# Ross ISR Project USNRC License Application Crook County, Wyoming

# December 2010

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Technical Report Volume 3 of 6 Addenda 1.2-A through 2.7-C

**EX STRATA**<br>ENERGY

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**ADDENDUM 1.2-A** 

**NUBETH R&D** 

**(NUCLEAR DYNAMICS/SUNDANCE PROJECT)** 

**SITE DECOMMISSIONING DOCUMENTS** 



ED HERSCHLER GOVERNOR

# $\boldsymbol{\mathcal{D}}$ eparlment of *Environmental Quality*

LAND OUALITY DIVISION

**DISTRICT IV-OFFICE**<br>TELEPHONE 307-672-6488

. ') EAST GRINNELL **STREET** TELEPHONE 307·672·6488 ~ERloAN. **WYOMING 82801** 

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April 25, 1983

Mr. Albert F. Stoick MAnager, Nubeth Joint Venture NI) Resources. Inc. P.O.B ox 1449 Glenrock, Wyoming 82637

RE: Sundance Project, License to Explore No. 19

Dear Mr. Stoick:

On the basis of information supplied by your company and on the basis of confirmation water samples taken November 24, 1983, the Land and Water Quality Divisions concur that restoration of the groundwater at the Sundance Project has been done to meet applicable water quality standards.

Accordingly, ND Resources and the Nubeth Joint Venture are released from any further aquifer and groundwater restoration requirements for this area.

At your request, the reclamation bonding requirements will be reduced to reflect the elimination of bond coverage for groundwater restoration.

Reclamation bond coverage for the surface disturbances, including the well field, plant building, evaporation ponds and access road will continue to be required until either the area is reclaimed or the site is converted to an approved lion-mining use.

If you have any questions, please contact the District IV Engineer, Richard Chancellor.

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William Garland

 $Sineerely,$  $^{\prime}$  . , ,

Nancy Freudenthal

William Garland Mancy Freudenthal<br>William Garland Acting Land Quality Administrator<br>Robert E. Sundin

Director, Dept. of Environmental Quality

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#### UNITED STATES



#### NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV

URANIUM RECOVERY FIELD OFFICE BOX 26326' DENVER. COLORADO 8022fi

*JUL* 11 1983

URFO:TlJ Docket No. 40-8663

ND Resources ATTN: Mr. Albert F. Stoick P. O. Box 1449 Glenrock, Wyoming 82637

Gentlemen:

We have reviewed available ground-water restoration data for your Oshoto site project. Based on this review, we have concluded that the ground water has been adequately restored. Our review memorandum is attached.

Please note that the NRC staff must approve the adequacy of your decontamination and decommissioning before your license can be terminated. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. T. l. Johnson (301-427-4319) of my staff.

Sincerely,

John J. Linehan, Chief Licensing Branch 2 Uranium Recovery Field Office, RIV

Enclosure: As stated

I.JJ..,) 1l\~LI>UI J.Ull Docket 40-8663 OCS/PDR Region IV lJJREO PM/f URFO r/f WOEQ (2)

## JUN 9 1983

URFO:TLJ Docket File 40-8663 04008663011E

MEMORANDUM FOR: FROM: SUBJECT: Docket File No. 40-8663 Ted L. Johnson, Project Manager Licensing Branch I Uranium Recovery Field Office, RIV NO RESOURCES - REVIEW OF GROUNDWATER RESTORATION ACTIVITIES'

#### Background

On April 14, 1978, License SUA-1331 was issued to ND Resources (formerly Nuclear Dynamics, Inc.). The five-spot wellfield was leached with a carbonate-based lixiviant from November 1978 to April 1979. Restoration activities utilizing groundwater sweep and fresh water injection techniques were initiated immediately following shutdown. On September 19, 1979, these restoration activities were terminated. After a stabilizing period of. about seven months, post-restoration sampling began on April 30, 1980. A restoration report summarizing the 1980 sampling was reviewed by the NRC staff, who concluded that additional restoration would be necessary, principally because levels of arsenic, molybdenum, selenium, vanadium, and uranium exceeded baseline values.

Additional sampling was performed by ND Resources in 1981, and final confirmation sampling was performed by DEQ in 1982. This memorandum constitutes my review of DEQ's analysis of the 1982 confirmation sampling and my review of the overall adequacy of restoration.

#### Discussion

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of groundwater restoration at the NDR site, I reviewed the 1) DEQ 1982 sampling data, 2) NDR 1981 sampling data, and 3) NDR 1980 sampling data. Several wells that were sampled by DEQ did not have any baseline data. The wells with baseline data were compared to that baseline data and to quality-of-use standards. Wells without baseline data were compared to average well-field baseline data

#### Docket File No. 40-8663 04008663011E

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and the quality-of-use standards. The quality-of-use standards used were the State of Wyoming Class I (domestic), Class II (irrigation), and Class III (livestock) standards.

Following is a summary of parameters which exceed high baselin<mark>e values or</mark> quality-of-use standards for each well sampled. All other parameters were restored to below these values.



40-8663/mne/83/0S/27/0



Docket File No. 40-8663 04008663011E 1. The No. 40 0000

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\*Based on mean baseline values. Standard would be higher if based on .high baseline values.

#### 1. Well 3X·

All parameters, except those listed in the preceding table, were restored to values less than the high baseline value. Bicarbonate slightly exceeds its high baseline value; this increase (603 to 614 mg/l) is insignificant. Molybdenum increased from .005 to .02 mg/l; this incrase is also felt to be insignificant since some baseline data had a detection limit of 0.05, and no standard has been set for this parameter. Based on an examination of other data, the gross alpha and gross beta increases are unimportant since  $(1)$  no quality-of-use standard exists, (2) levels are much lower in other parts of the wellfield, and (3) other parameters were fully restored to acceptable limits.

40-8663/mne/83/05/27/0



Docket File No. 40-8663 04008663011E *JUN* 9 1983

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#### 2. Well 7X (Upper Aquifer Monitor Well)

All parameters which exceeded the high baseline value are either 1) below the quality-of-use standard, or 2) no quality-of-use standard exists. All other parameters meet their respective standards.

#### 3. Wells *19XX* and 77XX

Bicarbonate and sodium for both wells, and carbonate for 77XX, exceeded their baseline values. Since no quality-of-use standard is set, no detrimental effects can be determined to be caused by these parameters.

TDS, pH and sulfate exceeded their quality-of-use standards as determined by mean baseline data. However, all of these parameters<br>had high-range baseline values that were above the quality-of-use standard (as determined from the mean values). If the, . . . quality-of-use standard had been set using high baseline values, TDS and sulfate standards would have been 2000·and 3000 mg/l, respectively; these values are well above existing concentrations. I agree with WDEQ that while these parameters do reflect some water quality degradation, they do not represent a significant deviation from the overall quality of use for which the water was suitable for prior to mining.

#### Conclusions

The method of restoration utilized (groundwater sweep-fresh water injection) is not considered to be the state-of-the-art method. However, based on an examination of the most recent water quality data available, I conclude that the groundwater quality at this site has been stabilized and adequately restored to a level which meets the minimum quality-of-use standard. Many parameters were restored to lower levels than those

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existing prior to mining. Overall, the groundwater restoration is -considered adequate to terminate operations at this site.

#### ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Terry L. Johnson, Project Manager Licensing Branch 1 Uranium Recovery Field Office, RIV

**ORIGINAL SIGNED BY:** 

Approved- by:-

- Harry J. Pettengill, Chief
- Licensing Branch 2

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Uranium Recovery Field Office, RIV

Case Closed: 04008663011E

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#### UNITED STATES

#### **NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

REGION IV

URANIUM RECOVERY FIELD OFFICE BOX 2&325 DENVER. COLORADO II022S

**JAN 10 1985** 

URFO:RFB Docket No. 40-8663

N D Resources. Inc. ATTN: A. F. Stoick 213 West Birch P.O. Box 1449 Glenrock, Wyoming 82637

Gentlemen:

On November 26, 1984. Mr. R. F. Brich of this office visited the Sundance Project to review records associated with the decommissioning activities and to make independent gamma measurements to verify that cleanup efforts were sufficient. Enclosed is a copy of the trip report which describes the findings of this visit and also staff review of the pond decommissioning report. As discussed in the enclosed report, license termination will be contingent upon final notification by the licensee that all pertinent WDEQ requirements have been or will be met.

By letter dated December 28, 1984, Resource Technologies Group (RTG) submitted a report on the pond decommissioning work on behalf of NDR. Based on staff review of this report, we conclude that cleanup of the ponds is adequate.

If you have any questions. please contact Mr. Brich at (303) 236-2814.

Sincerely,

Edward F. Hawkins, Uranium Recovery Field Office Region IV

Enclosure: As stated



#### UNITED STATES

#### NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

REGION IV

URANIUM RECOVERY FIELD OFFICE 80X 25326<br>DENVER, COLORADO 80225

### **JAN 10 1985**

URFO:RFB Docket NO. 40-8663 MEMORANDUM FOR: FROM: SUBJECT: Docket Fll~ No. 40-8663 Randall F. Brich, Project Manager licensing Branch 1 Uranium Recovery Field Office, Region IV TRIP REPORT ON NOVEMBER 26, 1984 SITE VISIT -<br>N D RESOURCES, INC., SUNDANCE ISL PROJECT

#### Background

On November 26, 1984, Mr. Al Stoick of N D Resources, Inc. (NDR), Mr. Bart Conroy of Resources Technology Group, Inc. (RTG), who acted as NOR's consultant and Radiation Safety Officer (RSO), and Mr. R. F. Brich of NRC/URFO met in Gillette, Wyoming, to discuss the status of the nearly completed decommissioning of the Sundance ISL project. After record review, we motored to the ISl site and observed the status of decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) of the site amidst a +40 mph cold, north wind. A slight covering of blown and drifted snow had recently accumulated in the leeward areas of the ponds, dikes, ditches, building, etc.

#### Discussion

I reviewed all records associated with the D&D of the site pertaining to personnel safety training, personnel monitoring, air particulate monitoring, gross alpha contamination monitoring and baseline soil radium-226 values. The records were found to be a true and accurate account of the 0&0 activity. Mr. Stoick stated that a decommissioning final report would be prepared and furnished to the agency.

All liners, piping and leak detection systems for the ponds had been previously removed. We walked the entire site from North to South making contact gamma measurements at the following preselected locations: north

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pond, middle pond, south pond, influent ditch to north pond, effluent ditch, open portions of the gravity delivery ditch, overflow pond (never used), wellfield drainage ditch on north side of building and the interior of the building. All measurements were found to be essentially equivalent to the natural background for the area (approximately 11-13 microRoentgens per hour (uR/hr)) with one exception. A small area in the northwest portion of the middle pond (Pond #2) appeared to contain about a I-inch thick black residue that read approximately 40 uR/hr.

