The El Faro*Prospects, Near Placitas, Sandoval County, New Mexico

Location and Accessibility

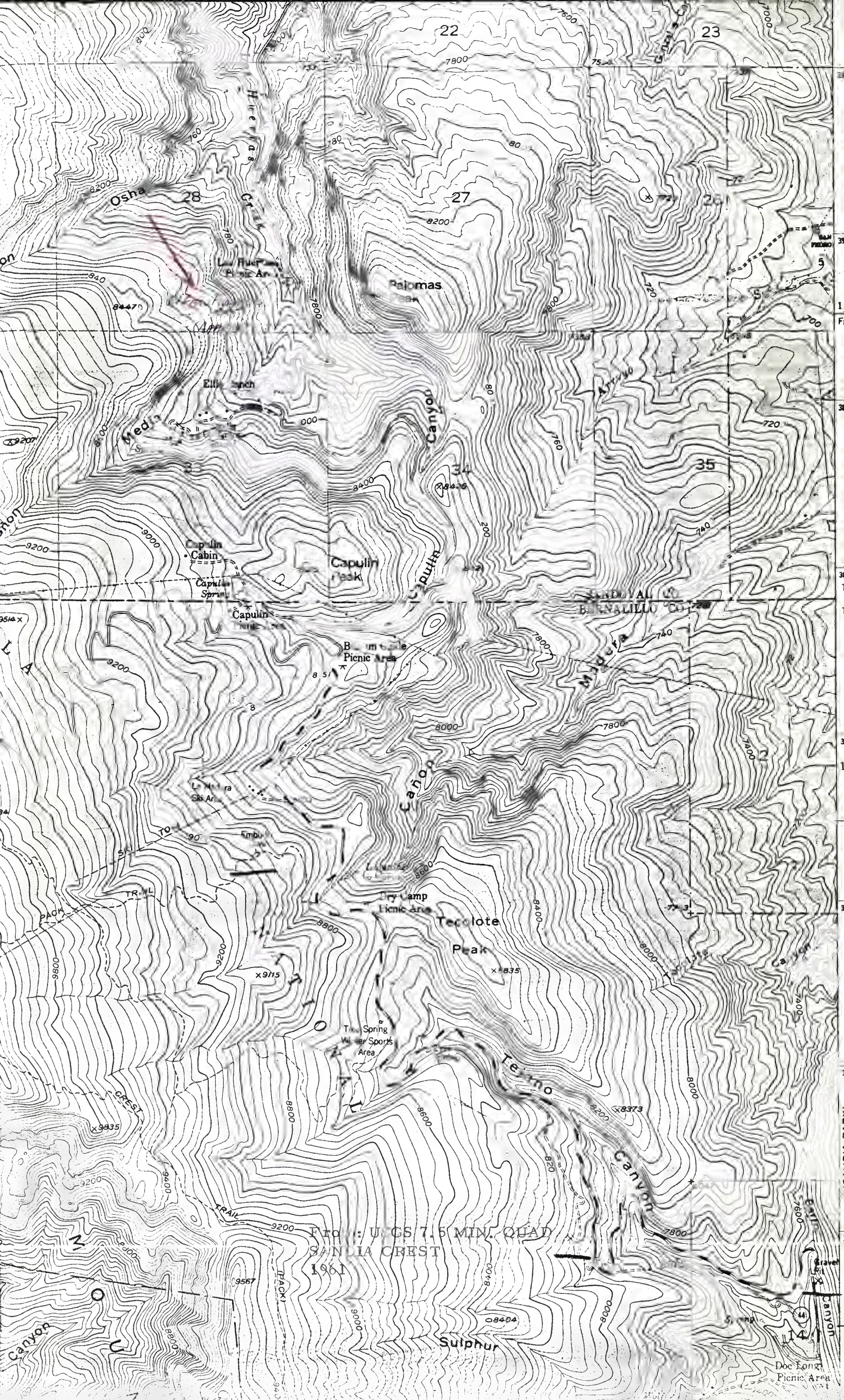
The El Faro prospects are located in CS½S½, Sec 28, T.12N., R.5E., N.M.P.M. in Sandoval County, New Mexico. The prospects, whose approximate location is shown on the enclosed map[1/] can be reached by traveling south from Plactias on New Mexico State Highway 44 for 6.5 miles to the Las Huertas picnic area. The prospects are some 1000 feet southwest of the picnic area in a ridge lying north of an unnamed creek.

