



'Minerals that are unavailable when we need them, should be considered critical.'

- NATIONAL MINING ASSOCIATION

The following was adapted by the author, Utah Mining Association President Brian Somers, from testimony he gave to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources of the U.S. House of Representatives in September.

It is important to recognize that mining is something most people never experience firsthand, yet they benefit from the products made possible by mining every single day. From smartphones, medical devices and consumer electronics to new energy technologies and national defense systems, our modern economy and quality of life are supported by mined minerals.

The Utah Mining Association (UMA) was founded in 1915 and represents Utah's hard-rock, coal and industrial mineral mine operators and related support industries. UMA's mission is to advocate on behalf of Utah's mining industry, its workers and the communities they support. Mining is a critical industry

in Utah, contributing \$7.7 billion to the state's GDP, supporting nearly 57,000 direct and indirect jobs and powering Utah's broader economy by producing the coal which provides 62 percent of Utah's low-priced electricity. Mining jobs in Utah are family- and community-sustaining jobs with mining salaries averaging 46 percent more than the average Utah wage.



Since Utah's first commercial mining district was established in 1863 — 33 years before Utah became a state — Utah's mining industry has labored diligently to develop Utah's vast mineral wealth and provide the mined commodities markets demand.

Today, we are witnessing a welcome and long overdue public focus on supply chains and mineral production. This is partly due to the supply chain disruptions which everyone experienced during the COVID pandemic. It is partly due to current geopolitical events which

are affecting mineral production and availability, including interference by bad actors like China who seek to distort and control commodity markets. And it is due, I believe, by an increased public awareness of misguided regulatory burdens, policy decisions and investment signals by the federal government which hamper domestic mineral production.

Much of the current public focus and discourse around mineral supply is centered around what are being called "critical minerals." Responding to an executive order from President Donald Trump, the Department of Interior published a list of critical minerals in 2018, which was updated in 2022. We also have competing mineral lists from other parts of the federal government, including a list of critical "materials" from the Department of Energy and the National Defense Stockpile of minerals maintained by the Defense Logistics Agency.

In many ways, the current focus on critical minerals is history repeating itself. A recent report titled "Critical

Minerals of Utah" released by the Utah Geological Survey states, "The concept of critical minerals is not new, and in the United States various lists of commodities and definitions of what qualifies as critical have been developed since the early 1900s."

It seems that over the past 100 years, we haven't learned the lesson that making lists of critical minerals — however methodologically sound they might be — is not as useful as letting the diverse demands of free markets, environmental responsibility, operational efficiency, technological innovation, economic security and national security determine which minerals are "critical" at any given time.

More simply, perhaps we could adopt the definition of criticality put forth by the National Mining Association (NMA), which is that, "minerals that are unavailable when we need them, should be considered critical."

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Brahma Group Inc.	brahmagroupinc.com 801-521-5200	Industrial construction & project management	Pray and Co.	praysolutions.com 775-934-9308	Human resources, PR, org. effectiveness solutions
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Industrial Supply	indsupply.com 801-484-8644	Industrial supplies, MROP materials	Wanzek Construction	wanzek.com 701-282-6171	Heavy civil & industrial construction
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Job Industrial Services Inc.	jobindustrial.com 801-433-0901	Engineering, procurement, construction mgmt.	Wheeler Machinery Co.	wheelercat.com 801-796-8333	Equipment distribution & service
Komatsu Equipment Co.	komatsueq.com 877-566-2878	Equipment distribution & service	Wollam Construction Co.	wollam construction.com 801-938-9170	Heavy civil & industrial construction
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Program is mitigating the danger posed by Utah's abandoned mines

In Utah, there are 174 mining districts illustrating the rich mining history in the state. Silver, copper, coal and uranium have all been unearthed from Utah's lands. This rich mining legacy has left in its wake thousands of open abandoned mine shafts and adits, dilapidated structures such as headframes and buildings and eroding waste dumps (also known as mine dumps). These waste dumps often contain elevated levels of heavy metals, such as cadmium, arsenic, lead, zinc and other minerals.

The number of abandoned mines on Bureau of Land Management lands in Utah could number between 8,000 and 11,000, but no complete inventory of BLM lands in Utah has ever been conducted.

