Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository: Delving into Content

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Introduction

Closed Mines

The Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository in the Arthur Lakes Library at the Colorado School of Mines conducted a resource evaluation of its special collections with the following results:

• Materials can provide valuable data in the context of current research and development, geological studies, permitting efforts, and socio-economic research.

• Media archived at the repository include: photographs, maps, architectural drawings, 35 mm slides, oral histories, reel-to-reel film, and technical reports.

• Research topics of interest which are found in the repository include: business meetings and correspondence of closed or defunct mines, the industry’s famous icons, retorts, revegetation, ground water, and oil shale geology.

Famous Icons

Retorts

The information contained in many of these documents can provide a much deeper data pool for today’s research.

Ground Water

Methods

• Enhancing and creating catalog records for all items in the repository, based on MARC standards, will create better access and discoverability of the items in the repository. Only 1% of the records within the repository have an assigned catalog record. Approximately 27,900 records need to be added to the current database to correctly represent the items within the repository.

• Digitizing all technical reports, maps, architectural drawings, photos, and audio/visual items as funding is made available. Process includes intellectual content and follow up with copyright holders for permission to digitize.

Ground Water

Resources

Oil Shale resources in repository

Table 1. Oil Shale (closed) Facilities and Oil Shale Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Inclusive dates</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Environmental reports, business meetings, chemical analysis, physical properties, maps, photographs, reel film, oral histories, and slides...</td>
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- Anvil Points: Bureau of Mines                     | 1916-1986           |
- Colony Mine I: Atlantic Richfield Company         | 1971-1972           |
- Colorado School of Mines Research Foundation, Inc.| 1964-1968           |
- Occidental Oil Shale, Inc. (OXY)                  | 1972-1978           |
- Paraho Development Corporation                     | 1973-1979           |
- Paraho Utah Shale Oil Project                      | 1980-1999           |
- Rio Blanco Oil Shale Company                       | 1974-1980           |
- Rulison Project: Bureau of Mines                   | 1913-1929           |
- Superior Oil Company                                | 1977-1983           |
- The Oil Shale Corporation (TOSCO)                  | 1955-1999           |
- Union Oil Company of California (Unical)            | 1940-1999           |
- White River Shale Project                          | 1975-1983           |

This short list represents a few of the oil shale facilities and projects which are found in the repository. Areas of research over the past year include: the history of oil shale, chemical analysis of oil shale, mining engineering, and socio-economic issues.

Revegetation

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Anvil Points, Lower Aft Yard, 1947 (Laramie Project Collection)


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Discussion

From the strategic plan, multiple projects were created to focus on best practices to gain increased accessibility of the oil shale collections. The following projects were created based on future funding:

• Create Encoded Archival Description finding aids for all collections. This will allow anyone on the Internet to read the descriptions of all collections within the repository, including box-level descriptions, folder-level descriptions, and if time allows, item-level descriptions. These finding aids are word searchable and proven to assist researchers worldwide.

• Digitize all audio/video items within the repository, including oral histories. Link items to the CSM Digital Repository. This will help preserve the information from these formats, and make them more accessible.

• Create a visual gallery at the repository to educate the public about the oil shale industry. Display would include architectural drawings, maps of oil shale mines such as Anvil Points, and drawings of various mining equipment.

• Digitize all photos, uploading and linking to the CSM Image Database, which are then linked to the library’s web site.

• Catalog all items within the repository, enhancing discoverability on the Internet.

Conclusion

With one COSTAR Librarian and a part time student, we have created full text links to just over 2,500 records in the Tell Ertl database, doubling the amount at this time last year. Next year we intend to continue digitizing and cataloging documents and plan to submit grants to fund the projects listed above.

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