

Half Life

The Story of America's Last **Uranium** Mill



Film Screening Kit



FILM SCREENING KIT

Thank you for screening “Half Life”. In this packet you will find all of the information necessary to host your own successful screening of the film. If you have any additional needs or questions, please contact us!

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Film Overview

Film synopsis

In southeastern Utah, not far from many of America's famed national parks, lies America's last remaining uranium Mill. After more than 36 years in operation, the leaders of the nearby Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's White Mesa community worry that lax regulations and the aging infrastructure of the mill site are putting their water supply, and their way of life, at risk.

General film information

- Length - 12 Minutes
- Language- English
- Year- 2016
- Format - Digital video
- Director - Justin Clifton
- Exec Producer - Anne Mariah Tapp
- Cinematography - Justin Clifton, Mari Clevon
- Sound Design - Cody Peterson
- Illustrations - Andrew Paffrath
- Editing - Justin Clifton
- Public Screening Formats - Quicktime ProRes422, BluRay, online (vimeo download or streaming)

Filmmaker/representative attendance at screenings

Travel and lodging expenses will need to be covered if you would like a film representative at your screening. Please contact Anne Mariah Tapp (atapp@grandcanyontrust.org) with any inquiries or requests.



The Grand Canyon Trust- film sponsor

The Trust was established in 1985 by Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt and other leading conservationists to work on natural resource issues affecting the Grand Canyon. Soon after, Executive Director Ed Norton and Trustee Stewart Udall made an impassioned plea that issues do not stop at the boundaries of the park, and that the Trust should be an advocate for both the Grand Canyon and the surrounding Colorado Plateau. The suggestion was adopted and Grand Canyon Trust emerged as a leading regional conservation organization, with offices across the plateau and extensive connections among policymakers, land managers, scientists, and community leaders.



Justin Clifton- film director

Justin Clifton is a native of the American Southwest who has dedicated the past decade of his career to advocacy film, first as director of Telluride Mountainfilm on Tour and now as a filmmaker whose work is centered around environmental and conservation issues. He has produced and directed five films focused around the protection of landscapes in southeastern Utah as part of the Our Canyon Lands campaign for land conservation.



Film Follow Up

Take action!

Help take action and raise awareness of threats surrounding the White Mesa Mill. There are various ways to spread the word and take action, but we recommend the following:

1. **Send a letter to decision makers**- Write a letter to urge our decision-makers to increase regulations and oversight on the White Mesa Mill. You can hand out a draft letter and have people write their comments, sign it, and then mail it. A draft letter is attached in the resources section of this packet.
2. **Sign our petition**- You can also give people this link or have laptops/ ipads for people to sign at the event.
<http://grandcanyontrust.nonprofitsoapbox.com/uranium-poisoning>
3. **Social media sharing**- SHARE the film with your friends. A list of sample social media posts can be found in the resources section of this packet. Please make sure to use our hashtags #waterislife #uranium.

Audience participation

- Discussion Questions- encourage conversations after the film with the following questions:
 1. Are there uranium contamination issues near us?
 2. With the high economic cost, lack of waste disposal solutions, and potential catastrophic environmental consequences of a meltdown associated with nuclear power plants, is uranium mining and nuclear power really a sustainable and efficient way to generate electricity?
 3. What is the best way to transition away from a fossil fuel energy system if uranium also poses serious health and contamination risks?
 5. How should groundwater be protected in arid regions? Should regulators take a highly precautionary approach that demands industry guarantee a lack of contamination and effective remediation before allowing operations?
 6. How should a bond/financial guarantee be calculated for a site like the White Mesa Mill?
 7. Should tribal nations that are impacted by uranium mining and milling be able to exercise regulatory authority over the uranium industry?
 8. Who are the local groups working to protect our region from uranium contamination?
 9. How can someone like me get involved in protecting communities and water resources from uranium contamination?
- FAQ- for a general outline of common uranium mining and milling questions, please see our FAQ in the resources section of this packet.



