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PROJECT TO CLOSE 22 ABANDONED URANIUM MINES
IN EMERY & GRAND COUNTIES, UTAH

A project to close 22 abandoned Uranium mines in Emery and Grand Counties has been slated to begin this September. The project, known as the Labyrinth Canyon Project, will seal twenty-two open uranium mine portals in Labyrinth Canyon along the Green River northwest of Dead Horse Point State Park. The work is part of the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program.

The mines in Labyrinth Canyon and surrounding areas became active during the uranium boom powered by the Cold War and the U.S. government's promotion of uranium prospecting, purchasing and stockpiling of uranium ore for making Atomic bombs and energy during the late 1950s into the 1970s, explained project manager, Ken Wyatt.

Although eliminating public hazards posed by open mines is the prime objective of the Labyrinth Canyon Project, historical and cultural resources will be preserved during the reclamation work. "Work is expected to last for several weeks beginning in mid September. Approximately 2/3rds of these mines have limited access," added Wyatt. "This means our contractor will have to close them in much the same way the original miners developed them, by using picks and shovels to place material back into the mine openings."

The twenty-three year old Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program works statewide to abate public health and safety problems created by past mining practices. The project is an ongoing part of the Division's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program and is funded by a per ton tax on current coal production in the state of Utah.

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