NDR had collected the required number of soil samples at all three ponds (three from each pond) and reported that all contained less than 15 pCi/g Ra-226 above background. NDR also collected soil samples at other locations in the delivery ditch and we11fie1d, and the results will be reported in the final decommissioning report. After returning to Denver, I informed RTG that we would require D&D of the ponds to 5 pCi/g (plus background) instead of 15 pCi/g.

In addition, NDR collected three soil samples from the base of Pond #2, four soil samples from the base of Pond #1, and two soil samples from the base of Pond #3, and analyzed them for Ra-226. Based on the results shown in Table 1, NDR elected to remove additional material from Ponds #1 and #2. A total of nine additional truck loads (approximately 108 cubic yards) of material were removed and shipped to a licensed mill for disposal.

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# Table 1

### BEFORE ADDITIONAL SOIL REMOVAL



Table 2 shows the Ra-226 activity in the soil after removal of the additional material.

## Table 2

## AFTER SOIL REMOVAL



## JAN 101985

#### Conclusions

Based on my review of the associated records, pond decommissioning report and independent gamma measurements, I conclude that the site has been decommissioned properly. Therefore, I recommend that the licensee be notified by letter that URFO staff has concluded that cleanup of ponds is sufficient and the license will be terminated upon final notification by NOR that all pertinent WDEQ requirements have been or will be met.

Randell FBsech<br>Randall F. Brich, Project Manager<br>Licensing Branch 1 Uranium Recovery Field Office Randel 7 Brich, Project Mana<br>
Randel 7 Brich, Project Mana<br>
Licensing Branch 1<br>
Uranium Recovery Field Office<br>
Edward F. Hawkins, Chief<br>
Licensing Branch 1<br>
Uranium Recovery Field Office, Region IV Region IV

Approved by:  $\mathcal{L}$ Edward F. Hawkins, Chief

Uranium Recovery Field Office, Region IV



ED HERSCHLER **GOVERNOR** 

Department of Environmental Quality

LAND QUALITY DIVISION DISTRICT III OFFICE 30 EAST GRINNELL STREET TELEPHONE 307-672-6488 SHERIDAN, WYOMING 82801 December 19, 1986

Mr. Albert F. Stoik Manager ND Resources, Inc. P. O. Box 1449 Glenrock, Wyoming 82637

RE: Annual Inspection ND Resources, Inc., LEl9

Dear Mr. Stoik:

Enclosed is a copy of my Annual Inspection Report for LE19. Any written comments you submit will be incorporated into the permit file.

I am recommending that your license to explore be terminated and the associated surety bond be released. Should you have any questions, please call me.

incerety

C. L. Preston Environmental Specialist

 $CLP/mw$ Enclosure



#### ANNUAL INSPECTION REPORT

- LICENSE: Exploration License No. 19, ND Resources, Inc.
- DATE: 29 August 1986 1000 hrs.
- INSPECTOR: C. L. Preston, Environmental Specialist, LQD District III
- CONTACT: Al Stoik, ND Resources, Inc.

Reclamation activities are outlined in Mr. Glenn Mooney's 25 June 1985 inspection report. Restoration of the wellfield was accepted by DEQ on 25 April 1983 and the NRC on 11 June 1983. Surface reclamation has been completed. Two small buildings cover the two wells that have been transferred to Milestone Petroleum.

#### Bond Evaluation

ND Resources' current bond is surety No. BD 19S35723 for \$50,000. ND Resources was authorized to reduce the bond amount to \$12,500 on 27 August 1985. No action was taken by the company to reduce the bond.

CLP/mw



# **ADDENDUM 1.9-A**

# **RAI/COMMENT TABLES**


























## ADDENDUM 2.6-A

# MIKE BUSWELL THESIS

#### SUBSURFACE GEOLOGY

OF THE OSHOTO URANIUM DEPOSIT,

CROOK COUNTY, WYOMING

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the Department of Geology and Geological Engineering, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology

by

#### Micheal Douglas Buswell

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Geology

May, 1982

pproved by: Major Professor Chairman, Department of Geology and Geological Engineering

raduate Division

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Thesis<br>TN<br>490<br>.U.7<br>1982<br>1982

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#### ABSTRACT

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uranium in the Oshoto area was deposited as complex epigenetic roll fronts that paralleled the sand geometry of Upper Cretaceous Fox Hills and Lance Formations. Depositional environments changed upward from the deep marine Pierre Shale, to the offshore and nearshore marine Fox Hills Formation, to the fluvio-deltaic Lance Formation.

Offshore marine bars parallel the north-south Lower Fox Hills Formation strandline and are overlain by an extensive sequence of seaward dipping nearshore marine sediments. Regression of the Interior Cretaceous sea deposited shoreface, foreshore, and barrier island sequences in the region which were eroded and reworked. Sediments deposited on the scour surface display a complex pattern of dip- and strike-oriented sand bodies.

Lance Formation distributary channels flowed primarily southward, reflecting favorable stream gradients developed by a subsiding basin to the south. Distributary channels and crevasse splays form the clastic framework of the. Lower Lance Formation.

Uranium was introduced into Upper Cretaceous sediments after the Black Hills uplift had exposed the Fox Hills and Lance Formations to oxidizing uranyl-bearing ground water. Uranium transportation and concentration in a roll front system was influenced by variations in ground-water migration due to the complex stratigraphic setting and premineral faulting.

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## LIST OF FIGURES



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# LIST OF PLATES (in Pocket)



# LIST OF PLATES (continued)



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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the following people, without whom this project would not have been completed: Mr. Albert Stoick of ND Resources, who provided data as well as professional and economic support throughout this study, and Harry Dodge of the U. S. Geological Survey for his insight into Fox Hills Formation paleoenvironments.

Finally, I would like to specially thank Joyce Fry, my wife, who was invaluable from this study's inception to its conclusion by assisting data reduction, providing geologic discussions, editing drafts and typing this manuscript.

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#### INTRODUCTION

### Statement of Problem

Uranium-bearing roll fronts occur in Upper Cretaceous sandstones in the Oshoto area at a depth between 450 ft and 750 ft. The orientation of alteration salients associated with roll front migration trend along strike to slightly up dip. Geometry of the alteration tongue provides a record of direction and rate of the paleogroundwater flow. Both rate and direction of groundwater flow are controlled by permeability and transmissivity of host sediments. Permeability and transmissivity are governed by paleodepositional environments (Galloway, et al., 1979, p. 177).

The goals of this thesis were to determine the sand body geometry of the depositional system active in upper Cretaceous time, and to present a model for local and regional uranium deposition.

#### Location and Accessibility

The study area comprises 3000 acres in the westcentral portion of the Oshoto 15' topographic quadrangle. It is located 25 miles north of Moorcroft in northeastern Wyoming (Fig. 1). Access to the property is gained by the Crook County 'D' road and numerous oil field roads. The community of Oshoto is located on the eastern edge of the study area (Fig. 1).

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Figure 1. Location and outcrop patterns of Upper Cretaceous<br>Fox Hills and Lance Formations (Adapted from<br>Love, et al., 1955).

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# Regional Setting Structural Geology

Oshoto is situated on the margin of two major tectonic elements, the Black Hills uplift and the Powder River Basin (Fig. 2). Both features are related to the Laramide Orogeny, the Black Hills being the easternmost and least deformed uplift of the Rocky Mountain Foreland Tectonic Province (Lisenbee, 1978, p. 166). The Black Hills is a broad north-trending domal uplift bounded on the east and west by monoclinal flexures. The uplift extends north and south as a series of plunging folds (Darton and Paige, 1925, p. 17-23; Noble, 1952, p. 31-37). The northeast-trending Little Missouri fault zone is located near the study area (Fig. 3). These steeply dipping normal faults have less than 100 ft displacement and limited areal extent (Robinson et al., 1964, p. 108).

Boardering the western flank of the Black Hills uplift is the powder River Basin. The synclinal axis of the structurally asymmetric Tertiary intermontane basin is located along the western margin. In this area, sedimentary units dip steeply eastward. On the eastern flank of the basin, the structural dip is  $1^{\circ}$  to  $2^{\circ}$  basinward in the study area (PI. 1). Immediately east of the area, the rocks have been rotated to near vertical as a result of flexure on the steeply inclined limb of the Black Hills monocline.

Ross ISR Project **14** TR Addendum 2.6-A



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Figure 3. Tectonic map of the Black Hills uplift showing<br>location of the Oshoto deposit (E), and Little<br>Missouri fault zone (D) (From Lisenbee, 1978).

Ross ISR Project

#### Regional Stratigraphy

Strata exposed in the vicinity of the study area record the last major regression of the Western Interior Cretaceous Seaway (Figs. 4 and 5). Offshore marine Pierre I Shale grades upward into transition marine' sediments of the Fox Hills Formation. The Fox Bills Formation has been divided by Dodge and Spencer (1977, p. 50) into a lower and an upper unit. Lower Fox Hills Formation sandstones were deposited in marginal marine, foreshore, and shoreface environments (Dodge and Spencer, 1980, p. 7). Above a local unconformity, Upper Fox Bills Formation estuarine sediments were deposited (Dodge and Spencer, 1977 and 1980). Marine influence on sediment distribution terminated with the deposition of the Lance Formation. The Lance Formation was deposited on a relatively stable platform in Northeastern Wyoming (West, 1964, p. 26). Resulting environments of deposition have been interpreted as being fluvio-deltaic in origin. (Dodge and Powell, 1975, p. 41 Dodge and Spencer, 1977, p. 50; Dodge and Spencer, 1980, p. 7). Deposition of fluvial sandstones, flood plain mudstones and coals document continued continental influence on sedimentation through the Paleocene Fort Union Formation (Curry, 1971, p. 49-56; West, 1964, p. 27).

Various criteria, both on the outcrop and in the subsurface, have been used to determine boundaries between the Fox Bills, Lance and Fort Union Formations. Robinson and others, 1964, p. 98) used the lowest brown carbonaceous

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Figure **4.** Stratigraphic section of the Black Hills area (From the Department of Geology and Geological Engineering, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, SO, 1963. Muddy sandstone revised by G. Wulf, 1968).

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shale or swelling clay bed as the Fox Hills-Lance contact. Dodge and Powell (1975, p. 4), Tschudy (1975, p. 25-35), and Dodge (person. comm. 1980) demonstrated that the contact can be determined by distinguishing marine-fresh water palynologic, microfossil, trace fossil, and invertebrate \ fossil assemblages. In an area west of the study area Dodge and Powell (1975, Fig. 2, p. 9-10) picked the Fox Hills-Lance Formation contact from electric logs at the base of the first high resistivity sand above a coarsening upward Fox Hills sequence. Curry (1971, p. 49), in an overview of the Powder River Basin, could find "no consistent difference" in electric log curves between the marine Fox Hills Formation and the continental Lance Formation.

