

LMS/DRM/41438-2.0

Defense-Related Uranium Mines Program Outreach Communications Plan Campaign 2, Navajo Nation

July 2026

Work performed under DOE contract number 89303020DLM000001
for the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management.

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Abbreviations

BIA	U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy
DRUM	Defense-Related Uranium Mines
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
LM	Office of Legacy Management
NAMLRD	Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department
NNEPA	Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency
STEM	science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
V&V	verification and validation

1.0 Scope

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM) developed this Outreach Communications Plan to broaden awareness, facilitate communication, and encourage community involvement as it relates to the Defense-Related Uranium Mines (DRUM) Program fieldwork on the Navajo Nation. Fieldwork specifically includes verification and validation (V&V) of former uranium mines, as described in the *Defense-Related Uranium Mines Verification and Validation Work Plan Campaign 2: Navajo Nation* (DOE 2026). Outreach communications described in this plan will occur before and during V&V fieldwork on the Navajo Nation to ensure that residents are aware of the planned activities. Partnerships will continue with other surrounding communities and the agencies responsible for these lands (such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency [NNEPA], the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA], and the Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Department [NAMLRD]).

2.0 Purpose

LM will use the community involvement activities outlined in this plan to ensure that communities in the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Nation partner agencies NAMLRD and NNEPA, and federal partner agencies (e.g., EPA, BIA) are informed and provided opportunities to be involved. This Outreach Communications Plan is part of the DRUM Program Campaign 2 and specifically addresses outreach related to fieldwork on the Navajo Nation. The DRUM Program includes three campaigns. Fieldwork for Campaign 2 on the Navajo Nation began in October 2022 and will continue through September 30, 2026, to assess DRUM sites on Native Nation lands. Interagency collaboration for Campaign 2 will be designed to augment ongoing abandoned uranium mine programs of partner agencies.

3.0 Strategy

LM will implement V&V activities, including proactive outreach activities, on all Native Nation lands as needed. LM has supported and plans to continue to support public awareness campaigns with the Navajo Nation through the following activities:

- Leading communication and outreach planning with the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, NAMLRD, and NNEPA. These partners will help identify and address the flow and timing of subsequent communications.
- Maintaining focus on collaboration with the Navajo Nation, NAMLRD, and NNEPA in developing outreach activities and observing proper communication protocols if new partners are identified during DRUM Program outreach.
- Informing and collaborating with the Navajo Nation about current and planned activities related to DRUM sites, including V&V activities.
- Developing a shared understanding about DRUM sites.

- Sharing access to DRUM site information, V&V reports, and other documents with the Navajo Nation.
- Promoting the LM public website as a source of information.

LM will continue to foster communication with the Navajo Nation by:

- Proactively seeking the Navajo Nation's participation in community outreach when appropriate, as specified by Navajo Nation leadership.
- Participating in regular meetings with the Navajo Nation.
- Participating in face-to-face and teleconference meetings when appropriate.
- Participating in regular triannual meetings between DOE, the Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Tribe.¹
- Participating in regular meetings with the Navajo Nation partner agencies NNEPA and NAMLRD and with federal agencies BIA and EPA.
- Attending Navajo Nation fairs and festivals.
- Providing presentations to schools and colleges.
- Publicizing V&V activities through the radio, newspaper, and posting fact sheets.
- Remaining open to input and suggestions from partner agencies.

4.0 Audience

The audience of these outreach activities will be Navajo Nation chapter house leadership and residents, especially those near DRUM sites, and partner agencies within the Navajo Nation.

5.0 Communication Activities

Table 1 presents communication activities and their expected results. While the activities listed are intended to be comprehensive in nature, communication activities will be determined by location and need. Each communication activity will be assessed based on its need and value for each chapter house. As such, not all communication activities listed in Table 1 may be conducted.

¹ There is no DRUM V&V fieldwork being performed on Hopi Tribe land.

