Abandoned Uranium Mines in Haystack Area of the Navajo Nation
August 4, 2014

Issue

EPA is conducting a Removal Site Evaluation at two priority mines (Haystack No. 1 and Section 24), and the adjacent Bibo Trespass mine. These mines have gamma measurements between 9-85 times backgrounds, and there are homes with a quarter mile.

Background

The mines are located in the Baca/Haystack chapter in the Eastern Agency of the Navajo Nation, near Prewitt, NM. The mines appear to have been reclaimed with dirt covering waste rock piles. The off reservation portions of the mines have faded warning signs and some fencing.

Mine	Years mined	Claim area (acres)	Ore produced (tons)	Land status	Highest gamma measurement (counts per minute)	Highest gamma measurement times background	Homes within ¼ mile of mine
Haystack No. 1	1951-81	70	191,248	Private, small portion of tribal allotment land	626,434	65	2 and church
Section 24 (Nan-A-Bah Vandever)	1952-57	28	24,638	Tribal allotment	594,083	84	3
Bibo Trespass	1956-61	22	3,736	Public Land Ordinance land	89,750	9	3

What we are doing

Due to the residents living within the a quarter mile of these abandoned uranium mines, EPA OSCs are conducting a Removal Site Evaluation August 11-21, with the support of ERT and START contractors. The Removal Site Evaluation will include a 99% gamma scan of the site and soil samples. EPA will also be evaluating new VIPER radiation monitoring equipment, and new tremble GPS units.

Next steps

EPA will issue a general notice letter to PRPs.

Contact: Linda Reeves 415-972-3445, reeves.linda@epa.gov

Faded sign warning of subsurface radiological hazards

Haystack No. 1