



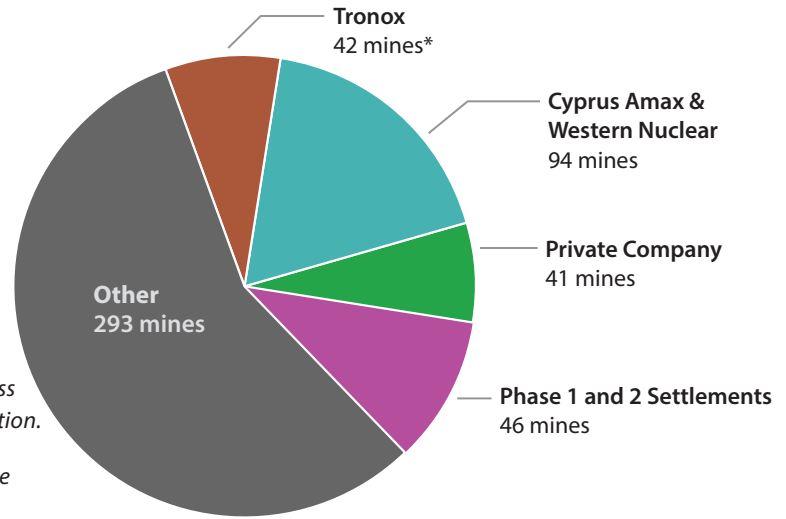
# Abandoned Uranium Mine Settlements on or near the Navajo Nation

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA • November 2022

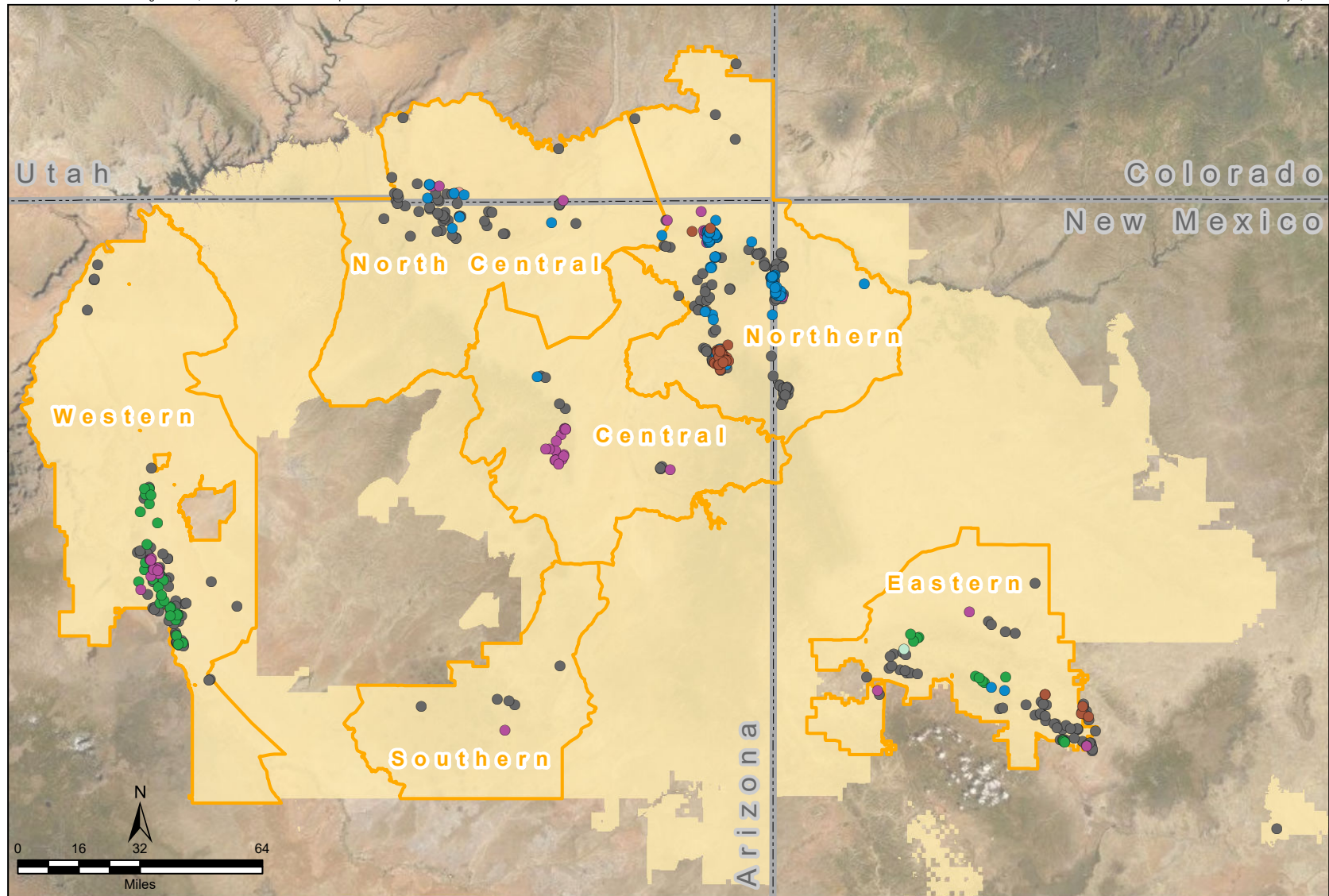
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has entered into enforcement agreements and settlements valued at over \$1.7 billion to reduce the highest risks of radiation exposure to the Navajo people from abandoned uranium mines (AUMs). As a result, funds are available to begin the assessment and cleanup process at 230 of the 523 abandoned uranium mines. The settlements are part of a larger strategy to address AUMs on and near the Navajo Nation. The table below provides information on the separate enforcement agreements and settlements to address these abandoned uranium mines.

