

# NEVER AGAIN

## NUCLEAR IMPACTS AND LESSONS FROM ARAPAHOE, WY

### The Susquehanna-Western Uranium Mill

From 1958 to 1963, Susquehanna-Western Inc. operated a uranium mill located just southwest of Riverton, on the Wind River Reservation. To build this project, native people were either bought out or forcibly removed from their homesites, disrupting their community and livelihoods. Within just five years, this facility processed over 800,000 tons of ore. Upon its closure, it left behind a 72-acre mound of radioactive tailings that remained uncapped and unlined for more than two decades.

Rain and snowmelt caused uranium, thorium, and radium to leach directly into the surface aquifer. Although the surface was "remediated" in 1989 and the tailings were relocated to Gas Hills, uranium continued to persist in the groundwater. Initially, the Department of Energy (DOE) asserted that the aquifer would "naturally flush" itself by 2098. However, significant flooding in 2010 disproved this theory, mobilizing trapped contaminants and causing uranium levels in monitoring wells to surge to nearly 100 times the safe drinking water limit.

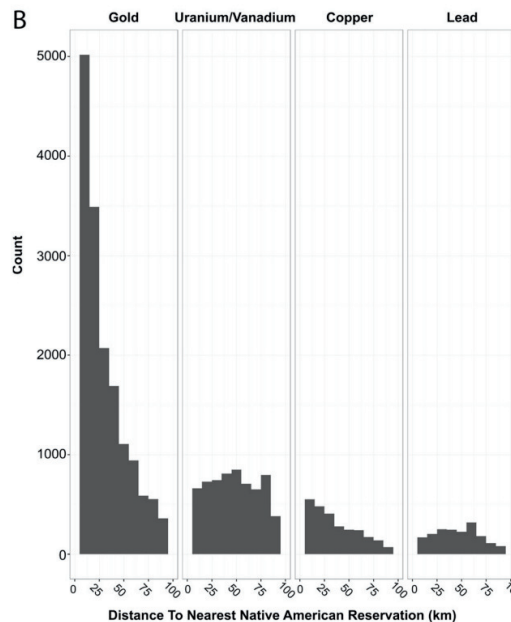
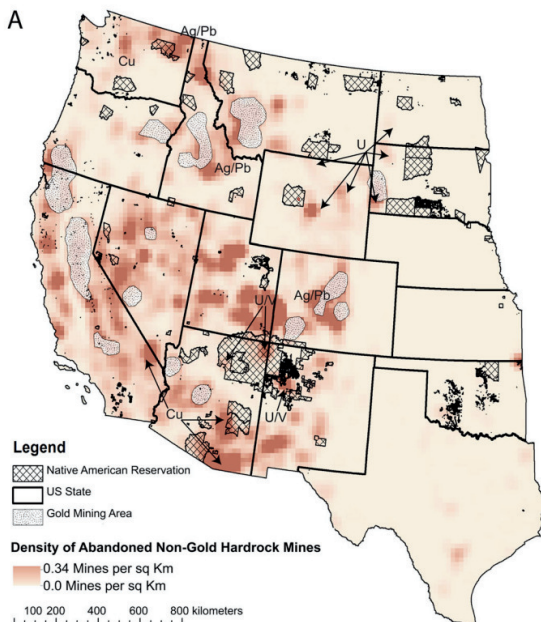
### Community Impacts & Environmental Justice

The community on goes in lodge, redcrow and littlesield are grappling with persistent health challenges stemming from tailings contamination, with significant concerns including:

- Health disparities associated with various cancers and chronic kidney issues.
- Ongoing contamination that impacts both groundwater and local ecosystems.
- Erosion of trust in federal oversight, resulting from ineffective scientific models and delayed communication regarding pollution surges.

### Indigenous people face disproportionate impacts from radioactive industries in the West.

- Uranium and Vanadium mines rank second to gold and silver in significance.
- There are approximately 10,400 abandoned mines in the region.
- About 600,000 Native Americans nationwide reside within five miles of these abandoned mines and milling sites.



There may be an increased sensitivity to toxicity caused by:

- Genetic, epigenetic, and metabolic differences that are often overlooked.
- Cultural connections to the land, which can make relocating a difficult choice to reduce exposure.

# REFLECTIONS & ACTION WORKSHEET

SESSION: NUCLEAR IMPACTS AND LESSONS FROM ARAPAHOE, WY

## THE PAST

Based on the testimonies from Wind River community members, describe the immediate and long-term consequences that followed the establishment of uranium processing sites. What happened to the water and the health of the people?

## THE PRESENT

How are these historical nuclear impacts currently affecting the daily lives, environmental policies, and community health initiatives on the Reservation today?

## THE FUTURE

What steps should be taken to ensure community input is prioritized in future nuclear projects?  
How do we ensure environmental and health impacts are taken into account when citing these projects?  
How do we ensure "Never Again"?