

DATE: September 21, 1979

TO: Al Topp, EID Radiation Protection Section

9/21/79

FROM: David G. Boyer, Water Pollution Control Section

SUBJECT: Visit to Grace Nuclear Site #3, Socorro County.

On August 28, 1979, while performing field work for the Surface Impoundment Assessment, Dennis McQuillan and myself visited the inactive Grace Nuclear Site located in Socorro County, about 20 miles northwest of Magdalena in SE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4 Section 13, Township 1 North, Range 6 West. The site has been inactive for several years and mineral rights have been leased by another mining company. The land owner, a Mr. Barty Henderson, who acts as caretaker, lives at "Hook Ranch" about a mile southwest of the mining site. Mr. Henderson was not at the ranch the day of our visit, but his Granddaughter reluctantly agreed to our visit after presentation of our State credentials together with an explanation of our authority. She explained that attorneys for the new leasee had ordered that no one be allowed upon the leased property. We agreed to close all gates and return to the ranch and report what we found after the visit.

At the site, ore extraction had been performed at the base of a small hill. Numerous pits several feet in width and 10-20 feet long had excavated; no waste material was observed in them. Three to four open shallow boreholes about 6-8 inches in diameter had been drilled in unconsolidated sediments. A small (10' x 16') concrete-floored leach pad was seen with a pile of ore still perched on it and a concrete-sided pit (about 4' x 4') was nearby. A shallow horizontal shaft dug into the cliff face was signed "Explosives, Keep Out" but the actual presence of explosives is not known.

Springs and an intermittent stream indicate that groundwater is near or at the surface in the site vicinity. Because of the shallowness of groundwater at the site, the good quality of water as evidenced by its use at the Hook Ranch, and because of the potential hazard of uranium ores, the Grace Nuclear site was given a score of 27 out of a possible 29 in the surface impoundment assessment. This high rating indicates a high potential for groundwater contamination at the site. Other hazards, as listed above, include open boreholes and the possible presence of explosives.

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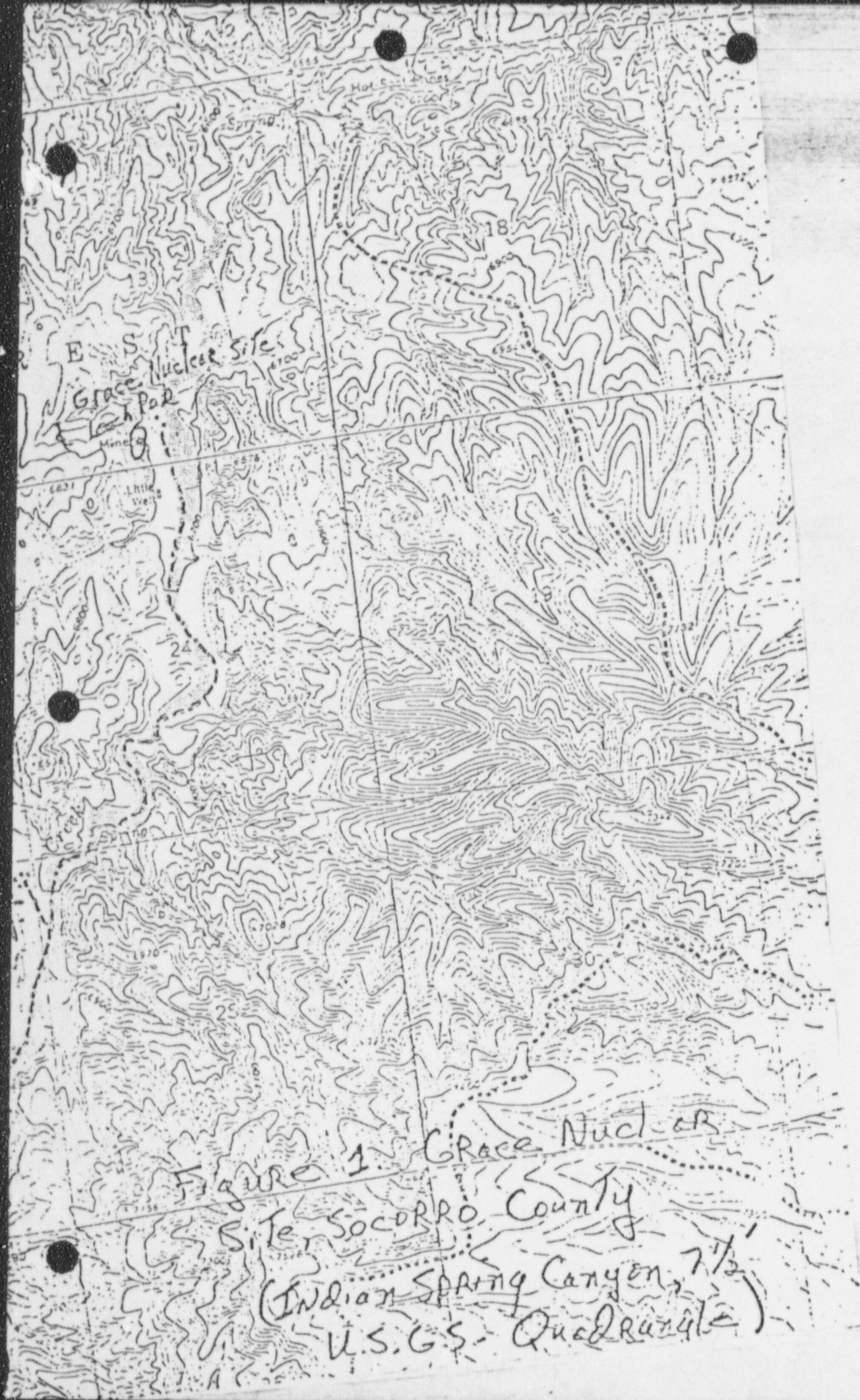


Figure 1. Grace Nuclear
Site, Socorro County
(Indian Spring Canyon, 7 1/2
U.S.G.S. Quadrangle)



STATE OF NEW MEXICO

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT DIVISION
RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL LICENSE

License number NM-GRA-UL-00 is amended to become

License Number NM-GRA-UL-01

Michael P. Grace
c/o William Condren
Attorney at Law
9 West 57th Street
New York, New York 10019

The subject license is amended to add the following:

18. The expiration date of this license is hereby extended from March 31, 1981 to September 30, 1981.

For the New Mexico HED Environmental Improvement Division

Date March 27, 1981

By

for Gerald W. Stewart, Program Manager
Uranium Licensing Section