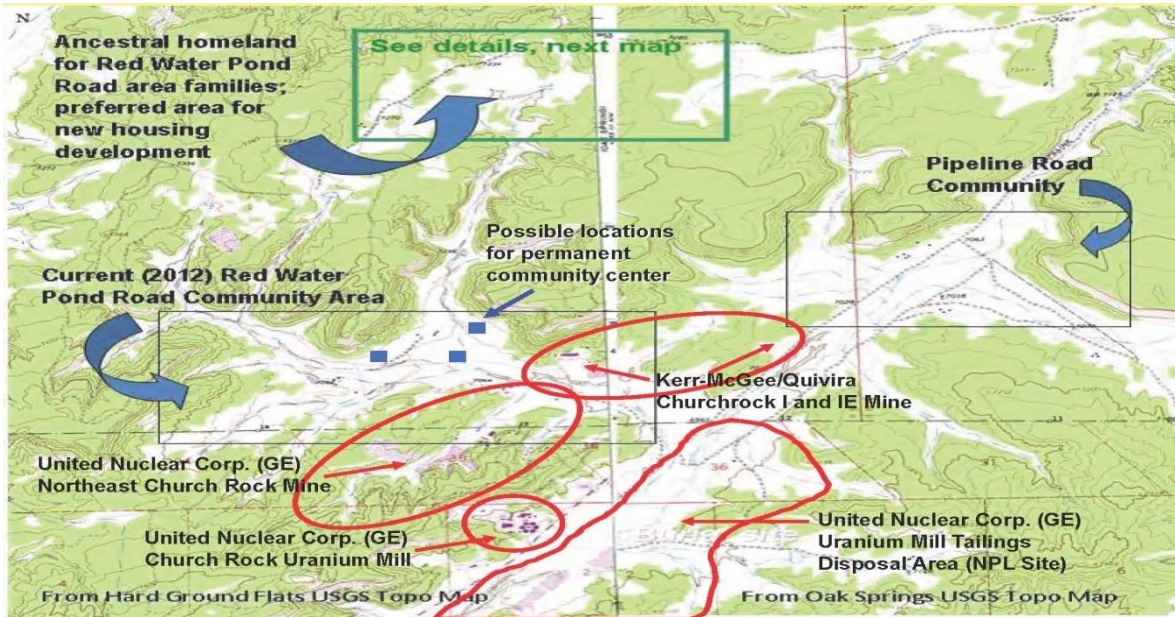


# URANIUM CONTAMINATION IN NEW MEXICO



- ❖ Groundwater is New Mexico's most important resource - according to the New Mexico Environment Department, 80% of New Mexicans get their drinking water from groundwater sources.
- ❖ The New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division estimates that more than 250 uranium mines operated throughout New Mexico, nearly all of which contributed to groundwater contamination, and 137 of which have no record of any reclamation. Additionally, the Navajo Nation contains 521 abandoned uranium mines.
- ❖ Abandoned uranium mines and mills also contribute to tens of thousands of acres of contaminated soil.
- ❖ Living within a mile of uranium mine and/or mill waste has been shown to result in a range of adverse health effects including cancer, kidney disease, hypertension, heart disease and autoimmune dysfunction.

The Red Water Pond Road Community is located within 1/2 mile of three Superfund sites: the NE Churchrock Mine, the Quivira/Kerr McGee Mine, and the United Nuclear Corporation Churchrock Mill. (see above map) The Red Water Pond Road Community is representative of many communities impacted by uranium mining and milling in New Mexico.

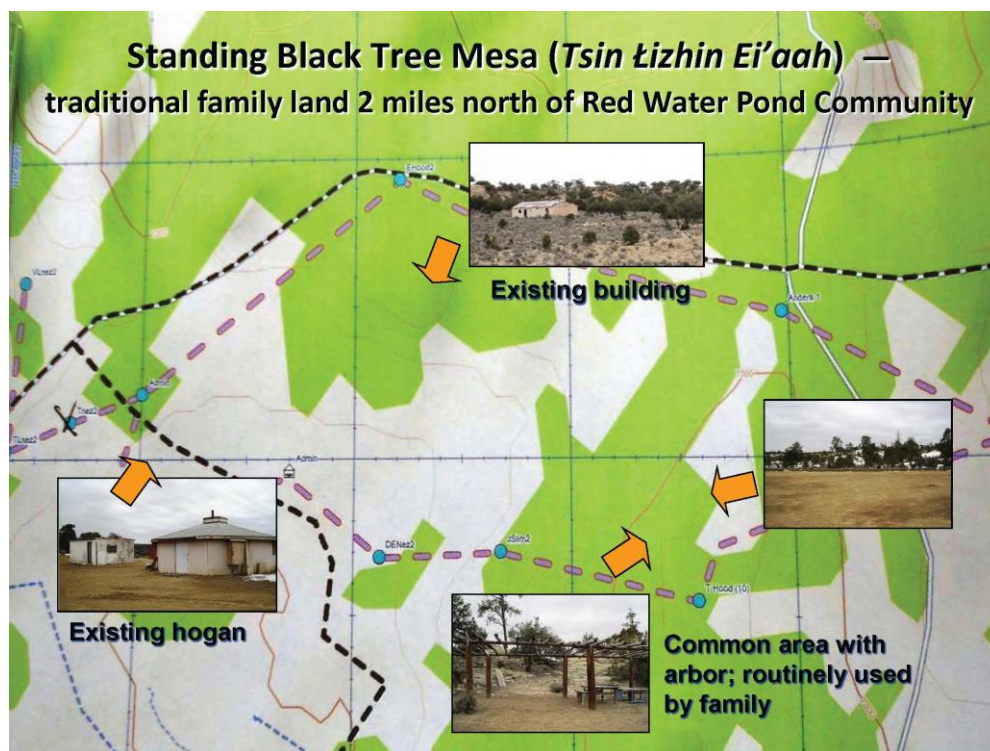


- ❖ Despite several removal actions, residents in the Red Water Pond Road Community continue to be exposed to unsafe levels of radiation and toxic heavy metals.

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- ❖ Regulatory agencies have not required responsible parties to conduct any groundwater remediation at either of the mine sites and only limited groundwater remediation at the Churchrock Mill.
- ❖ Background radium concentration in the Red Water Pond Road Community is 1 picocurie/gram ("pC/g") of soil.
- ❖ EPA has set the remediation concentration for radium at both Northeast Churchrock Mine and Quivira Mine is 2.24 pC/g, more than double background concentrations.
- ❖ EPA decided that waste from the NE Churchrock Mine will be consolidated with mill tailings at the UNC Churchrock Mill, rather than being disposed of away from the community.
- ❖ This final removal plan may not begin until 2020, because waste consolidation requires Nuclear Regulatory Commission action.
- ❖ EPA has not approved a final removal plan for the Quivira Mine waste and has not identified a final disposal site.
- ❖ Quivira Mine 2010 initial remediation plan required a permanent, paved, road through the Red Water Pond Road Community by 2015. No road has yet been built.



*Maps from Southwest Research and Information Center  
October 2015*

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