Table 1. Communication Activities

Action	Desired Outcome	Anticipated Completion Date
Contact the Navajo Nation Office of the President and Vice President, NAMLRD, and NNEPA via email or phone	LM will communicate plans, solicit the Navajo Nation organizations' input on the communication process, and address any concerns with the proposed general plans. LM will communicate its desire for a collaborative outreach process and solicit the Navajo Nation's input on achieving appropriate timing, messaging, and identification of all partners. The Navajo Nation organizations will help guide the order and specific steps of this plan.	Initial communications were completed via letters issued by DOE in March 2022. Communications are ongoing as needed.
Maintain a DRUM Program and Navajo Nation contact list	The lists will be used in community outreach for Navajo Nation partners and NAMLRD to directly address concerns throughout the process.	Ongoing.
Participate in chapter house public meetings	The meetings will be an opportunity for public outreach to impacted Navajo Nation areas.	Before beginning V&V fieldwork in each area and as requested to provide status updates.
Participate in regular triannual meetings between DOE, the Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Tribe	Information will be shared on DRUM Program work, and feedback will be solicited on how to best participate and communicate with local Navajo Nation partners.	Updates on DRUM V&V fieldwork will be provided at meetings as necessary.
Participate in the Navajo Nation Community Outreach Network meetings	Announcements will be made during the meetings about the locations of V&V fieldwork.	As needed.
Schedule presentations with schools and colleges	Presentations will be given on DRUM fieldwork and Navajo Nation partnership, along with possible STEM outreach with Navajo Nation high school and college students.	As needed.
Include a representative from the Navajo Nation to provide Navajo language communications during V&V activities and at meetings and events	Information about the DRUM Program will be communicated in the Navajo language. Approximately 60%–70% of Navajo Nation residents communicate verbally in the Navajo language. A representative fluent in this dialect will be able to communicate effectively to residents.	During V&V fieldwork on the Navajo Nation.
Attend special events	Information booths on the DRUM Program and Navajo Nation partnership will be set up during fairs and festivals. These events will be conducted in coordination with LM's ongoing efforts on other projects.	As needed.
Continue to monitor the DRUM Program email inbox	Timely responses to inquiries about the DRUM Program will be ensured.	Ongoing.
Update the LM public website and social media	The LM public website and social media will include announcements communicating where DRUM teams are conducting V&V activities. This information will be shared with NAMLRD for inclusion on its social media, if desired.	As needed.

Table 1. Communication Activities (continued)

Action	Desired Outcome	Anticipated Completion Date
Radio communications	Public service announcements will share plans for DRUM V&V activities with local radio stations. Advertisements on local stations will notify residents of upcoming meetings and field efforts.	Ahead of chapter house meetings and as needed.
Newspaper notices	Possible earned media pitches to journalists and participation in local newspaper editorial board discussions will communicate why the DRUM Program is conducting V&V activities on the Navajo Nation.	Ahead of chapter house meetings and as needed.
Prepare and maintain a DRUM Program fact sheet specifically for Navajo Nation fieldwork	The fact sheet will communicate where and why V&V work is being performed. Field teams will distribute this information when encountering residents.	Updated at least annually. Distributed in advance of mobilization and as needed while conducting fieldwork.
Correcting inaccurate information	As part of LM's ongoing monitoring of the DRUM Program's mentions in the news, social media, and other media, LM will proactively correct inaccurate information regarding LM's mission and fieldwork at DRUM mine sites.	Ongoing.
Continue ongoing intergovernmental collaboration	LM will continue working with federal regulators on a consistent and unified message to share across channels and audiences.	Ongoing.

Note:

Not all of these communication activities will be conducted.

Abbreviation:

STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

Effective communication is critical for reaching potentially impacted residents, particularly those in remote locations. Written communication will be brief and include graphics where possible. LM's master narrative is included as Appendix A. The DRUM Program will communicate using several methods, including fact sheets, community events, radio advertisements, newspaper notifications, and meetings. These informational materials will address the Navajo Nation partners' concerns, as identified through chapter house meetings, quarterly meetings, and communication with Navajo Nation leadership. DRUM Program and Navajo Nation representative contact lists will also be made available.

6.0 References

DOE (U.S. Department of Energy), 2026. *Defense-Related Uranium Mines Verification and Validation Work Plan Campaign 2: Navajo Nation*, LMS/DRM/41156-1.0, Office of Legacy Management, March.

