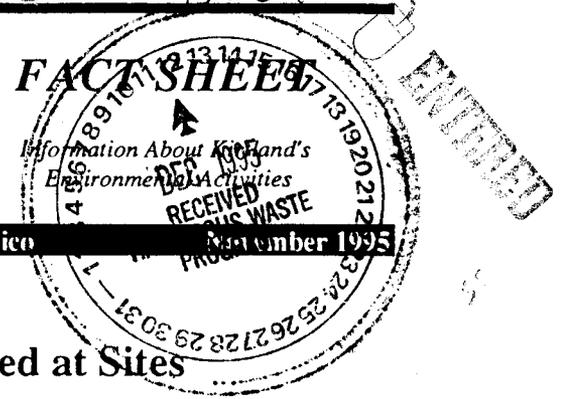


BOOK 2 BARBARA H

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ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE



Environmental Management Division, Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico

Soil Sampling

Kirtland environmental officials, in their latest search for possible contamination, investigated an area west of the National Atomic Museum. The U.S. Geological Survey took soil samples using a Geoprobe in September 1995.

Environmental restoration officials ordered the sampling to find out whether any contamination resulted from demolished airplanes at the site. The area was used for aircraft demolition activities after World War II. The base stored and disassembled 2200 aircraft no longer needed after the war. This included B-17s, B-24s, B-26s and various fighters. Once the aircraft were chopped apart in a "guillotine" operation, they were reduced to metal ingots in a smelter nearby.

The site was also used recently to store parts from crashed planes pending completion of aircraft mishap investigations.

The soil study was conducted because the National Atomic Museum asked to take over the area west of the museum to expand its outdoor exhibits. Looking for possible past contamination is a prerequisite to any land-use transfer on base--in this case, from the Air Force to the Department of Energy and Sandia National Laboratories, who operate the museum. If contamination is ever discovered in the process, it has to be cleaned up prior to the transfer.

Signs Posted at Sites

Environmental officials are almost finished posting signs at 46 installation restoration sites on base warning people not to excavate or deposit material in those areas. The signs tell people to contact the Restoration Branch for more information.

The signs are posted at sites needing more investigation or cleanup where past spills, leaks, and disposal activities might affect the environment or human health. The sites include landfills, low-level radioactive waste burial sites, fire-fighting training areas, septic systems, miscellaneous disposal sites, and numerous oil-water separators and area drains.

Ranking Contaminated Sites

Last March citizen volunteers helped Restoration officials rank the relative risk of contaminated sites on base. The final rankings were: 21 high, 16 medium and 6 low. Additional information has been gained about some of the sites. For example, pyrenes were found in the soil at the former Sandia Base Laundry Facility. Kirtland wants citizen input on whether any of the relative risk rankings need to be changed. A meeting to discuss the sites will be held in early 1996.

The Air Force uses relative risk rankings to determine the priority for cleanup funds. Kirtland sends the rankings to higher headquarters during the budget process.

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Site Investigations

Stage 2C, Waste Lines: The Resource, Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) investigation report for Stage 2C sites has been completed. It will be forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 in November 1995.

Stage 2E, Appendix V: This RCRA investigation report is due to EPA Region 6 in December 1995. This appendix includes Landfill D, a former laundry facility, mine shafts, the oil-water separator at the Trestle site, and a sediment/drain pit at the ART facility.

Status of New Sites

SS-69, Drum Storage Area: The base recommended that this site be added to the RCRA permit as a Solid Waste Management Unit (SWMU). EPA agreed and it is now listed in Appendix IV, with a RCRA investigation report due in December 1996. This site is near the Radiation Training Sites. The drums were removed and disposed of years ago.

KC-135 Ramp Septic System: Kirtland submitted a SWMU Assessment Report in July 1995. Kirtland recommended this site for no further action and is waiting for EPA's answer.

GRABS Site Waste Pile: This waste pile is at the Great Reusable Air Blast Simulator (GRABS) Site in the southeastern area of Kirtland where shock tube research took place in the past. Kirtland submitted a SWMU Assessment Report to EPA Region 6 in July 1995. Kirtland is waiting for EPA's answer. The site may require additional investigation.

Old Skeet Range and Small Arms Range:

These sites, located south of the runway, contain debris from broken clay pigeons and minor visible, spent, small arms projectiles. The base is studying soil samples to see whether or not the lead buckshot and projectiles contaminated the ground in the area. Both ranges are being investigated as one site. Kirtland is waiting for EPA's decision. The site may require additional investigation.

