



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
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*Barbara  
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 me or their  
 Benito  
 5/30/96*



28 May 1996

377 ABW/EMR  
 2000 Wyoming Blvd SE  
 Kirtland AFB, NM 87117-5659

Mr. Benito Garcia, Chief  
 Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau  
 New Mexico Environment Department  
 P.O. Box 26110  
 Santa Fe NM 87502

Dear Mr. Garcia

? The RFI Report for SWMUs RW-68 and SS-69 was to be submitted in December 1996. We identified this RFI as a high-priority project in our FY96 budget; however, it fell below the funding cutoff, thereby delaying the RFI. For FY97, we are again submitting the RFI as a high-priority project. As we anticipate funding, we request you approve a report submittal extension until 31 December 1997.

— The sampling and analysis plan for each site was included in the SWMU assessment report submitted to and approved by the EPA in an 11 January 1996 letter.  
 — Field activities will be conducted in accordance with the Base-Wide Work Plan approved by NMED and the EPA. Field work is scheduled to start within 30 days of receipt of funds for this project, and expected to last approximately 60 days. Significant amounts of field work were completed at RW-68 as part of a FY95-funded site characterization project. This data will be incorporated into the RFI report which will be submitted to NMED and EPA Region 6 no later than 31 December 1997.

KAFB1768



I have enclosed background information for these sites. Please call me at (505) 846-0053 so we may discuss any comments or concerns you have.

Sincerely

  
CHRISTOPHER B. DeWITT, R.P.G.  
Chief, Restoration Branch  
Environmental Management Division

Attachment:  
Background

cc:  
NMED/HRMB (Mr. Pullen)  
Brown & Root Environmental (Mr. Thacker)  
AFCEE (Mr. Arnold)  
EPA Region 6 (Ms. Morlock)  
HQ AFMC/CEVR (Mr. Dodyk)

## BACKGROUND

### RW-68:

Site RW-68 consists of a cratering area and radium dump/slag piles located approximately 0.25 miles apart. During the 1940s, aircraft were positioned in an open test area and subjected to explosive blast conditions to assess them for vulnerabilities under combat conditions. The test area, adjacent to a dirt runway in the remote southeast end of KAFB, is now referred to as the cratering area. In the course of conducting these tests, aircraft were blown up or otherwise severely damaged. Upon completion of the tests, the aircraft were moved to what is now known as the radium dump/slag pile area, where they were dismantled and incinerated. The cratering area was later used to conduct high explosives testing and research to determine the depth to which a nuclear device would have to be buried so there would be no crater development at the surface.

The slag piles contain heavy metals and radioactive contamination from radium instrument dials. An Interim Corrective Measure (ICM) to stabilize and remove the radium slag piles was funded in FY95 and is scheduled for completion in July 1996. The RFI will also be used to confirm that source removal is complete at RW-68 as a result of the ICM.

### SS-69:

Site SS-69 consists of a 50 ft x 50 ft fenced area within Interservice Nuclear Weapons School (INWS) Training Site (TS) 6, one of eight training sites comprising IRP site RW-10. The training sites are the subject of a separate site characterization report due for submittal in July 1996.

The fenced area once served as a drum storage area. The drum storage area was used by INWS personnel to store thorium oxide sludge and contaminated soil. Over time, other unknown sources also used the site to dispose of unwanted drums; approximately 90 drums accumulated over time. Upon discovery, the area contained about 55 empty drums and 35 drums containing solid (cardboard, plastic, dirt, etc.) and liquid materials (from 1/4 inch to full). Sixteen drums required laboratory analysis; the results indicate four drums contained radiological waste, four contained characteristic waste by virtue of TCLP benzene, and eight contained waste diesel fuels with oil/sludge, gasoline, and or solvent additions. A number of these drums had deteriorated, resulting in a release to the environment. Soil staining is evident at the site but soil sampling has not been conducted.

The two SWMUs (one IRP site and one IRP AOC) identified in this project have been assigned a high relative risk. The relative risk is based on sample results indicating the slag at RW-68 failed TCLP for lead, cadmium, and selenium and is located in an arroyo flood plain; SS-69 is obviously contaminated and lies in a drainage area adjacent to Arroyo del Coyote.

In a 27 April 1995 letter, the EPA added RW-68 and SS-69 as SWMUs to the RCRA Part B Permit; we submitted site specific sampling plans were submitted.