



left photo: Warning ©2015 Marilyn Maxwell

By the 1980s, decades of uranium mining had already taken their toll on the people and environment of northwestern New Mexico. As the Cold War mining boom turned to bust, one company promised mines without toxic tailings piles or massive impoundments waiting to burst. But residents in the Diné (Navajo) communities of Crownpoint and Church Rock – one of whom had worked at such a mine where irreversible contamination ruined groundwater – were not convinced. They began what few imagined would be a

decades-long struggle against a company – and the tangle of state, tribal and federal agencies that pushed for its success – that promised a “pot of yellowcake at the end of the rainbow.”

On October 1, 1996, Law Center Executive Director Douglas Meiklejohn penned a response to a request from Mitchell Capitan of the Eastern Navajo Diné Against Uranium Mining (ENDAUM), promising to help the group in its fight to prevent new uranium mining in and near Diné (Navajo) communities.

It has been a long and complicated road to get where we are today, made possible by the strength and perseverance of our clients and the generosity of Law Center members and donors who have supported this critical legal defense for two decades. Yet as we commemorate this anniversary, we also acknowledge that the fight is far from over for too many communities in northwestern New Mexico that continue to grapple with the painful legacy of Cold War-era contamination and/or the threat of new mining. Justice is our goal. With your continued help, we will not stop until the threats of uranium mining have subsided in the region.

cover photo: The Big Spill ©2015 Marilyn Maxwell

MARILYN MAXWELL Fine Art Photography

THE BIG SPILL, now in the permanent collection at the Palace of the Governors Photo Archive (Museum of New Mexico), documents the commemoration of the 36th anniversary of the United Nuclear spill of over 1,000 tons of solid radioactive uranium mill waste and 93 million gallons of acidic, radioactive tailings into the Puerco River near Church Rock, NM. It was the largest accidental release of radiation in U.S. history, and affected people and the environment in New Mexico and Arizona. The commemoration is held annually by the residents of Red Water Pond Road Community with support from the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE) and ENDAUM.

Marilyn Maxwell is an internationally recognized photographer based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her project, “Consequences of Uranium Mining” documents impacts from some of the 400+ abandoned uranium mines in northwestern New Mexico that continue to cause dire negative consequences to humans, animals, soil, water and air. marilynmaxwellphoto.com