The Cretaceous Lance Formation and Tertiary Fort Union Formation contact is discernable by changes in the paleontologic record (Tschudy, 1975, p. 32). Brown (1958, p. 112) placed the Lance Formation contact above the last dinosaur fossil and below the first coal bed. In the subsurface, Curry (1971, p. 49) calls the Tullock Member of the Fort Union the "most distinctive and widespread" unit in the Powder River Basin. The Lance-Fort Union Formation contact is picked at the top of low resistivity Lance Formation mudstones and the base of high resistivity Fort Union Tullock sandstone (Curry, 1971, Figs. 2-5, p. 51-54).

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Ross ISR Project **20** TR Addendum 2.6-A

### Exploration History

In 1952, uranium was discovered in Lance Formation sandstones on the east-central flank of the Powder River Basin. Exploration drilling, conducted between 1971 - 1977, by Nuclear DYnamics, Inc., (now ND Resources) discovered approximately 6 million pounds of indicated and inferred uranium reserves and an estimated 34 million pounds of potential resources in the region (Stoick et al., 1981, p. 293). Grade and thickness of these reserves and resources are proprietary information. Improving economic conditions prompted ND Resources to conduct economic, engineering, and geologic feasibility studies on a uranium deposit near Oshoto, Wyoming by in-situ leaching methods. Environmental restoration of the pilot leach field is currently nearing completion.

### Initial Discovery

Uranium was discovered near Oshoto in 1952 by flying the area with a hand held scintillometer (Stoick, et al., 1981). A small low grade anomaly was found 3 mi west of Oshoto in the Lance Formation. During a field check of the area, light pink- and green-colored sands were noted on a small outcrop. Chemical assays, from grab samples, ranged from .01% to .02% uranium. Due to unfavorable marketing during 1952, in the Black Hills, additional exploration was not warranted. Not until 1970 was the potential of this occurrence evaluated.

#### Reconnaissance Exploration

In a joint venture with Bethleham Steel Corporation, Nuclear Dynamics initiated a reconnaissance exploration program utilizing existing oil well gamma logs and systemmatic airborne radiometric surveys. Checks of oil well \ logs in the area showed significant radioactive anomalies in the Lance Formation from north of Moorcroft to Oshoto. Concurrently, an airborne survey flying 1/3 mi spaced east-west lines, discovered several extensive low intensity anomalies. One of the airborne anomalies was field checked and verified that the radioactivity was due to uranium decay. At this time, approximately 70,000 acres of state, federal and fee land was acquired for exploration. This exploration program, designated the Sundance project, expanded to include over 114,000 acres by 1974.

#### Drilling Programs

Drilling on the Sundance Project was separated into four distinct phases: Phase I, stratigraphic; Phase II, delineation: Phase III, development; and Phase IV, production drilling. Each drilling phase was initiated / sequentially upon the completion of the goals set *by* the prededing program. Because of the large area involved in the Sundance Project, however, no single phase was completely terminated. In the course of continued exploration, two or more drilling phases ran concurrently as new areas of mineralization were-discovered.

Phase I. Widespaced stratigraphic drilling began in 1970. Holes were placed on  $1$  to 2 mile centers on fences  $4$  to  $5$ miles apart. These holes provided information on subsurface extension of airborne anomalies, stratigraphic correlations of the Lance Formation, and structure of the Lance Formation. In addition, the 42 stratigraphic holes in Phase I bracketed several oxidation-reduction boundaries and mineral intercepts, providing impetus for expanded drilling.

Phase II. From 1971 to 1975, approximately 4,000 holes were drilled to delineate roll front boundaries (Fig. 6). A variety of drill spacings and patterns were tried in an effort to taylor the drilling program to the deposits and to provide information needed for economic evaluation of the deposits. The drilling was separated into three categories on the basis of offset distances: 1) 400-1000, 2) 100-400, and 3} 10-100 ft centers.

Widespaced exploration holes (400-l000 ft centers) were drilled primarily on grid patterns to explore and identify<sub>/P</sub>reviously unknown oxidation-reduction boundaries. These boundaries were then targeted for closer spaced drilling (100-400 ft centers). Delineation of roll fronts, at this spacing, was conducted utilizing diamond patterns. Very close-spaced drilling' (10 to 100 ft centers) on fence or diamond patterns, was used to test ore width, grade and continuity.





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 $\mathcal{L}$ The second phase of exploration located 22 horizons, delineated over 150 linear miles of roll fronts, discovered approximately 34 million pounds in resources and located 12 areas targeted for developmental drilling (Stoick et a1., 1981).

Phase III. From 1975 to 1977, exploration efforts were directed toward developing the Oshoto area into a mineable ore deposit. Approximately 1500 holes, drilled principally on 100 ft centers, delineated 4 million pounds of  $U_3O_8$ within the study area. Improving economic conditions of the uranium market prompted ND Resources to proceed with an in-situ leach research and development program.

Phase IV. Feasibility studies of in-situ mining of the Oshoto deposit began in 1976 with a single well push-pull test of the leach chemistry. By mid 1977, NO Resources and its joint venture partners had conducted the engineering, hydrologic and environmental studies necessary for the licensing and building of a research and development *in*situ leach facility. The initial test area consisted of 1 recovery well, 4 injection wells, 4 buffer wells, and 5 monitor wells. A sixth monitor well was installed when a hydrologic barrier in the mining horizon isolated one of the original monitor wells from the producing field.

Early in 1979, ND Resources completed the test and initiated restoration. Evaluation of the results indicated that an expanded well field was needed to determine the

economic feasibility of in-situ mining of the Oshoto deposit. To date, restoration of the affected aquifer is nearly completed.

## Subsurface Mapping Methods

Analysis of subsurface geology at Oshoto was divided into two categories: sedimentation and mineralization. Data for each division was obtained from approximately 1500 exploration drill holes. Each hole was probed with an electric sonde that recorded resistivity, self potential, and gamma radioactivity. Alteration and lithology characteristics were obtained from cuttings and core.

#### Sedimentation Analysis

Eight cores provided detailed lithologic data for stratigraphic correlations throughout the study area (Fig. 7). Sixty-four panel diagrams with east-west cross sections were constructed utilizing all available exploration logs. Stratigraphic divisions illustrated on Figure 7 were correlated on the panel diagrams to surrounding exploration logs. Three hundred and forty of these logs were considered representative and displayed sufficient resolution for construction of stratigraphic and structural cross sections (Pl. 2). Thirty-nine dip-oriented (east-west) stratigraphic and two strikeoriented (north-south) structural sections were prepared.

Six stratigraphic and two structural cross sections were used to illustrate subsurface facies (Pls. 3 and 4).

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 $\cdot$  Currelation of core to electric log curves (Fig. 7) provided the foundation for quantifying the lithology of adjacent exploration drill holes. Self-potential logs were not used for correlation because drilling fluids used in coring tended to reverse log responses. A similar study of Fox Hills and Laramie Formations in the Cheyenne Basin also used resistivity logs to distinguish stratigraphic units and to aid in interpretation of depositional systems (Ethridge, et al.,1979, p. 8). In this study, data for lithofacies analysis was obtained from the three hundred and forty resistivity curves.

### Lithofacies Mapping

Cross sections and log diagrams illustrate qualitative facies changes, but do not present a complete picture of complex environments. To quantify and map rapidly alternating sediments, a variety of lithofacies maps were constructed. Included in this study are: 1) isopach, 2) paleotopographic, 3) effective sand isolith, 4) percent sand, 5) alternation rate and 6) isofacies maps. Definition and method of construction for each type of map are discussed in following sections.

Bates and Jackson {1980} define an isopach as a line of equal thickness. In this study, an isopach map was constructed for the Lower Fox Hills Formation basal sand (Fig. 7 and Pl. 5). By mapping the thickness of this interval, depositional patterns and paleodrainage are revealed.

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 $\div$  Paleotopography of the stratigraphic divisions were mapped by methods outlined by Anderson (1961) and Busch (1959). Anderson called the technique "datum planevalley floor isopach method". The upper contact of the lower Fox Hills Formation basal sandstone was used as the datum plane. Paleotopography represents the thickness of the interval between datum plane and the depositional surface.

Effective sand isoliths were constructed for the mineralized stratigraphic units: zones A, B, and C. An isolith as defined by Bates and Jackson (1980) is an: "Imaginary line of equal aggregate thickness of a given lithologic facies or particular class of material within a formation". In effective sand isoliths, sands that meet a minimum bed thickness are the class of material contoured. By setting minimum thickness criteria, thin sands deposited with interbeds of silt and shale are eliminated (Fig. 8 and Sedimentary sections II, III, and IV). Only sand deposited under persistent high energy environments are mapped (Fig. 8) and Sedimentary sections I and II).

Percentage maps show contours of the "... percentage value of any one lithology in the total aggregate thickness..." (Low, 1977, p. 261) of the stratigraphic interval. Areas of high and low percent sand are distinguishable in this type of map, but there are variations in sand occurrences that are not discernable using percent sand maps alone (Fig. 8, Sedimentary sections I, II, and III).

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: Aiternation rate maps show the frequency of lithologic variations within a uniform stratigraphic interval (Low, 1977, p. 267). To calculate the alternation rate of a stratigraphic unit, multiply the number of lithologic changes by the unit thickness and divide by a uniform reference interval. In this study, a hundred ft reference interval was used (Pig. 8).

Alternation rate maps illustrate, in plan view, the manner of sedimentation from alternating lithologically diverse, to stable, uniform deposition (Fig. 8, Sedimentary sections I and III). Low alternation rates are not an absolute indicator of sand channels (Fig. 8, Sedimentary section IV), but only an indicator of depositional environments with stable, nonvariable sedimentation.

To distinguish variations in the mode of sand occurrence, alternation rate maps can be compared to percent sand maps. OVerlying a complex. alternation rate map on an equally complex percent sand map becomes cumbersome. A solution to this problem lies in a hybrid isofacies map that combines the attributes and eliminates the ambiguities of the singular maps.

Bates and Jackson (1980) define isofacies as a map that shows "...the distribution of one or more facies within a designated stratigraphic unit". Percent sand and alternation maps were combined to synthesize four facies based on sand content and alternation rate. Faces divisions are: I} low percent sand, 2) high alternation

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rates, 3, median percent sand and median alternation rates. and 4) high percent sand and low alternation rates.

<sup>A</sup>*goal* of mapping subsurface geology is to determine lithologic variations and to illustrate these changes in plan view. Cross sections and log diagrams show, qualitatively, internal configurations of the stratigraphic units in two dimensions. They do not exemplify the complete and continuous quantitative picture of rapidly changing facies.

To quantify and to map sedimentation patterns, several lithofacies maps are used. Percent sand and alternation rate maps depict complex sedimentation data in simplified form. Combining both maps to create an isofacies map provided a representative portrayal of lithologic diversity within a stratigraphic interval. Effective sand isoliths purvey channel geometry in terms of width, length, thickness, location and trend. Paleotopographic maps illustrate depositional patterns by isopaching intervals between the datum plane and basal contacts. Isopaching the Lower Fox Hills Formation basal sand interval provided a means to verify paleodrainage interpretations and to determine the basal sand geometry.

