Keeping You in the Know

U.S. Department of Energy
Environmental Management Recovery Act

NEWS FLASH

October 28, 2010

Moab Site Disposes of 1.5 Million Tons of Mill Tailings in Recovery Act Milestone

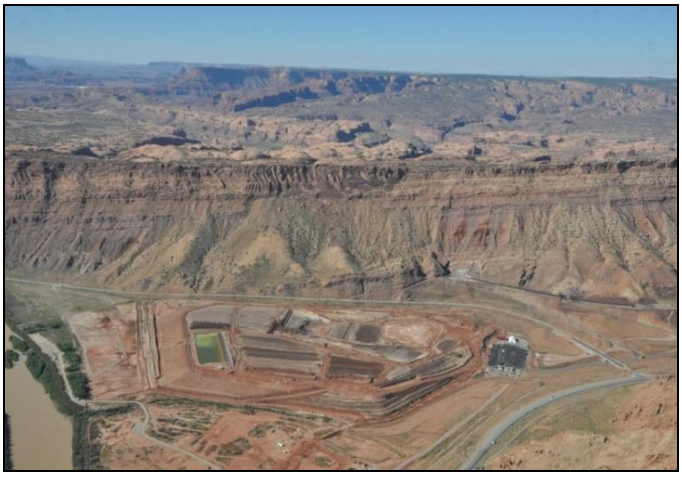
"Removing 1.5 million tons of tailings in less than 18 months after receiving our Recovery Act funding is a phenomenal accomplishment. The Moab Project was able to effectively and efficiently use the Recovery Act funds for their intended purpose: to create jobs to further progress on shovel-ready projects. We have done exactly that."
--Moab Federal Project Director Donald Metzler

MOAB, Utah –The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act delivered another milestone Oct. 27 as the Moab Uranium Mill Tailings Remedial Action Project celebrated the disposal of 1.5 million tons of uranium mill tailings. The $108 million Recovery Act project will remove 2 million tons of tailings in total.

The Moab project continues to show progress in moving the 16-million-ton tailings pile away from the Colorado River to a DOE-constructed disposal cell near Crescent Junction in Utah. A total of 2.5 million tons have been removed so far with Recovery Act and base program funding.

With more than 200 Recovery Act employees, the project has exceeded its commitment to save or create 160 jobs.

The tailings were shipped the 30-mile distance to the disposal cell by rail. Extensions to the rail spurs at both the Moab and Crescent Junction sites constructed last spring have enabled adding two more railcars to each of the two trains that ship the tailings five days a week. More than 5,000 tons of tailings are transported with each 36-car trainload. The Recovery Act funds about six of the 10 shipments a week. The balance is funded with annual appropriations.



A view of the Moab uranium mill tailings pile.

In July, workers began placing barrier layers of the final disposal cell cover for the portion of the cell where tailings have been compacted to the design height. Rock is being quarried, sized, and hauled 80 miles from Fremont Junction, Utah, to the Crescent Junction site, where it is being stockpiled for use as additional disposal cell cover layers.

Uranium ore was mined in significant quantities in the U.S. for more than 40 years. Mill tailings are the sand-like material that remains after the ore is processed.

Railcars carrying containers of mill tailings are unloaded at the Crescent Junction site.