



Community Involvement Plan

Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site

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Section 1: Overview

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM) developed this Community Involvement Plan (CIP) to facilitate communication and encourage community involvement with residents around the Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site. LM will use the community involvement activities outlined in this plan to inform Halchita community members and provide them opportunities for meaningful engagement.

LM plans to support public awareness of the Mexican Hat site through the following activities:

-  Inform residents of projects through door-to-door notifications.
-  Host an annual community meeting and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) event.
-  Educate the public about site activities.
-  Provide public access to site information, reports, and other documents.
-  Promote using the LM website as a source of information.

LM will support communication with Halchita community stakeholders by:

-  Participating in regular meetings and door-to-door outreach with stakeholders.
-  Sharing information, site fact sheets, project information sheets, and other site information.
-  Being open to all input and suggestions.

LM used multiple information sources to develop this plan, including community interviews, site files, and 2020 census data, and made every effort to make sure the information in this CIP is accurate.

Section 2: Site Overview

2.1: History

The Mexican Hat site is the location of a former uranium-ore processing mill. Texas-Zinc Minerals Corporation built the Mexican Hat mill on land leased from the Navajo Nation and ran the facility from 1957 to 1963. Atlas Corporation bought the mill in 1963 and ran it until it closed in 1965. A sulfuric-acid manufacturing plant operated at the site from 1957 to 1970. Site control returned to the Navajo Nation after the lease ended in 1970.

Much of the uranium ore processed at the Mexican Hat site came from Utah's White Canyon area and had large amounts of copper sulfide and other sulfide minerals. The mill ground up, treated, and processed the ore and minerals to recover copper and uranium. During its operation, the mill processed 22 million tons of ore and produced 5,700 tons of uranium concentrate.

The Mexican Hat site also had radioactive material transported from the former Monument Valley, Arizona, Processing Site 15 miles south of Mexican Hat. The Monument Valley site is near Cane Valley, which was an active uranium mining area. Approximately 983,300 cubic yards of Monument Valley residual radioactive material — including the tailings (sandy waste material from milling), soils under and around the tailings, and other contaminated materials — were put on top of the preexisting Mexican Hat disposal cell that was under construction.

DOE finished surface remediation at the Mexican Hat site in 1995 and secured about 3.6 million cubic yards of residual radioactive material in the site's disposal cell while leaving the former mill office building and sewage lagoons intact. Once surface remediation was done, the roughly pentagonal-shaped, fenced-in disposal cell covered about 68 acres. The entire Mexican Hat site property is about 119 acres.

The site falls under federal regulatory guidance through Title I of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) of 1978, which regulates uranium mill tailings reclamation and long-term care. UMTRCA Title I addresses former uranium milling sites that were unlicensed and abandoned as of Jan. 1, 1978. The licensing agency is the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) or an Agreement State. The state of Utah is an Agreement State, but the Mexican Hat site is on Navajo Nation land, so the Navajo Nation has jurisdiction.

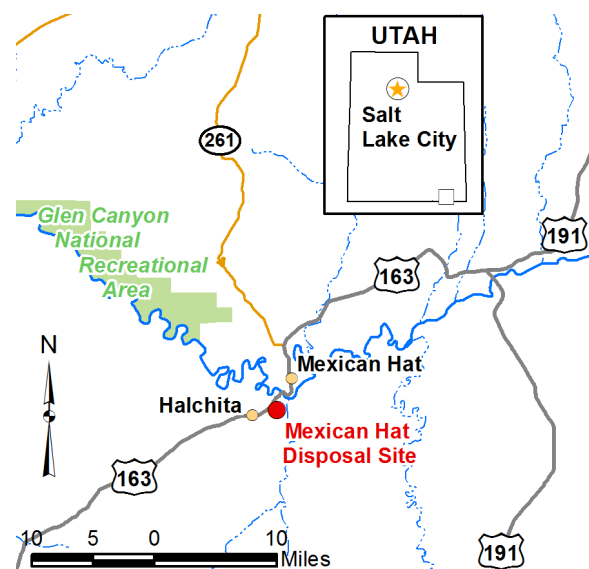
NRC issued a general license for custody and long-term care, including monitoring, maintenance, and emergency actions. Custody and long-term care make sure uranium and thorium mill tailings disposal sites are monitored so that the public and environment are protected after reclamation activities are finished. LM is responsible for Mexican Hat site custody and long-term care.