These maps and cross sections represent the subsurface geology at Oshoto in three dimensions. They provide the means to map lithology changes and to quantify the geometry of the sand bodies.

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#### SUBSURFACE SAND BODY GEOMETRY

Geometric characteristics of sand deposition used for interpretation of depositional environments include: 1) geographic location, 2) trend, 3) length, **4)** width, 5) thickness and 6) boundary conditions (Shelton, 1967, p. 117; Shelton, 1973, p. 3). Geographic location and trend describe the areal extent of the sand body. Length, width and thickness measurements portray physical dimensions of sand deposits, including width to thickness ratios, to aid in estimating sand genesis (Shelton, 1973, p. 4). Boundary conditions include contacts with overlying, underlying and laterally equivalent facies.

#### Stratigraphic Divisions

Within the study area, Upper cretaceous sedimentary rocks include: the Pierre Shale, Fox Hills Formation and Lance Formation. The Pierre Shale conformably underlies the Fox Hills Formation, which *is* divisible into upper and lower units (Dodge and Spencer, 1980, p. 7). Upper Fox Hills Formation strata comprise the lower mineralized horizon, designated Zone A. Overlying the Fox Hills Formation is the Lower Lance Formation. Contacts between these formations are conformable, except where local scouring occurs. Two mineral horizons, Zones Band C, are differentiated in the Lower Lance Formation within the Oshoto deposit.

In the following discussion and tables, reference numbers are used to locate areas on lithofacies maps ci ted in the text.

### 'Pierre Shale

Outcrops of Pierre Shale are poorly exposed, but are distinguishable in the subsurface by electric logs and core. Comprised of dark gray to black silty shales, the upper portion of the formation is highly bioturbated. Siphonites trace fossils identified in core, give indication of a marine environment of deposition (Dodge and Spencer, 1980, p. 4).

#### Lower Fox Hills Formation

In the vicinity of Oshoto, Dodge and Spencer (1980) have divided the Fox Hills Formation into lower and upper units, based on differences in color, bedding, trace fossils, lithology and texture. The Lower Fox Hills Formation consists of lower and middle sand members separated by interbedded shales and silts. An upper interbedded shale, silt, and very fine-grained sandstone interval is truncated by Upper Fox Hills Formation sandstone (Fig. 7).

The lowest sand interval is comprised of sandstones with thin interbeds of shale and siltstone, capped by a calcareous-cemented sandstone. Isopachs of the interval outline multiple, narrow north-south ridges and swales, bisected by an east-west sand ridge (Pl. 5). Physical
dimensions of individual sandstone ridges are noted on Table 1. The total areal extent of some of the sandstone bodies is not known because the sandstone trends extend beyond study area boundaries. Sandstone deposits present within the confines of the Oshoto deposit, but which extend beyond the boundaries, are noted by a plus sign (+) on Table 1.

Boundary contacts between the Pierre Shale and the basal Lower Fox Hills Formation sandstone interval are gradational. The basal sandstone unit typically exhibits a coarsening upward sequence with a very sharp upper contact with overlying shales and siltstones.

Between the basal and middle sandstone unit of the Lower Fox Hills Formation is an interval comprised of slightly bioturbated dark gray to black shale. Isopachs of this interval (Pl. 6) reveal the paleotopography of the middle sandstone depositional surface. Sand was deposited on a gently undulating surface, dipping eastward approximately 20 ft per mile. The interval consists of thin bedded sandstones and interbeds of shales, siltstones, and calcareous-cemented sandstones (Fig. 7). Fining upward sequences with sharp basal and gradational upper contacts are typical of the Lower Fox Hills Formation middle sandstone unit (Pls. 3 and 4; Fig. 7).

Conformably overlying the middle sandstone is an interval comprised of thin interbeds of bioturbated, black to dark gray shales, siltstones and thin-bedded, graded

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Table **1.** Lower Fox Hills Formation basal sand geometry.



<sup>+</sup>Denotes extension beyond mapped boundary, indicating minimum values

sandstoncs. In the Oshoto area, the marine trace fossil Thalassinoides is .the only identified trace fossil found in the Lower Fox Hills (Dodge and Spencer, 1980, p. 7). South of the area, Ophiomorpha and Arenicolites are found in equivalent facies (Dodge, 1980, p. 25).

## Upper Fox Hills Formation

Two types of sandstone deposits are prevalent within the Upper Fox Hills Formation: 1) thick-bedded, blocky sandstones and 2) thin, interbedded sandstones, siltstones and shales (PIs. 3 and 4). Blocky sandstones are light gray to gray, well- to moderately well-sorted, and fine grained. Intraformational shale pebble conglomerates commonly occur at, or slightly above the basal contact between Upper and Lower Fox Hills Formations, in areas with sandstones greater than 25 ft thick (Fig. 7, hole numbers 16, 32, 33, and 39). Shale clasts are well rounded and have been found in core to range up to 6 inches in diameter.

Deposits of interbedded sandstones, siltstones, and shales are illustrated on Plate 8 by either a low percentage sand or a high alternation rate area. Sandstones range from olive green to gray, fine- to very finegrained, and moderately to poorly sorted. Black shales to dark gray siltstones are slightly bioturbated. Horizontal, inclined, and vertical burrows are present in Upper Fox Hills Formation core in southeastern area A9

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 $(Pl. 7)$ . Dodge and Spencer (1980, p. 7) identified brackish-water pelecypods in the same unit. Coalified leafy matter and small carbonaceous fragments are present in core. Leafy material occurs as thin laminae along bedding planes and the small fragments are found as detrital grains in sandstones.

Two major sand trends are present in the study area: east-west and north-south sand bodies (Pl. 7). Physical parameters of individual sand bodies are summarized on Table 2. Thick-bedded sandstones are delineated by effective sand isolith contours greater than 25 ft thick (Pl. 7). Sandstones in areas A4-AS and A6- A7-AIO display sharp upper and lower contacts. Fining upward sequences, near the top of thick-bedded sandstones occur in area A7-A4 (PIs. 7 and 8). Lateral boundary conditions range from abrupt contacts in the northern portion to gradational contacts in the southern portion of the study area (Pl. 7).

Sand deposits in area A8-AI form minor, north-south, bifurcating sand channels (Pl. 8). Boundary conditions are abrupt for both lower and lateral contacts and grade upward into finer, interbedded sediments towards the top of the interval.

Areas that contain primarily thin-bedded sandstones, siltstones, and shales are outlined as interchannel in areas A9, northeastern A3, and eastern AS and Al (Pl. 8).

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Table **2.** Upper Fox Hills Formation sand geometry.



+ Denotes extension beyond mapped boundary, indicating minimum values

sediments are characterized by a basal sandstone with sharp lower contacts and a fining upward sequence with a diminishing sand content.

Paleotopography of this unit is illustrated by isopaching the interval between the basal Lower Fox Hills Formation sandstone'and the base of the Upper Fox Hills Formation. Topographic lows trend north-south and east-west as illustrated on Plate 9. Relief within the topographic lows varies from 5 ft per 1000 ft in the east-west A4-A5 area to 20 ft per 1000 ft in the northsouth A6-A2-AIO area.

### Lower Lance Formation

Lower Lance Formation sediments are poorly exposed at the surface, but are distinguishable in the subsurface core and electric logs (Fig. 7). In the study area, sediments of interest lie within the lower 100 to 150 ft of the Lance Formation. Two depositional sandstone packages are discernab1e in this interval based on sand body geometry. They correspond to a lower, Zone B, and an upper, Zone C, mineralized horizon.

Zone B. In the subsurface, sandstone deposits are divided into thick bedded sandstones and thin, interbedded sandstone, siltstone, and shale (Fig. 7). Thick sand sequences are outlined on Plate 10 by effective sand isolith contours. greater than 25 ft. Well-rounded, intraformational shale pebble conglomerates generally occur as basal channel

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 $lag.$ : Muitiple scour surfaces with accompanying shale clasts are locally abundant in area Bl (Pl. 10). Detrital carbonaceous fragments and coalified woody material occur locally as clasts within the thick-bedded sand sequences. Interbedded sediments are depicted on Plate 11 as areas of low sand percentages and high alternation rates. The sediment sequence consists of interbedded dark brown organic-rich shales, black lignitic shales and gray, very fine to fine sandstones overlain by organicrich shales. Palynomorphs indicate a predominately freshwater environment of deposition for Lower Lance Formation sediments (Tschudy, 1975).

Lower Lance Formation Zone B sand bodies form narrow, straight, rejoining channels that trend roughly north-south (PI. 10, areas Bl, B2-87, B4 and B6). Physical dimensions of the strata of Zone B are summarized on Table 3. Sand trends extend both north and south out of the Oshoto area. Upper and lower boundary conditions of the thick-bedded sandstones are predominantly abrupt, except for the lateral gradational boundary on the western flank of area B4 sand body (Pl. 10).

Interbedded strata also exhibit sharp basal contacts, except in the northeastern Bl, southern Bl, and western B2 areas. upward fining sequences are common in the thinly bedded sediments.

Paleotopography of Zone B is illustrated by isopaching the interval between the basal Lower Fox Hills

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Length Width Thickness <u>Width</u> Boundaries:<br>(ft) (ft) (ft) Thickness Upper Lower Area Trend (ft) (ft) (ft) Thickness Upper Lower Lateral 81 N-S 6500+ 1000-1500 25-65 40:1-60:1 Sharp- Sharp Abrupt Gradational B2-B7 NW-SE 7000+ 1000-1500 25-65 40:1-60:1 Sharp Sharp Abrupt 84 NE-SW 7500+ 2500 25-45 55:1-100:1 Sharp Sharp Western-Gradational - Eastern-Abrupt B3-B8 NW-SE 5500+ 4000+ 1-25 --- Sharp Sharp Eastern-Fine Upward Morupt Western-Unknown <sup>86</sup>6500+ 500-2000 45-65 11:1-30r1 Sharp Sharp Abrupt E-89 E-W 1000 1300 25-45 3011-5011 Sharp Sharp Abrupt 89 N-S 2500+ 1700 25-65 25:1-7011 Sharp Sharp Abrupt al0 NE-SW 4500+ 2000+ 1-25 Fine Sharp Eastern-Upward Abrupt Western-Unknown

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Table 3. Lower Lance Formation Zone B sand geometry.

+ Denotes extension beyond mapped boundary, indicating minimum values

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Table 3. Lower Lance Formation Zone B sand geometry (continued) •



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<sup>+</sup>Denotes extension beyond mapped boundary, indicating minimum values

Formation sandstone and the basal sandstone of the Lance Formation. Topographic lows trend approximately northsouth. Maximum relief observed is approximately 20 ft per 1000 ft in the B2 area (Pl. 12).

