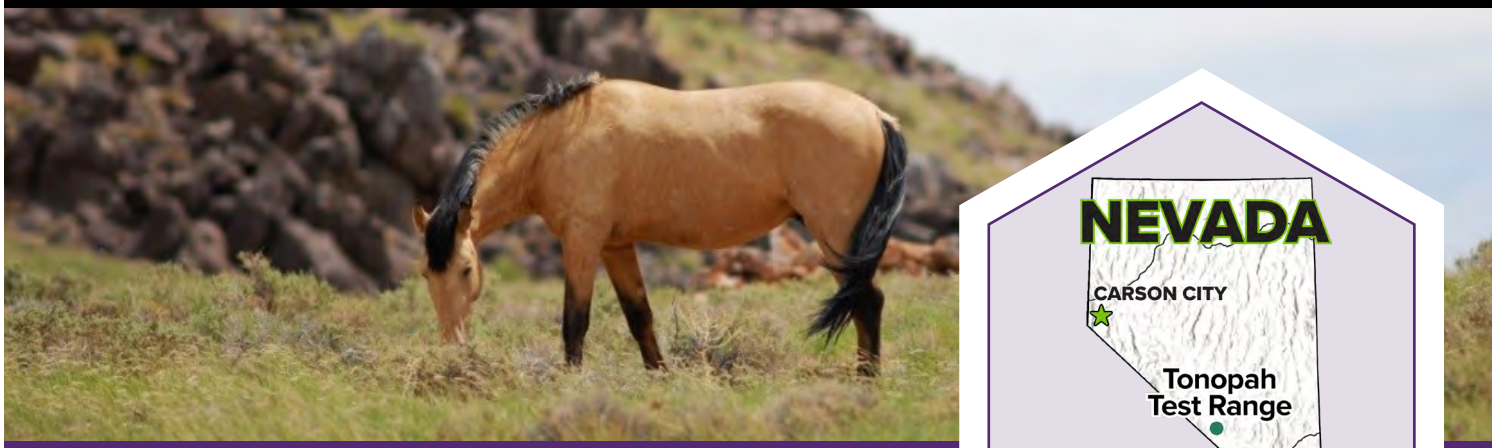
Fact Sheet

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY | Legacy Management



Tonopah Test Range, Nevada, Site

A Weapons-Related Site/Industrial and Soils Site

This fact sheet provides information about the **Tonopah Test Range site**. Long-term stewardship responsibilities for this site are managed by the **U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management**.

Site Information and History

The Tonopah Test Range (TTR), Nevada, Site is located about 160 miles northwest of Las Vegas, Nevada. The range is within the boundaries of the Nevada Test and Training Range (NTTR), which is managed by the U.S. Air Force. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) conducts operations at TTR in support of DOE weapons programs. The range also offers a unique test environment that other U.S. government agencies and their contractors can use.

Although the NTTR spans three counties in Nevada, TTR is located entirely within Nye County. There are sparsely populated public lands north of the TTR boundary, which are jointly administered by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. These lands are used mostly for cattle grazing and recreation. TTR and NTTR are active training sites that are not open to the public.

TTR was established in 1957 as an isolated location for the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) to test ballistics and non-nuclear features of atomic weapons. Testing required many support facilities for personnel and equipment. In many cases, the use of the support facilities, the tests themselves, and the disposal practices at the time led to radiological and chemical contamination of surface and subsurface soils. Although some areas were contaminated as a direct result of testing activities, most of the areas were only used for support activities. These included construction-waste landfills, waste trenches, debris piles, fuel storage areas, and septic systems.

The DOE Office of Legacy Management (LM) is responsible for long-term surveillance and maintenance at 40 Corrective Action Units (CAUs) where AEC activities led to contamination.

Land Use

The TTR CAUs are located on land owned by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and managed by the U.S. Air Force. This land is not managed by LM. NNSA is a tenant on parts of the land and is responsible for TTR operations. However, the land is not part of the NNSA Nevada National Security Site. Current land use at the TTR is not expected to change.

