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Home > EARTH Magazine: Asbestos Found in Nevada and Arizona: Roadblock and Potential Health Hazard?

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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1/29/2015

Alexandria, Va. — In 2011, geologists at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, began discovering asbestos where none should be — in granite rocks with a geologic history not previously known to produce asbestos.

The discoveries, in Clark County in southern Nevada and across the border in northwestern Arizona, suggest that asbestos may be more widespread than previously thought; they also raise questions about the potential health hazards of naturally occurring asbestos (NOA).

In 2012, an epidemiologist analyzing cancer data from Clark County found a higher incidence than expected of mesothelioma — a fatal cancer of the lining of the chest cavity that is caused by inhalation of asbestos. In response, geologists have discovered a geologically unexpected deposit of asbestos that might be the source. Disagreements on process between the scientists and the state have prevented the traditional publishing of those findings.

In Nevada, where some popular off-road recreational vehicle areas cross through these asbestos-bearing formations, the planned construction of the new Boulder City Bypass has spurred debate over how much asbestos is getting into the air, and what that means for public health.

Read more about the discovery, geology, and potential health hazards of the new asbestos deposits in the March issue of EARTH magazine (<http://www.earthmagazine.org/article/asbestos-found-nevada-and-arizona-roadblock-and-potential-health-hazard>)

For more stories about the science of our planet, check out EARTH magazine online or subscribe at www.earthmagazine.org. The February issue, now available on the digital newsstand, features stories on new tracers that can identify fracking fluids in the environment, a stegosaurus' deadly battle with an allosaurus, and a geological and historical exploration of the rocks, reefs and beaches of Bermuda, plus much, much more.

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Keep up to date with the latest happenings in Earth, energy and environment news with EARTH magazine online at:

<http://www.earthmagazine.org/>. Published by the American Geosciences Institute, EARTH is your source for the science behind the headlines.

The American Geosciences Institute is a nonprofit federation of 50 geoscientific and professional associations that represents more than 250,000 geologists, geophysicists and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in the profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources, resiliency to natural hazards, and interaction with the environment.

Press Release PDF:



29Jan2015_Asbestos.pdf
