In 2016, the Navajo Nation and the United States entered into a $13.2 million settlement called the Phase 1 Settlement. The Phase 1 Settlement included one trust account, the Phase 1 Trust, and was managed by an independent trustee, with USEPA and NNEPA oversight. This settlement provided funds to assess 16 priority mines on the Navajo Nation, including six in the Northern AUM Region. In 2015, assessment work began at these six priority mines Oak124/Oak125, Alongo Mines, NA-0904, NA-0928, Barton 3, and Tsosie 1. The Removal Site Evaluation reports, which provide information needed to determine the extent of contamination at these mines, were completed in 2018.

In 2015, the Navajo Nation and the United States entered into a historic legal settlement agreement with Cyprus Amax Minerals Company and Western Nuclear, Inc., two companies owned by Freeport-McMoRan. The settlement funds the assessment and cleanup of 94 abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation, including 82 mines in the Northern AUM Region. This settlement addresses almost 20% of the abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation. The mines are located in the following chapters: Cove, Red Valley, Shiprock, Tse'ecnospos, Tolikan (Northern AUM Region), Demnehoto, Kayenta, Mexican Water, Oljato (North Central AUM Region), Chichinbito (Central AUM Region), and Smith Lake (Eastern AUM Region).

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In 2018-2019, USEPA conducted RSEs at 33 mines and nearby areas. This work involved radiation measurements and collecting laboratory samples. The results will be used in EE/CA documents to help decide how the sites are cleaned up.

In 2014, the United States entered into a historic legal settlement that provides almost $1 billion to investigate and clean up approximately 50 AUMs on or near the Navajo Nation that were operated by Kerr-McGee Corporation and its successor, Tronox. 32 mines in the Cove/ Lukachukai/Round Rock area and two mines are in the Tse Tah area in the Northern AUM Region.

DANGER

Steps to keep yourself safe:

• Stay away from abandoned mines and mills
• Find out if your home is a contaminated structure
• Use regulated water for human needs
• Never use untreated water for human needs—even if it looks ok
• Use good water hauling practices to keep your water clean
• Get regular cancer screenings, like pap tests, mammograms, colonoscopies, and other cancer screenings
• Reduce Your Contact with Uranium and Radiation

For More Information

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USEPA Navajo Abandoned Uranium Mine website: www.epa.gov/navajo-nation-uranium-cleanup

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In 2017, USEPA completed construction activities to stop surface erosion at the former Cove Transfer Station #1 site that used to stage mining materials for transfer. The transfer station is located in the Cove Chapter on the Navajo Nation in eastern Arizona.

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COVE TRANSFER STATION

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COVE MESA V HAUL SHAF BARRICADE

USEPA and the Navajo Nation were concerned that unrestricted access to Mesa V poses risk to the public from radon gas released into the environment from exposed uranium ore and waste. In 2019, USEPA, in partnership with the Navajo Nation, implemented a new flat top barricade around the opening of the Mesa V Haul Shaft. The number of access points to the Mesa V Haul Shaft has been reduced from two to one opening used by the mining company to transport uranium ore from the mine site on top of the Mesa V haul tracks at the opening below.