How to Host Your Own Screening: Tips and Tricks

- **Publicize your event.** This is the most important step. Not only can you tell the world about your screening, but you can also let the Grand Canyon Trust know about your plans so we can help you publicize your event. You can find a full list of public relations tips in this packet.
- **Visualize your goal.** What do you hope to achieve with your screening? Your goal could be to inform your community of uranium milling issues, to generate a post-film discussion about the state of our public lands, or to provide an opportunity for families to watch and learn together.
- **Select a location.** Consider which locations in your area would be ideal for accommodating a community film screening of the size you anticipate: churches and synagogues, town halls, community centers, public libraries, school auditoriums, outdoor screenings at parks and playgrounds, or coffee shops — be creative!
- **Find a partner.** Give some thought to who is already working on improving your community. Can they help sponsor or publicize the event? Can they speak on a panel after the screening? Some potential partners include: universities, colleges, high schools, faith-based organizations and institutions, museums, parks, nature centers, environmental groups, small-business owners, human rights and social justice groups, and other organizations concerned about the environment.
- **Invite a guest speaker.** Guest speakers and panels are a great way to encourage discussion and debate after a community screening. When people are thinking about the issues, they will stay engaged long after the screening has passed. The film team and participants in the film may be available to appear in person for a Q&A and presentation on the White Mesa Mill. Contact the Grand Canyon Trust if you are interested.
- **Spread the word.** Think about the best methods available to you for publicizing the film screening to people in your community. Sending emails, creating event notifications on Facebook or Meetup, using Twitter, and placing screening announcements in local newspapers and newsletters is a good start. Use the screening poster and press photos to help publicize your event around town. Marketing tips are contained in this packet.
- **Check your equipment.** It is very important to check that your film equipment AND film are both running and working well before the screening. Make sure to test the film out on the actual equipment you will be using and to run the film in its entirety to make sure there are no glitches. It is best to download the film instead of streaming it for best quality.
- **Tell us how it went!** Where it was held, who attended, what went well, and what was challenging? Your feedback will help others in organizing their own successful events.



Public Relations

This public relations plan is intended to help guide community organizers in their interactions with regional and local news media to ensure effective dissemination of targeted messages and information promoting both the film and the organizations behind it. Media coverage generated by your community screenings plays a key role in the overall impact made by the film. Therefore, community screeners should read this media plan in its entirety, and follow the recommendations and templates provided in the media toolkit section. Please send copies of all media coverage generated by your event to the Grand Canyon Trust so we can track the impact of the overall public relations strategy. This public relations plan will ultimately benefit your event by providing you with professional, thorough, and accurate information on the film that will hopefully result in great local media coverage for your event.

Primary message

"Half Life" is more than a film about the White Mesa Mill in Southern Utah, it is a call to action to become informed on our energy issues in the United States and demand that our clean air and water be preserved.



Goal and objectives for screening

- To develop the broadest possible audience for the "Half Life" documentary through screenings of the film in a wide variety of program formats and locations across the country;
- To provide, through public screenings, a new and deeper understanding of the concerns of uranium milling and mining;
- To utilize the film to foster community discussion about conservation concerns and issues in terms of shared ethical values;
- To utilize the film as an outreach tool to renew partner organizations' relationships with existing contacts and constituents, and to develop new relationships and partnerships to help grow the collective reach of partners into the future.

"Half Life" spokespersons

Should a local media contact want to interview someone associated with the film for more information, please contact Anne Mariah Tapp at the Grand Canyon Trust: atapp@grandcanyontrust.org.



