



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Legacy
Management

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Community Involvement Plan

Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site



LMS/HAT/S33507

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SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

The U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management developed this Community Involvement Plan 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 the public about current and planned site-related activities.
- ✦ 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 — and put it on top of the pre-existing 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.

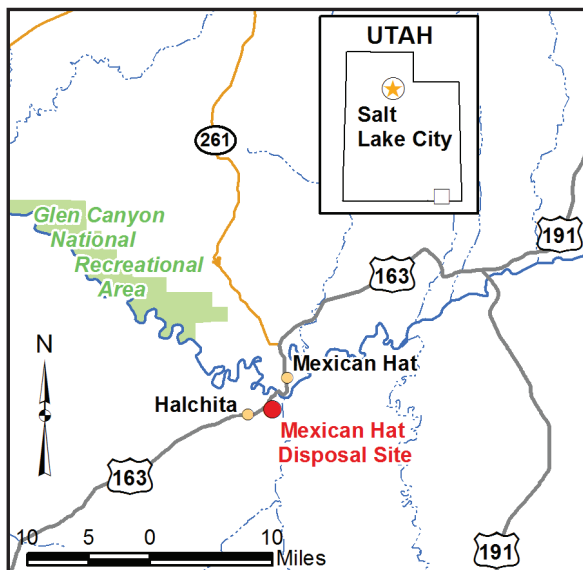


The site falls under federal regulatory guidance through Title I of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978, which regulates uranium mill tailings reclamation and long-term care. UMTRCA Title I addresses former uranium milling sites that were unlicensed as of Jan. 1, 1978, and abandoned. The licensing agency is the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission 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.



Location of the Mexican Hat, Utah, Disposal Site.

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, 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'bii'nidzizgai Elementary School.
- ✦ Monument Valley High School.
- ✦ Utah State University, Monument Valley.

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 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, NRC, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to collaborate with the Navajo Nation and address abandoned uranium mines and their impact on people and the environment.

Under the Congress-directed Five-Year Plan, LM created a Community Outreach Network to coordinate outreach work among tribal and federal agencies. LM also provided input for a Ten-year Plan, which was completed in 2022.

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 and 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.
- ✦ 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 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.	
<i>Activity 1A: Provide information to tribal and federal partners to include Oljato, Dennehotso, and Kayenta Chapter House officials.</i>	
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 LM's website to provide detailed site information.
Timing:	As needed.
<i>Activity 1B: Hold community meetings.</i>	
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.	
<i>Activity 2A: Post informational flyers in public locations about upcoming community meetings, site open houses, and site tours.</i>	
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						
 <p>Verbal and written updates</p> <p>▼</p> <p>Present at Mexican Hat community meetings, at least four times a year</p>	 <p>Door-to-door notifications</p> <p>▼</p> <p>One to two weeks before a project starts</p>	 <p>Mailings</p> <p>▼</p> <p>Two weeks to one month before a project starts</p>	 <p>Flyers</p> <p>▼</p> <p>As needed</p>	 <p>Radio, newspapers, and newsletters</p> <p>▼</p> <p>Up to one month before a project begins</p>	 <p>Social media</p> <p>▼</p> <p>One day to one week before an event takes place</p>	 <p>Local events</p> <p>▼</p> <p>Annually and/or when events take place</p>

4.3 COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

As part of DOE's ongoing efforts to reach out to the Halchita community and Cane Valley residents, it is important that federal, tribal, and LM support partner personnel interact with the public safely, such as during door-to-door visits to community homes or businesses. The following guidelines ensure safety is the number one priority when conducting outreach in the Mexican Hat and Halchita communities.

- ✦ Email and mail information packets to Oljato, Dennehotso, and Kayenta Chapter House leadership to notify community members and tribal members about DOE activities and answer questions about upcoming site work.
- ✦ Post outreach flyers at public places, including Chapter Houses and area businesses in Mexican Hat.
- ✦ Conduct door-to-door outreach with no fewer than two staff members, including one member fluent in Navajo.
- ✦ Exercise situational awareness before approaching homes; do not approach or enter if it doesn't seem safe.
- ✦ Record which homes staff contact, including date and time, the result of that contact, residents' questions or concerns, and any feedback gathered during door-to-door visits.
- ✦ Give the records to the public affairs manager and site lead for record keeping.



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

SECTION 5: OFFICE OF LEGACY MANAGEMENT REGIONAL CONTACTS

Site Manager	Angelita Denny U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management 2597 Legacy Way Grand Junction, CO 81503 (970) 248-6621
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Public Affairs Lead to the Navajo Nation LM Support Partner	Jennifer Grossheim Harris U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management 2597 Legacy Way Grand Junction, CO 81503 (970) 248-6281
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Community Outreach Network Coordinator and Public Affairs Specialist LM Support Partner	Shine Salt U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management Highway 264 and Indian Route 12, Suite 10 Window Rock, AZ 86515 (970) 810-2104

SECTION 5: OFFICE OF LEGACY MANAGEMENT REGIONAL CONTACTS

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