

Fax

Offsite
(Guaje Canyon)

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Date: April 13, 1998

Subject: Spills at Guaje Replacement Well Field

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The following are informal observations regarding recent spills at the Guaje Replacement Well Field. Formal correspondence to DOE with attached field notes will follow in the next two days.

LANL / POC-HSWA / PPDES

Diesel spill on April 4, 1998 (1200): Spill occurred approximately 50 yds north of Guaje Replacement No. 2. According to Beylik, roughly 40 gallons of diesel fuel was spilled from a tank due to a split line. Beylik has excavated a 10-ft deep soil pit measuring about 8-ft x 12-ft in order to contain the spill. The soil appears to be a very porous and permeable gray sand. There are still contaminated areas in the soil pit. I pointed these out and was told that they would also be excavated. In my opinion, it looks as though the spill was closer to a volume of 100 to 125 gallons. Beylik did not have any documentation to support the estimate of 40 gallons.

Water spill on April 3, 1998 (1730): This spill occurred about 10 to 25 yds SE of GR 4. Approximately 20,000 gallons of potable water were spilled. There was no visible erosion in the stream bed which could be attributed to the spill. The BMPs appeared to be effective in containing this spill.

Mud/polymer/bentonite spill on April 10, 1998 (2300): Spill consisted of roughly 3000 gallons of some type of mud or sludge. All personnel from Beylik stated that they had no knowledge of how the spill occurred or what the material was. The material appeared to be very similar to the sludge found in the cyclone separator located onsite. The spill occurred at the point in the watercourse Beylik was discharging water to. The hose used for water discharge appeared to have a fine coating of this bentonite/silica/sludge at the outlet. The stream bed was coated with approximately 1/8 to 1/2 inches of this material near the point of discharge. At the time of my



arrival (roughly 3 PM), Beylik was discharging water into the watercourse over this spilled material. I recommended to both the Foreman and LANL POC that they immediately halt the discharge and suspend further discharges until after the area is cleaned up. Discharging ceased approximately 5 minutes later. Due to the discharge, the mud/polymer material had traveled roughly 150 yds downstream. I recommend that an official from SWQB visit the site ASAP. Despite Beylik's claims to the contrary, this spill looked suspiciously intentional. Harvey Decker of ESH-18 did take photos of the spills. I did not have a camera with me, but will return to the site this evening or Tuesday morning to document the spills with photographs.

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