

# C.A.R.D. NEWSLETTER

October 5, 2008



## Coloradoans Against Resource Destruction

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### Uranium Rules Being Written Now

On May 20, 2008, Colorado Governor Bill Ritter signed House Bill 1161, the most comprehensive state legislation in the U.S. on in situ leach uranium mining and ground water protection. State legislators Steve Johnson, John Kefalas, and Randy Fischer -- all from Fort Collins -- sponsored the bill.

Some people thought that we had “won” the battle against uranium mining when the law passed. Not so. In fact, laws alone cannot stop anything. Laws must be enforced, and that starts with writing rules that say exactly what a law means.

The rulemaking process has already started. The uranium mining companies, the Colorado Mining Association, and their allies will attempt to weaken the rules. We need to be sure the rules are strong and protect our communities and our water. The agency responsible for the rulemaking is the Division of Reclamation Mining and Safety. Watch their website (<http://mining.state.co.us>) and ours ([www.nunnglow.com](http://www.nunnglow.com)) for updates.

Rulemaking includes public hearings, and we all need to be ready. Letting state rule-makers know that thousands of Colorado residents want strong protection – and over 10,000 have already signed petitions – is one way we can insure that the will of the people is incorporated into these rules.

### Permit Applications Expected

Powertech Uranium Corp. is expected to file its permit application(s) to mine uranium just northeast of Fort Collins in the next few months. Watch CARD’s website, our newsletter, and your local media for information. We will need to take action – and “we” means everyone reading this paragraph – at that time.

Everyone in the State of Colorado has a say on whether uranium mining is permitted here. Let your voice be heard!

## Donations Needed

The uranium industry has deep pockets and will likely hire a number of pro-uranium mining consultants to testify at the upcoming rulemaking hearings (see above). In contrast, concerned citizens and landowners who are trying to protect our water rely on your donations to hire experts to analyze and comment on proposed rules.

Everyone needs to do their part – large or small – to stop uranium mining from polluting our water and land. Please donate today by mailing your check to the address shown or at [www.nunnglow.com](http://www.nunnglow.com).

## Help “Keep an Eye” on Things

In the past – including the past year -- uranium companies have moved into an area quietly, bought up leases and mineral rights from people who didn't know about uranium mining, and some even started drilling without the necessary state or county permits. Locally, several companies have quietly bought up leases in eastern Weld County. In the last uranium boom, the only thing that stopped a company that had started mining without a permit was an alert citizen who reported “unusual” truck activity in their area!

Citizens need to keep a close eye on activity in their area, on legal notices in the local newspaper, and on state offices and websites. If you see any activity or a legal notice, contact your county and state regulators and ask a lot of questions. Please also contact CARD. We are happy to provide information and, if necessary, help you hold state and company officials accountable.

It is up to every one of us to insure that all regulations are followed and that companies don't start drilling before they have met all the legal requirements. We have laws and regulations for a reason – to protect people, our livestock, the wildlife, and our water. And we deserve to have them enforced.

Remember that companies don't have to mine to contaminate our water. All they have to do is drill. So keep asking those questions!

## Wyoming Fines Uranium Company \$1 Million

The nation's largest in situ uranium mine, the Smith Ranch-Highland mine north of Glenrock, Wyoming, was cited and fined for regulatory violations that had been happening for years. Power Resources Inc (PRI), a division of Cameco, runs the Smith Ranch-Highland mine.

This is the same type of mining operation that is proposed right now in Weld County, just a few miles from Fort Collins, Wellington, Nunn, Greeley, Windsor, Ault, and Timnath. The city governments in Fort Collins, Greeley, Ault, and Timnath have all passed resolutions against the proposed mining.

According to the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality in its Notice of Violation 4231-08, “Given that PRI's operation has for many years been the major uranium producer in Wyoming, there is an expectation that the operation might serve as a model for excellence in ISL mining. Unfortunately this is not the case. There are a number of long-standing environmental concerns at this operation that demand immediate attention.”

The report goes on to identify the following problems that the “model for excellence” in situ leach mining in the United States was cited for: “Failure to reclaim the water as scheduled.” “Near total disturbance of the native vegetation and soils”. “Over the years there have been an inordinate number of spills, leaks and other releases at this operation.” In fact, “Some 80 spills have been reported, in addition to numerous pond leaks, well casing failures, and excursions. Unfortunately it appears that such occurrences have become routine.”