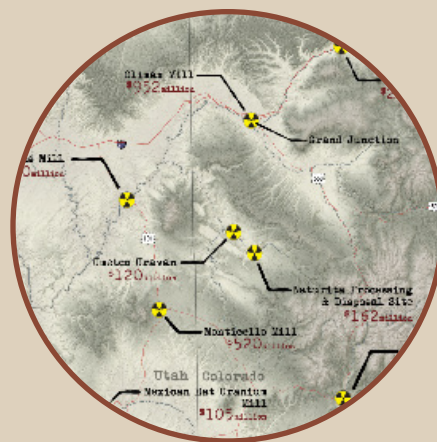
Media Tips

Step 1: Create a media list

Create a list of media outlets and research them to see who else might be interested in the screening. Reporters in a newsroom are usually assigned to a certain “beat.” A beat is a type of story that person usually covers: education, police, environment, business, etc. For “Half Life” screenings, you should consider contacting environment reporters, outdoor reporters, and education reporters, especially if your screening is at a school, or if a group of school kids are invited. In your media list, make sure to include: outlet, contact name, beat, phone, fax, email, and mailing address.

Determine what contacts you already have.

- Have any reporters covered this venue before?
- Have any reporters covered news about uranium before?
- Have any reporters covered similar documentary screenings?
- Have any reporters covered local conservation issues?



Step 2: Finalize your press release

The media is used to seeing invitations to events in a certain format, called a press release or media advisory. This format tells the media the basic information about your event and makes it easy for them to put it on their calendar. When communicating with the assignment or metro desk, this format is the most appropriate and they will appreciate your consistency. It is their job to judge each story’s newsworthiness, so think about what readers/viewers will be interested and make sure to communicate those points to the reporter/editor. A sample press release is included in the resources section for you to customize with your event details.



Media Tips, con't.

Step 3: Make a plan of action

Whenever you are sending information to the assignment or metro desk, always use the standard press release format. They are interested in the five W's: who, what, when, where, and why, and they appreciate brevity. Put yourself in their shoes and think about the hundreds of media alerts they receive each day, so try to make their job as easy as possible.

When contacting a reporter who may already have an interest in the event, or with whom you have an existing relationship, you can provide some more information in a slightly more casual manner. You may want to consider:

- Crafting a “pitch” email to capture their attention and remind them of previous stories they have written, perhaps related to local conservation issues, that may tie into this story. If you’ve previously met them or worked with them, remind them and you’ll already have their attention.
- Drafting a “pitch” script for when you call a reporter. Keep it simple and get the most important facts out first. Base your conversation on the contents of the media alert.
- Creating a timeline for when you will distribute the media alert, when you will make phone calls and when you will follow up with more information.



Step 4: Implement your plan

Once you have created a plan, stick to it. Persistence is the key to successful media pitching. A few key points to remember:

- Media people have a very short line of vision. They are most interested in what is happening today, but do appreciate some notice for planned events.
- Start with the media contacts you have a relationship with, or those you know will be interested in this particular story.
- Make their job as easy as possible. This is not the only story that they will work on in a given week, or even in a given day. Provide as many facts as possible. Make someone available for them to interview. By being a good source of information, you will build trust and respect and hopefully some valuable media relationships that will be useful in the future.
- When your story gets published, send a quick note to thank the reporter who covered it. They appreciate it and will remember your thoughtfulness.
- Record your success and remember the contact information for future events.
- Share published materials with the Grand Canyon Trust’s communications team by emailing adavidson@grandcanyontrust.org



Marketing

Facebook

Facebook is a great way and often one of the only ways people hear about events these days. Making a Facebook event and “inviting” all of your friends is a great way to get the word out. Make sure to include and time, date, and location details. You can use the poster or any stills included in this packet as the header image.

Email to friends/organizations

Word of mouth is one of the best ways to get people there! Send an email, text, or call to your friends and let them know about the screening and why they should come. A sample email is located in the resources section of the packet.

