



Utah Department of Natural Resources **Oil, Gas & Mining**

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UTAH DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

Salt Lake City – The Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining’s Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program received an award for work completed in the San Rafael Swell in central Utah. The National Association of Abandoned Mine Land Programs (NAAML) publicly recognized Utah for the exemplary physical safety hazard mitigation in the reclamation of abandoned hard rock mines and presented them the nation’s highest achievement at its annual conference in Bozeman, Montana.

“This is an honor to be recognized for our hard work,” stated Utah’s Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program Manager Steve Fluke. “It is the goal of the program to protect the public from the hazards of old mines. This project could not have succeeded without our partnership with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) while working closely with the BLM’s Price field office and the Emery County Public Lands Council.”

The San Rafael Swell project in central Utah closed 173 abandoned uranium mine openings remaining from the Cold War era. The openings were located high in cliff faces often with no road access, so the contractor enlisted helicopters, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), pack horses and a great deal of ingenuity to get supplies and labor to the sites. In addition to the tricky terrain, radiation safety protocols, designated wilderness areas, and bighorn sheep lambing added to the logistical complications.

The San Rafael Swell is located on public land and is a popular destination for outdoor recreation including camping, hiking and ATV riding. The completion of the project has safeguarded all known uranium mine openings in the area to protect the public’s health and safety in this popular region.

This project was funded by the BLM and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

For additional information on the Abandoned Mine Reclamation program, visit ogm.utah.gov.

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