On its website, PRI comments on the Smith-Ranch Highland mine, saying that “Mining at Smith Ranch-Highland uses an environment-friendly extraction method called in situ recovery (ISR).” The state of Wyoming disagrees, and so does CARD.

If you do not want this sort of mess in our area, make a donation today so that we can continue our fight against this dangerous activity.

## **Uranium Mining Contaminates Drinking Water in Southwest**

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is working with the Navajo Nation, federal agencies, and community organizations to ensure that Navajo families do not drink water that is contaminated with uranium or other heavy metals. About a third of the Navajo Nation’s population is not served by a public water system. These residents either haul water from unregulated sources -- such as livestock wells, springs, or private wells -- or from regulated watering points in a town.

In March 2008, the EPA tested 50 unregulated water sources on the Navajo Nation in the “Four Corners” region. The Centers for Disease Control sampled over 100 additional sources. Of these, 22 were found to exceed standards for radiation. The water from 21 of these sources is being used for human consumption.

Because of this, Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., announced in 2007, that the Navajo Nation remains opposed to uranium mining on or near its land, and will take whatever action necessary to prevent it.

EPA and its local partners are posting advisory signs at contaminated water sources and issuing health advisories to affected residents. EPA and the Navajo Nation will continue to test unregulated water sources. When water sources are contaminated, the EPA may use its “Superfund” authority to take appropriate clean-up action.

Private wells are not regulated in Colorado either. They can be polluted, and no one will know -- unless the well owner gets the water tested. Do not, under any circumstances, let a uranium company test your water. They want to be able to say that your water is always clean – even after mining -- or that it was already polluted before they started drilling. With all the old drill holes from the 1970s in the area, this is quite possible.

If you live in a proposed mining area, stay safe – keep testing your water. (Some information from <http://www.epa.gov/region09/waste/sfund/navajo-nation/contaminated-water.html>)

## Mill That Handles Colorado Uranium Wants to Expand

When uranium is mined by using the open pit or underground methods, it is processed to make “yellowcake” at a mill. The mill crushes and purifies the uranium ore. This leaves huge piles of wastes called “tailings,” which are 85% as radioactive as the original ore.

Some tailings piles are still not cleaned up -- 25 years after the last uranium boom ended. This includes tailings from a mill near Moab, UT, that was formerly owned by Atlas Minerals. There, clean-up was overseen by the current Vice President for Health, Safety and Environmental Resources for Powertech Uranium Corp. Atlas went bankrupt in 1998, leaving the tailings pile behind. The estimated cost to taxpayers for cleaning up this site is in the tens of millions of dollars.

The only uranium mill currently operating in the U.S. is the Denison Mines Corp. mill, which is just west of the Colorado border in Blanding, UT. It processes ore mined in San Miguel County, CO, where three mines are active.

According to San Miguel County officials, the company has been hauling more ore than its permit allows. The County will raise this issue in upcoming public hearings. The hearings are a result of Denison’s application for a permit to expand its waste dump in San Miguel County. The federal Bureau of Land Management will consider the application.

Colorado’s only uranium mill, run by Cotter Corporation, near Cañon City, has decided against efforts to dispose of radioactive material and instead is deciding whether it is feasible to refurbish and reopen the mill. The mill operated from 1958 to 1979, then intermittently until 2006. It became a Superfund site in the 1980s.

On July 25, 2008, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) issued a Notice of Violation to Cotter Corp. for exceeding the 30 microgram per liter groundwater standard for uranium north and west of the mill complex. Cotter Corp. also pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, in connection with a spill of approximately 4,500 gallons of organic solvent which escaped from a building at the processing facility and flowed into a catchment pond.

Two applications have also been filed to build additional uranium mills.

One would be in Paradox Valley, CO, and the other would be near Green River, UT. For more information on the Colorado plan, see

<http://www.montrosepress.com/articles/2008/08/11/news/doc489bae27c0af9567371249.txt>

## Who Are We?

CARD (Coloradoans Against Resource Destruction) is a diverse collection of citizens concerned about the health, environmental and economic impacts of uranium-related activity. Our goal is to prevent uranium mining in Colorado and protect our valuable resources, especially our water, for future generations.

The CARD website, [www.nunnglow.com](http://www.nunnglow.com), has a wealth of information about the proposed mining, the processes and the potential impact on our air and water. On our website you can learn what you can do to stop the proposed uranium mining, sign an online petition and make a donation.