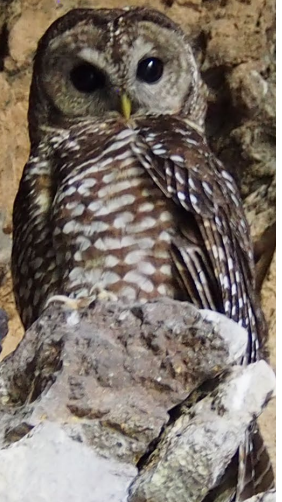


2024 Annual Report

New Mexico Mining Act Reclamation Program



Energy, Minerals & Natural Resources Department Mining and Minerals Division

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1. Executive Summary

This annual report summarizes activities regulated by, and related to, the Mining Act Reclamation Program (MARF) of the New Mexico Mining and Minerals Division. The New Mexico Mining Act Rules (Rules) requires an annual report to be provided to the New Mexico Mining Commission. The annual report is to contain a general description of mining operations, reclamation practices, proposed rule changes, and production figures for the state.

This report identifies activities related to the permitting and regulation of mines and mineral exploration under the Mining Act for the 2024 calendar year. In this report, MARF also provides production and reclamation statistics for the 2024 calendar year, as required by the Rules. This information is provided to MARF by the mine operators in annual reports that are required to be submitted by April of the following year. The 2024 information submitted in this report was provided by mine operators in April 2025.

This report also provides tables identifying all mining and exploration operations that have obtained a permit, or submitted a permit application, under MARF since its inception in 1994.

This report includes:

- Production figures for New Mexico mines active during the 2024 calendar year;
- A description of reclamation activities and practices related to specific mines in the State of New Mexico;
- A description and summary of exploration and mine permitting activities for the 2024 calendar year;
- Summary of reclaimed and disturbed acreage for 2024;
- Summary of any actions undertaken by the Mining Commission in 2024;
- Summary of financial assurance amounts and instruments for each approved mine site and exploration project.

2. General Description of Mining Operations

Permit Types

Mining operations in New Mexico are defined by the following terminology:

- Minimal Impact Mining Operations are small extractive operations that are less than 10 acres in size or are less than 40 acres in size for certain commodities such as dolomite, garnet, humate, perlite and zeolite operations that are located outside Bernalillo, Doña Ana and Santa Fe counties and are committed to performing concurrent reclamation. These mines can be up to 40 acres in size under a rule revision approved in 2016. Minimal impact mining operations can be designated as either existing or new operations. Existing operations are those that operated between January 1, 1970, and June 18, 1993, while new operations are those permitted after 1993.
- Regular Mining Operations are larger mining operations of unlimited acreage and can be designated as either existing or new operations. Existing regular mining operations are those that operated between January 1, 1970, and June 18, 1993, while new operations are those permitted after 1993.
- Minimal Impact Exploration Operations are those that create less than 5 acres of surface disturbance and meet the definition of “minimal impact mining operations” as defined by the Rules. These are typically small extractive operations that involve the sampling of ore bodies prior to full-scale mine development.
- Regular Exploration Operations are those that exceed 5 acres of surface disturbance or do not meet the definition of “minimal impact mining operations” as defined by the Rules.
- General Permit Operations cannot excavate materials greater than 200 cubic yards per year or disturb greater than 2 acres of surface at any one time. The General Permit category is typically used by hobby and recreational miners.

The Minimal Impact Exploration and General Permit categories make up the largest number of permitted operations. Table 1 shows the various types of mining and exploration operations, by category, that have received approved permits since the start of MARP in 1994.

Table 1. Mining Operations Approved from 1994 to 2024

Type of Operation	Description	Number of Operations
Regular Existing Mining	>10 acres of disturbance	31
Regular New Mining	>10 acres of disturbance	0
Minimal Impact Existing Mining	<10 or <40 acres of disturbance	24
Minimal Impact New Mining	<10 or <40 acres of disturbance	41
Regular Exploration	>5 acres of disturbance	9
Minimal Impact Exploration	<5 acres of disturbance	183
General (Recreational)	<200 cubic yards/yr of disturbance	417
Total Mining Operations Permitted		705

Permit Modifications and Revisions

Every year, MARP typically receives and processes several permit modifications and revisions, which can be just as time-consuming in processing and approving as new permit applications. Modifications and revisions can involve updating closeout plans, updating reclamation acreage, permit transfers, operator name changes, as well as adjustments to financial assurance instruments and amounts. In 2024, MARP approved six (6) modification applications and two (2) permit revisions.