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Zone C. Lower Lance Formation Zone C sediments are comprised of multiple sand bodies bounded by abundant shales and siltstones (Pl. 3 and 4). Thick-bedded sandstones are gray to light gray, very fine to fine grained with thin interbeds of very fine-grained sandstones and dark gray siltstones.

Zone C sandstones form narrow, east trending deposits. Two types of sand bodies are illustrated on Plate 14: 1) east-trending, shoestring sandstones in areas Cl, C3, and C4; and 2) the broad, wedge-shaped distributary deposit at area C2. The sand geometry is summarized in Table 4. Sand trends extend east and west out of the study area. Zone C sands, outlined on Plate 14 by contours greater than 25 ft, display sharp lower contacts. In areas Cl and C2, upper boundaries are sharp to gradational, and in area C3 the sands form a fining upward sequence. Lateral boundaries for individual sand bodies are abrupt.

Interbedded sediments, areas CS and C6, exhibit sharp lower contacts and commonly display fining upward sequences.

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Table **4.** Lower Lance Formation Zone C sand geometry.

+ Denotes extension beyond mapped boundary, indicates minimum values

## STRUCTURAL GEOLOGY

Structural features illustrated on Plate 1 are mapped on the base of the Upper Fox Hills Formation. Within the study area, sedimentary units dip  $1^{\circ}$  to  $2^{\circ}$ basinward. In the northeast corner the dip increases *in*  response to folding on the Black Hills monocline. Immediately east of the area, strata *is* nearly vertical.

Subsurface faults *in* the area trend predominantly northeast, east and southeast. Displacement on faults ranged between 10 and 30 ft. In addition to faulting illustrated on the structural contour map, faults were observed in core, and inferred by pump tests in area S4 (Pl.l). Core from hole number 36 (Pl. 2) intersected a high angle fault in the Lower Lance Formation. SandstOne was displaced against shale and slickensides were present on the fault surface. A hydrologic barrier, discovered by a series of pump tests in area B6 (Pls. 10 and l7) coincided with the northeast trending fault in area S4 (PI. 1).

## ROLL FRONT GEOLOGY

Ground water entering and flowing through an aquifer chemically modifies the host rock and through interaction with the host rock is modified in turn. A record of chemically reactive, migrating ground water is preserved by diagenetic mineralogy changes and epigenetic metal enrichment. Various types of ground water are capable of mobilizing, transporting, and concentrating uranium through mechanisms active in roll front deposits.

Roll front deposits result from oxidizing ground water migrating down-flow through regionally reduced sediments (Rackley, et al., 1968, p. 23). Subsequent geochemical cells, produced by migrating ground water, formed ore deposits through a dynamic process of oxidation, dissolution, transportation, reduction and precipitation of uranium. Shape and position of the roll front is determined by sand body geometry (gross permeability), reductant concentration, and ground water flow. Profiles of individual roll fronts are convex up-flow in vertical section; a shape that approximates the velocity gradient of flow through a uniform sand bed (Germanov, 1960, p. 79).

Rubin (1970, p. 5-8) has demonstrated a definite zonation across Powder River Basin roll fronts. Divisible into eight zones, from unaltered to altered, these are: 1) unaltered; 2) remote seepage; 3) near seepage; 4) ore;

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5) interlace; 6) near barren interior; 7) remote barren interior; and 8) barren interior. Sandstone characteristics and radiometric configuration typical of the Oshoto deposit are described below and summarized on Figure 9.

- 1. Unaltered sediments are light gray to gray; carbonaceous matter is vitreous and firm; pyrite is brass yellow and metallic.
- 2. Remote seepage assemblages are akin to unaltered sediments, except that a radioactive anomaly occurs at the base of the sandstone.
- 3. In near seepage zones, radioactivity becomes stronger and the first traces of limonite staining may occur.
- 4. Ore zone radioactivity reaches peak thickness and grade; pyrite is pitted and tarnished, and limonite stain increases slightly in abundance.
- 5. The interface zone is the geochemical boundary between regionally reduced and epigenetically oxidized sediments. Alteration, evidenced by presence of limonite, occurs in sandstone between multiple gamma log anomalies. Carbon becomes dull and flaky with pyrite showing increased pitting and tarnishing.
- 6. Sandstones within the near barren interior take on a grayish yellow color in response to increased oxidation. Pyrite is pitted and dull, or completely destroyed and carbonaceous material is dull and sooty in appearance. Radioactive anomalies commonly occur as pairs: an upper, and a lower gamma "spike".

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- 7. Remote barren interior zOnes are characterized by twin, low intensity gamma. spikes. Alteration increases in intensity and hematite staining may be present. Pyrite and carbon are almost destroyed.
- 8. Barren interior zonation.is distinguished from other altered zones by the lack of anomalous gamma radioactivity. Limonite and hematite staining is prevalent enough to color sandstone yellow gray to rusty red.

In this study, this scheme was modified and five divisions were used to map the Oshoto ore deposit. They are: 1) barren interior; 2) near barren interior; 3) interface, 4) ore to near seepage; and 5) unaltered zones. For each mineralized stratigraphic subdivision, Upper Fox Hills Formation (Zone A) and Lower Lance Formation (Zones B and C). roll fronts were mapped and are illustrated on Plates 16, 17, and 18.

### Roll Front Geometry

Position of oxidation-reduction boundaries is determined by variations in ground water flow. Ground water migration is modified by inherent physical attributes of host aquifers. Permeability, transmissivity, flow boundaries, and hydrologic gradients, all contribute to alter ground-water flow. Migration of oxidizing geochemical cells is tempered by the relative abundance of reductants, such as organic material, reduced iron and sulfide materials and by the physical parameters of aquifers. Alteration

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salients form in areas of relatively high ground-water flow in sediments (Galloway, et al., 1979, p. 177).

Roll front geometry provides information concerning paleoflow direction and relative volume of ground-water flow during the ore forming episode. By classifying and mapping position of roll fronts and mineralization patterns, insight into physical aspects of host aquifers is obtained. Using a classification system presented by Galloway, and others (1979, p. 177-180), roll front deposits are segregated into passive, active and stagnant fronts (Fig. 10).

The classification scheme outlined by Galloway integrates the uneven migration of roll fronts with groundwater flow lines. A passive front forms parallel to groundwater flow lines. Little circulation occurs across the geochemical interface, resulting in. a stationary front composed of narrow, discontinuous, low grade uranium deposits. In active fronts, oxidizing ground water continually passes the oxidation-reduction boundary, producing a dynamic ore body. Through protracted oxidation, transportation, reduction, and enrichment of uranium, broad, high grade, continuous deposits are produced. Stagnant fronts occur as isolated islands or embayments of reduced sediments within altered interiors of migrating roll fronts. Mineralization typically occurs as small, discontinuous

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pods. Mineral grade and thickness of stagnant fronts is higher along oxidation-reduction boundaries oriented normal to the ground-water flow.

# Z'one A ,

Zone A uranium distribution is associated with two major alteration tongues that are separated by a narrow, elongate embayment of unaltered ground (Pl. 16). Paleogroundwater flow is illustrated by the orientation of alteration projections in areas Al and A2. Oxidizing ground water entered the Upper Fox Hills Formation aquifer, migrated westward down dip, then flowed from south to north in the Oshoto area. Active, passive, and stagnant roll fronts formed in response to the differential migration of the oxidation geochemical cell. Uranium roll front characteristics are summarized in Table 5.

At the terminus of each alteration tongue, active fronts pervade. In area AI, a single active front is present; in area A2, the active front consists of multiple, narrow alteration projections (Pl. 16). Mineralization associated with the two alteration salients exemplifies the characteristics of active roll front uranium deposition in the Oshoto area. Active ore zone mineralization is consistently thicker, wider, and maintains higher grades than flanking passive roll fronts (Table 5). An exception is illustrated by the passive ore roll in the southern A2 area (Cross section  $L-L'$ ; Pl. 19). In this instance,

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Table 5. Upper Fox Hills Formation Zone A mineralization.

uranium is being contributed to the deposit from two opposing directions, creating a thick, high grade, continuous uranium deposit.

Oxidizing ground water migrating northward through the Upper Fox Hills Formation aquifer, left remnants of reduced ground and isolated mineralization behind the advancing geochemical cell. Orientation of oxidationreduction boundaries, with respect to ground-water flow, determines the tenor of mineralization associated with stagnant fronts. Uranium deposited along east-west oriented fronts typically contains thicker, higher grade (Table 5), and more continuous mineralization (Pl. 16) than stagnant fronts oriented north-south, parallel to ground-water flow (Table 5). Isolated remnant mineralization, not associated with crescent-shaped roll fronts forms thin, low grade, and very discontinuous deposits.

# Zone B

Ground water entering the Lower Lance Formation Zone B sediments was channeled along multiple, narrow flow paths. Projection of alteration into reduced areas (Areas Bl, B3, and B4; Pl. 17) formed in response to variable ground-water flow. In the Oshoto deposit, roll fronts migrated from south to north, or northeast. Uranium mineralization associated with both active and passive fronts is highly diversified (Table 6). Area Bl contains roll'fronts that produced relatively high grade, continuous deposits. The active front associated with passive fronts

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Table 6. Lower Lance Formation Zone B mineralization.

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near area 84 has not been discovered, to date, but the northwestern passive B4 roll front exhibits exceptionally well developed uranium deposits. Roll fronts in areas B2 and B3 produce thin, low grade, discontinuous mineralization (Plate  $17$  and Table 6).

Stagnant fronts in Zone B are varied and numerous. Uranium in area B6 was deposited on the southern interface between remnant islands of reduced ground and encircling altered sediments of the roll front interior (Pl. IS). Mineralization can be high grade, but often is very thin and narrow (Table 6). Stagnant fronts associated with unaltered embayments in B7 and southeastern B1 areas, contain poorly developed mineralized roll fronts. A well developed front occurs in area B8 (Pl. 17). In this case, uranium was deposited at the oxidation-reduction boundary from two directions (Cross section M-M'; Pl. 19). Mineralization isolated in the near barren interior, located in area B9, is typically thin, low grade and very discontinuous.

# Zone C

Roll fronts in Lower Lance Formation Zone C sediments are poorly developed. Only a single down-dip alteration tongue contains any known mineralization within the study area (Pl. 18). The resultant deposit stradles the oxidation-reduction boundary and is thin, low grade and severely limited (Table 7).

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## DEPOSITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

Recognition of ancient depositional environments requires the integration of a variety of characteristics inherent within the rocks. This study investigates the sand body geometry, lithologic variability, and vertical and lateral relationships of the Fox Bills and Lower Lance Formations in a local area. The depositional models proposed in the following text also incorporate work published primarily by Barry Dodge and Charles Spencer of the U. S. Geological Survey.