Trash Pile Near Coyote Springs: In spring 1995 base officials discovered various empty barrels and construction debris near the former picnic area at Coyote Springs in the eastern part of Kirtland. The base took soil samples at the site and recommended no further action. Kirtland is waiting for EPA's decision.

Voluntary Corrective Measures

Restoration officials are planning some remediation measures on a voluntary, accelerated basis. FY95 funds were received for these projects and work has begun on some:

- ◆ Remove silver-contaminated sediment from the Silver Recovery Unit at the former photo laboratory (WP-47)
- ◆ Demolish the Imhoff tank and remove the sludge at the Manzano Sewage Treatment Facility (WP-16)
- ◆ Remove surface slag at the Radium Dump/Slag Piles (RW-68)
- ◆ Install chain link fences at the Radioactive Burial Site (RW-06) near the stables and at three Radiation Training Sites

- ◆ Tear down the fence and fill in the trench at Manzano (RB-7)
- ◆ Finish removing all underground storage tanks on base, replacing those still required.

Kirtland has also requested FY96 funds to stabilize and dispose of lead-contaminated soil at the Manzano Fire Training Area.

Kirtland Background Study

Kirtland and Sandia National Laboratories are working together on a base-wide background study to establish the "average" naturally occurring concentrations of metals and radionuclides in the soil within the Kirtland complex. The background levels established by this study will help officials determine if a site is contaminated or not. For example, some compounds, like beryllium and arsenic are prevalent and occur naturally at Kirtland. Sandia is responding to comments on the plan from EPA and the New Mexico Environment Department.

Measuring Groundwater

Kirtland is helping Sandia National Laboratories improve their groundwater surveillance network. Sandia will use some of Kirtland's monitoring wells to collect aquifer data. The results will benefit the Air Force, Sandia and the Department of Energy. Sandia began taking water-level measurements at three Air Force monitoring wells on McCormick Ranch in October 1995. Sandia also plans to install pressure transducers and solar-powered data logger units on six Air Force monitoring wells for six months.

Environmental officials at Kirtland closely study the depth to groundwater, commonly 400-500 feet below the surface at Kirtland,

as well as the direction of the water flow. This information helps determine the risk that any possible contamination might pose in reaching the groundwater or flowing toward drinking water wells on- and off-base. Kirtland is cooperating with Sandia National Laboratories in a Site-Wide Hydrogeologic Study of Kirtland Air Force Base to determine the occurrence of groundwater under the base.

Bioventing Project

The base's pilot bioventing project at the Kirtland Fire Training Area began in April 1993. Air is being injected into the soil to increase the amount of oxygen needed by naturally occurring bacteria to break down contaminants underground. Results, so far, indicate the bioventing reduced the level of organic compounds (contaminants) in the soil, but not as much as at other installations with similar projects. This is attributed to the high-desert climate and lack of soil moisture.

Environmental Funding

Kirtland's Installation Restoration Program (cleanup) budget for FY95 was \$2.9 million. Funding for the Environmental Compliance Program and Pollution Prevention Program was \$7.2 million and \$240,000, respectively. Similar or less funding is expected for this fiscal year (FY96), which began October 1, 1995. Kirtland will try to obtain funding for those environmental activities not initially funded.

Recycling

Kirtlanders can now do more recycling at the office. The base's new, expanded recycling program now includes mixed office paper (computer paper, newspaper,

magazines, file folders, etc.), aluminum cans, cardboard and other materials.

The goal of the Air Force's Qualified Recycling Program, which began Oct. 1, 1995, is to reduce the amount of waste needing to go to a landfill by 50 percent by the end of 1997, compared to a 1992 baseline.

Recycling now plays a primary role in that effort. The closing of Kirtland's landfill to municipal solid waste in August 1994, created a new urgency for more recycling. Since that time, the base has been using Albuquerque's Cerro Colorado landfill on the West Mesa, which has been very expensive.

The new recycling program emphasizes a **proactive** reduction of solid waste. It also includes an increased effort to reduce the amount of materials the base uses to accomplish its mission.

In the past, Kirtland's recycling program was operated by the Services Squadron as a non-appropriated fund operation, where funding limits were a major constraint to expanding recycling activities. Now, Environmental Management Division is in charge of recycling and uses a contractor, Okom Enterprises, Inc., to collect, process and sell recyclable materials.

Approximately 65 percent of the waste generated at Kirtland is paper and other easily recycled materials. Environmental officials will study the possibility of a recycling program for on-base residents in the future.

Underground Storage Tanks

In November 1995 Kirtland started removing and replacing underground storage tanks throughout the base. Approximately 100

tanks will be removed; 25 of them will be replaced.