BLM Utah has made significant strides in safeguarding and cleaning up abandoned hard-rock mines, particularly through the development of state and federal interagency partnerships through the Utah Abandoned Mine Lands Program. By sharing resources and leveraging dollars, that partnership

has resulted in hundreds of mines closed in areas deemed high-priority by the BLM.

Success Story

The San Rafael Swell uranium mine closures project in south-central Utah recently won the Abandoned Mine Land Programs 2016 Hard Rock Abandoned Mine Lands Reclamation Awards for Physical Safety Hazards. The project was completed through a partnership with the State of Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program.

Despite a happy ending, this project posed logistical challenges. The Swell sprawls out over 800 square miles of rugged terrain. In addition, the team was faced with radiation safety protocols, wilderness areas and bighorn sheep lambing.

The San Rafael region contained over 200 abandoned uranium mines that remained open after the mining boom and bust of the Cold War era. The old miners' shacks and car bodies remain as curiosities for visitors recreating in the area.

In addition to the usual range

of acute abandoned mine hazards (falls, cave-ins, getting lost, etc.), there was also exposure to radiation and long-term health risks. This combination of hazards and recreational activity led the BLM Utah and Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program to identify the

mines in the Swell as a priority for reclamation.

Ultimately, 172 mine openings were selected for closure and in doing so, the project protected the public health and safety.

This article was reprinted from blm.gov.



The entrance to a decades-old abandoned mine in the San Rafael Swell region of south-central Utah was recently sealed by workers from the Utah Abandoned Mine Lands project.

MINERAL MINES

Listed Alphabetically

SALT LAKE BUSINESS JOURNAL **List**

Mine Name	Commodity	Mine Location	Mining Method	Owner	Year Opened
American Gilsonite	Gilsonite	Near Vernal, Uintah Co.	Sub-surface	American Gilsonite	1904
Ash Grove	Portland cement products	Leamington, Millard Co.	Surface	Ash Grove Cement Co.	1980
Cricket Mountain	Limestome, limestone products	Near Delta, Millard Co.	Surface	Graymont Corp.	*
Devil's Slide	Limestone, cement products	East of Morgan, Morgan Co.	Surface	Holcim Inc.	1904
Enefit American	Oil shale	Uinta Basin, Uintah Co.	Surface	Enefit American Oil	*
Grantsville Facility	Limestone, limestone products	Grantsville, Tooele Co.	Surface	Lhoist North America	*
Great Salt Lake Minerals	Sulfate of potash, magnesium chloride	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Compass Minerals	1972
Moab Facility	Potash	Near Moab, Kane Co.	Solar evaporation	Intrepid Potash Inc.	1965
Morton Salt	Salt	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Morton Salt	*
Red Leaf Resources	Oil shale	Uinta Basin, Uintah Co.	Surface	Red Leaf Resources Inc.	*
Redmond Mine	Salt, bentonite	Redmond, Sevier Co.	Underground, surface	Redmond Minerals	1958
Sevier Playa	Potash	Sevier Dry Lake, Millard Co.	Solar evaporation	EMR Capital Investments	*
Simplot Vernal Mine	Phosphates and derivatives	Near Vernal, Uintah Co.	Surface	J.R. Simplot Co.	1960
Timple Facility	Salt	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Cargil Salt Inc.	*
US Gypsum	Gypsum	Sigurd, Sevier Co.	Surface	US Gypsum	*
Utelite Mine	Expanded shale	Coalville, Summit Co.	Surface	Utelite Corp.	1962
Wendover Facility	Potash	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	Intrepid Potash Inc.	1938
Western Clay	Bentonite	Aurora, Sevier Co.	Surface	Western Clay Corp.	1963

