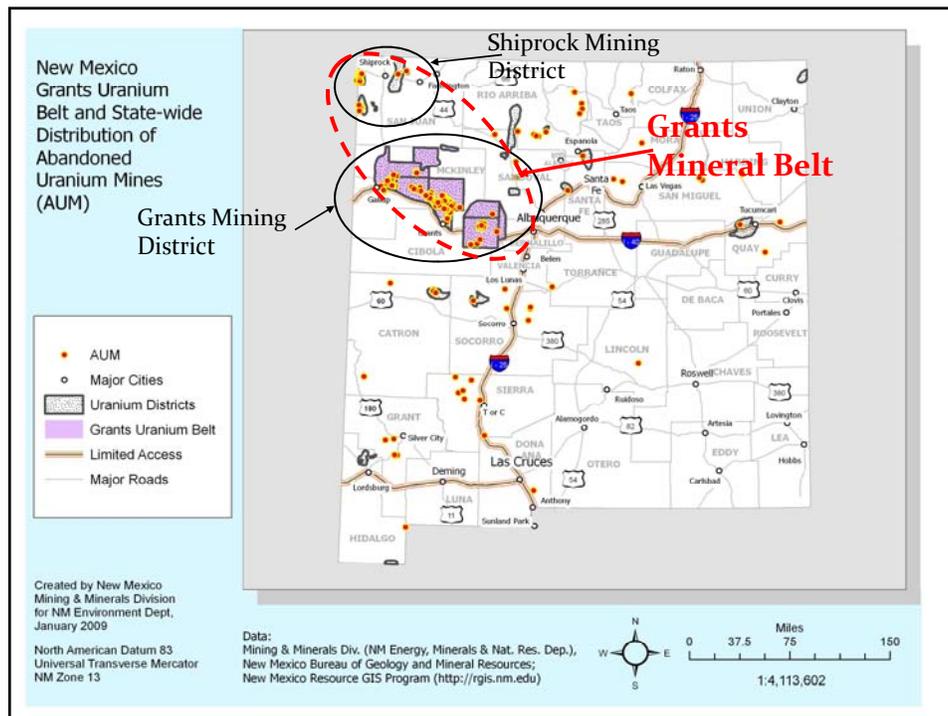
- Overview of the Grants Mining District 5-Year Plan
- NMED Activities
- Accomplishments
 - Mine Sites
 - Former Mill Sites
- On-going Activities
- Future Activities

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Overview of the Grants Mining District 5 Year Plan (August 2010)

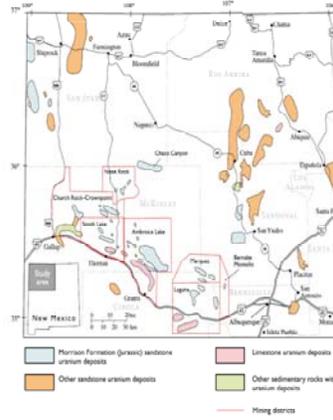
- The Grants Mining District was the major uranium-producing region in the United States from the 1950s through the 1990s.
- There are 97 abandoned or inactive uranium mines and five (5) former uranium mills are within the San Mateo Creek Watershed in Cibola and McKinley counties, on private and federal lands, as well as on Tribal lands, excluding the Navajo Nation.
- The Navajo Nation is working with EPA Region 9 under a separate five-year plan.

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Overview (Continued)

- The potential impacts from past mining and milling operations and releases of uranium mining waste to soil, air, surface water, groundwater, and cultural resources are largely unknown.



Map 4. Uranium potential in the San Juan Basin, New Mexico. From McCann and Clewett, 1992.