Community Right-to-Know Law

Kirtland has been tracking the purchase, receipt, storage and use of hazardous materials on base since 1994. Now, it is required by federal law to report this information to local and state emergency planning officials on a regular basis.

In addition, military installations like Kirtland are also required to notify the Environmental Protection Agency annually about any releases of toxic chemicals (as defined in 40 CFR 355) that were above regulatory thresholds. A common way toxic chemicals can be released into the environment is from vapors from cleaning products. The thresholds include any chemical "manufactured" or "processed" in excess of 25,000 pounds or "otherwise used" in excess of 10,000 pounds.

Mandatory reporting became effective for CY94, with those bases exceeding thresholds required to notify EPA by July 1, 1995. Because Kirtland did not exceed the thresholds last year, no report was required on July 1, 1995.

The new reporting requirements for toxic chemicals stem from Executive Order 12856, that mandates federal agencies comply with the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986. The purpose is to protect the environment and the health and safety of communities surrounding federal installations and facilities and reduce the government's use of toxic chemicals.

The laws require bases like Kirtland to coordinate available resources with city and state emergency planning officials. The

base has been doing this voluntarily since 1991. If an accident or spill migrates off the base, the Air Force will report and coordinate efforts with the surrounding community.

The base provides Material Safety Data Sheets and a hazardous material inventory to local and state emergency planning committees. This information tells off-base officials the highest quantities and types of hazardous materials that can be found on the base at any one time. By providing chemical information to community planners, the base and local and state authorities are better able to plan for potential emergencies.

The base submitted this information in February 1995 to both the Albuquerque and New Mexico emergency planning committees, as well as the Pueblo of Isleta on the southern boundary of the base. In its hazardous chemical inventory, the base reported the quantities and locations of such items as unleaded fuel in storage tanks, chlorine, propane, halon 1211 and 1301, heating oil, hydrazine, JP-8 jet fuel, and waste oil.

Kirtland identified 50 chemicals on base that are regulated; however, only about 10 are widely used. The largest quantities are typically ethylene glycol (found in paint, antifreeze, and firefighting agents), xylene (used in paint products), methylene chloride (in paints and solvents), and toluene and methyl ethyl ketone (in solvents and cleaning agents).

For several years, Kirtland has been scrutinizing the amounts and kinds of hazardous and toxic chemicals on base. Pollution prevention specialists at the HAZMAT Cell closely monitor and validate quantities of materials being purchased, received, and inventory levels of all hazardous materials entering the base.

Besides centralizing the purchasing and receiving of those materials, the Hazardous Materials Management Program also has a detailed monitoring system of bar codes and serial number labels to track hazardous material to the user level.

With this system, environmental officials know where all the materials are stored and used. Kirtland environmental officials put strict quantity controls on base organizations that order and use hazardous materials

Kirtland managers are also working to reduce the base's use of ozone-depleting substances, typically found in cleaners and solvents. Since January 1993, Kirtland has reduced quantities of these substances by 94.6 percent, based on pounds purchased. This took a concerted, commendable effort by all wing and associate units on base to achieve.

Also, as part of the initiative, the base reduced its quantities (pounds purchased) of EPA-17 Industrial Toxics by 84.4 percent in the same time period. These substances are usually found as constituents in materials such as spray paints. Aggressive action by all base organizations this year reduced the purchase and use of conventional spray paints. Units are now ordering environmentally friendly substitutes.

Kirtland's computerized hazardous material tracking system provided the data necessary to compile the reports. Environmental specialists had to analyze Kirtland's inventory of hazardous materials, along with ingredient descriptions from the chemical manufacturers, and calculate the "releases" of any chemicals identified by EPA as toxic. These calculations were then compared against the reporting thresholds to make sure the base complied with the new laws.

Kirtland is committed to protecting the environment and the safety and health of its surrounding communities.

**For More Information about
Kirtland Environmental Activities,
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Documents at Library

Citizens are invited to review Kirtland environmental documents. The Information Repository is located at the:

Albuquerque Technical-Vocational Institute
Main Campus Library (Reference Desk)
525 Buena Vista Drive SE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87106

Phone: (505) 224-3285

COMMITMENT TO THE ENVIRONMENT

The Air Force is committed to:

- Cleaning and protecting the environment through four areas: restoration, compliance, pollution prevention and planning
- Complying with environmental laws
- Devoting personnel and financial resources to environmental issues
- Working closely with public and private institutions to protect and clean the environment
- Finding faster, better, and cheaper ways to clean up the environment
- Working aggressively to find innovative ways to reduce pollution and restore the environment
- Following safe handling and disposal practices for hazardous materials.

“Focusing on Today...for Tomorrow”