

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Now that LMMD is on the NPL, EPA will work through the Superfund process. The Superfund Process figure (above) shows each step. Once a site is placed on the NPL, further investigation into the problems at the site and the best way to address them is required. This is called a remedial investigation and a feasibility study. The remedial investigation usually involves gathering and analyzing soil, surface water, groundwater, and waste samples from locations throughout the site and near the site borders. The remedial investigation also involves assessing risks posed by the site to people and the environment. At LMMD, the remedial investigation will include evaluating fund lead mines, soil, water, and haul and drill roads. This will be combined with existing information and data from other mines within the study area to form a comprehensive assessment of the site.

The analysis of potential treatment methods or “cleanup alternatives” is called the feasibility study. During the feasibility study, the advantages and disadvantages of each cleanup method are explored. EPA is committed to involving the communities in its cleanup process as outlined below.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

EPA organizes its outreach efforts by developing a community involvement plan. This plan identifies community issues, concerns, preferences, and how EPA will engage the community in the cleanup process. EPA will conduct interviews with various community members to prepare the community involvement plan starting in Spring 2024. Community member input will be used to share information about the site cleanup and investigation progress, which may include meetings, fact sheets, public notices, reports, and other means of communication and involvement.

For More Information

Elsa Johnson
Environmental Protection Specialist
EPA Region 9
(415) 947-3552
johnson.elsa@epa.gov

Evan Lloyd
Remedial Project Manager
EPA Region 9
(831) 498-8924
lloyd.evan@epa.gov

Kenyon Larsen
Remedial Project Manager
EPA Region 9
(415) 914-4213
larsen.kenyon@epa.gov

Lee Anna Martinez-Silversmith
Senior Remedial Project Manager
Navajo Nation EPA
(928) 551-2360
lamartinez@navajo-nsn.gov

Online Resources:

Superfund Site Information: www.epa.gov/superfund/lukachukai
Superfund Brochure: <https://semsub.epa.gov/work/HQ/175197.pdf>



Lukachukai Mountains Mining District

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA • July 2025

Lukachukai Mountains Mining District is now a Superfund Site

BACKGROUND

The Lukachukai Mountains Mining District (LMMD) site is located primarily in the Cove, Round Rock, and Lukachukai Chapters of the Navajo Nation in northeastern Arizona. The site includes a hundred mine waste piles from former mines. Past uranium and vanadium mining in the Lukachukai Mountains created waste piles contaminated with radium-226, uranium, and other heavy metals. Waste from these piles has migrated downstream in washes and may have impacted groundwater and continue to impact surface water. Past ore hauling activities may have spread contamination along miles of mountainous haul roads.