Monitoring Program

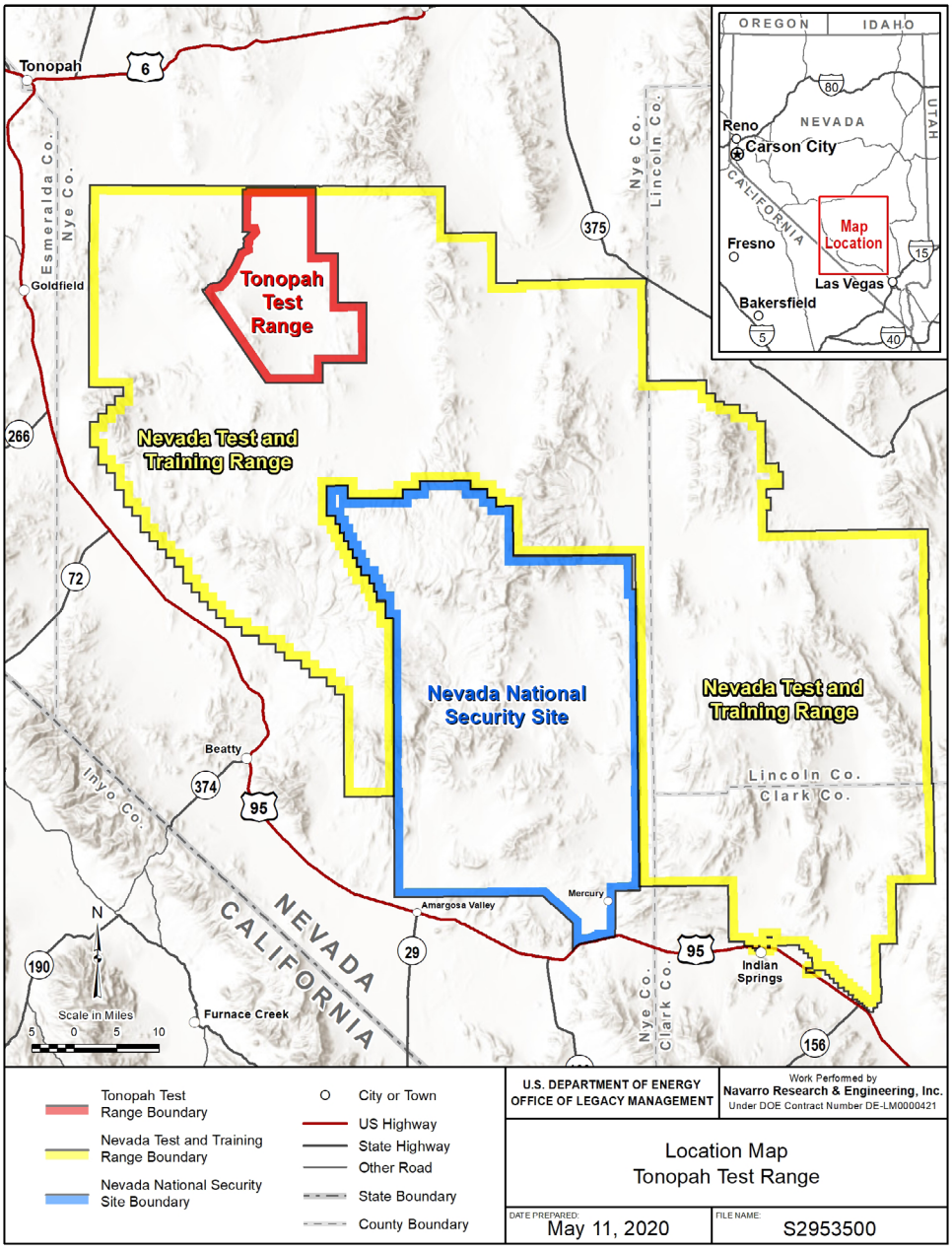
The TTR includes 40 CAUs located on TTR and NTTR. Each CAU contains one or more Corrective Action Site. Only 11 Corrective Action Sites have post-closure monitoring requirements, including annual visual inspections of fences, signs, monuments, and soil covers.