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Overview (continued)

- The Five-Year Grants Mining District Plan (August 2010) provides a multi-jurisdictional approach to address the legacy uranium impacts to the groundwater and surrounding surface.
- The plan identifies six objectives designed to comprehensively address legacy contamination of water resources, sediment and structures, and ensure urgent issues are acknowledged and mitigated.
 - **Assessment of Water Supply for Contamination**
 - **Assessment and Cleanup of Legacy Uranium Mines**
 - **Contaminant Assessment, Cleanup, and Long-Term Management of Former Uranium Milling Sites**
 - **Assessment and Cleanup of Contaminated Structures**
 - **Jackpile Mine on Laguna Pueblo**
 - **Public Health Surveillance**

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Summary of NMED Activities (1 of 2)

- Completed screening 67 assessments of mines to identify potential threats to human health and environment and prioritize resources.
- Conducted ground water sampling using existing wells to identify potential threats to human health and environment.
- Developed a generic field Investigation and soil/sediment sampling plan guidance

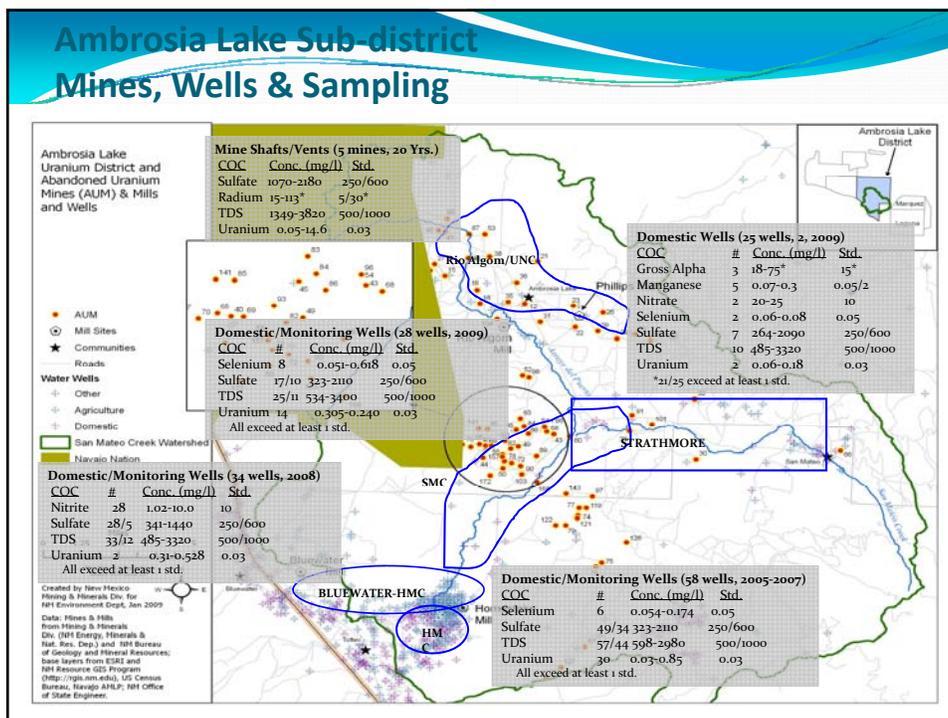
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Summary of NMED Activities (2 of 2)

- Provide review, and comment with specific emphasis on compliance with state regulations.
- Support for EPA removal actions (on-going)
- Development for implementation plans for in furtherance of the Five-Year Plan Objectives (on-going)

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Accomplishments (1 of 4)

Removal Actions:

- Completed the 5 removal actions, 1 pending (38 residences completed 27 pending)
 - Soil removal
 - Radon Abatement
- One family temporarily relocated.

