

V-Site Additional Sampling Request

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The Significance of V-Site (TA-16-516 and TA-16-517):

Manhattan Project scientists and engineers assembled the Trinity test device (the “Gadget”) and conducted tests of “Fat Man” and “Little Boy” weapon components at this World War II-era facility. V-Site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Furthermore, the Department of Energy has designated V-Site as one of the most important historic facilities in the complex. This “Signature Facility of the Manhattan Project” has also been identified in the LANL Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) as a potential National Historic Landmark and has been named in the 2011 Department of the Interior Manhattan Project Sites Special Resources Study as a property to be considered for inclusion in the Los Alamos unit of a recommended Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

Regulation and Regulator:

Historic building management at LANL is a requirement of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Compliance with the NHPA is regulated by the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Division (NMHPD). All formal consultation under the NHPA regarding LANL historic buildings is conducted between the Los Alamos Site Office (NNSA, DOE) and the NMHPD.

Request for Additional Sampling within the V-Site Area at TA-16:

Resampling of many locations sampled in 2009/2010 will be necessary to determine the vertical extent of site contamination using a drill rig to collect samples from deeper depths and several sites within the V-Site Area at TA-16. In addition, new locations have been proposed for sampling to determine the lateral extent of contamination at several sites. The LANL Resources Management Team (RMT, ENV-ES) staff has determined that additional deep drilling within the V-Site boundary fence using a drill rig could potentially damage this nationally significant historical site and should not be allowed. During previous sampling work at V-Site, the LANL RMT monitor noted the potential for adverse effects to unsupported earthen berms and to the historic landscape adjacent to the V-Site buildings and former building areas and requested that drill rig operations be discontinued. This resulted in a formal deviation from the original sampling plan. Possible adverse effects noted at the time included direct impacts from the use of heavy equipment and indirect impacts from vibrations from the operation of the drill rig.

Furthermore, the planned use of the area for the foreseeable future is for limited public tours of the buildings and non-contaminated surface areas. There are no plans to demolish any of the remaining V-Site buildings or to excavate under the foundations or former foundations of the buildings within the V-Site boundary fence.