Table 2. Approved Permit Applications – 2024

Type of Operation	Description	Number of Approved Operations
		2024
Regular New Mining	> 10 acres of disturbance	0
Minimal Impact New Mining	< 10 or <40 acres of disturbance	0
Regular Exploration	> 5 acres of disturbance	0
Minimal Impact Exploration	< 5 acres of disturbance	3
General Permits	< 200 cubic yards/yr of disturbance	4
Revisions	Revision to an Existing Permit	2
Modifications	Modification to an Existing Permit	6

*Additional On-Going Projects with Continued Permitting*Questa Mine Reclamation

Chevron Mining Inc.'s (CMI) Questa Mine has also involved a significant number of MARP staff

and has required numerous MARP resources over the last several years. The Questa Mine has been designated a federal U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Superfund Site and MARP has been coordinating state reclamation plans with the EPA's prescription for remediation under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) process. After an extensive remediation investigation and feasibility study were conducted, a Record of Decision (ROD) was signed in December 2010. Further, CMI announced the permanent closure of the Questa Mine during the calendar year 2014. A Partial Consent Decree/Settlement was agreed to with Chevron, EPA and the state agencies in August 2016 for approximately 25% of the permitting area. Much work remains to be done to address further reclamation of the site under the CERCLA process and bring the remainder of the site under another Partial Consent Decree. Reclamation of the former tailing impoundment commenced during 2019 and continued through 2024. Reclamation of the mill pond and Group 1 Waste Rock Stockpiles progressed throughout 2024. MARP performed monthly inspections of active reclamation at the Questa Mine throughout 2024.

Tronox Mine Reclamation

In 2014, the U.S. District Court approved a legal settlement of nearly \$1 billion for approximately 50 uranium mines that were operated by Kerr-McGee Corporation on or near the Navajo Nation. Collaborative work with EPA Region 9, EPA Region 6, the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico partners commenced in 2015. Since 2015, MARP has spent a considerable amount of time working with the various partners on prioritization of projects, review of documents, assistance with development of closure alternatives and providing management services and technical assistance. MARP continued to provide technical assistance to EPA Region 6 and the Navajo Nation throughout calendar year 2024, focused largely on the development of reclamation alternatives for the Quivira Mine and the Section 32/33 Mine.

Abandoned Uranium Mine Reclamation

House Bill 164 was signed into law in 2022 and directed the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to lead and coordinate the cleanup of abandoned uranium mine and mill sites across New Mexico. The bill also created a Uranium Mine Reclamation Coordinator position with NMED and a second position with MARP. The MARP Uranium Mine Reclamation Coordinator assisted NMED with contract development and site assessments of abandoned uranium mines throughout 2024.

Mt. Taylor Mine Reclamation

The Mt. Taylor Mine announced it was permanently closing in December 2019 and began implementation of the Closure/Closeout Plan in 2020. The Mt. Taylor Mine continued reclamation activities throughout 2024, including tasks such as dismantling the treated water pipeline, excavation and shipment of low-grade ore to the White Mesa Mill, updating the Closeout Plan (Revision 22-1) to support construction of a disposal cell in the South Waste Rock Pile, demolition of buildings, and other closeout activities. MARP performed monthly inspections of active reclamation activities and continued working through technical comments with the operator on Revision 22-1 throughout 2024.

Exploration Projects and General Permits

MARP approved three (3) minimal impact exploration permits in calendar year 2024, which are summarized below in Table 3.

