



**Position Statement:
Northern Arizona Uranium Mine Compliance Measures**

Uranium mining causes irreparable harm to natural and cultural resources in Grand Canyon watersheds. The U.S. Geological Survey and Environmental Protection Agency have documented and acknowledged multiple instances of soil and water contamination and devastating impacts to the region's people caused by uranium mines.¹ For instance, the abandoned Orphan uranium mine permanently contaminated groundwater and polluted Horn Creek within Grand Canyon National Park and has already cost taxpayers \$15 million dollars for just the first phase of remediating surface contamination.

Grand Canyon Trust supports the 20-year mineral withdrawal and permanently closing Grand Canyon watersheds to all new uranium mines by enacting the Grand Canyon Watershed Protection Act. We also support immediately closing and remediating four existing mines (Canyon, Arizona 1, Pinenut, and Kanab North) to prevent any further damage to soil, water, wildlife, and traditional cultural properties.

Since those mines were approved and built in the late 1980s and early 1990s, they have operated for only a handful of years. Owing to poor market conditions, long periods of dormancy not anticipated in previous public reviews by federal agencies have resulted in unforeseen and unaddressed environmental impacts. Energy Fuels Resources, citing market conditions, recently announced a new period of mining cessation. Are we entering another decades-long period of mine dormancy now?

In addition to immediate closure and reclamation of the four mines, we request that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service take immediate steps to prevent adverse impacts and irreparable harm to public and tribal resources, and to correct underlying regulatory problems relating to uranium mines. Specifically, we ask the agencies to:

1. Amend plans of operations for the four mines to adopt [compliance measures](#)² that the five cooperating agencies prepared upon completing the Northern Arizona Proposed Withdrawal EIS. BLM and Forest Service have modified plans of operations for these mines on several occasions in the past;³

¹ *Hydrological, Geological, and Biological Site Characterization of Breccia Pipe Uranium Deposits in Northern Arizona.*
<http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2010/5025/>

² "Best Management Practices and Compliance Measures for Breccia Pipe Uranium Mining Activities in Northern Arizona," submitted by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service comments to Arizona State Land Department, Re: "Wate Mining Company, LLC Lease No. 11-116806", May 6, 2013.

³ For example, BLM modified the Pinenut's plan of operation in 1986 "to expand the nature and duration of previously approved activities", and it modified its 1982 decision on the Kanab North Mine in 1984 "to expand the nature and duration of activities authorized under the existing Plan of Operations." In 1986, the U.S. Forest Service approved a modified Plan of Operations for Canyon uranium mine to expand "monitoring of soil, air and water to determine the

2. Amend resource management plans for the Arizona Strip District and Kaibab National Forest to adopt the five agencies' compliance measures as standards applicable to uranium mining; and
3. Amend BLM and Forest Service surface management regulations at 43 CFR 3809 and 36 CFR 228A to require uranium mine reclamation following ten years of stand-by or non-operation.⁴

In addition, the BLM and Forest Service should:

- Complete consultation with Havasupai, Zuni, and other affiliated tribes before mining is allowed to resume at Canyon Mine in the Red Butte traditional cultural property;
- Implement regional and mine-specific monitoring and reporting programs that are underwritten by mining applicants;
- Improve remediation and research into ecological effects of uranium mining; and
- Commit to interagency oversight and enforcement of new compliance measures.

It is within land management agencies' discretion and legal authority to enact the above-described changes to protect public and tribal resources and values. These common-sense changes are clearly in the public's and native nation's best interests. With mines facing a new round of closures, now is the time for the agencies to address these needs.

environmental impacts, if any, of mine operations and ore transport, and the need for imposing additional mitigation measures, if necessary.”

⁴ These amendments would align federal regulation with the “temporary cessation of production” provision of Colorado’s Mined Land Reclamation Act (“MLRA”), which applies to public lands mines in Colorado. C.R.S. § 34-32-103(6)(a) (III). (“In no case shall temporary cessation of production be continued for more than ten years without terminating the operation and fully complying with the reclamation requirements of this article.”) accord Rule 1.1 (53) (“temporary cessation” defined as “limited periods of non-production [...]”).