

Working with the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe

This fact sheet provides information about the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management working with the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe.

Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site



Monument Valley, Arizona, Processing Site



Shiprock, New Mexico, Disposal Site



Tuba City, Arizona, Disposal Site



The role of the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management Site

Uranium milling from the Cold War era created a legacy of contamination in the United States. Within the Navajo Nation there are four former uranium mill sites located in Mexican Hat, Utah; Monument Valley, Arizona; Shiprock, New Mexico; and Tuba City, Arizona. The mission of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM) is to protect human health and the environment, and to provide long-term stewardship. Stewardship activities include information sharing and outreach to tribal communities where the sites are located. LM conducts stewardship of the four former uranium milling sites within the Navajo Nation and evaluates and implements groundwater remedy technologies.

Outreach

LM learned that more information was needed about the four former milling sites and stewardship activities. LM responded by increasing its outreach efforts and holding community open houses, site tours, outreach events, and meetings.

LM routinely visits and presents to community members and leadership during chapter house meetings. Often times, when work is being performed, community members are informed through different avenues such as door-to-door notifications, emails, phone calls, public service announcements, paid advertising, and mailers. Community meetings are often hosted by LM when larger non-routine projects are scheduled. These updates inform agency leadership, stakeholders, community members, and chapter officials about the former mill sites and LM stewardship activities, such as groundwater monitoring and sampling.

LM has a cooperative agreement with the Navajo Nation Division of Natural Resources Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation/Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (AML/UMTRA) Department to assist with activities associated with the four Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act (UMTRCA) Navajo Nation sites. LM also has a cooperative agreement with the Hopi Tribe to assist with activities associated with the Tuba City site. The agreements include working collaboratively with the Navajo Nation AML/UMTRA Department and the Hopi UMTRA program on activities such as public relations; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education; and outreach activities.

Engaging Students

LM provides internships every year to help further the next generation of students interested in STEM. In the past, LM worked with Diné College students in the following communities:

- Monument Valley, Arizona
- Shiprock, New Mexico
- Tsaile, Arizona
- Tuba City, Arizona

Tribal college students helped LM with scientific studies on contamination from mill tailings. The students collected data on plant growth and conducted water and soil sampling. Students have been able to apply their knowledge and learn soil sampling techniques on a test bed that LM built in Monument Valley. This educational collaboration helps students learn technical field skills and in return they help LM by learning more about the important work being done at the four former mill sites located within the Navajo Nation. It is LM's hope that Navajo students will continue their studies and provide technical assistance and capacity building for the Navajo Nation.

In addition to working with college students, LM participates in festivals that promote STEM-based education. LM participates regularly in STEM-sation events that are held at various high schools on the Navajo Nation. LM also created a STEM with LM website that has activities for students and teachers. Some of the programs are specifically designed around the four former milling sites.

The Ten-Year Plan

In October 2007, the congressional House Natural Resources Committee and former Congressman Henry Waxman asked



Students conduct experiments during STEM events.



that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, DOE, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (Centers for Disease Control) address uranium issues on the Navajo Nation. Congress recognized that each of the federal agencies had specific responsibilities and should join their efforts to address the multiple issues related to site cleanup and stewardship, and to protect the health of tribal communities and their environment. Congress issued a directive to the federal agencies to create a Five-Year Plan to address uranium contamination within the Navajo Nation.

The hub of this coordinated multi-agency effort is the outreach office in Window Rock, Arizona. Two Navajo staff were hired to coordinate outreach and provide information and education at the four LM sites.

In February 2021, a Ten-Year Plan was finalized that built on previous plans. It is available at www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/documents/nnaum-ten-year-plan-2021-01.pdf.

Together the agencies work to address:

- Supporting community outreach and information sharing.
- Participating in multi-agency efforts to protect human health and the environment.

The Ten-Year Plan establishes specific goals the agencies, in collaboration with the Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe, work to achieve. LM actively participates in Ten-Year Plan activities such as coordinating community meetings, hosting conference calls, taking part in joint agency and tribal planning, and sharing information. These efforts are extremely

important for affected tribal communities where agency and tribal programs answer questions and provide information.

The six federal agencies involved in this effort are:

- U.S. Department of Energy
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- Indian Health Service
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (Center for Disease Control)

The tribal agencies involved in this effort are:

- Navajo Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation/Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Program
- Navajo Nation Division of Health Community Health Representative Program
- Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency
- Hopi Tribe

LM is dedicated to honoring its trust responsibilities to the Navajo Nation and Hopi Tribe while relying on valuable input and feedback from local tribal residents to do its work effectively.



CONTACT INFORMATION

**IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT THE SITE,
CONTACT 911**

**LM TOLL-FREE EMERGENCY HOTLINE:
(877) 695-5322**

For more information about upcoming events, please contact:

**Kayla L. Bia, Outreach Coordinator
Community Network Outreach Office
HWY 264 & Indian Route 12 - Suite 10
Window Rock, AZ 86515**

Office phone number:
(928) 810-2100

Email:
kayla.bia@lm.doe.gov

Websites detailing DOE stewardship at the four former uranium mill sites:

- Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site:
www.energy.gov/lm/mexican-hat-utah-disposal-site
- Monument Valley, Arizona, Processing Site:
www.energy.gov/lm/monument-valley-arizona-processing-site
- Shiprock, New Mexico, Disposal Site:
www.energy.gov/lm/shiprock-new-mexico-disposal-site
- Tuba City, Arizona, Disposal Site:
www.energy.gov/lm/tuba-city-arizona-disposal-site

Overview of the second Five-Year Plan:
www.energy.gov/lm/articles/second-five-year-plan-address-uranium-contamination-navajo-nation

For more information about LM activities, contact:

**U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
2597 Legacy Way
Grand Junction, CO 81503**

Email:
public.affairs@lm.doe.gov

DOE Office of Legacy Management
(970) 248-6070



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