In northeastern Wyoming, sedimentary rocks record the last major regression of the western Interior Cretaceous Sea. Depositional environments change upward from offshore marine Pierre Shale, to the nearshore marine Fox Hills Formation, including local estuarine sedimentation, to the fluvio-deltaic Lance Formation. During the time of deposition of the Fox Bills Formation in the study area, the strandline strike was north-south. With time, the shoreline prograded eastward.

A change in the depositional dip occurred during Lance sedimentation. The shallow stream gradient developed to the south. Regional isopachs of the Fox Bills Formation indicate a basin was developing south of the area (Dodge, 1980, Pl.7).

## Lower Fox Hills Formation

Sand geometry of the Lower Fox Hills Formation basal sandstone is comprised of multiple sand ridges crosscut by a transverse sand channel (Pl. 5). The basal sandstone exhibits an overall coarsening upward sequence from a gradational and conformable contact with the underlying marine Pierre Shale, to abrupt upper contacts with overlying marine strata of the Lower Fox Hills Formation.

In a regressional sequence, vertical stratigraphic relationships place the linear sand ridges landward of the marine Pierre Shale and seaward of the continental Lance Formation. Environments located in this range include offshore, nearshore, shore face, and foreshore. In studies of ancient environments within interior seaways, several authors have described linear offshore bars that parallel the strandline (Ryer, 1976, p. 1082; Brenner and Davies, 1974, p. 427; Brenner, 1978, p. 195).

Offshore linear sand ridges with coarsening upward sequences, have been described in Upper Cretaceous strata from central Wyoming. Brenner's study of the Sussex Sandstone (1978, p. 195) and Asquith's work on the Shannon Sandstone (1974, p. 2279) place the formation of these sand bars on the outer continental shelf. Gill and Cobban (1973, p. 31) place the deposition of the Shannon Sandstone approximately 100 km offshore. The depositional model proposed by Harms, and others (1975, p. 113) for the Shannon Sandstone and by Brenner (1978, p. 197) for the

Sussex Sandstone consists of an initial progradation of the continental shelf and slope. Shelf sediments were then subjected to periodic storms which winnowed out shelf deposited mud and piled sand into bars or shoals. As the sand bars built vertically, the deposits coarsened upward in response to increased shoaling energy. Sand bar geometry is further modified by regional and tidal currents (Brenner, 1978, p. 197).

Similar marine bar sands have been desoribed as forming during the Jurassic in a regressive shallow interior seaway (Brenner and Davies, 1974, p. 426). Transverse channels cutting bar sands were also noted. Brenner and Davies (1973, p. 1685) attributed these to surge channels that cut through the bars by storm induced currents under shallow marine conditions.

Modern investigations of shelf topography of the North Atlantic Ocean have identified the presence of offshore and nearshore bar sands (Duane, et al., *1972,*  p. 447; Swift, et al., 1972, p. 499). Multiple nearshore sandbars are actively forming in response to normal tidal, storm and regional circulatory currents. Nearshore bars, deposited on the inner continental shelf, trend parallel or subparallel to the strandline. The actively forming ridge and swale topography of the inner Atlantic shelf lies in water depths within the zone of wave surge in the nearshore zone (Duane, et al., 1972, p. 447). The bar

sands ot the outershelf are termed relict deposits formed in the nearshore environment during the earlier stages of transgression (Swift, et a1., 1972, p. 569).

In the study area, overlying the marine bars *is*  70 ft to 90 ft of gently dipping interbedded shales, siltstones, and sandstones that contain marine trace fossils. Local erosion may have removed an additional 90 to 120 ft of section (Dodge and Spencer, 1980; Fig. 11). The only mappable subsurface marker bed within this unit is a sandstone, located roughly in the middle of the sequence. Paleotopography of the depositional surface exhibits a slightly undulatory, 20 ft per mi eastward dipping slope. The shallowness of the depositional slope corresponds to the low gradients of the nearshore area (Hoyt and Henry, 1967, p. 81). Dodge (1980, p. 7) reports predominantly east, southeast and south paleoflow directions for gently inclined bedding surfaces, from surface exposures of the Lower Fox Hills Formation south of the study area.

Considering the depositional history of the basin, regional stratigraphy, vertical relationships, well profiles and sand geometry, a depositional model can be developed for the Lower Fox Hills Formation. The regression of the Interior cretaceous Sea began with the progradational shelf deposits of the offshore marine Pierre Shale.

Increased energy, supplied by periodic storms, began winnowing out shelf-deposited mud and started piling



**EXPLANATION** 

Isopach Contours<br>C.I.: 30'

Inferred Paleodrainage

Figure 11. Subregional Upper Fox Hills Formation paleodrainage pattern as derived from isopach lines<br>(modified from Dodge and Spencer, 1980).

sand into submarine bars. Through increased shoaling energy, the sand bars developed a coarsening upward sequence. The sand bars were further modified by storm, regional and tidal currents. A storm induced surge channel oriented normal to the bar strike is observed in the Oshoto area.

Because the basal sand bars of the Lower Fox Hills Formation conformably overlie offshore marine Pierre Shale, and underlie marine shales and siltstones, it is postulated that these sand bars were deposited as offshore bars on the continental shelf. Without additional paleontological information, a definitive determination of the water depth of sand bar sedimentation cannot be made. Overlying these sand bars is an extensive sequence of marine shales, siltstones and sandstones. Within this unit there is a sandstone that exhibits an eastwarddipping paleotopography, typical of the nearshore marine environment.

Coastline orientation during deposition of the Lower Fox Hills Formation can be inferred from sand body geometry, paleoflow directions and paleotopography of the sediments. In modern and ancient environments, marine bars, both offshore and nearshore, can form roughly parallel to the coastline. The north-south strike of the marine bars, the easterly to southerly paleoflow directions, and the easterly sloping paleotopography of nearshore

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marine strata indicate that the strandline was approximately north-south and prograding eastward.

Upper Fox Hills Formation

Sand body geometry of the Upper Fox Hills Formation is complex and varied, with many cross-cutting trends  $(Pl. 7)$ . The coastline was probably oriented northsouth, normal to the depositional dip, indicated by the paleotopography of the Upper Fox Hills Formation (Fig. 9). TWo prominent trends are present: north-south, strike oriented, and east-west, dip oriented sand bodies. Areas of preserved interchannel sediments are oriented parallel to the sand trends. Both strike and dip oriented remnants are present.

The contact between Upper and Lower Fox Hills Formation is marked by an abrupt increase in grain size with shale pebble conglomerates occurring at, or near the basal contact. Within the study area, sand channels generally correspond to paleotopographic depressions which are superimposed on the dendritic paleotopography indicated by Lower Fox Hills thinning. It appears that Upper Fox Hills Formation channels deeply eroded the underlying sediments and deposited both strike and dip oriented sediments.

Local erosional thinning is superimposed on a regional thinning pattern (Dodge, 1980, p. 26). Fox Hills Formation sediments become thicker and younger to the south. Regional thinning in northeastern wyoming

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reflects the relatively stable nature of the area during Fox Hills time with respect to the subsiding basin south of the area.

A relatively stable coastline implies that rates l of deposition are greater than subsidence. As a result, lateral migration is the principal process for channel accretion, both normal to and parallel to the depositional strike, as the entire depositional sequence progrades eastward.

A Fox Hills coastal sequence is exposed along the Rock Springs and Wamsutter Arches in Sweetwater County, WYoming. Land (1972, p. 60) and Weimer and Land (1975, p. 662) describe an ancient depositional environment that also produced strike and dip oriented sand bodies. Facies present include barrier island, tidal river and estuary depositional environments. Sandstone bodies are 6 to 12 mi wide and are oriented parallel to the coastline. Tidal rivers or large estuarine meander loops that parallel the shoreline, migrated laterally, reworking upper barrier island sequences as the shoreline prograded seaward (Weimer and Land, 1975, p.  $662$ ). Sandstones 20 to 35 ft thick were described disconformably overlying shoreface and foreshore sandstones. Depth of scour averaged 25 ft, but major estuary channels scoured as deep as 60 ft (Land, 1972, p. 63).

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Environmental settings proposed by Weimer and Land (1972, p. 662) are illustrated on Figure 12. Initial submergence of the Fox Hills coastline built up beach and dune ridge deposits. During submergence, the area behind the backshore ridges was flooded. Small estuaries, tidal rivers, lagoons and marshes formed landward of the barrier islands. At some time, submergence stopped and progradation began. As the estuaries and tidal rivers migrated seaward, channel processes began reworking barrier island sediments. Some channel sediments were deposited parallel to the shoreline as the channels prograded seaward. This postulated model for barrier island - estuary tidal river regressional coastline complex closely approximates processes similar to those active along the modern Georgia coast (Land, 1972, p. 59).

Hoyt and Henry (1967, p. 77) describe the processes of migrating tidal inlets and the depositional responses along the modern barrier island coast of Georgia. Oomkens and Terwindt (1960, p. 701) describe similar processresponse relationships in a migrating estuary on the coast of the Netherlands. On the coast of Georgia, inlet channels vary between 1 to 4 mi in width and 40 to 100 ft in depth. As the inlets migrate southward, parallel to longshore drift, sediments of the barrier island and underlying sequences are eroded and reworked to varying degrees, dependent upon channel depth. Hoyt and Henry (1967, p. 78) found that scour depths were generally 2 to

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three times the depth of barrier island sequences. As a result, migrating tidal inlet sandstones were deposited unconformably on nearshore marine sediments.

Channel deposits formed by migrating inlets produce elongate sand lenses that parallel the depositional strike of the coastline. The sand bodies thin both landward and seaward (Hoyt and Henry, 1967, p. 82). Length of the deposit depends on the migration rate and changes in sea level. Width and thickness vary with channel depth and sea bottom characteristics (Hoyt and Henry, 1967, p. 85). Within the overall estuary sequence, dip oriented sand bodies form in response to tidal currents (Greer, 1975, p. 105). These deposits would also be incorporated in a laterally migrating tidal inlet deposit.

Subregional drainage patterns, paleontology and sand body geometry aid in the reconstruction of the depositional history of the Upper Fox Hills Formation. Evidence of preserved shoreface, foreshore, and barrier island sequences have been described at locations on outcrop north, south and east of the study area by Dodge and Spencer (1980, p. 7), Cuancara (1976, p.ll), Feldman (1972), and Waage (1968). In the area mapped by Dodge (1980, Fig. II), much of the high energy shoreface, foreshore and barrier deposits were removed by erosion and sediments with a brackish water fauna were deposited (Dodge, 1980, p. 26). As much as 120 ft of section has been removed in the deeper portions of the channel scour.

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Regression of the Cretaceous Seaway during deposition of the Lower Fox Hills Formation produced a sequence of seaward prograding offshore, nearshore, shoreface and foreshore environments. At some point in time, either due to a rise in sea level or an increase in subsidence, a barrier island - estuary - tidal river complex was formed. Hoyt (1967, p. l125) indicates that a slow transgression is necessary to form barrier islands. Once formed, barrier islands can migrage along the depositional strike, or dip, or remain stationary. Estuary, tidal river, and brackish marsh water environments formed behind the barrier islands.