*Over \$1.7 billion is now available to begin the assessment and cleanup process at 230 mines, about 40% of the abandoned uranium mines on the Navajo Nation.*

*\*The Tronox settlement funds 55 mines, including mines in New Mexico that are not on the Navajo Nation.*



<b>Tronox Settlement</b>	<b>Cyprus Amax and Western Nuclear Consent Decree (Settlement)</b>	<b>Enforcement Agreements with private companies<sup>1</sup></b> <small><sup>1</sup>Babbitt Ranches, BNSF, Chevron, El Paso Natural Gas, EnPro Holdings, Homestake, United Nuclear Corporation</small>	<b>Phase 1 and 2 Trust Settlements</b>
<p>When Tronox, a successor to Kerr-McGee, filed for bankruptcy in 2009, USEPA and the Navajo Nation, among others, filed claims and received settlements in the bankruptcy. The United States, on behalf of USEPA and other agencies, then filed a lawsuit against Anadarko, another successor of Kerr-McGee, seeking additional funding for the AUMs. The United States and others involved ultimately achieved a \$5 billion national settlement in 2014, of which USEPA received almost \$900 million for cleanup of more than 50 AUMs associated with Kerr-McGee including the 42 mines on or near the Navajo Nation. In addition, USEPA received close to \$90 million for the Quivira mine. The Navajo Nation received \$44 million. The funds allocated to USEPA are mandated by the court to be spent by USEPA to address contamination at the Navajo Nation AUMs.</p>	<p>The United States on behalf of USEPA and other federal agencies entered into a historic settlement with Cyprus Amax and Western Nuclear in 2017 for the cleanup of 94 mines on the Navajo Nation. The settlement requires Cyprus Amax and Western Nuclear to perform the work.</p> <p>The United States will pay approximately half of all costs, including USEPA and the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency oversight costs, through a trust funded at \$335 million. Cyprus Amax and Western Nuclear will fund the other half of the work. This settlement has an estimated value of \$600 million.</p>	<p>USEPA has entered into enforcement agreements with seven parties to assess contamination or take other removal actions at 37 AUMs, and to install interim safety measures such as fencing and signage. Each agreement varies in scope and dollar amount for the work, but USEPA intends to follow up with agreements for cleanup as necessary. USEPA funds the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency oversight of these agreements via grants.</p> <p>Ongoing efforts include identifying the companies responsible for the unfunded AUMs in this region and engaging them to assess and clean up the mines.</p>	<p>The Navajo Nation negotiated with the United States to address the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission's role in developing historical uranium mining on Navajo lands. As a result, the United States and the Navajo Nation entered into two legal settlements (the Phase 1 Settlement in 2015 and the Phase 2 Settlement in 2016). The Phase 1 Settlement provided funds to assess 16 "priority" mines that had elevated radiation levels and were near homes, or had a potential for water contamination. The Phase 2 Settlement provides funds to assess an additional 30 mines, conduct two water studies, and clean up the 16 Phase 1 priority mines located on the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation has selected Navajo trustees with concurrence and approval of the United States, to manage the trust funds and do the work under the oversight of USEPA and the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA). Currently, the United States has provided \$13.2 million for the Phase 1 Settlement and \$21.5 million for the Phase 2 Settlement. The agreements also provide for payments of the USEPA and the NNEPA oversight costs.</p>



- Mines**
- Cyprus Amax/Western Nuclear
  - Other Private Companies
  - Phase 1 and Phase 2 Trusts
  - Tronox
  - Navajo Superfund Lead
  - US EPA Funded
  - Currently Unfunded

**Navajo Nation Abandoned Uranium Mines  
Current Settlements and Funded Mines**

- 📍 AUM Region
- 📍 Navajo Nation
- 📍 US State



**For more information on Settlements and Enforcement Agreements**

**Damian Willson**  
 Communication Lead, Navajo AUM Program  
 USEPA Region 9  
 (415) 972 – 3453  
 willson.damian@epa.gov

USEPA Navajo Abandoned Uranium Mine webpage:  
[www.epa.gov/navajo-nation-uranium-cleanup](http://www.epa.gov/navajo-nation-uranium-cleanup)

  
 Printed on 50% post-consumer recycled paper  
 Processed chlorine-free