Post-closure monitoring is not required for most of the CAUs. LM's activities for these sites are typically limited to records management and stakeholder support. Two TTR CAUs — CAU 426, Cactus Spring Waste Trenches (CAS RG-08-001-RGCS); and CAU 404, Roller Coaster Lagoons and Trench (CAS TA-03-001-TARC) — are unique. CAU 426 has a use restriction and CAU 404 has an administrative use restriction, but neither unit needs post-closure monitoring.

Post-Closure Monitoring

CAUs that require post-closure monitoring are described below. Long-term surveillance and maintenance activities include annual inspections to check the integrity of engineered or institutional controls, maintenance, records-related activities, and stakeholder support.

- CAU 407, Roller Coaster RadSafe Area: AEC used this location in 1963 as a decontamination area to remove radiological contamination from vehicles, equipment, and people involved in AEC tests. Closure of the surface included removing radiologically contaminated surface soil. Personnel closed a waste disposal pit with a soil cover. This CAU is surrounded by a fence.
- CAU 413, Clean Slate II: CAU 413 is an area contaminated by the release of radionuclides to the surface and shallow subsurface from the Clean Slate II storage-transportation test conducted on May 31, 1963. The corrective-action removed soil and debris that exceeded the final action level. The radiological conditions at CAU 413 are currently controlled. The fenced CAU is posted as a Soil Contamination Area and inspected annually as part of the LM radiation protection program.
- CAU 424, Area 3 Landfill Complexes: The seven Corrective Action Sites in CAU 424 consist of one or more buried waste cells that received wastes from daily operations at test support areas from before 1963 to about 1993. Wastes include petroleum-contaminated sludge and landfill debris (e.g., drums, carpeting, magnetic recording tape, electronic cable, and scrap metal). Personnel closed each landfill with a soil cover.
- CAU 453, Area 9 Unexploded Ordnance Landfill: AEC used these waste cells from the early 1960s through 1993 to receive wastes from range cleanups after weapons testing. Cell contents were not well documented during early operations, but site process knowledge suggests that the cells were used for solid waste disposal, including disposal of unexploded weapons. Personnel closed the waste cells with a soil cover. This CAU is surrounded by a fence.
- CAU 487, Thunderwell Sites: These units include debris from a series of explosives tests from the early to mid-1960s. These units are use-restricted because there is surface and subsurface debris. There are no hazardous materials associated with the units.



Institutional Controls

Institutional controls are administrative and legal restrictions that keep people and the environment from being exposed to leftover contamination at post-closure sites. At the TTR units, institutional controls include the congressional land withdrawal, Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (FFACO) use restrictions, and physical features such as warning signs, fences, and monuments.

Regulatory Setting

TTR is regulated by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) through the FFACO. The FFACO was signed in 1996 by NDEP, DOE, and the U.S. Department of Defense. The TTR CAUs are identified as either Industrial or Soil Sites in the FFACO, which are separate categories of sites that have a specific corrective-action process within the FFACO. The TTR CAUs were evaluated using this process prior to being transferred to LM in 2020.

Most of the TTR CAUs were closed in the early 1990s. They were either identified as no-further-action sites (there was no contamination), closed in accordance with state regulations (landfills and septic systems), or cleaned up to standards approved by NDEP. LM is responsible for complying with FFACO requirements and carrying out long-term stewardship at the TTR CAUs.

Legacy Management Activities

LM monitors the TTR CAUs to make sure conditions continue to protect people and the environment. This monitoring is done in accordance with site-specific FFACO closure requirements. LM summarizes monitoring results every year in a post-closure monitoring report. LM performs long-term surveillance and maintenance activities in coordination with the U.S. Air Force, NNSA, and other organizations that use the TTR.

CONTACT INFORMATION

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY AT THE SITE, CONTACT 911

LM TOLL-FREE EMERGENCY HOTLINE: (877) 695-5322

Site-specific documents related to the **Tonopah Test Range, Nevada, Site** are available on the LM website at **www.energy.gov/lm/tonopah-test-range-nevada-site**

For more information about LM activities at the **Tonopah Test Range, Nevada, Site**, contact:

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