



Technical Assistance Services for Communities

Cove Area Abandoned Uranium Mines

Cove Wash Watershed Assessment Orientation Meeting and Sampling Activities: June 16, 2015

Meeting Summary

The orientation meeting for the Cove Wash Watershed Assessment took place at the Cove Chapter house on June 16, 2015. The meeting also included the first day of sampling for soil and water in the Cove watershed. The meeting and sampling activities provided the community with a hands-on introduction to upcoming soil and water sampling and cleanup activities.

Agency attendees included staff from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA). EPA contractors in attendance included Weston Solutions and Skeo Solutions. Interns from Dine College Environmental Institute, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, and the New Mexico Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (NM EPSCoR) participated. The Cove Authorized Local Emergency Response Team (ALERT) and community members were also part of the meeting. The meeting began with group introductions led by EPA project manager Wilson Yee.

During the meeting, EPA and Weston Solutions staff discussed safety concerns and hazards associated with working outdoors. Potential hazards include heat stress, flash floods, trip hazards, lightning and wildlife. Weston Solutions staff provided an equipment demonstration and explained how each piece of equipment is used in



Weston Solutions gave an equipment demonstration to participants.

the field. Geobotanist Arnold Clifford gave a presentation on how plants grow or change in soils depending on chemical conditions or soil disturbances.

This meeting and sampling activities were an introduction to what lies ahead for the community of Cove and for those who will be involved with soil and water sampling and the cleanup.

Sampling Activities

The kickoff meeting also included the first day of sampling for soil and water in the Cove Watershed. The goal of this round of sampling is to study the Cove watershed and determine how far uranium has traveled from the abandoned mine sites. Sampling will focus on wetlands and then mines with high levels of contamination that could affect the Cove community. These areas will be prioritized for cleanup.

At the end of the meeting, the sampling team broke into two teams. The teams included representatives from Weston Solutions and interns from the Dine Environmental Institute, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, NM EPSCoR, Navajo Technical University, and Eastern New Mexico University. The teams traveled to Zone 3 – located in Cove Wash, about one mile north of Indian Route 33 – to collect surface water and sediment samples.



Interns from various colleges around the region took part in Sampling Activities and training during the June 16, 2015 orientation meeting.



Participants taking part in collecting surface water and sediment samples in Cove Wash.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Tina Ulrich
Cove Community Liaison
tna_e@yahoo.com
(970) 759-7274

Wilson Yee
EPA Region 9 Project Manager
yee.wilson@epa.gov
(415) 972-3484