Purpose

The prospects were examined briefly on January 18, 1980, by the author at the request of Mr. Kenneth Blue of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mr. Blue had described a deposit near Placitas of what he thought to be cinnabar. This mineral has been previously reported from the area but upon inspection had, on each occasion, turned out to be hematite. I therefore questioned Mr. Blue at length regarding the appearance of the substance. He described it as a heavy, brilliant red mineral with a metallic luster which left a slick, silvery residue on the hands when rubbed. He went on to relate a conversation he had with an elderly Spanish man residing in Bernalillo who claimed to have mined mercury with his father several years ago from a deposit in the northern Sandia Mountains. The man recalled bringing the mercury out in small bottles.

1/ U.S.G.S. 7.5' quad., Sandia Crest, 1961

*** Note: These prospects were called "El Faro" by Mr. Blue. This name could not be substantiated however. I have therefore filed the report under Las Huertas Prospects. (RWE)**


22
23
Osha
28
27
Palomas Peak
Ellis Ranch
34
35
Capulin Cabin
Capulin Spring
Capulin Peak
Capulin
Canyon
SANDOVAL CO
BERNALILLO CO
Madera
Cañon
Dry Camp Picnic Area
Tecolote Peak
Tejano
Canyon
CREST
TRAIL
Sulphur
Doc Long Picnic Area
From: USGS 7.5 MIN. QUAD
SANDIA CREST
1961

Workings

The workings of El Faro prospects consist of three (or more) adits driven to the southwest along a narrow vein structure generally 1-2 feet in width but locally up to 4 feet in width.

The lowest of the adits is reported by Mr. Blue to be 300 feet or more in length but was flooded at this time and was not examined. The upper two adits, each of which is obscured by vegetation and talus, are 50 to 100 feet in length.

Vein minerals include quartz, fluorite, hematite, malachite, azurite, and possibly chalcopyrite. Small fragments of malachite up to ½" in thickness and 1" in length with small "eyes" of azurite were found on the dumps. Fluorite seemed to be confined to the hanging wall and footwall of the vein. The most prominent mineral observed, hematite, is coarsely micaceous and brilliant red--very reminiscent of cinnabar to the untrained eye. It was thus misidentified as such by Mr. Blue.

Three samples of this material were submitted by Mr. Blue for assay. They yielded the following results:

Sample #	Au	Ag	Cu
1 (271)	--	.23 oz/ton	<5ppm
2 (272)	--	.78 oz/ton	.26%
3 (273)		.04 oz/ton	.30%

Conclusion

Because of the low values returned from the above samples, the prospect was judged unlikely to be of economic importance. The extreme brilliance of the hematite may, however, make it useful as a pigment. Indeed, a subsequent search through the literature revealed the following statement: "In Sandoval County small seams of soft micaceous hematite occur near Placitas in the mineralized fissures along the Las Huertas fault. The deposits are too small to be considered as iron ore, but they may have some importance as pigment."[2/]

The hematite from the El Faro prospects could be mistaken for cinnabar and may account for some of the reports in the past on cinnabar occurrences in the Placitas area.

Robert W. Eveleth
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2/ V.C. Kelley, Geology and Economics of New Mexico Iron-Ore Deposits, U.N.M. #2, 1949, p. 230

ASSAY REQUEST FORM

DATE 15 JAN 80

Sample #	Assay For: Au	Ag	Cu	Sample description & Comments
271	~~0~~	0.23		KEN BLUE HEAD SPL #1
272	~~0~~	0.78		" " " " #2
273	~~0~~	0.04		" " " " #3

Signature of Requestor:
William Cameron