

Date set for New Mexico dig for Atari 'E.T.' games (Update)

April 10 2014

Organizers of a search in a New Mexico landfill for a rumored stash of what some call the worst video game ever made by Atari announced Thursday that the dig will get under way this month.

The dig at the Alamogordo landfill where Atari reportedly discarded millions of "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" game cartridges in 1983 is scheduled for April 26, officials with Microsoft-owned Xbox said.

The excavation will be open for public viewing, according to Xbox.

The company is joining with Fuel Entertainment and LightBox Interactive to search the landfill. All three companies are making a documentary about the project. Microsoft plans to release the documentary on its Xbox One console.

City officials told the Alamogordo Daily News on Wednesday that the city has rights to any discovered games. City Attorney Stephen Thies said any game cartridges will be stored by the city for possible marketing. However, a tentative agreement between the Alamogordo City Commission and Fuel Entertainment's parent company calls for Fuel to receive some games.

The city will give Fuel either 100 game cartridges or 10 percent, depending on which is the lesser amount, according to Thies. But Fuel cannot receive more than \$2,500 worth of games. The company plans to hand out the cartridges to film crews.

City commissioners also want Fuel's \$1.5 million liability insurance to be raised to \$3 million.

"If they decide they don't want any of the games, then the original \$1.5 million insurance will apply." Thies said. "Because it is our landfill, anything that's out there is our property, if any games are found those are our games."

All three companies gained approval last month from the New Mexico Environmental Department for their waste excavation plan. The agency plans to send a representative to monitor the project once it commences.

Atari paid director Steven Spielberg tens of millions of dollars to license the wildly popular 1982 movie's name, and game developers completed the project in just six weeks. In the game, the player takes on the role of the titular alien and tries to elude FBI agents while collecting pieces of a telephone to call E.T.'s spaceship.

The end result was a huge commercial dud that caused the troubled company's worth to sink even further.

Atari purportedly disposed of millions of game cartridges and other equipment by the truckload at the landfill. The area's supposed role as a gaming burial ground has taken on urban-legend status over the years.

The landfill was first used as a dumping ground in the 1920s but has been closed since the late 1980s, officials said.

© 2014 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Date set for New Mexico dig for Atari 'E.T.' games (Update) (2014, April 10) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-04-date-mexico-atari-games.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.