



Defense-Related Uranium Mines Program on the Navajo Nation

This information sheet documents DRUM program fieldwork on the Navajo Nation.

Program Overview

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Defense-Related Uranium Mines (DRUM) program is a partnership between DOE, federal land management agencies, and state and tribal abandoned mine lands (AML) programs to verify and validate the condition of more than 3,400 mine sites across the United States, of which about 200 are on the Navajo Nation. These mines provided uranium ore to the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission for defense-related activities that occurred between 1947 and 1970, and accounts for all mines operating during the time that are not already on the EPA's register.

In October 2022, the DOE Office of Legacy Management (LM) began conducting mine inventories of DRUM sites located on the Navajo Nation. To do so, LM worked with the Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Department (NNAML) and Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA).

DRUM field teams consist of five people traveling in multiple vehicles with U.S. government-issued license plates. Fieldwork activity details are below.



V&V work on the Navajo Nation, November 2022.

Field Inventories

(Verification and Validation)

LM uses a technical support contractor to conduct fieldwork for the verification and validation (V&V) of DRUM sites. V&V fieldwork locations are generally grouped by mining or abandoned uranium mine (AUM) region (Figure 1). Technical specialists on each field team perform the following tasks on each DRUM site:

- Inventory DRUM sites by collecting location and condition data on mine features, such as adits, shafts, and waste-rock piles.
- Perform gamma radiation walkover surveys.
- Conduct soil and water sampling (if applicable).
- Develop reports that provide rankings of physical safety hazards at DRUM sites and perform preliminary screenings of potential risks to human health and the environment.

A Navajo-language-speaking liaison from NNAML or NNEPA accompanies field teams to help answer questions from the public.

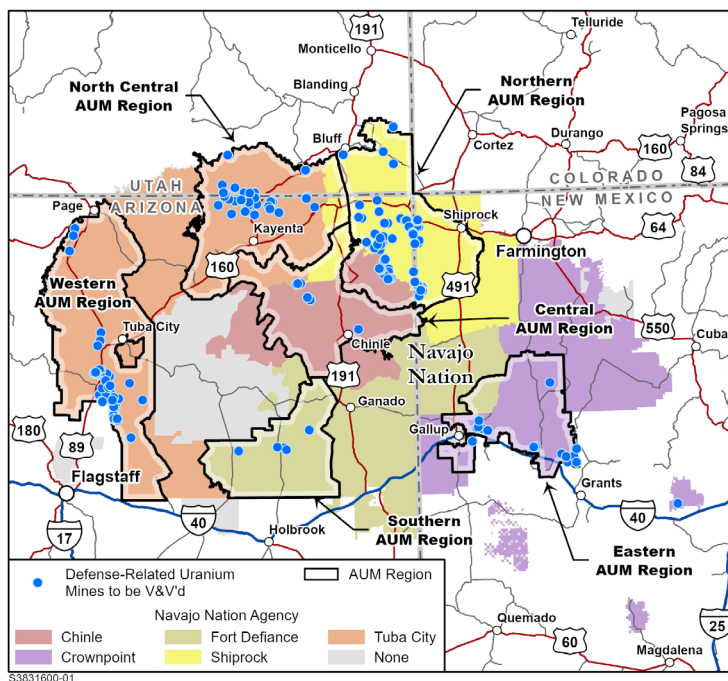


Figure 1. Navajo Nation DRUM sites for verification and validation.

The five people on the DRUM field team are: the field team lead, a geologist, an ecologist, a radiological control technician, and a NNAML representative. Each person has specific responsibilities for collecting necessary data during the field inventory work. None of the work they do involves construction or heavy equipment. The only vehicles needed are those used by the team to access each DRUM site.

Team members wear bright yellow, logoed shirts, making them easy to identify. They also carry DOE photo identification with them at all times.

The work helps DOE and NNAML make decisions for safeguarding features identified at some mines sites to protect humans and wildlife. Reclamation and remediation work is not part of the DRUM program and is coordinated with NNAML and NNEPA.

Coordination With Navajo Nation Leadership

Prior to the DRUM field inventory work, DOE coordinated with Navajo Nation leadership, including the President of the Navajo Nation, NNAML, NNEPA, Community Outreach Network, Chapter Houses, and other leaders. The DRUM program will benefit the Navajo Nation by identifying safety hazards that may exist at abandoned uranium mines. DOE has also coordinated closely with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9, who is remediating many DRUM sites. The agencies coordinated their efforts to avoid duplication.

Work will continue through 2025 and could extend after.



DRUM field team members look at mine features and collect soil samples for testing.



Scan the QR code to visit the [Defense-Related Uranium Mines Program](#) webpage.



CONTACT INFORMATION

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY, CONTACT 911

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

Information about the Defense-Related Uranium Mines program is available at www.energy.gov/lm/defense-related-uranium-mines-program.

For more information about LM activities, contact:

**U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Legacy Management
2597 Legacy Way
Grand Junction, CO 81503**

Email:

DRUMInfo@lm.doe.gov

**DOE Office of Legacy Management
(970) 248-6070**

**Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Offices
Window Rock AML/UMTRA Department
P.O. Box 1875
3783 Window Rock Blvd
Window Rock, AZ 86515**

**Window Rock, AZ
Toll Free at 1-866-458-4390
Tuba City, AZ
Toll Free at 1-800-220-7834
Shiprock, NM
Toll Free at 1-800-215-6226**

Email:

AML@navajo-nsn.gov

**LM Navajo Nation Outreach Office
Navajo Nation Shopping Center, Suite 10
Window Rock, AZ 86515**

Phone

(928) 810-2100

Email:

public.affairs@lm.doe.gov

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