Uranium Deposits in Southwestern North Dakota

Edward C. Murphy

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Introduction

The uranium deposits in southwestern North Dakota are predominantly uranium-rich lignites and carbonaceous shales that occur within and adjacent to Cretaceous rock units, primarily within lignites, sandstones, and carbonaceous shales. These deposits are located in the Killdeer Mountains, the Medicine Pole Hills, and the vicinity of the White River and Arikaree formations. The deposits are generally concentrated in topographic lows, areas where uranium-bearing rocks occur within Cretaceous strata. These deposits are of economic significance due to their relatively high uranium content and large size. The deposits have been known to contain over 10,000 pounds of U3O8 "yellow cake." The deposits are primarily found in the lower Cretaceous strata, including the Killdeer and Medicine Pole formations.

Exploration and Mining in the 1950s and 1960s

The uranium deposits in southwestern North Dakota were discovered in the 1950s and 1960s through geological surveys, ground-based gamma surveys, and core drilling. The deposits were identified through the presence of gamma anomalies in the ground, which are caused by the presence of uranium-bearing rocks. The deposits were then further investigated through core drilling, which confirmed the presence of uranium in the rocks.

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Potential Health Problems Associated with Uranium

Uranium is a naturally occurring element in the earth's crust. When uranium-bearing rocks are mined and processed, the resulting materials can contaminate the environment and pose a health risk to individuals exposed to them. Inhalation of uranium and its compounds can result in respiratory tract irritation, lung inflammation, and lung cancer. Skin contact with uranium compounds can cause skin irritation and dermatitis. uranium is also a known carcinogen, which can cause lung cancer and other respiratory tract cancers.

The health effects to miners in western North Dakota were severe, and the mining companies were required to follow strict safety regulations to prevent exposure to uranium. The companies were also required to clean up the mining sites to prevent the contamination of the environment. The companies were also required to clean up the mining sites to prevent the contamination of the environment.

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