2.2: Site Description and Location

The Mexican Hat site is in San Juan County, Utah, and on the Navajo Nation, about 2 miles southwest of the town of Mexican Hat. Halchita — which means “red land” in Navajo — is a small Navajo community that is about a half mile southwest of the site. The site is very remote and located about 1 mile south of the San Juan River.

The site is on the Colorado Plateau, which covers about 114,000 square miles in Utah, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Major physical features in the area are the deeply entrenched San Juan River to the north and prominent Raplee Ridge to the northeast. Mexican Hat is named for a rock that looks like a hat on top of a spire.

The site's elevation is about 4,300 feet above sea level. Surface drainage from the site and the surrounding area feeds into the San Juan River. Two ephemeral, or temporary, drainages, North Arroyo and South Arroyo,



Location of the Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site.

border the site and discharge into Gypsum Creek. The drainages are somewhat narrow but deep. The terrain west of the site is like the terrain to the north and east. A ridge extending about 100 feet above the site borders the site on the south.

Section 3: Community Background

3.1: Community Profile

The community directly next to the Mexican Hat site is Halchita, Utah. Halchita is on the Navajo Nation and is within the governmental jurisdiction of the Oljato Chapter, a local Navajo Nation governmental entity. According to the 2020 census, Halchita has a population of 273 people living in 81 housing units. The average household size is 4.7 people.

The racial makeup is:

 100% are Native American (100% Navajo).

The age distribution is:

 31.1% are under 18 years old.

 68.9% are 18 years and older.

 14.4% are 65 years and older.

Halchita's median household income is \$17,188, and 41.9% of people live below poverty level.

The educational institutions serving the Halchita community are:

 Tse'biinidzizgai Elementary School.

 Monument Valley High School.

 Utah State University, Blanding, UT.

Educational achievement is:

 51.7% completed high school or equivalent.

 16.7% attended some college.

 8.3% completed an associate degree.

 0% completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

3.2: Community Involvement

Though DOE finished remedial action at the Mexican Hat site in September 1995, the Department's commitment to the site is ongoing. With its mission to ensure the protection of human health and the environment of impacted communities, LM stays involved with the Navajo Nation by participating in technical meetings, community open houses, and other outreach events. In-person meetings are opportunities for LM to talk with stakeholders, community members, and Tribal and federal partners and address their concerns about the disposal cell and site, technical studies done on behalf of Tribal agencies, and any potential community impacts.

Under a long-standing cooperative agreement, LM works with the Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation/Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Department to conduct long-term surveillance and maintenance at four sites on Navajo Nation (in Mexican Hat, Utah; Shiprock, New Mexico; and Monument Valley and Tuba City, Arizona) to keep the community and environment safe. LM also works with several Navajo Nation departments to protect cultural and biological resources.

In 2007, Congress directed DOE and other federal agencies — including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — to work collaboratively to address the legacy of uranium mines and former processing sites on the Navajo Nation.

The federal agencies developed the 2008-2012 Five-Year Plan, which was the federal government's first coordinated effort to address abandoned uranium mining on the Navajo Nation. A second 2014-2018 Five-Year Plan was updated to include a major objective to "support community outreach and information sharing." In this plan, the Community Outreach Network was established with the purpose of facilitating collaboration among the agencies conducting outreach and educational activities as mandated by the plan. In 2019, the six federal agencies and various Navajo Tribal agencies extended the agreement to what is now known as the Ten-Year Plan (2019-2029). The extended agreement between the agencies further emphasizes planning and coordinating outreach events to enhance community understanding of the work agencies are doing to address uranium contamination.

In June 2016, LM and LM's Support Partner opened an outreach office in Window Rock, Arizona. The Window Rock outreach office provides a place for the public to learn about LM and its sites on the Navajo Nation, the Navajo Nation Ten-Year Plan, and LM's work to address uranium issues on the Navajo Nation. The office provides community outreach and coordination support to LM and Navajo Nation and Hopi leadership, coordinates Tribal programs, and offers public affairs services throughout the Navajo Nation such as leading site tours, hosting site open houses, and going door to door to update community members about site activities.