Posters

Posters are a great way to get the word out about your event. Posters are included in the resources section of the packet and should be put up in your community. Some recommendations are:

- Community boards
- Coffee shops
- Bars/ restaurants
- Colleges/ schools
- Businesses (especially outdoor stores)
- Environmental groups
- Gyms (climbing, yoga studios, athletic)

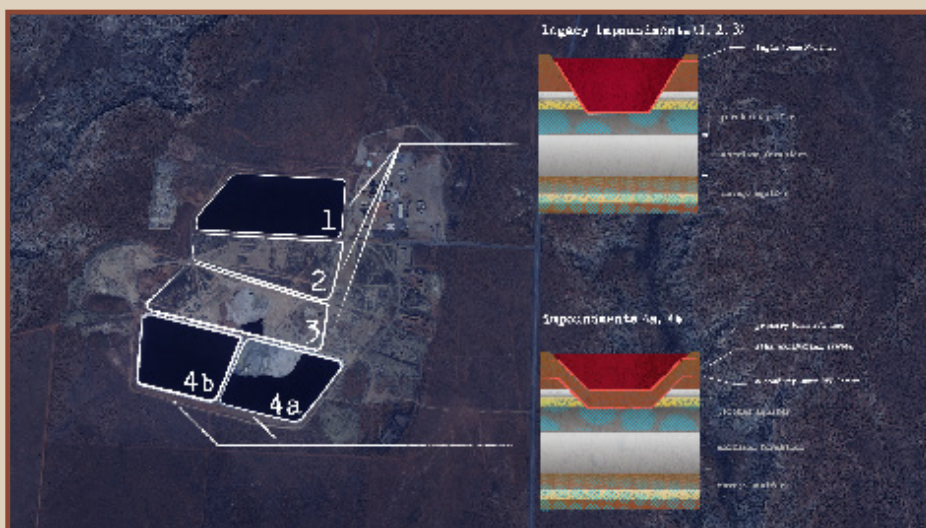
Press release

Send out a press release! Find a sample press release in this packet. For more information go to:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Press-Release>

Social media

Share the event with your friends and family on your social media channels, like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Sample social media posts are included in the resources section of this packet.





RESOURCES

In this section of the packet you can find materials for your screening.

Posters and graphics

- **Poster:** https://www.dropbox.com/s/0esmfewhapw4bq7/2016_03_02_HL_OneSheet.psd?dl=0
 - Fill in your own information for your event.
- **High Resolution Images:** <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/b5hoez62glyvlz0/AAB-2KtJiJ9cXM9LPhIzXR-na?dl=0>
- **Logo:** https://www.dropbox.com/s/8f23g7jnt2ehjme/2016_04_02_GCT_HL_LogoOutlines.eps?dl=0
- **Social Media Graphics/ Marketing Resources:** <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B5zwGFwayU1WdGjX-2ZJVUFSbE0>



FACT SHEET

What is the White Mesa Mill?

- The White Mesa Mill is the only conventional uranium mill licensed to operate in the United States. Through subsidiaries, Canada-based Energy Fuels Inc. owns and operates the mill and uranium mines that supply ore to the mill. The mill is located three miles north of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's White Mesa Ute community and six miles south of Blanding, Utah. It was built in 1979 to process uranium ore from the Colorado Plateau. In 1987, it began receiving "alternate feed material" (uranium-bearing radioactive waste) for processing. From 1999 to the early 2000s, the mill processed only alternate feed. Since then, the mill has intermittently processed both uranium ore and alternate feed from across North America. Energy Fuels disposes of the mill's radioactive and toxic waste tailings in "impoundments" that take up about 275 acres next to the mill.

What are the tailings impoundments?

- There are currently five tailings impoundments (Cells 1, 2, 3, 4A, and 4B) in the mill's tailings-management system. These impoundments receive tailings, including waste processing solutions, that are laden with radioactive and toxic elements.

What are the health and environmental hazards?

