



VOICES *from the* EARTH



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IN THIS ISSUE

Post-1971 Uranium Workers Look for Answers	2
Uranium Projects Proceed Despite Stagnant Price	4
Church Rock Spill: 30 Years Later	6
A Community Member's Perspective on Uranium Mine Cleanup	7
Environmental Justice, the Green Economy, and the Politics of Diversity	8
Special Events Showcase Support for SRIC's Work	10
BOOK REVIEWS:	11
• <i>American Environmental Leaders: From Colonial Times to the Present</i>	
• <i>Remedies for a New West: Healing Landscapes, Histories, and Cultures</i>	
• <i>The Nature Way</i>	
SRIC Extras	12



“Remember...
*We are one people.
 We cannot separate ourselves now.
 There are many good things to be done for our people and for the world.
 It is important to let things be good.
 And it is important to teach the younger generation so that things are not lost.*”

— CORBIN HARNEY,
 WESTERN SHOSHONE SPIRITUAL LEADER
 1920–2007

Uranium mining — historical and future — continues to be a divisive issue in New Mexico. Community members affected by the dangers of past uranium mining are united in the belief that cleanup must be done. They have dealt with the polluting effects of uranium mining on their lands and their health for more than 50 years. Enough is enough.

In July, hundreds of people commemorated the 30th anniversary of the Church Rock Uranium Mill Tailings Spill, an event that dumped more than a million gallons of uranium contaminated mill tailings into the Puerco River, flowing past numerous Navajo communities, Gallup, NM, and spreading into Arizona. The Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE) organized a series of events to commemorate the day (see page 6). Yet for those living in the shadow of the Northeast Church Rock Mine, community members live with the stress of watching loved ones suffer from disease, and the knowledge of being surrounded by land, air, and water contaminated by substances they cannot see, feel, or taste. Cleanup of the mine is beginning, but the fears continue (page 7).

Federal compensation for some of the health problems experienced by uranium workers is limited to those who worked before 1971. But that does not limit the legacy of health effects from uranium mining and milling. The Post '71 Uranium Workers Committee was created in 2007 to survey uranium workers about working

conditions in the mines and their medical conditions. Findings from the surveys are reported on pages 2–3.

Future uranium mining is on the agenda with some state and federal agencies as companies apply for exploration and mining permits and want to “streamline” existing regulations. We look at some new uranium projects being proposed in Colorado and New Mexico. A new uranium mill is being planned for Paradox Valley, Colorado, while projects are still being proposed for the Mount Taylor area in New Mexico, despite its designation as a Traditional Cultural Property. In addition, proposals for other New Mexico sites are moving forward, despite opposition from tribal governments and community members. (See pages 4–5.)

We also look at environmental justice. As we near the 20th anniversary of the “Letters to the Group of Ten” large environmental organizations, there are some new questions. How are the national environmental groups doing in terms of diversity? Is there a difference between the green jobs movement and the environmental justice movement? And, what is the future of the environmental justice movement? (See pages 8–9.)

SRIC also participated in a few special events that provided information about our work, and the opportunity to support the organization. We want to offer our appreciation for the many people and groups who made our special events possible: Bonnie Raitt, Taj Mahal, Indigie Femme, Fenders II, Andrew Thomas, and many, many others. Read about these events on page 11.

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