

Mt. Taylor Mine Fact Sheet

Mt. Taylor Mine was operated by Gulf Mineral Resource Company from 1980-1985 and by Chevron Resources Company from 1985-1990, before the mine ceased production altogether.

The mine is now owned by Rio Grande Resources Corporation (RGR), a subsidiary of General Atomics Corporation.

Mine owners have requested 3 stand-by periods since the New Mexico Mining Act was enacted in 1993. RGR applied for its third standby permit revision in 2010.

MASE appealed the 2010 stand-by permit revision that was granted by the Mining & Minerals Division (MMD), based on MMD's failure to allow meaningful public participation. A New Mexico district court agreed and ordered MMD to conduct further public hearings. A new public hearing was held in May 2015.

An environmental baseline study of the Mt. Taylor Project Area was performed in 1974 by the NM Environmental Institute.

Under New Mexico mining law, mine reclamation is not mandated until a mine closes. A mining company can delay the start of expensive reclamation activities by requesting multiple stand-by periods.

MASE is concerned about the spread of contamination during prolonged stand-by periods from radioactive and toxic waste rock stockpiled at the mine site and from ground water mixing in the open mine shaft.

Mining companies generally claim that the uranium market will not support the costs of mining operation when they request to go on stand-by. This means that some mining companies may take short-cuts to lower their reclamation expenses if a downturn in the uranium market forces them to close.

In the meantime, wind and water can carry exposed uranium in dissolved or particulate forms great distances from a mine site, putting our public health and water supplies at risk during mining operations and prolonged stand-by periods.

MMD could require interim reclamation and monitoring until active reclamation begins.

MMD can also revise the mining company's financial bond to assure that all required reclamation activities will be completed.

Many other mines in the Grants Mining District remain un-reclaimed to this day. Other mines, such as the Jackpile Mine, have yet to address continuing soil, surface water and groundwater contamination.



Mt Taylor is a Zombie mine - it is not operating and it is not being cleaned up.

- Mine operated for only 8 years and stopped in 1990.
- Mine has neither produced uranium nor reclaimed since then.
- Rio Grande Resources/General Atomic's predictions that the international uranium market will improve ignores the readily available information that current uranium production will satisfy demand for years, possibly decades.
- NM Mining and Minerals Division must consider the fact that the only economically viable activity at the Mt Taylor Mine during the period of standby is reclamation activities.
- Cleaning up uranium tailings means jobs in our communities.
- Economic viability is the standard by which the NM Mining and Minerals Division determines whether a mine may actually resume production during the standby period, or whether the operator is just seeking to avoid reclamation. Here, the mine is clearly not economically viable, so reclamation should begin.

Environmental Protections

- Rio Grande Resources has received Standby Permits since 1990 and has not started reclamation.
- Waste piles, ore pile, evaporation lagoons, and mine shafts have not been permanently reclaimed.
- NM Mining and Minerals Division has approved a Standby Permit despite documented groundwater contamination.
- Rio Grande Resources has postponed cleanup by continuing to request Standby Permits including its most recent request in 2014 for their final Standby Permit and at the same time a New Standby Permit - Return to Operations.
- Standby Permits allow RGR to postpone cleanup and reclamation making the pollution and contamination worse and depriving the community of the only economic development opportunity the mine will have to offer for years and perhaps ever.
- All levels of government in the United States are responsible under the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) Treaty to clean up radioactive sites as soon as possible.

Sacred Sites

- Mount Taylor was permanently listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties by the Cultural Properties Review Committee on June 5, 2009.
- Significant and irreparable cultural and religious damages have resulted from the failure of the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department to consult with the nineteen Pueblos, and other affected tribes prior to determine probable impacts to regional groundwater, the La Jara and San Mateo Creek drainage areas, and cultural properties within the Acoma Cultural Province resulting from exploratory drilling and past uranium mining.
- The All Indian Pueblo Council declares the land around Mt. Taylor, within the Acoma Cultural Province, unsuitable for mining activities due to its widespread cultural significance as a sacred site by all regional Tribes, including the nineteen Pueblos and the unique value of the area's hydrologic resources to northwestern New Mexico.
- We advocate for changes to the 1872 Mining Law to recognize and protect sites sacred to indigenous communities throughout the United States and its territories, as well as environmental health and the well-being of all affected communities.