- Cells 1, 2, and 3 at the White Mesa Mill were constructed with thin plastic liners between two layers of crushed rock. The liners in those cells had a useful life of 20 years when they were installed in the early 1980s and have never been replaced.
- The leak detection system in Cells 1, 2, and 3 lacks a double liner and will not detect a leak until groundwater has already been contaminated.
- The mill emits radioactive and toxic air pollutants including radon and thoron (gases) and sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (particulates). Windblown particulates and gases travel off-site. Energy Fuels has stockpiled both ore and alternate feed on-site. Many of the stockpiled materials are not adequately covered and can blow off-site. White Mesa residents report smelling pollutants from the mill.
- Trucks loaded with ore and hazardous materials travel on Arizona and Utah highways to reach the mill. Alternate feed materials are usually off-loaded from the railroad at Cisco, Utah, trucked to Interstate 70, east to Highway 191, and south through Moab, Monticello, and Blanding to the mill. Ore from the mines in the Grand Canyon region travels north through the Navajo Nation and Bluff to the mill.
- There has been a nine-year delay in the renewal of the mill's radioactive materials license and approval of an updated reclamation plan for the mill.
- There are plumes of increased levels of nitrate, nitrite, chloride, heavy metals and radionuclides, and a trend of decreasing pH in the perched aquifer beneath the mill site.
- Radon emissions are not measured from Cells 1, 4A, or 4B, and the actual amount of radon emissions from these impoundments is unknown. In both 2012 and 2013, radon emissions from Cell 2 at the mill exceeded the limits established by the Clean Air Act.



What are other community concerns?

- The mill was built on sacred ancestral lands of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. More than 200 rare and significant cultural sites are located on the mill site. These include burial sites, large kivas and pit houses, storage pits, and artifacts. When the mill and its tailings impoundments were constructed, several significant archaeological sites were destroyed. These included pit houses, kivas, burial sites, and food-processing and storage structures.
- Many residents in the communities of White Mesa and Bluff are concerned that the Navajo Sandstone Aquifer, which provides drinking water to the area, will be contaminated. This primary drinking water aquifer lies underneath the mill site.
- Uranium ore is trucked to the mill through tribal lands and towns across the Colorado Plateau.

What is processed at the White Mesa Mill and where does it come from?

Selected Examples:

- Up to 5,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste per site from various in-situ leaching sites in Wyoming, North Dakota, Nebraska, and Texas for direct disposal.
- Uranium ore from uranium mines in the Grand Canyon region.
- 32,000 short tons of material resulting from Fanstall FMRI's industrial processing of tantalum and niobium (Muskogee, Oklahoma).
- More than 300,000 tons of contaminated soil (Tonawanda, New York, Ashland 1 FUSRAP and Linde FUSRAP sites).
- Contaminated materials removed from FUSRAP sites in St. Louis, Missouri.
- 2,343 tons of calcium fluoride and 2,475 tons of KOH solution (Allied Signal, Metropolis, Illinois).
- 17,000 tons of waste sludge containing lead, thorium, uranium, and other toxic metals (Molycorp, Inc. mine at Mountain Pass, California).
- 4,500 tons of uranium mining waste (Midnite Mine Superfund Site, Spokane Indian Reservation, Washington).

Who regulates the mill?

- The mill is subject to Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Utah Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control regulations. Radon emissions from the tailings are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. The Mine Safety and Health Administration regulates worker health and safety.



FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Utah Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control:

<http://www.deq.utah.gov/businesses/E/energyfuels/whitemesamill.htm>

Utah Department of Environmental Quality Electronic Document Management System:

<http://eqedocs.utah.gov/>

Canadian Securities Administrators System for Electronic Document Analysis and Retrieval Files:

<http://www.sedar.com/DisplayProfile.do?lang=EN&issuerType=03&issuerNo=00004321>

Energy Fuels Resources Inc.: <http://www.energyfuels.com/>

Environmental Protection Agency Subpart W Radon Emission Standard Rulemaking:

<https://www.epa.gov/radiation/subpart-w-rulemaking-activity>



"Half Life" FAQs

What is a uranium mill?

Conventional milling is one of the two primary recovery methods that are currently used to extract uranium from mined ore. Trucks deliver uranium ore to the mill, where it is crushed into smaller particles before being extracted (or leached). In most cases, sulfuric acid is the leaching agent, but alkaline solutions can also be used to leach the uranium from the ore. (In addition to extracting 90 to 95 percent of the uranium from the ore, the leaching agent also extracts several other “heavy metal” constituents, including molybdenum, vanadium, selenium, iron, lead, and arsenic.) The mill then concentrates the extracted uranium to produce a material, called “yellowcake” because of its yellowish color. Finally, the yellowcake is transported to a uranium conversion facility, where it is processed through the stages of the nuclear fuel cycle to produce fuel for use in nuclear power reactors.