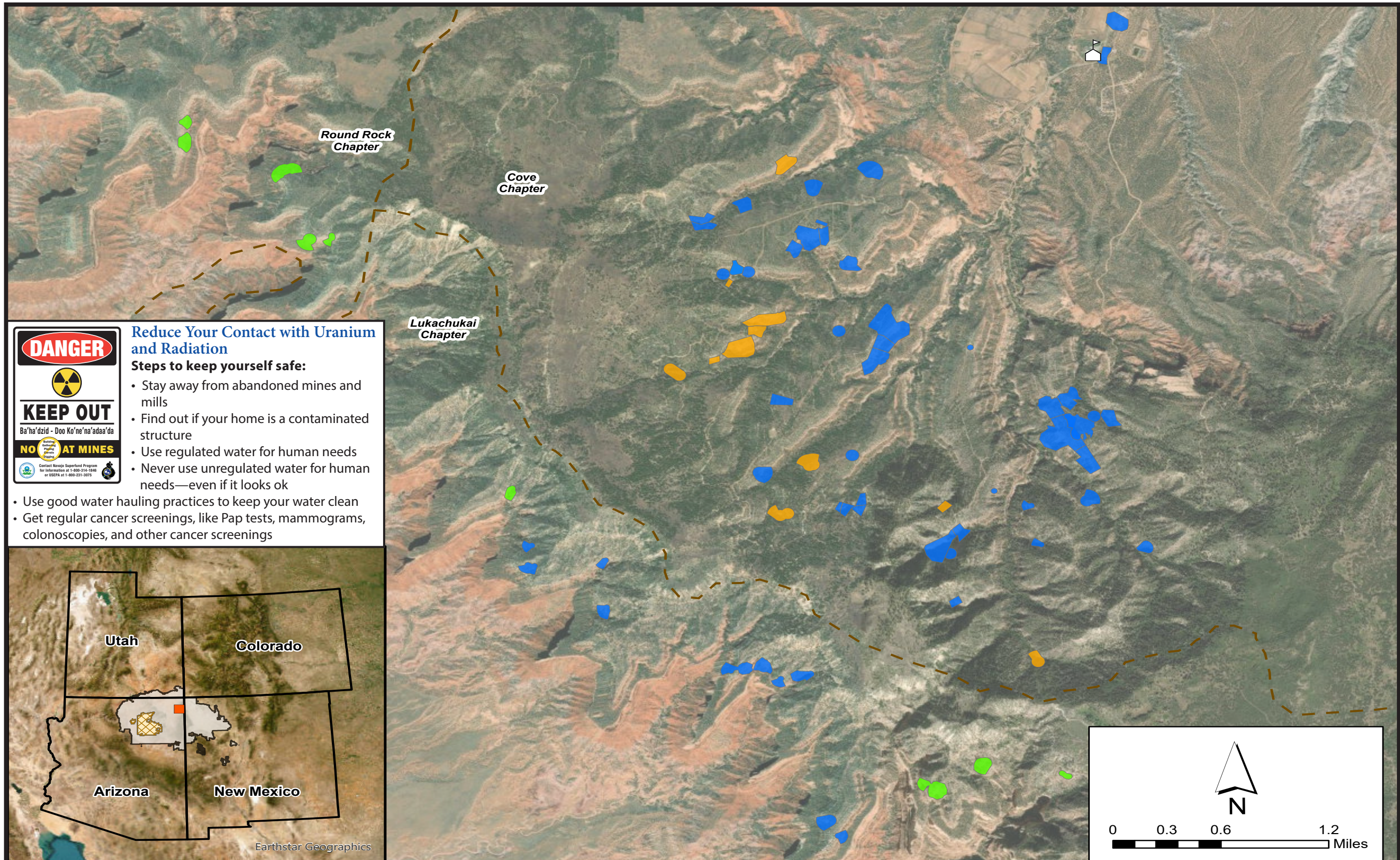
Many Navajo families reside on the Lukachukai Mountains. The mountain is used for livestock grazing, recreation, and hunting, and it provides medicinal plants for traditional ceremonial uses. The mountains provide habitat for several sensitive species, including the federally threatened Mexican spotted owl.

LMMD was proposed for placement on the National Priorities List (NPL), in March 2023. The NPL is a list of sites often referred to as "Superfund sites," that require investigation and cleanup of hazardous releases, and is used by the federal government to prioritize funding for this work. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund program identifies sites that may pose actual or potential threats to public health or the environment from contamination in groundwater, surface water, soil, and air. Placing a site on the NPL allows EPA to use additional federal resources to conduct cleanup activities and require potentially responsible parties to conduct or fund the required work.

EPA received a letter from the Navajo Nation President in June 2023 in support of placing LMMD on the NPL. As of March 7, 2024, LMMD is officially on the NPL.



Lukachukai Mountains









Reduce Your Contact with Uranium and Radiation

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 unregulated 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



Earthstar Geographics

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|---|--|
|  Tronox Incorporated |  Navajo Nation Boundary |
|  Cyprus Amax |  Navajo Nation Chapter Boundary |
|  Fund Lead |  Cove Day School |

Abandoned Uranium Mines in the Lukachukai Mountains Mining District