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State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

MICHAEL R. STYLER
Executive Director

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For Immediate Release

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Contact: Jim Springer
(801) 538-5324
jimspringer@utah.gov

PUBLIC INPUT SOUGHT ON PLAN TO CLOSE ABANDONED MINES IN GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT

The Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program will conduct two open houses to present and gather information about the proposed reclamation of abandoned mines in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The project will close approximately 29 openings at 15 separate sites within the monument. The project may also include maintenance work on previously reclaimed openings at four sites outside of the monument in the Dixie National Forest and the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area.

The meetings will be held Tuesday, April 1, 2008, at the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Visitor Center, 745 East Highway 89, Kanab, Utah, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 pm; and Thursday, April 3, 2008, at the Escalante Interagency Visitor Center, 755 West Main Street, Escalante, Utah, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

"We hope anyone with an interest will take the time to share their thoughts on the project with us," said project manager Steve Fluke. "Those not able to attend one of our meetings are invited to contact us directly."

Comments may be made directly by calling Steve Fluke at (801) 538-5259; by email to stevefluke@utah.gov; or in writing to the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program, Attn: Steve Fluke, 1594 West North Temple, Suite 1210, PO Box 145801, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84114-5801.

The Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program is responsible for safeguarding abandoned mines that present physical safety hazards to the public. Program staff conduct abandoned mine inventories that aid in the identification of hazardous sites and set priorities for reclamation. Before a site is closed, it is checked for threatened or endangered plants and animals, cultural and historic resources, and wetland values.

Abandoned mines often pose a significant danger to unwary adventurers and should be left alone. The public is reminded to, "Stay Out and Stay Alive."

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