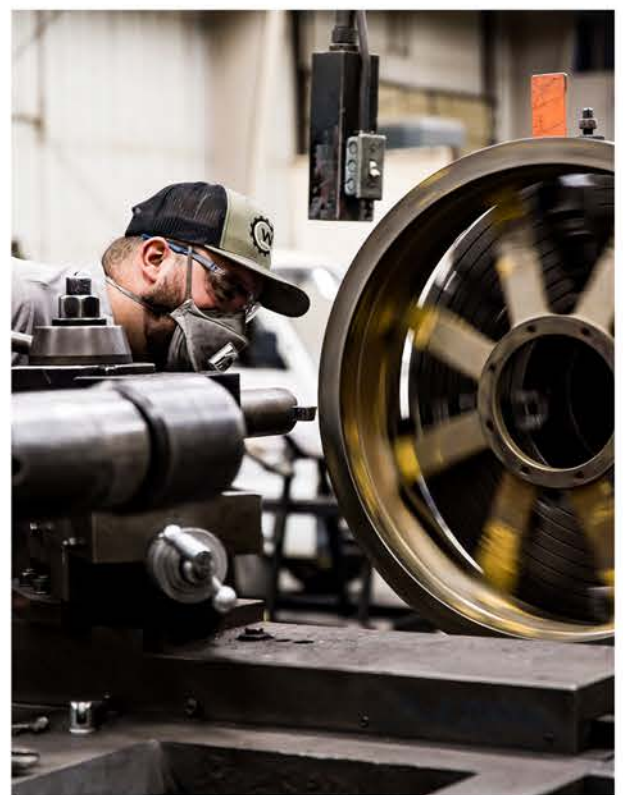
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COAL MINES

Ranked by Short Tons Produced 2022



Mine	County	Coal Field	Company	Thousand Short Tons Produced
1 SUFCO	Sevier	Wasatch Plateau	Wolverine Fuels	3,882
2 Skyline No. 3	Carbon/Emery/Sanpete	Wasatch Plateau	Wolverine Fuels	2,521
3 Lila Canyon Mine	Emery	Book Cliffs	American Consolidated Natural Resources	2,299
4 Emery	Emery	Emery	Bronco Utah Operations	1,063
5 Castle Valley No. 3	Emery	Emery	Gentry Mining	600
6 Coal Hollow Mine	Kane	Alton	Alton Coal Development	354
7 Castle Valley No. 4	Emery	Emery	Gentry Mining	*
8 Dugout Canyon Mine	Carbon	Book Cliffs	Wolverine Fuels	*

* Did not disclose. All rights reserved. Copyright 2023 by Salt Lake Business Journal. The Enterprise strives for accuracy in its list publications. If you see errors or omissions in this list, please contact us at lists@slbusinessjournal.com. Data Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration



METAL MINES

Listed Alphabetically



Mine Name	Commodity	Mine Location	Mining Method	Owner	Year Opened
Bingham Canyon Mine	Copper, gold, silver, molybdenum	Bingham Canyon, Salt Lake Co.	Surface	Rio Tinto Kennecott	1906
Deer Trail Mine	Silver, gold, lead, zinc	Marysvale, Piute Co.	Underground	DT Mining/Mag Silver	2020
Gold Springs Project	Gold, silver	Great Basin, NV and UT	Surface	Gold Springs Resources	2020
Henry Mountains Complex (Tony M & Bullfrog mines)	Uranium	Henry Mountains, Garfield Co.	Underground	Energy Fuels Inc.	*
La Sal Complex (Beaver & Pandora mines)	Uranium, vanadium	La Sal Mountains, San Juan Co.	Underground	Energy Fuels Inc.	*
Lisbon Valley Mine	Copper	Lisbon Valley, San Juan Co.	Surface	Lisbon Valley Mining Co.	2004
Spor Mountain Mine	Beryllium	Spor Mountain, Juab Co.	Surface	Materion Natural Resources	1968
Tintic Project	Gold, Silver, Lead, Zinc	Tintic District; Utah/Juab Counties	Underground Osisko Development/Tintic Consolidated Metals	Tamra Mining Co. LLC	2020
US Magnesium Facility	Magnesium	Great Salt Lake, Tooele Co.	Solar evaporation	US Magnesium LLC	1972
White Mesa Mill Facility	Uranium, vanadium, alternative feeds	Blanding, San Juan Co.	Mill	Energy Fuels Inc.	1980

*Did not disclose. Please note that some firms chose not to respond, or failed to respond in time to our inquiries. All rights reserved. Copyright 2023 by Salt Lake Business Journal. The Journal strives for accuracy in its list publications. If you see errors or omissions in this list, please contact us at lists@slbusinessjournal.com.





