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Dept of Interior

1999 DEC -2 P 11: 38 May 16, 1999

DEPT. OF ENERGY
FOIA

DEC 02 1999 03

FOIA/PA Officer
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

OTHER: 2 HOURS SEARCH FREE, 100 FREE PAGES

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST

Pursuant 5 U.S.C. 552 and the Department of Interior's implementing regulations at 45 CFR Part 5, would respectfully request the following Bureau of Land Management (BLM) records:

Category 1

[All BLM records pertaining to consultation between the BLM and the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) regarding the Vanadium Corporation of America's uranium recovery facility at Hite, Utah (White Canyon Mining District). (See Attachment A.) Such consultation is documented in AEC records pertaining to the Hite tailings site. (See Attachment B, at 4., 10., and 11.)

Category 2

All other BLM records pertaining to the Hite, Utah, facility. AEC records indicate BLM's Hite facility file was sent to Washington from Salt Lake City, Utah.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sarah M. Fields

Sarah M. Fields

Enclosures: As Stated

99-05-21 P03:45 IN

N/A 99-073

Chris

FOIA/PA REQUEST

Case No: 1000-0074
Date Rec'd: 12-9-99
Action Off: 1601
Related Case: Referred by DOE

9912020003

VANADIUM CORPORATION OF AMERICA
White Canyon (Hite), Utah

Contract No. AT(05-1)-38 was entered into with Vanadium Corporation of America (VCA) on May 17, 1949, effective October 8, 1948, for a term extending through June 30, 1953. Amendments to the contract extended its term through December 31, 1953.

The AEC paid a negotiated price for the U_3O_8 in concentrate purchased under the contract.

Millfeed for the White Canyon mill consisted of copper-uranium ores from the White Canyon district of southeastern Utah, notably from the Happy Jack mine. Practically all of the ore fed to process during the term of the contract was purchased by the contractor from independent ore producers in the area. The remainder (less than one hundredth of one percent) was furnished by the contractor.

The White Canyon facility was located at Hite, in the southeastern Utah area where White Canyon intersects the Colorado River. It was essentially a pilot plant operation, processing an average of about 20 tons of ore per day (tpd) from August of 1949 until it was shut down in December of 1953. During that period the plant treated 26,358 tons of ore averaging 0.45% U_3O_8 . Recovery averaged 57 percent. All of the uranium concentrate produced in the plant was sold to the AEC.

The plant used an acid leach process, and the leach liquors were neutralized with excessive sodium carbonate. The resulting alumina sludge was removed and the liquor containing the uranium was then acidified to destroy the carbonate. With the addition of a small amount of caustic the uranium was precipitated as sodium diuranate.

Tables 1 and 2 present data on AEC purchases of U_3O_8 from VCA's White Canyon operation and mill production data for the period of the AEC contract.

Table 1 - AEC Purchases of U_3O_8 from Vanadium Corporation of America-White Canyon, UT

<u>Contract No.</u>	<u>Period (FY)</u>	<u>U_3O_8 (Lbs.)</u>	<u>Average Cost Per Lb. U_3O_8 (\$)</u>
AT(05-1)-38	1950 ^a -1953 ^b	128,145	13.95 ^c

a) First U_3O_8 delivered late CY 1949.

b) Last U_3O_8 delivered 12/53.

c) Average Fiscal Year costs ranged from \$11.45 to \$14.48.

Attachment A

T. M. 1/6 1999

A-81

A-82

Memorandum

TO: Robert Lowenstein, Director
Division of Licensing & Regulation

THRU: Lyall E. Johnson, Assistant Director for Materials Licensing
Donald A. Nussbaumer, Chief
Source & Special Nuclear Materials Branch

DATE: *3/27*

SUBJECT: STATUS REPORT ON URANIUM MILL TAILINGS AND HITE SITUATION

LR:DH

Attached as Appendixes A and B are chronological summaries of events concerning regulatory staff actions on the general uranium mill tailings situation and the Hite situation, respectively. As you know, these events are the result of requests by mill licensees for termination of their AEC licenses.

As noted under Item 24 of Appendix A, I phoned Dr. Harley, Director, Health and Safety Lab, NYOO, on December 11, 1963. He informed me that HASL hoped to complete their analytical work (in conjunction with the survey program conducted for us) within 4 to 6 weeks. He further informed me that he would send us some preliminary results within the next 10 days.

With regard to the general tailings problem it appears that future recommendations and developments will depend on:

1. A thorough evaluation of the HASL survey results;
2. A thorough evaluation of the report to be submitted by USPHS; and
3. Staff discussions concerning Items 1 and 2.

With regard to the Hite situation we are planning:

1. To meet again with the Department of Interior to discuss further their authority to require removal of the tailings.
2. To make a thorough evaluation of the material to be submitted by the USPHS;
3. Make recommendations based on our findings.

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PDR ADOCK 040****
C PDR

Attachment B To May 16, 1964

APPENDIX

Hite Tailings Matter

August 8, 1963

1. As a result of information obtained from the Division of Raw Materials in conjunction with the mill shut down matter, it was learned that Vanadium Corporation of America had operated a uranium mill from approximately 1949 until 1953 at Hite, Utah. DLR requested further information from the Division of Raw Materials and an investigation by the Division of Compliance to determine the facts of the matter. It was subsequently learned that an approximately 26,000 tons of ore had been processed by VCA at Hite and that the old tailings pile is to be inundated by Lake Powell.

August 29, 1963

2. VCA representatives located in New York were questioned about the Hite situation by Division of Compliance personnel.

October 23, 1963

3. Personnel of Region IV, Compliance, visited the Hite site to obtain samples of the pile and review the situation. VCA personnel at Shiprock, New Mexico, were also questioned at this time.


Letter was sent to Mr. Charles Stoddard, Director, Bureau of Land Management, requesting position of Land Management and informing the Bureau of our interest.

November 5, 1963

5. Similar letter sent to Mr. Gordon McCallum, USPHS.

November 7, 1963

6. A meeting with Mr. Eric Meyer, USGS ground water geologist was held to discuss possible future hydrological characteristics of the Hite site.

November 15, 1963

7. By letter, McCallum informed us that USPHS had a definite interest in the problem and would furnish us in the near future with a report outlining their position and reasons therefor.

November 1, 1963

3. The sample results of the uranium content of the Hite tailings were received by DLR. The uranium content in the tailings at Hite appears to be less than 0.05% based on the initial sampling.

November 21, 1963

9. Information Paper No. AEC-R-18/13 sent to the Commission.

November 21, 1963

10. A meeting was held with representatives of Land Management to discuss mutual interests in this problem. Apparently the case was being handled by the Salt Lake City area office and the file on the subject had been requested from Salt Lake. We were informed that the file would have to be obtained and reviewed prior to further action on the part of Land Management.

Land Management was contacted by phone to inquire of possible developments and to arrange a meeting. We were informed that they had not completely reviewed the situation but would contact us in the near future. They also informed us that the lease date of the site had been renewed (now expires May 31, 1964) in order to permit VCA "to remove any valuable property remaining on the site".

December 9, 1963

12. By letter to McCallum, PRS, dated December 9, 1963, we indicated we were looking forward to receiving their report on Hite tailings.

December 10, 1963

13. We received uranium and thorium sample results of the Hite tailings from Don Walker. The average radium content in the tailings is lower by a factor of two than the value DLR had used in our estimated radium-226 concentrations in Lake Powell.