3.3: Outreach Materials

LM provides informational materials at outreach events, all of which are also on LM's website:

-  Site fact sheets.
 -  Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site fact sheet.
 -  Monument Valley, Arizona, Processing Site fact sheet.
 -  Shiprock, New Mexico, Disposal Site fact sheet.
 -  Tuba City, Arizona, Disposal Site fact sheet.
 -  Working with the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe fact sheet.
 -  Window Rock, Arizona, Navajo Nation Community Outreach Network Office fact sheet.
-  Women of the Manhattan Project coloring book.
-  Colorado Plateau coloring book.
-  LM overview brochure.
-  LM Strategic Plan brochure.
-  LM video about work done on the Navajo Nation.
-  Window Rock, Arizona, Outreach Office map.
-  Uranium and Radiation on the Navajo Nation resource list.
-  LM Radiation Exposure Information Sheet.
-  LM children's brochure.
-  Community Outreach Network information sheet.

Many Mexican Hat site projects require specific project information sheets that detail the work being done. LM distributes and shares these information sheets with the Chapter House, local businesses, and residences near the site.

Section 4: Community Involvement Strategy

The goal of this strategy is to help support communication between LM and Halchita community members and provide them opportunities for meaningful involvement in Mexican Hat site activities. The strategy is based on community feedback from outreach events and Tribal partners, as well as conversations with community members during door-to-door visits.

4.1: Community Involvement Activities

1. Share information about current and proposed site activities.

Activity 1A: Provide information to Tribal and federal partners to include Oljato, Dennehotso, and Kayenta Chapter House officials.

Objective: Provide information about Mexican Hat site activities.

Method: LM will email and mail outreach materials to stakeholder database. Materials may include presentations, site information fact sheets, poster boards, and the LM website to provide detailed site information.

Timing: As needed.

Activity 1B: Hold community meetings.

Objective: LM site manager and staff will share in-depth information with Halchita community members about site activities and technical and engineering rationale for the activities.

Method: LM will host an annual community meeting at an appropriate location (e.g., Chapter House, recreation center, local high school). LM will offer mid-morning site tours with disposal cell location maps, graphic poster boards of the disposal cell construction, and information about site studies.

Timing: At stakeholders' request or once a year.

2. Perform timely outreach and share information with stakeholders during community meetings, site open houses, and site tours.

Activity 2A: Post informational flyers in public locations about upcoming community meetings, site open houses, and site tours.

Objective: Post information about community meetings, site open houses, and site tours.

Method: LM will email and mail meeting information to the Oljato, Dennehotso, and Kayenta Chapter House public information boards. LM will drop flyers off at the post office, local businesses, and Monument Valley and Mexican Hat Tribal and federal offices.

Timing: As needed.

Activity 2B: Notify stakeholders about events and projects.

Objective:	Share informational packets about upcoming community meetings, quarterly updates, site open houses, site tours, and projects.
Method:	LM will collect community members' mail and email addresses during community meetings, quarterly updates, and site open houses and tours to share information and announce upcoming community meetings, quarterly updates, site open houses, and site tours.
Timing:	Fifteen days before planned community meetings, quarterly updates, site open houses, site tours, and projects.

3. Schedule community meetings, site open houses, and site tours at times and dates that work for community members.

Activity 3A: Work with community leadership and members to schedule dates, times, and locations for community meetings, site open houses, and site tours.

Objective:	Determine the best time to have community meetings, site open houses, and site tours.
Method:	LM will ask community leaders and community members during door-to-door notifications and outreach events for the best times to have community meetings, site open houses, and site tours. LM will coordinate community meetings with scheduled events and community gatherings.
Timing:	Conduct meetings and informal polling in the community as needed.

4.2: Community Involvement Activities Time Frame Summary

Tools for sharing information

						
Verbal and written updates	Door-to-door notifications	Mailings	Flyers	Radio, newspapers, and newsletters	Social media	Local events
▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Presented at Chapter meetings, at least four times a year	One to two weeks before a project starts	Two weeks to one month before a project starts	As needed	15 to 30 days before a project starts	One day to one week before event takes place	Annually or when events take place



Public affairs staff visit with a Halchita community member about an upcoming aerial survey flight.

Section 5: Office of Legacy Management Regional Contacts

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