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Date: September 17, 2003
Refer to: RRES-GPP-03-087

Mr. John Young, Corrective Action Project Leader
Permits Management Program
NMED – Hazardous Waste Bureau
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East
Building 1
Santa Fe, NM 87505-6303



SUBJECT: LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY (LANL) PLANNED ACTIONS FOR THE INSTALLATION OF WELLS DURING CALENDAR YEAR (CY) 2003

Dear Mr. Young:

This letter responds to comments regarding plans for well installation in CY2003 contained in your letters dated February 27, 2003, April 11, 2003, April 15, 2003, and two letters dated August 29, 2003. We welcome the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) approval of Regional (R) wells R-1, R-2, R-4, R-11, R-26, and R-28 for installation in CY2003. (Please note that consistent with NMED's use of calendar years to track work, these wells will be installed by the end of CY2003, not fiscal year.) These approvals represent significant progress in defining the scope of work for 2003.

Note that R-28 and R-1 are planned for Mortandad Canyon and their objectives and preliminary design requirements are described in the "Mortandad Canyon Groundwater Investigation Work Plan," submitted to NMED on August 29, 2003. Please note that the locations for construction of the wells were agreed to by Department of Energy (DOE), LANL, and NMED during field visits on June 4, 2003, and September 10, 2003.

We plan to include in the sampling and analysis plan (SAP) for wells R-1 and R-28, provision for an additional well (R-33) as a matter of efficiency in writing the SAP. This SAP is expected to be provided to NMED in the near future. In addition to the SAP, a drilling plan will be provided to NMED for information only.

With respect to well completion reports for the CY2003 wells, these reports will incorporate the NMED comments contained in the above referenced letters to the extent reasonably possible. The one request that may not be reasonably possible is inclusion of screening analytical data within the short timeframe for delivery of the report to NMED.



If the screening analytical data are not available when the report is due, it will not be included in the well completion report, but will be included in the periodic monitoring report or in a separate letter.

While drilling the 2003 wells, we are taking extra measures to detect any perched saturated zones. If perched saturated zones are detected, wells to characterize these zones will be installed, if warranted. The need for such wells will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with NMED, considering several factors, including saturation zone thickness, productivity, presence of contaminants in screening samples, location relative to potential sources and infiltration areas, and proximity to other sampling points for the same zone.

In response to your letter of April 15, 2003, regarding "Review of Pilot Geophysical Studies in Mortandad Canyon Los Alamos National Laboratory EPA ID# NM0890010515," we are in substantial agreement with your conclusion that geophysical surveys can be a useful tool in interrogating subsurface conditions. We plan to include, where appropriate, geophysical surveys in the canyons work plans as one of the characterization tools available for subsurface investigations.

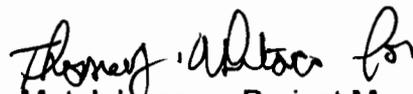
If you have any questions, please contact either Charlie Nylander at (505) 665-4681 or Mat Johansen at (505) 665-5046.

Sincerely,



Charles Nylander, Program Manager
Groundwater Protection Program
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Sincerely,



Mat Johansen, Project Manager
Program Compliance Manager
National Nuclear Security Admin.
Office of Los Alamos Site Operations

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