Why is the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe involved in the White Mesa Mill campaign?

The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is a sovereign nation with tribal lands in both Colorado and Utah. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe’s ancestral lands extend across the Colorado Plateau and Four Corners region. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe has a satellite community in White Mesa, Utah – only three miles from the White Mesa Mill. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe is involved in the effort to protect its members and lands from uranium mill contamination.

Why should I care about uranium mining and milling?

Uranium mine wastes contain complex mixtures of heavy metals and radionuclides. When uranium is dug up and subject to industrial processes, it makes radionuclides more available to be inhaled or ingested. Absorption of uranium and radionuclides into the human body can cause a variety of health issues, including kidney damage, lung cancer, bone diseases, and reproductive impacts.

Uranium mill tailings contain radioactive materials, including radium-226 and heavy metals which can leach into groundwater. Near tailings piles, water samples have shown levels of contaminants at hundreds of times the government’s acceptable level for drinking water.

Uranium mining and milling operations have disproportionately affected indigenous populations across the globe. For example, nearly one third of all mill tailings from abandoned mill operations are on Navajo Nation lands. Many Native Americans have died of lung cancer linked to work in uranium mines. Many others suffer the effects of land and water contamination due to seepage and spills from tailings piles.

In the Grand Canyon region, detrimental impacts to groundwater resources have been seen at a number of previous and ongoing uranium mining sites in northern Arizona. Sampling summarized by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) in 2010 showed that 15 springs and five wells contained dissolved uranium concentrations in excess of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for drinking water. These locations “are related to mining processes.” The regional aquifer groundwater wells at the Canyon, Pinenut, and Hermit uranium mines as well as the sumps at the base of the Pigeon and Hermit mines have all exhibited dissolved uranium concentrations in excess of drinking water standards. Additionally, radionuclide-laden dust has blown off numerous mine sites in the Grand Canyon region and caused documented elevated levels of uranium, arsenic, and radiation.



Who is fighting uranium mining and milling contamination on the Colorado Plateau?

Tribal nations across the plateau, including the Navajo Nation, Havasupai Tribe, Hualapai Tribe, Hopi Tribe, Zuni Pueblo, and the Kaibab Paiute Tribe have all taken leadership roles in protecting their ancestral lands from uranium contamination.

The Grand Canyon Trust, Uranium Watch, Amigos Bravos, Earthworks, DINÉ No Nukes, and Clean Up the Mines are all doing important work to protect the Colorado Plateau from uranium mining and milling.

How much uranium mining and milling is happening in the United States and where?

The majority of the underground uranium mining activity in the United States occurs on the Colorado Plateau and most of the active underground mines are located in northern Arizona. With one exception, these underground uranium mines are on standby status currently, and will likely remain on standby until uranium prices boom. In the Powder River Basin and Texas, uranium industry operators are mining uranium using in-situ leaching (ISL). ISL technology involves injecting chemicals into an aquifer that contains a uranium ore deposit. When the chemicals are injected into an aquifer, they create a chemical reaction with the uranium, causing it to spread over large areas of an aquifer. The uranium plume is brought to the surface with a series of “production wells” and processed for shipment to enrichment facilities. There are currently eight ISL sites in the United States with numerous sites in the midst of the permitting process. The White Mesa Mill is the only operating conventional uranium mill in America and the site where all ore from underground mines is processed.



Letter to Decision-Makers

Attn: Scott Anderson
Division Director, Utah Division of Waste Management and Radiation Control
P.O. Box 144880
Salt Lake City, UT
84114-4880

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am writing to express my concern about the threat that the White Mesa Mill poses to the nearby communities and environment, particularly to the groundwater that underlies the White Mesa Mill site.