Table 3: Approved Exploration Permits – 2024

Permit Number	Permit Name	Permit Operator	Commodity
GR094EM	Alhambra Project	Standard Silver Corp	Silver, Gold
SI056EM	Bella Group Lode Exploration	New Metals Strategies, LLC	Copper, Gold
SI057EM	Peloton Group Drolte Hole	Peloton Group LLC	Gold

Approved Minimal Impact Mining Projects in 2024

No minimal impact new mining permit applications were received or approved by MARP in calendar year 2024.

Table 4: Approved Minimal Impact Mining Permits – 2024

Permit Number	Permit Name	Permit Operator	Commodity
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Pending Regular Mine Applications

One (1) new conventional mine was engaged in some phase of permit development in New Mexico, a summary of which is provided in Table 5:

Table 5: Pending Regular Mine Permit Development – 2024

Project Name	Operator	Surface Ownership	Commodity	Proposed Permit Area (acres)
Permitting In-Progress				
La Jara Mesa Mine	Laramide Resources	U.S. Forest Service	Uranium	17

La Jara Mesa Mine:

The La Jara Mesa Mine proposed by Laramide Resources LTD is a conventional underground uranium mining and surface operation located in Cibola County. The proposed mine is located within the Mt. Taylor Traditional Cultural Property. The La Jara Mesa Mine application details an underground mine accessed from an incline portal with approximately 17 acres of surface disturbance. Laramide Resources restarted both the federal and state permitting processes in 2024.

Laramide Resources submitted the Baseline Data Report in 2024, which MARP evaluated alongside cooperating state agencies and the U.S. Forest Service. MARP also conducted tribal consultation meetings with Zia Pueblo and Acoma Pueblo representatives as well as other tribal entities during numerous field trips to the project area.

3. General Description of Reclamation Practices

An important step in determining whether a reclaimed mine site can be released from the Mining Act is evaluating revegetation success. Land disturbed by mining is required to be “...reclaimed to a self-sustaining ecosystem appropriate for the life zone of the surrounding areas following closure unless conflicting with the approved post-mining land use.” Common post-mining land uses are grazing land and wildlife habitat due to the remoteness of most mining operations, both of which require revegetation. Revegetation success is often determined through a comparison of ground cover of living perennial plants and plant species diversity relative to a reference area or technical standard. Line transects are a common method to record data like plant species presence, cover and density by taking readings at specific intervals along the transect. Other quantitative field methods include quadrat sampling and photo point monitoring. Remote sensing methods such as aerial photography, satellite imagery, and light detection and ranging (known as LiDAR) are also effective for large-scale projects or long-term monitoring.



Measuring revegetation success using line transects at Georgetown Mine.

Mines Fully Released from The Mining Act

Twenty-seven (27) mines have received a complete and final release for reclamation or for achieving the post-mine land use under the New Mexico Mining Act:

- Alley Gypsum Mine, Doña Ana County
- Arroyo Solar Pueblo Alto, McKinley County
- Black Hawk Tailings Impoundment, Grant County

- Boston Hill Mine, Grant County
- Brockman Mine, Hidalgo County
- Chaco Limestone Quarry, San Juan County
- Chino Limestone Mine, Grant County
- Copar South Pit Mine, Sandoval County
- CR Minerals Mill, Santa Fe County
- Cullum Claims Mine, Rio Arriba County
- Deming Jigging, Luna County
- Double Tree I Mine, McKinley County
- Georgetown Mine, Grant County
- KB Mine, Grant County
- Little Lode #3 Mine, Luna County
- Malone Mine, Grant County
- Mathis Limestone Quarry Mine, Grant County
- Mesa Verde Resources Mill, Sandoval County
- Pine Canyon/Spar Hill, Grant County
- Pinos Altos Mine, Grant County
- Sais Quarry Mine, Socorro County
- Section 14 Mine, McKinley County
- Section 2 Mine, McKinley County
- Shamrock Leach Site, Doña Ana County
- Toro Mine, Grant County
- U.S. Hill Mine, Taos County
- Velarde Mill, Rio Arriba County

Total Disturbance and Reclamation

Total disturbance and reclamation across the state are reported by the mine operators. Overall disturbed and reclaimed acreage under permit with MARP for the 2024 calendar year is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Disturbed and Reclaimed Acres – 2024

Calendar Year	Disturbed Acres To Date	Reclaimed Acres To Date
2024	27,220.20	7,760.40

4. Financial Assurance Update

A summary of the amount of financial assurance held by MARP for hard rock mining projects for the 2024 calendar year is shown in Table 7 below. Financial assurance is provided to the State of New Mexico by mining operators who have obtained approved permits and closeout plans. The forms of financial assurance include surety bonds, cash deposits, letters of credit, collateral (real estate), and third-party guarantees.