Other Response Action

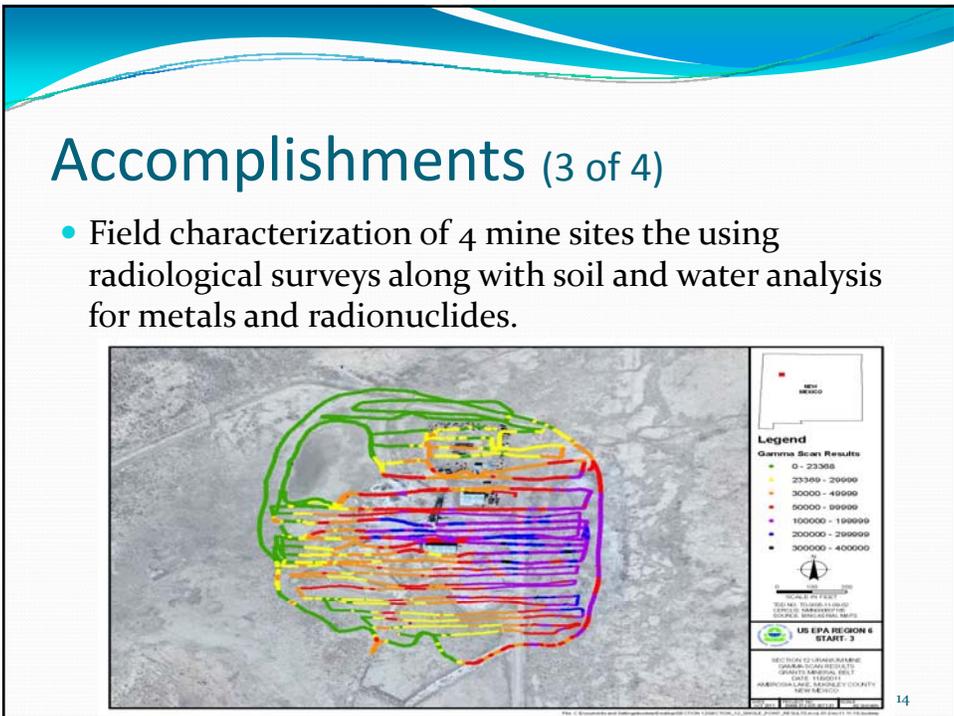
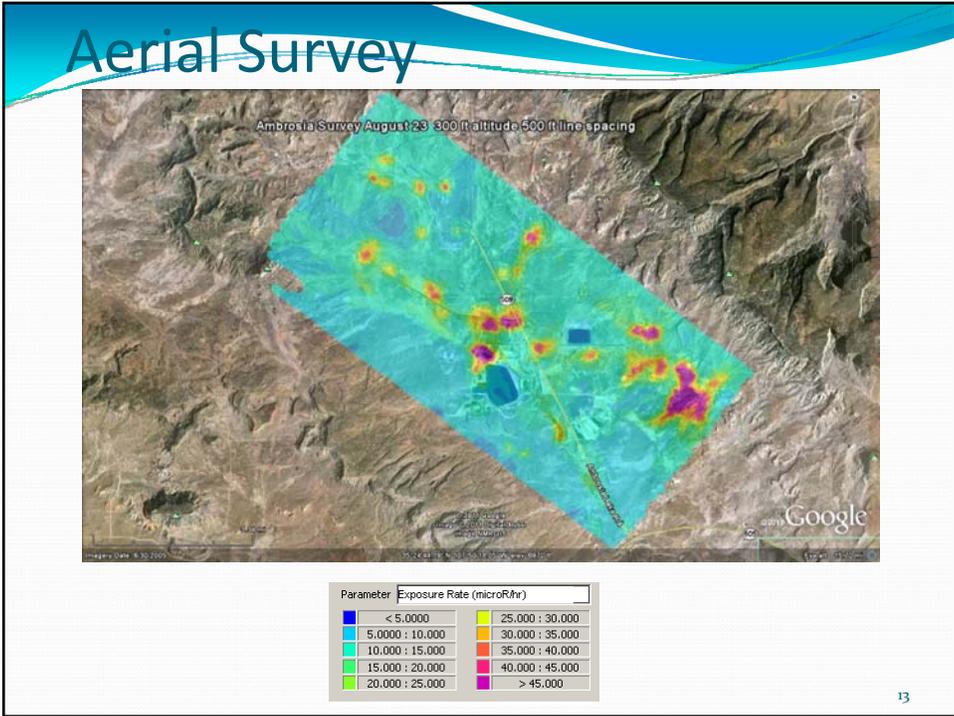
- EPA in consultation with Laguna Pueblo completed the site investigation of the Jackpile--proposed site to EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) of Superfund sites on March 15, 2012.

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Accomplishments (2 of 4)

- Serial radiological survey was conducted in the northwest portion of the Ambrosia sub-district, Poison Canyon area and in the San Mateo watershed basin north of the Homestake Mining Company site.