Appendix A

Master Narrative

Master Narrative

The following is the master narrative, which has been reviewed by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management's (LM's) leadership and is included in all site communications plans. Communications plans for specific sites include these messages, each tailored to the particular site. The message framework is consistent with LM's stated mission and goals and is intended to help LM articulate its mission and goals in a way that resonates with key audiences.

Stewardship

- LM is the caretaker of legacy sites that played a critical role in U.S. nuclear history. By supporting the Manhattan Project and additional nuclear weapons development, as well as experimental peacetime nuclear energy applications, legacy sites helped the United States win World War II and the Cold War.
- The expertise of LM's 80 federal employees and 500 contractor partners helps protect human health and the environment by maintaining over 100 sites in more than 30 states and territories, from Puerto Rico to Alaska.
- LM is the federal land manager and steward of cultural, historical, and natural resources at sites that have been successfully cleaned up and have remedies in place. LM works closely with federal, state, local, and Native nations governments to set clear expectations and monitor results to ensure public and environmental safety for generations to come.
- LM uses advancements in science and emerging technologies to efficiently maintain or improve the existing levels of protection at legacy sites.
- As a steward of taxpayer dollars, LM is steadfast in its commitment to conservatively managing its funds.

Environment

- Science drives LM's work, and LM is committed to protecting the environment. LM coordinates closely with federal, state, and local environmental and public health agencies to monitor the environmental impact of legacy sites through air, soil, and water testing, as needed.
- From wild onion and Indian paintbrush to monarch butterflies and bull elk, plants and wildlife are thriving at LM sites across the United States. Some locations have been transformed into nature preserves, wildlife refuges, and open spaces boasting hundreds of species in multiple habitats.
- LM continues to evaluate how potential environmental changes may impact how it should approach monitoring, inspections, and maintenance at legacy sites.

Health and Safety

- It is important to LM that members of the public have access to the information they need to be confident in the safety of legacy sites. That is why LM transparently shares information about the role legacy sites played in U.S. nuclear history, and LM is transparent about its long-term surveillance and maintenance work to prevent public exposure to hazardous waste.

- LM's site maintenance protocols are closely prescribed by regulatory agencies. LM shares the results of any testing performed with the public.
- It is important to remember that uranium and the radiation it emits are naturally occurring, and that individuals are exposed to radiation every day from sources like the sun, soil, and even the foods we eat.
- Remediation work has reduced radiation levels at many legacy sites to a lower level than individuals might experience in everyday life. These lower radiation levels mean that visiting public LM sites does not make individuals more likely to get cancer.

Community

- LM respects and honors community knowledge. LM only succeeds by partnering and consulting with Native nations, state and local governments, community organizations, and interested members of the public who know an area's history best.
- LM is investing in communities across the nation. Legacy sites are often returned to the community to be reused as playgrounds, dog parks, wildlife refuges, and other beneficial outdoor recreation spaces enjoyed by residents, local groups, and tourists.
- At some sites, LM is building state-of-the-art educational facilities for visitors of all ages to explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and to learn about DOE's role in U.S. nuclear history. LM is committed to STEM education for youth, the future stewards who will carry on its legacy.
- LM hosts thousands of people at legacy sites each year and regularly participates in public forums to share information and answer questions.
- LM engages with the communities it serves frequently and transparently through a wide range of channels and welcomes the public's feedback.
- LM is committed to being responsive, relevant, and reliable to earn the trust of all Americans.

History

- LM sites, including former uranium mines, are an important part of U.S. history. As former nuclear weapons research, production, and testing facilities, these sites helped win World War II and the Cold War.
- At the same time, LM cannot ignore the fact that operations conducted at these facilities left a legacy of hazardous radioactive and chemical waste and environmental contamination.
- LM is proud to fund pensions and medical and life insurance benefits for more than 7850 former weapons complex contract workers and their spouses.
- LM is committed to telling the U.S. nuclear story. Communicating the significant natural, cultural, and historical importance of these sites, as well as LM's work to effectively clean them up, is important to help ensure that any potential risks to human health and the environment are minimized and well understood.
- LM invites the public to learn more by visiting its interpretive centers and accessing its detailed electronic records database.