Table 7: Summary of Financial Assurance Held by MARP – 2024

Calendar Year	Financial Assurance Amount Held By MARP
2024	\$1,078,410,470.89

5. Amendments to the New Mexico Mining Act Rules

No amendments to the rules were taken by the New Mexico Mining Commission during calendar year 2024.

6. Mineral Production Statistics for New Mexico in 2024

According to U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and U.S. Energy Information Administration (US EIA for coal) reports, New Mexico continues to rank among the top producers of minerals in the United States for 2024:

- Potash: 1st (used primarily in fertilizer, and in lesser amounts for chemical and industrial applications)
- Perlite: 1st (used in building construction products, horticultural aggregate, and fillers)
- Zeolite: top 6 (used primarily in animal feed, odor control, and water purification applications)
- Copper: top 6 (used primarily in building construction, transportation equipment, and electrical and electronic products)
- Nonfuel Mineral Production: New Mexico ranks 23rd among the states, producing 1.45 percent of the U.S. total.

Total federal and state revenues generated by 2024 mineral production in New Mexico decreased 17.61 percent from 2023 levels, to \$25 million. State revenue information is provided by the Taxation and Revenue Department and the State Land Office and includes state trust land mineral lease royalties, rentals and bonuses, and associated taxes. Federal revenue information is provided by the Department of Interior's Office of Natural Resources Revenue and includes a 50 percent state share of federal royalties. In any production year, these revenues only accrue if the lessee is mining and producing commodities on federal or state land.

Copper was the largest employer in New Mexico's mining industry, followed by sand and gravel operations and coal operations. Reported industry payroll (excluding benefits) increased by 11 percent, from 2023 to \$312 million (Figure 1). Overall, reported employment increased slightly or was maintained in 2024. By category, compared to 2023, direct employment increased 0.31 percent from 3,562 to 3,573 employees; contract employment increased 1.80 percent from 725 to 738 employees; and reclamation employment increased 23 percent from 284 to 349 employees (Figure 2).

Table 8: Mineral Production Value, Rank, Employment, Payroll, and Revenue – 2024

Mineral	Production ¹	Production Rank ²	Production Value \$	Employment ³	Reclamation Employment	Payroll \$ ⁴	Revenue Generated \$ ⁵	
							State	Federal
Coal	7,203,935	14	\$ 409,619,447	724	204	\$ 66,725,936	\$ 3,508,397	\$ 1,577,168
Copper	175,174,715	3 *	\$ 738,547,109	1,488	7	\$ 112,264,956	\$ 6,053,313	\$ -
Gold ⁶	8,233	-	\$ 19,657,902	-	-	-	\$ 146,686	\$ -
Industrial Minerals ⁷	1,946,741	-	\$ 221,627,725	250	6	\$ 21,352,663	\$ 188,068	\$ 753,415
Aggregates ⁸	12,759,957	-	\$ 222,676,359	1,167	110	\$ 39,955,255	\$ 5,973,771	\$ -
Other Metals	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
Molybdenum	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$ -	\$ -
Potash	440,717	1	\$ 156,604,740	673	12	\$ 70,968,208	\$ 2,220,320	\$ 5,225,178
Silver ⁶	156,119	-	\$ 4,412,242	-	-	\$ -	\$ 30,525	\$ -
Uranium ⁹	-	-	\$ -	9	10	\$ 742,807	\$ -	\$ -
TOTAL			\$ 1,773,145,524	4,311	349	\$ 312,009,825	\$ 18,121,080	\$7,555,760

Source: Operator reports submitted to the Mining and Minerals Division, unless otherwise noted

¹ Production is in short tons for coal, industrial minerals, aggregates, other metals, and potash; in pounds for copper; and in troy ounces for gold and silver.