The submergence trend ceased and seaward progradation of the coastal environments was initiated. Estuary channels scoured deeply into underlying barrier island, foreshore, and shoreface sediments, forming the dendritic drainage pattern mapped by Dodge and Spencer (1980, p. 13). Sediments of the barrier island sequence were probably eroded and reworked by deeply scouring estuary channels. A lateral migration from.north to south by estuarine tidal inlets may account for the broad scour surface centered at Oshoto (Fig. 11). Complete removal of the entire barrier island sequence, foreshore, and shoreface sediments within this area is related to the amount of erosional thinning of the Lower Fox Hills Formation corresponding with the reported channel depths of modern tidal inlets on the Georgia coast.

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Superimposed on the deposits produced by strike migrating tidal inlets are the deposits formed by a prograding coastline. Tidal rivers that formed behind and parallel to barrier islands aided in the reworking of marsh and barrier island sediments. The abrupt lateral contacts of the major strike oriented sand body with the interbedded, presumably, marsh sediments, represents the leading erosional edge of an easterly prograding strike oriented tidal river. Various channel sizes and degrees of lateral migration are evident on Plate 7.

Erosion and sedimentation patterns near Oshoto closely approximate the response produced by prograding barrier island - estuary - tidal river processes (Fig. 12). In addition to producing elongate sandstone lenses parallel to the shoreline by lateral migration, estuaries also contain dip oriented sand bodies that form in response to ebb and flow tidal currents (Areas A4 and AS; Pl. 7). Tidal rivers, parallel to the strandline, and prograding seaward also eroded and reworked portions of the lagoonal and barrier island sequences. Sediments were either deposited as strike oriented channel sands or transported farther down the depositional dip.

## Lower Lance Formation

Only the lower 100 to 150 ft of the Lance Formation has been investigated. Within this section, there are two depositional sand packages, with opposing geometry. The

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two deposits are related in that deposition had occurred in a continental setting but was influenced by varied local processes active in a progradational coastal sequence.

The lowest sand package of the Lance Formation is comprised of narrow, rejoining channel deposits (Pl. 10). Sand trends indicate a general south to southeast depositional dip. Channel sandstones form sharp upper and lower contacts and display abrupt boundaries with laterally equivalent interchannel sediments. Lance-Fox Hills Formation contacts are generally disconformable within the study area, resulting from numerous local scours by individual channels (PIs. 10 and 12).

Located above the Lower Lance Formation channelinterchannel deposits, are sediments comprised of small east-west-trending sandstones. Two types of sand bodies occur in the area: multiple shoestring sandstones, and a singular wedge shape sandstone that grades easterly into multiple shoestring sand channels (Pl. 14). Sandstones exhibit a sharp upper and lower contact, with either a constant or slightly coarsening upward sequence.

Stream flow, throughout Lance sedimentation, was dominated by the subsiding basin south of the study area and the overall regression of the Interior Cretaceous Sea (Fig. 5). Paleoflow directions for the Lance Formation sequence in northeastern WYoming are predominantly south to southeast (Dodge and Powell, 1975, Figs. 6-13, p. 1461

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21) indicating a shift in the depositional dip between Fox Hills and Lance Formations.

Paleontology studies by Tschudy (1975) indicate that the lower portions of Lance Formation contain evidence of minor marine influence in a predominantly fresh water environment. Organic-rich shales and root casts are common in interchannel sediments and upper channel sequences. The change in fauna and flora to an increasingly fresh-water system reflects the continued progradation of continental depositional environments to the south.

Characteristics of Lower Lance Formation channel sands have been noted in like deposits associated with ancient coastal and delta plain environments by numerous authors. Shelton (1973) has compiled information describing distributary channel sandstones. Fisher and McGowen (1969, p. 30) described narrow elongate sandstones occurring in the Rockdale delta system, Wilcox Group, Texas. Laterally equivalent mudstones and lignites were interpreted to represent interdistributary deposition in lakes, swamps, or flood palins. Casey and cantrell (1971) noted that the Davies sand, Yegua Formation, Texas, was a narrow, elongate sand body with abrupt upper and lower contacts and sharp lateral boundaries. Small width to thickness ratios, abrupt contacts, and fresh-water fauna in laterally adjacent sediments indicate a distributary depositional environment (Shelton, 1973, p. 59).

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In each case described by Shelton (1973), distribtary channel sands characteristically contain: 1) sharp upper and lower contacts; 2) abrupt lateral boundaries; 3) small width to thickness ratios; 4) unidirectional stream flow; and 5) laterally equivalent flood plain, lake or swamp sediments.

Studies of modern delta plain sedimentation have described processes of distributary channel formation. Channels commonly display low sinuosity and unidirectional currents (Fisher, et al., 1969, p. 15). Small width to thickness ratios result from limited lateral migration.

According to Fisher, and others (1969, p. IS), active channels are filled with the coarsest sediments. Channel lag commonly is found on numerous internal erosional surfaces. Channel abandonment may be either gradual or abrupt. If channel. diversion is rapid, upper channels are in sharp contact with overlying channel fill shales and siltstones. Fining upward sequences are characteristic of gradual abandonments (Fisher, et al., 1969, p. 16).

Kolb and van Lopik (1966) note that the stability of the natural levees flanking the distributary channels decreases downstream. In areas of poor levee development, crevasse splays are more apt to form on the lower delta plain (Fisher, et al., 1969, p. 12). Splays often form in interdistributary bays open to the sea. Coleman and Prior (1980, p. 48) also note that open water on the delta 63

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plain can be completely surrounded by marsh or distributary levees, forming a fresh-water environment.

Coleman and Prior (1980, p. 53) describe crevasse splays extending into shallow bays by radial, bifurcating channels. Splay deposits generally coarsen upward. Lower contacts are either gradational or sharp (Coleman and Prior, 1980, p. 57, Fig. 20). The sand geometry forms an overall wedge-shaped deposit that thins away from the levee breech by multiple, radially bifurcating channel sands.

A depositional model for the Lower Lance Formation can be postulated using stratigraphic sequences, well profiles, sand body geometry, and paleontology. Sandstones of the lowest Lance Formation were deposited in distributary channels (Fig. *13).* Lateral migration was small, but channel abandonment was rapid. The rejoining distributary channel pattern probably resulted from rapid and repeated channel diversions. Minor marine incursions indicate the distributary system at Oshoto was located relatively near the coast, in areas on the lower delta, or coastal plain.

Higher in the section, and perhaps farther inland, crevasse splays were present. The deposits were derived from a distributary channel located to the west. A local break in the channel levee diverted water and sediment into an interdistributary bay or flood plain (Fig. 13). Although crevasse splays commonly occur in the lower delta plain, they do not form exclusively in that environment.



Figure 13. Distributary-crevasse splay depositional<br>environments.





Sedimentation Controls

Roll front development and migration is governed primarily by the sedimentary environments of deposition. Each stratigraphic unit consists of an internal framework of permeable sandstones surrounded by a body of impermeable shales and siltstones. These sandstones act as a conduit for ground water. The heterogeneous permeability and transmissivity of the host sediments modifies the migration of ground water. To a certain extent, the alteration projections formed in response to increased flow through the more permeable channel sandstones.

Migration rates between ground-water flow and roll front development are not equal. Roll fronts are geochemical cells and migrate in response not only to groundwater flow, but also to concentrations of reductants within the host sediments and the amount of oxygen in the ground water. It is the process of continuous migration of ground water across the oxidation-reduction boundary that advances roll fronts.

# Zone A

Orientation of roll front projections and location of ore deposits indicate an initial westerly flow of ground water down the stratigraphic dip from the recharge 66

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area. Further down dip, ground water was flowing predominantly northward, along a separate alteration tongue (Pl. 16).

Relationships between sedimentation patterns and roll front distribution is exemplified by comparing the alternation rate map to the mineralization map of the Upper Fox Hills Formation Zone A (PIs. 16 and 20) • The oxidation-reduction boundary, located in areas AS, A6, and A3 displays a broad, flat alteration projection bounded by embayments of reduced sediments (Pl. 16). The alteration tongue is closely related to the east-west oriented Fox Hills Formation estuary channels. Stagnant islands in area A4, and the embayment northeast of area Al occur in areas of high lithologic variability (PIs. 16 and 20).

Where interchannel sediments occur, advancing geochemical cells do not readily penetrate and oxidize host sediments. The low permeability and transmissivity of the interbedded sediments, coupled with a higher incidence of organic and inorganic reductants, observed in cores, contributed to the precipitation and preservation of uranium in these areas.

The embayment between the westward and northward migrating geochemical cells is not related to sedimentary patterns (Area A6, PIs. 16 and 20). The poor quality of mineralization associated with the embayment indicates that the boundary resulted from **an** undetermined low flow barrier to ground water migration. Mineralization

associated with this westward oriented projection is best developed in a north-trending branch of the roll front (Area AI, Pl. 16). Roll front orientation generally parallels a minor channel sand, but is offset to the west.<br>The mouth of the Al alteration tongue corresponds with an area containing a low percent sand and a high alternation rate (PIs. 16 and 20). Extensive near barren interior deposits formed as a result of the passage of roll fronts through the interbedded-sediments. Ground water flowing down dip was probably funneled into the low permeable sediments by low flow boundaries located in areas AS and A6. These flow boundaries are probably related to faulting and will be discussed in a later section.

Westward, across the narrow embayment of reduced ground, roll fronts are oriented north-south, parallel to the major strike oriented channel (PIs. 16 and 20). Roll front tongues are closely related to the thicker channel sequences. Ore deposited along these active fronts is very well developed (Areas A2 and southern A2, PIs. 16 and 20).

Isolated near barren interior mineralization is common in area A7. The area is characterized by a sedimentary sequence consisting of a thick basal channel sandstone capped by interbedded channel fill shales, siltstones, and sandstones. As the northward migrating roll front developed in the A7 area, uranium was not only being deposited in the

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channel sands, but also in the channel fill sediments. Continued roll front migration redeposited the ore zone further down flow, but left isolated remnant mineralization in the interbedded sediments. Ground water had apparently entered the study area from two different recharge areas. Recharge for the westerly migrating roll front (Areas Al, A3, A4, and AS, Pls. 16 and 20), was located directly up dip, along.the east-west oriented estuary channels. Ground water had to enter the northerly migrating roll front (AreaS A2 and A7, Pls. 16 and 20) at some distance to the southeast.

# Zone B

Orientation and distribution of Lower Lance Formation Zone B ore deposits, indicates an overall down dip migration, but within the study area, ground-water flow is predominantly to the north (Pl. 17). Relationships between depositional patterns and roll front development are illustrated by comparing the alternation rate map to the mineralization map (Pls. 17 and 22).

