



Abandoned Uranium Mines - Sections 32 and 33 Mines

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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 9 is working to protect the residents of Casamero Lake Chapter by cleaning up leftover mine waste from past uranium mining operations. Uranium mining operations occurred throughout the Navajo Nation from the 1940s to the 1980s. The Cobb Nuclear Company operated uranium mines in the Casamero Lake Chapter area and uranium ore was mined and taken out of the area. Now USEPA is looking at two mines called the Section 32 and Section 33 mines.

At the Section 32 mine, there is an unfenced deep mine shaft at the southeast portion of the site.

The leftover uranium ore has more radiation than the surrounding area and people should avoid touching it or walking near the mines. Livestock should not be allowed to walk or graze in this area.

USEPA Region 9 assessed the uranium ore and mining waste at the mine areas and found elevated levels of contaminated soil that need to be cleaned up to protect human health and the environment.

Over time, the contaminated soils in the Section 32 mine area have migrated due to wind and rain. We also found that areas outside the Section 32 mine area contain contaminated soils. Because of the health risks, USEPA Region 9 is removing the contaminated soil from the area around the Section 32 Mine site, including the former transfer area to the south of the Section 32 mine area, and building a temporary stockpile on top of the Section 32 Mine. The consolidated pile will be temporarily stored and sealed using soil tackifier to stabilize and prevent the contaminated soil from moving. After the soil is sealed at Section 32 Mine to prevent exposure to people and livestock, a fence will be placed around the pile with signs warning people to keep out. This removal action is a temporary measure to stabilize the contaminated soil while a final disposal solution is developed by the Navajo Nation government. USEPA and Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency (NNEPA) will discuss the final disposal options and timeframe with the community before making any decisions about permanent disposal.

USEPA will apply water when moving the soil to prevent dust. There will be constant air quality monitoring during excavation activities to make sure that residents in the immediate area will be safe from any dust coming from the excavation. It is expected the removal action will take 4-6 weeks to complete.

Contact Us

For specific questions about the Sections 32 and 33 Mines, please contact:

United States EPA

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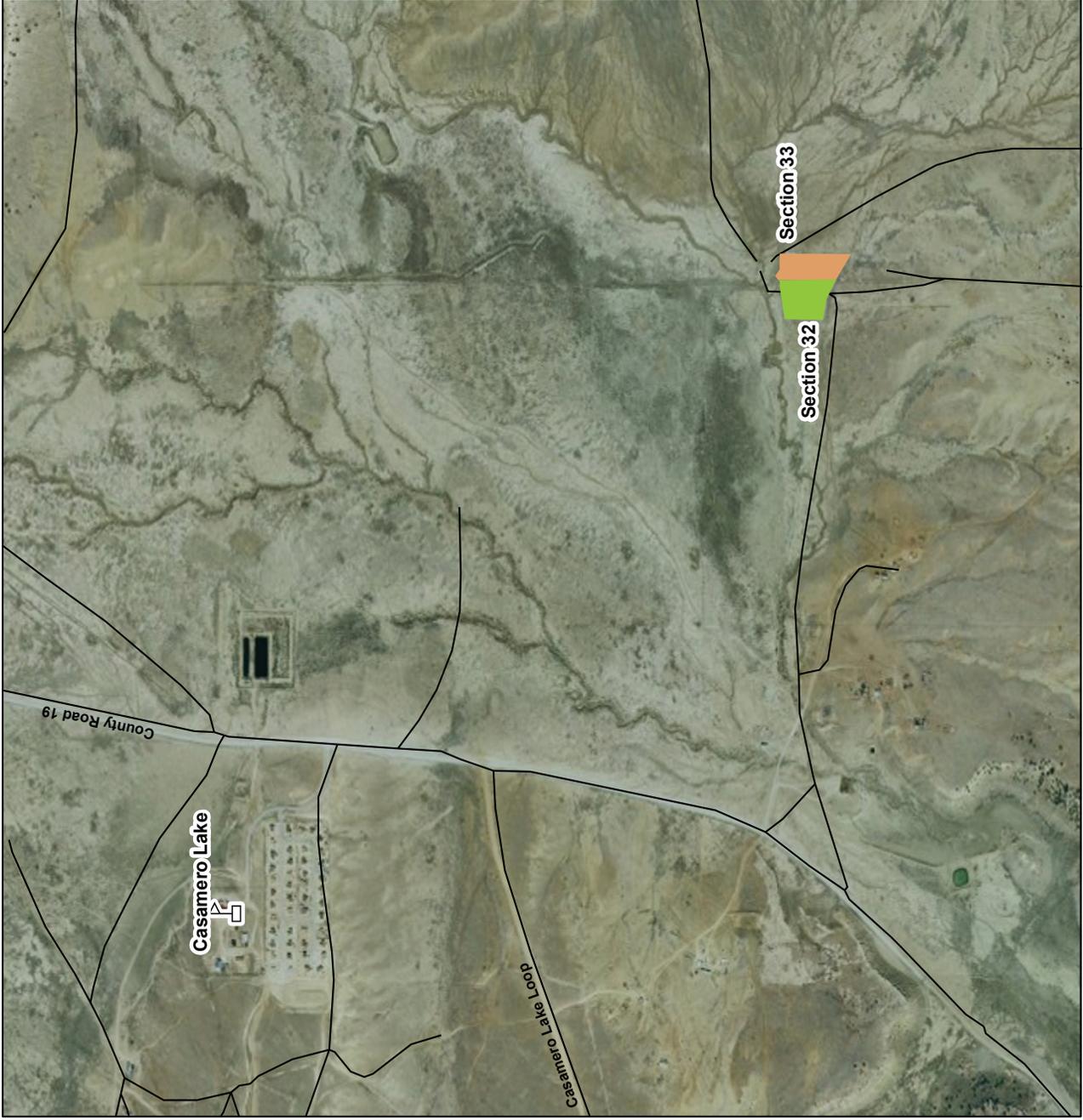
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Legend

- Chapter House Location
- Mine Area**
 - Section 33
 - Section 32

0 500 1,000 1,500 Feet

Navajo Nation
EPA
Environmental Protection Agency

**Abandoned Uranium Mine
Section 32 and 33**

Area Location Map

**Casamero Lake Chapter
Navajo Nation, New Mexico**

United States
Environmental Protection Agency