I am familiar with the pattern of groundwater contamination due to uranium milling activity across the Colorado Plateau and Four Corners region. Examples include the Tuba City Mill, the Atlas tailings pile, and the Monticello Mill site.

I am deeply concerned that the White Mesa Mill will permanently contaminate the perched aquifer underlying the mill site, and threaten contamination of the deeper Navajo Aquifer. A serious cause of concern is the fact that monitoring wells penetrate both the perched aquifer and the Navajo Aquifer, and could act as contaminant pathways from the upper aquifer to the Navajo Aquifer. I urge you to address this issue by requiring the company to permanently dewater and close the legacy impoundments at the White Mesa Mill site – namely Cells 1, 2, and 3.

I am also concerned about the lack of an adequate bond at the White Mesa Mill. The current surety amount is significantly less than what it has taken to remediate comparable sites on the Colorado Plateau. I urge you to reconsider the surety amount for the White Mesa Mill.

Overall, I urge you to exercise your full discretion as regulators by requiring the most rigorous pollution controls for the site. As a facility that receives waste from Superfund sites and contaminated sites across North America, it is imperative that the White Mesa Mill is held to the highest standards required by law. I do not want to see another Superfund site in the heart of the Colorado Plateau, and the region's scarce groundwater resources cannot be compromised. As decision-makers, you have the ability to protect this region and its communities from toxic and radioactive contamination.

Thank you for your consideration,

Name:

Address:

Email:



SOCIAL CONTENT

Hashtags:

#waterislife

#uranium

Facebook:

Everyone who loves southeastern Utah's redrock and desert waters needs to know about the White Mesa Uranium Mill: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

If you hike, climb, bike, raft, breathe, drink the water, and enjoy the scenery between Monument Valley & Canyonlands, you need to know about the White Mesa Uranium Mill: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

"People at the state and government level really need to look at this." -Malcolm Lehi, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Councilman: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

Uranium mined at the Grand Canyon ends up here: the White Mesa Mill, where the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, environmental groups, and nearby residents worry about toxic waste poisoning their water: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

The Canadian company that mines uranium around the Grand Canyon ships it to Utah's White Mesa Mill, where thin layers of old plastic separate the mill's toxic wastes from groundwater: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

Uranium and radioactive waste from across the country are shipped to Utah's White Mesa Mill, on the doorstep of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's White Mesa Community: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

Thin layers of old plastic separate huge pools of toxic uranium and radioactive waste from groundwater near a Ute Mountain Ute tribal community. Is it enough to protect their sacred springs? <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

Would you trust thin layers of old plastic to protect your drinking water from huge pools of toxic, radioactive uranium mill waste? We aren't convinced either: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

With a half-life of 4.5 billion years, uranium contamination is forever. Don't let the White Mesa Uranium Mill poison Utah's precious water: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0>

Twitter:

America's last #uranium mill & the Native American tribe whose drinking water lies below it: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0> #waterislife

Ute Mountain Ute tribe worries America's last #uranium mill is poisoning their sacred water <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0> #waterislife

Would you drink the water downstream from America's last #uranium mill? In Utah, towns have no choice: <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0> #waterislife

Is America's last #uranium mill poisoning Utah's precious water? <http://gctru.st/1oGt4g0> #waterislife #utpol

Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE

CONTACTS

Malcolm Lehi, Ute Mountain Ute Tribal Councilman, (970) 529-0806, mlehi@utemountain.org

Anne Mariah Tapp, Energy Program, Grand Canyon Trust, (512) 565-9906, atapp@grandcanyontrust.org

Justin Clifton, Filmmaker, Clifton Design, 970 401-0831, jwclifton@gmail.com

Film Raises Concerns About Uranium Mill's Impact to Groundwater

White Mesa, UT—The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and environmental organizations worry that the White Mesa Uranium Mill, the nation's last conventional uranium mill, threatens the water quality of vital springs and poses a long-term threat to the Navajo Aquifer, the main source of drinking water for south-eastern Utah and northern Arizona. These concerns are highlighted in the new film, "Half Life" [12 min].