² Production rank, where available, is based on 2023 production in relation to other states.

Sources: Copper and potash: Mineral Resources Program, United States Geological Survey;

Coal: Energy Information Administration, United States Department of Energy

* NM Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources; Economic Impact of the Mineral Industry in New Mexico, 2024

³ Employment category includes direct and contract employees.

⁴ Payroll does not include benefits.

⁵ NM State Land Office revenue: mineral lease royalties, rentals, bonuses; NM Taxation and Revenue Department revenue: severance, resource excise, and conservation taxes.

Federal revenue includes 50% state share of federal royalties.

Sources: State data: New Mexico State Land Office, New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department

Federal data: Office of Natural Resources Revenue

⁶ Gold and silver are by-products of copper production. Employment/payroll for gold/silver included in copper.

⁷ Category includes brick clay, calcite, dimension stone, gypsum, humate, perlite, Portland cement, pumice, salt, silica, and zeolite; USGS ranks NM first in perlite and zeolite.

⁸ Category includes base course, caliche, clay and shale, crushed rock, flagstone, fill dirt, gravel, limestone, red dog, rip-rap, sand, scoria and topsoil.

⁹ Employment/payroll numbers are for reclamation activities/maintenance at closed mines and mills.

Figure 1. Percentage of Production Value, Employment, Payroll, and Revenue by Commodity - 2024

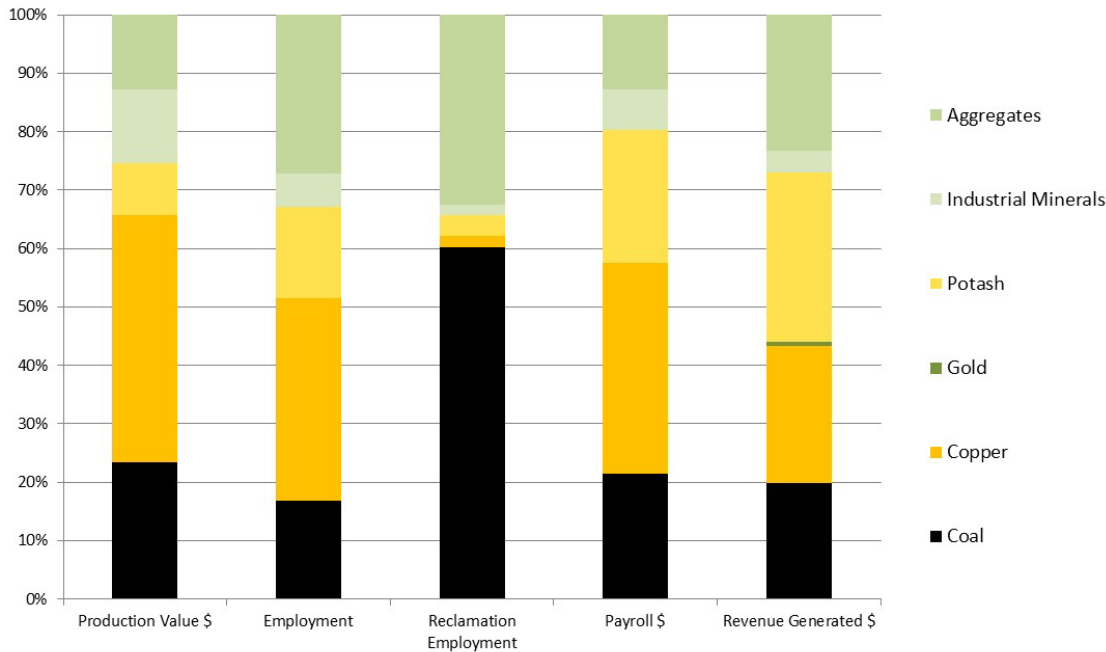


Figure 2. New Mexico Mineral Industry Employment from 2000-2024