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Former mining site becomes regional park in Salt Lake County

Butterfield Canyon, which once hosted a Rio Tinto Kennecott mine that was part of the Bingham Canyon complex, has turned into the Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park following land reclamation efforts.

Located in the Oquirrh Mountains in southwest Salt Lake County, Butterfield Canyon rises over 9,000 feet above sea level and contains the Butterfield Canyon Road, a paved road owned by Kennecott Utah Copper. The Kennecott mine operations are

famous for being the first to apply large-scale open-pit mining and economical mechanical processing to low-grade copper ores in the ores found in the area.

Bingham Canyon is also considered to be one of the deepest open-pit mines in the world and a top producer, with more than 17 million tons of copper extracted from its pits since 1906.

“We’re so proud to see what’s possible through our environmentally focused reclamation efforts on

what was once a mining site,” said Clayton Walker, Rio Tinto Copper’s chief operating officer. “The community has long asked for access to this beautiful area, and this collaboration with Salt Lake County is our way of finding better ways to offer a safe and fun way for the public to enjoy Butterfield Canyon.”

The 17-acre Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park is the result of a 2022 lease agreement between Salt Lake County and Rio Tinto Kennecott and is part of the Southwest Canyon

Trails Network, which is composed of 2,500 acres including Rose and Yellow Fork canyons.

Use of Butterfield Trailhead Regional Park is specific to trails only and can accommodate adaptive bikes. Two dedicated full-time open space technicians are stationed on-site to manage the trails and work closely with the Bureau of Land Management, Rio Tinto, Herriman City and first responders.

Adapted from a post in [mining.com](https://www.mining.com).

CRITICAL

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Utah provides an example of how, as NMA presciently observed in a comment letter on the first Department of Interior critical minerals list in 2018, “World events can redefine criticality in an amazingly short period of time.” A 2020 report from the Utah Geological Survey stated that Utah hosts 28 of the 35 minerals on the original critical minerals list and had active production of eight of them. When the Department of Interior released the revised critical minerals list in 2022, four of the eight critical minerals Utah was producing were removed from the list: uranium, potash, helium and rhenium.

Just two days before the revised critical minerals list was published in the Federal Register, Russia

invaded Ukraine. In the aftermath of the invasion, global prices for uranium spiked and remain at near-record highs as alternatives to uranium supplied by Russia and Russian-aligned countries are explored, especially in light of the greatly diminished capacity of the U.S.’s once-thriving uranium mining, milling and enrichment industries.

Prices for potash also spiked after the invasion and have remained high given that Russia and Belarus account for 41 percent of global trade in potash, with resulting negative effects on food supply and prices. Ongoing shortages and high prices for helium also continue, putting further strains on the global semiconductor shortage which began during the COVID pandemic as semiconductor manufacturing constitutes the second-largest use of helium worldwide.

Almost in real-time, world events were highlighting the criticality

of uranium, potash and helium as the federal government was downgrading their “official” critical status. It should be noted that Utah is home to the nation’s last functioning conventional uranium mill and is the only state in the union which produces the higher-value sulphate of potash or SOP, which made the exclusion of uranium and potash from the revised critical minerals list especially puzzling to Utahns.

There are many other concerns and inconsistencies related to federal government’s designation of critical minerals and its management of the nation’s mineral estate which also need to be part of the public conversation.

These include the competing federal mineral and material criticality assessments; the accelerated withdrawal of public lands from mineral production during the Biden administration; implications of the fact that many

minerals designated as critical are co-located and produced with other minerals which may not share a criticality designation; the severe diminishment of domestic mineral processing, smelting, refining and other beneficiation capacity over the last few decades; and the federal government’s byzantine and burdensome permitting processes which are far outside the norm of other allied countries with similar environmental and labor standards and which discourage capital investment.

I believe the public can coalesce around the idea that any minerals that are unavailable when we need them should be considered critical. There are far too many minerals which are unnecessarily unavailable or constrained because we have neglected our nation’s vast mineral resources, our highly trained mining workforce and our unrivaled capacity for innovation.



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