The White Mesa Uranium Mill, located between Bluff and Blanding, Utah, three miles from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's White Mesa community, processes uranium ore mined around the Grand Canyon as well as toxic waste from Superfund and radioactive waste sites as far away as New York and New Jersey. Through subsidiaries, Canada-based Energy Fuels Inc. owns and operates the mill, as well as uranium mines that supply ore to the mill.

Environmental Injustice

"People at the state and government level really need to look at this," says Ute Mountain Ute Councilman Malcolm Lehi, featured in the film. The tribe and environmental groups are concerned that the mill's toxic waste ponds will leak and contaminate groundwater. This would have significant impacts on tribal members' traditional and cultural uses of the area.

The mill was built on Ute Mountain Ute ancestral lands, with hundreds of rare and significant cultural sites located on the mill site, including burial sites, large kivas, and pit houses. Several significant archaeological sites were destroyed when the mill and tailings ponds were constructed.

Old Liners and Insufficient Leak Detection Systems

The mill processes both uranium ore and alternate feed (uranium-bearing radioactive waste) from across North America. The radioactive and toxic waste that remains after processing is disposed of in open pits called "impoundments" that take up about 275 acres next to the mill. The older impoundments at the mill are lined with thin layers of PVC, and the RRD International Corp, a team of mining experts, has concluded that these liners had a useful life of 20 years when installed in the early 1980s. The older liners also lack modern leak detection systems that would prevent groundwater contamination.

The Water Connection

"In arid southeastern Utah, we can't afford to gamble with our precious water resources," says Anne Mariah Tapp, Energy Program Director for the Grand Canyon Trust. "Contamination of the deeper Navajo Aquifer would be catastrophic for the region."

To date, no contamination has reached the four springs regularly monitored by the tribe, but evidence of growing plumes of contaminants in the perched aquifer below the mill site continues to mount.

Telling the Story

"We made this film to shed light on an important story that has flown under the radar," says filmmaker Justin Clifton, "there are serious problems at the White Mesa Mill that must be corrected to protect the long-term health of south-eastern Utah's communities and environment. Public awareness of these issues is a critical part of effecting change."

Additional Information:

- Photos: Aerial (Credit: Dom Smith, EcoFlight); Grand Canyon radiation sign (Credit: Blake McCord); Canyon Uranium Mine, owned and operated by Energy Fuels (Credit: Blake McCord)
- Maps: Proposed Bears Ears National Monument showing proximity to White Mesa Mill; Uranium mines and claims around the Grand Canyon; Toxic waste shipments to the White Mesa Mill; Canyon Uranium Mine haul route to the White Mesa Mill
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe's request for agency action before the Utah Department of Environmental Quality.

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Email Example to Friends/Organizations

Dear _____ ,

I am excited to announce a film screening of “Half Life” that I am helping to bring to our town on **DATE** at **LOCATION**.

The 12-minute film, “Half Life”, is designed to draw attention to ongoing contamination and regulatory failures at the White Mesa Mill, and to the mill’s role as a keystone in the North American uranium industry. The Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, Uranium Watch, and the Grand Canyon Trust have all used the legal and regulatory process, including the Trust’s ongoing citizen suit in federal district court, to exert pressure on the mill owners and regulators. However, the White Mesa Mill has never received large-scale public attention; indeed, even local residents are largely unaware that the mill receives some of the most toxic wastes (ISL and alternate feed) in North America as well as ore mined across the Colorado Plateau. The mill has managed to fly under the radar despite the growing threat to the nearby town of White Mesa, a Ute Mountain Ute Tribal community located only three miles from the mill. This lack of public scrutiny has allowed regulators to take a pass.

Please join us to learn about the mill and join in a discussion on ways we can help protect our clean air and water. Spread the words with your friends and family as well so we can get the message out!

Thank you,
NAME