There are four main alteration projections in the study area. All roll fronts are migrating northward, but exhibit widely variable characteristics.

Two roll front projections in areas B1 and B2 have migrated along the prominent eastern, north-south distributary channel (Pl. 22). Mineralization is better developed in area 81. The difference is related to the

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volume of oxidizing, uranyl-bearing ground water diverted into the individual roll front projections. The oxidized ground behind the Bl roll front is the most extensive and implies that a higher volume of ground water passed through this area. Because uranium deposition in the study area results from a mass transfer of very dilute, uranyl-bearing ground water across a geochemical interface, a large volume of ground water funneled into an alteration projection will produce a large uranium deposit with high grades. This appears to be the situation with the Bl roll front. Roll fronts that have a small volume of ground water flowing across the geochemical interface will produce discontinuous, low grade deposits (Area B2, Pl. 17).

Stagnant islands in area B6 and isolated near barren interior mineralization in area B9 are primarily related to areas of moderate to high alternation rates. These areas contain interbedded low permeability shales, siltstones, and sandstones which trapped and preserved the relict mineralization as the roll front migrated down flow.

The B3 roll front is poorly developed even in areas of active roll front migration (Pl. 17). Sediments are moderately to highly interbedded with few sandstones thicker than 25 ft (Pl. 10). Inferior transmissivity of the host aquifer retarded the influx of uranyl-bearing ground water, resulting in poor roll front development.

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The alteration tonque in the B4 area formed an asymmetric ore deposit with mineralization occurring primarily on the down-dip flank of a north-northeast trending distributary channel (PIs. 17 and 22). Alteration boundaries correspond with channel margins on the western flank, but on the barren eastern flank the roll front boundary is located in thick channel sandstones.

Mineralization on the western flank roughly parallels the sedimentary trend illustrated by the alternation rate map (Pl. 22). In this area, portions of the host sediment reach and maintain a 25 ft minimum effective sand thickness. These sandstones were able to transmit uranyl-bearing ground water into areas with increasing lithologic variability, and presumably a higher reductant content. As the geochemical cell migrated northward, uranium was probably still being contributed to the deposit, resulting in a well developed passive roll front ore deposit.

The eastern flank of the 84 alteration tongue contains little or no known mineralization. Oxidationreduction boundaries correspond with thicker sandstones of the distributary channel (PIs. 10 and 17). It is probable that uranium mineralization associated with the northward migrating geochemical cell was not preserved. The uranium was oxidized and transported down flow with the advancing roll front. Apparently, reductants were not in sufficient quantities to trap and preserve mineralization from being flushed out of the permeable channel sandstones.



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Mineralization associated with the crevasse splay sandstones is very poorly developed. Only one alteration projection is observed on Plate 18. The roll front in area Cl corresponds to one of the radially bifurcating channel sands (Pl. 14). The overall narrow, shoestring geometry of the thicker channel deposits (Areas Cl, *C3 ,*  and C4, Pl. 14) is primarily responsible for the lack of roll front development. In addition, the divergent nature of the channels in areas C1 and C3 (Pl. 14) does not allow funneling of large volumes of uranyl-bearing ground water into the subsurface.

## Structural Controls

Premineral faulting in the Oshoto area also influenced ground-water flow and roll front migration. Fault effectiveness as a barrier to ground-water flow is dependent on the ratio of fault displacement to bedding thickness. Faults with a small displacement can be flow barriers if the sediments are highly interbedded. Effectiveness of a fault to influence ground-water flow diminishes as sandstone beds thicken and dominate a stratigraphic sequence'. Fault barriers to ground water may also result if fault gouge is present.

Presence of hydrologic barriers in the area was discovered by a pump test during Phase IV production drilling. The barrier is fault related, with a displacement

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between 10 and 20 ft. Assooiated with the fault zone was a narrow stagnant front, direotly north of area B6 (Pl. 17). Other areas associated with low flow fault zones are illustrated by comparing mineralization patterns to the structural oontour maps (PIs. 1, 17, and 18).

Upper Fox Hills Formation roll fronts associated with fault zones are exemplified by the unaltered embayment in area AS (PIs. I and 16). Ground water migrating east and north was diverted into sediments at the mouth of the Al alteration tongue. This fault system also affected ground water migration in Zone B. Mineralization associated with fault related unaltered embayments is generally low grade and very discontinuous (Cross section K-K', Pl. 19).

Other areas that are possibly related to fault zones include the small unaltered islands in area B6 (Pl. 17) and the southern flank of the A4 unaltered island (PI. 16).

An unaltered, north-trending embayment in the area around A6 (Pl. 16) and a vertically identical embayment north of area B8 (Pl. 17) are areas of restrioted low ground water flow. A north-trending fault may be present and affecting ground-water migration. Because displacement is generally small, and the fault trace parallels strike, a fault is not distinguishable from the regional stratigraphic dip. The only evidence that a fault may be present, is a flattening of the dip contours in areas S3 and S4 (Pl. 1).

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The majority of the roll fronts that cross fault traces have migrated preferentially along thick channel sandstones. As a result, faulting in these areas exhibits little or no effect on ground-water flow.

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### SUMMARY

## Depositional Environments ,

Upper Cretaceous sediments were deposited in response to the overall regression of the Interior Cretaceous Sea. Vertical stratigraphic sequences record the lateral succession of depositional environments from the marine Pierre Shale to the marine Fox Hills Formation to the continental Lance Formation.

Sandstones of the basal Fox Hills Formation grade upward from the underlying conformable offshore marine Pierre Shale to overlying low energy marine deposits of the Lower Fox Hills Formation. The basal sandstones were shaped into submarine bars by periodic storm, regional and tidal currents. In the study area, a transverse, storm induced surge channel cuts the north-south oriented sand bars. The coarsening upward sequences Observed in these sandstones corresponds to increased shoaling energy. The water depth of formation of these submarine bars is not discernable without additional paleontological study.

Overlying the offshore marine bar-interbar interval is a progradational sequence of offshore to nearshore low energy shales, siltstones, and sandstones. The paleodepositional surface of prominent sandstone within the unit dips gently to the east. The Lower Fox Hills Formation

strandline strike remained north-south and was located west of the study area.

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A slow transgression, probably related to either increased subsidence, variable sediment influx, or a rise in sea level occurred at some point in time to initiate barrier island development.

Submergence ceased and a seaward progradation of coastal environments began. Estuarys and tidal rivers that formed behind the barrier islands, scoured deeply into the barrier, foreshore, and shoreface sediments. Erosion of underlying Lower Fox Hills Formation strata, by strike migrating estuary inlets, and dip prograding tidal rivers, scoured a dendritic drainage pattern, indieating a continued eastward regression of the interior sea. Erosion and redistribution of the clastic sediments formed complex depositional patterns. Both strike and dip oriented sand bodies are preserved in the Upper Fox Hills Formation.

Throughout deposition of the Lance Formation, paleocurrent directions were predominantly south to southeast. A favorable stream gradient developed, prior to deposition of the Lower Lance Formation distributary channels, in response to a subsiding basin located south of the area.

Sandstones were deposited as distributary channels and crevasse splays on a lower coastal or delta plain. Basal Lance Formation distributaries formed a complex

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rejoining channel pattern. Channel rejoining patterns probably resulted from rapid and repeated channel diversions (Fig. 13). Sandstones form a net of northsouth oriented sand bodies.

Crevasse splays deposited coarse clastic sediments into the low energy environments of the interdistributary areas. Splay deposits form radially bifurcating channels that eminate from a breech in the distributary levee. Sand bodies form an overall wedge-shaped sedimentary prism that thins away from the distributary.

# Uranium Deposition

Roll fronts in the Oshoto area developed when Upper Cretaceous sediments were uplifted and exposed to oxidizing, uranyl-bearing ground water. Ground water entering the system initially migrated down the stratigraphic dip. When strike oriented sand channels were encountered, ground water was diverted primarily northward.

Active, passive, and stagnant roll fronts formed in response to the differential migration of ground water through a heterogeneous aquifer. Active alteration tongues coincide with thick, permeable, transmissive channel . sands of the Fox Hills and Lance Formations. Passive and stagnant fronts tend to be associated with channel flanks or low permeability, organic rich interchannel sediments.

uranium grade and thickness of roll front deposits is dependent upon the rate and volume of uranyl-bearing

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ground water crossing the geochemical interface. Orientation of the roll front to ground-water flow and the size of the channel sand have a direct bearing on uranium deposition.

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The richest ore deposits are found at the terminous of alteration projections associated with large channel systems.

Premineral faulting also contributes to the modification of roll front migration. Fault zones also act as barriers to ground-water flow. The process either diverts the roll fronts elsewhere, or traps mineralization as stagnant fronts.

Exploration in the region using the concepts of sand body, and roll front geometry will aid in the location of other ore deposits. In the region, over 150 linear miles of roll front boundaries have been discovered to date. As much as a 1400 ft thickness of Fox Hills and Lance Formation sediments covering approximately 300 sq mi has the potential of containing uranium deposits.

To discover economic are bodies, large channels which funneled substantial volumes of uranyl-bearing ground water into the subsurface must be located.

A regional investigation of Fox Hills and Lance Formation sand geometry, using effective sand isoliths, will provide the means to locate and map major channel sand trends. The combination of sand geometry with roll tion De

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front geometry identifies potentially productive areas for exploration.



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## VITA

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Micheal D. Buswell was born in Canton, South Dakota September 1, 1952. He graduated from Harrisburg High School in 1970. In 1974, Mike graduated from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Engineering, and in 1982, received his Master of Science degree in Geology.

From 1974 to 1976, Mr. Buswell worked as an exploration geologist and again from 1978 to 1980 as project geologist for Nuclear Dynamics (now NO Resources) in Moorcroft and Casper, Wyoming.

In mid 1980, Mike began work for Union Energy Mining Division of Union Oil of California as staff geologist, and later as an exploration staff geologist. Late in 1981, he was transferred to the Oil and Gas Division of Union Oil of California in southwest Louisiana as a development geologist.

Mike has co-authored a paper on the history of uranium exploration in the Oshoto, Wyoming area for the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1980.

Additionally, Mr. Buswell has presented the methods and conclusions of this thesis to the Geological Society of America and the Wyoming Geological Association.

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**ADDENDUM 2.6-B EXPLORATION/DELINEATION DRILLHOLE TABULATION** 



# Table1. Exploration/Delineation Hole Finding , Surveying and Abandonment Summary

<sup>1</sup> Includes Exploration and Delineation Holes

Note: Statistics are based on information as of October 2010

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Note: Coordinate Projections are set in State Plane NAD 83 East Feet

















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Note: Coordinate Projections are set in State Plane NAD 83 East Feet

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Note: Coordinate Projections are set in State Plane NAD 83 East Feet

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Note: Coordinate Projections are set in State Plane NAD 83 East Feet

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Note: Coordinate Projections are set in State Plane NAD 83 East Feet

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