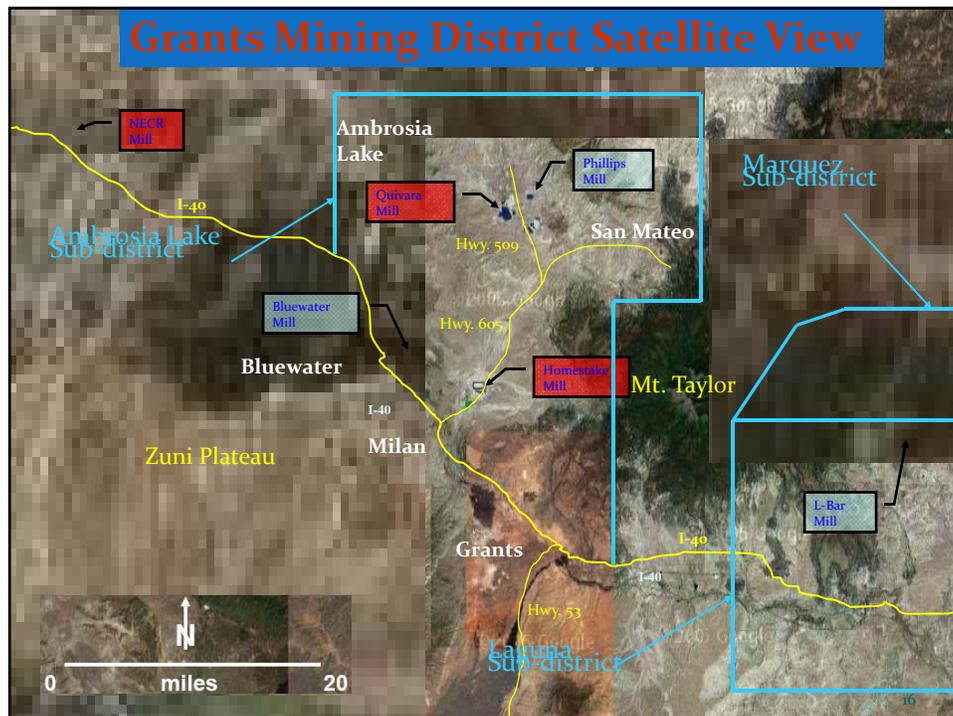
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Accomplishments (4 of 4)

- Collected data and began a risk assessment for the neighborhood adjacent to the Homestake Mining Superfund Site and reached agreement with the Homestake Mining Company to voluntarily mitigate radon gas in residences.
- An action memo was signed for General Electric to remove tailings from Northeast Churchrock for disposal at the United Nuclear Corporation Superfund Site.

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Former Mill Sites

Cleanups of the former mill are primarily being overseen by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) at two of the old mill sites (Ambrosia Lake – Rio Algom Mill and the Homestake Mining Company) and long-term stewardship is being performed by the Department of Energy (DOE) at three of the old mill sites (Bluewater Mill, Ambrosia Lake – Phillips Mill, and the L-Bar Mill).

- Activities performed by DOE
 - Installed 8 monitoring wells at Bluewater Mill site
 - Installed one monitoring well at Ambrosia Lake-Phillips Mill
 - Continuing ground water sampling at L-Bar

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On-going Activities

- Homestake Mill-Corrective Action Plan was issued on March 2012 for comment.
- North East Churchrock-Proposed Plan for the site was released for public comment on July 20, 2012.
- UNC Mill Superfund Site-NMED is in the process of beginning the 5 year review for the UNC Mill Superfund Site.

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Future Activities

Screening assessments

- Prioritize and further characterize based on screening assessments
 - 57 sites EPA Lead
 - 18 sites NMED lead
 - 17 sites BLM lead
 - 5 sites USFS Lead

Ground Water Characterization

- Develop strategies to evaluate ground water quality.

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Additional Information

- http://www.epa.gov/region6/6sf/newmexico/grants/nm_grants_index.html
- <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/gwb/NMED-GWQB-SOS-GrantsMiningDistrict.htm>

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