

TO: Paul Lehman

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DOE

NEWS

CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE TAILINGS CLEANUP AT TUBA CITY

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Tribe will hold a closing ceremony to commemorate completion of remedial action on the tailings pile at the inactive Rare Metals uranium processing site located six miles east of Tuba City, Arizona. The public is invited to attend the May 8 closing ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony will be representatives of the Navajo Nation, the Hopi Tribe, DOE Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and the DOE's Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action (UMTRA) Project Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The ceremony will commence at 10:30 a.m. (Mountain Daylight Time) at the tailings site.

The cleanup of tailings at the Tuba City site was conducted in two phases. Phase I included the demolition of the main mill building and other site preparation activities. This phase was completed in 1986.

Phase II cleanup, which consisted of stabilizing the contaminated materials on the site, began in 1988. It involved the consolidation of tailings and contaminated materials in a single pile. The pile was covered with a compacted soil layer to reduce water infiltration and control radon emanation, and a rock layer to protect against erosion. Disturbed areas around the pile were backfilled with uncontaminated soil, recontoured, and revegetated. Phase II cleanup was completed in early 1990.

In a follow-up action, the DOE will be evaluating contamination found in the groundwater beneath the Tuba City tailings site. Groundwater protection standards have been proposed for the UMTRA Project by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Final standards, anticipated later this year, will be used to address groundwater contamination at the site.

The Tuba City cleanup is being jointly administered by the DOE, the Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Tribe through a Cooperative Agreement signed in 1985. The cleanup work was performed by Blue Eyes Fencing and Crystal Creek Construction, Inc., under the direction of MK-Ferguson Company, the DOE's Remedial Action Contractor for the UMTRA Project.

The Tuba City site is one of four sites on Indian Lands that has been or is being addressed under the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978 (UMTRCA). Nationwide, 24 sites are included in the UMTRA Project. Remedial action has been completed at eight sites.

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