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September 13, 1999

Mr. David Neleigh, 6PD-N, Chief
NM and Federal Facilities Section
Region 6 EPA
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

RE: ACTIVITIES REPORT ON ELEMENT 12 OF THE 3011 RCRA GRANT

Dear Mr. Neleigh:

Element 12 of the 3011 RCRA Grant titled "The Oversight of Los Alamos National Laboratory Removal Activities" ended in June 1999. The New Mexico Environment Department's Surface Water Quality Bureau (NMED-SWQB) assumed responsibilities for a significant portion of the grant activities conducted by Ms. Barbara Hoditschek. A copy of her final report is included in Attachment A. The removal actions of focus were chosen by NMED-SWQB and consisted of the following Potential Release Sites (PRSs):

01-001(d) ✓	10-007 ✓
01-001(f) ✓	33-006(a) ✓
01-003(d) ✓	35-003(d, l, q) ✓
10-003(a-o) ✓	53-002(a) ✓

Please note that during the past year there was a consolidation of PRSs at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) as a result of the annual unit audit required under the Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau (HRMB) Fee Regulations (20 NMAC 4.2). The consolidation affected the PRSs as summarized below.

Consolidated PRS Number (as of 1999)	Includes Former PRS Numbers
01-001(a)-99	01-001(d), 01-001(f)
10-002(a)-99	10-003(a-o), 10-007
35-003(a)-99	35-003(d, l, q)

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During the grant period, the following activities were completed using grant funds:

1. NMED-SWQB completed the review of 7 removal action documents addressing the selected PRSs located at LANL. These PRSs were chosen because Interim Action (IA) and/or Voluntary Corrective Action (VCA) documentation was available and also because the sites are located in canyons that have surface water tributaries which tract to or through Indian Pueblo land and Bandelier National Monument (BNM) property. All but one of the PRSs has the potential to impact San Ildefonso Pueblo land. The remaining PRS is located adjacent to BNM. These sites also exhibited high to medium erosion potential survey scores, which indicated surface water concerns were present. The NMED-SWQB visited each PRS and documented any deficiencies regarding stabilization measures or Best Management Practices (BMPs). Any deficiencies noted were communicated to LANL staff on-site and were reinspected by NMED-SWQB following repair to confirm that conditions were satisfactory.
2. NMED-SWQB and LANL coordinate activities through the Surface Water Assessment Team (SWAT) which they formed. SWAT reviews all sites that scored high or medium during the erosion potential surveys and makes recommendations to address erosion control at certain sites through the implementation of BMPs. During SWAT reviews, NMED-SWQB made sure that LANL had surveyed and addressed the PRSs selected for this grant. NMED-SWQB and HRMB discuss environmental issues associated with all LANL PRSs at each monthly NMED internal LANL Working Group meeting. The erosion potential survey scores are available to HRMB and can be used in assessing surface water concerns during document review in addition to coordinating with NMED-SWQB.
3. NMED-SWQB contacted San Ildefonso and BNM representatives several times to discuss its activities and recommendations. Additional stakeholders were also made aware of the NMED-SWQB's activities during a presentation to the Natural Resource Trustee Council (NRTC) for LANL. In addition on June 2, 1999, the NRTC toured several of the PRSs with representatives from DOE/LANL, NMED-SWQB and NMED-HRMB. The tour principally focused on the application of BMPs for erosion control at each site. Following the tour, NMED-SWQB requested that each council member submit comments regarding the PRSs visited. Only comments from HRMB and DOE/LANL were received by NMED-SWQB as of July 6, 1999. The NMED-SWQB will continue to coordinate with the NRTC and LANL to ensure that natural resource and surface water concerns are addressed at all PRSs.
4. NMED-HRMB conducted a review of the HSWA files for each PRS to identify the potential data gaps that may delay a No Further Action (NFA) determination. This information is summarized below.
5. NMED-HRMB conducted soil and sediment sampling at Bayo Canyon. The sampling was conducted in the vicinity of former Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Technical Area (TA) 10. On the afternoon of June 23, 1999, HRMB performed field-screening activities in the canyon and examined the area for potential sample locations. HRMB collected a total of 6

soil/sediment samples on June 24, 1999. Representatives from NMED's Department of Energy Oversight Bureau (DOE-OB), LANL and Los Alamos County were present and observed the sampling activities. The data was collected to screen for possible contaminant migration down gradient of TA 10 PRSs. A copy of the analytical results is included in Attachment B. HRMB also provided a copy of the analytical results to Los Alamos County in September 1999. No significant review of the data received on August 19, 1999 has occurred to date.

In general, for the PRSs addressed in this grant:

- None have received NFA determinations from HRMB to date;
- None are on the current list of PRSs petitioned by LANL for consideration for NFA;
- Several still need a significant amount of investigation/assessment; and
- Despite any aggregation approach by LANL in addressing PRSs, HRMB still intends to evaluate NFA determinations one PRS at a time. Aggregation of PRSs as a result of the LANL Environmental Restoration group's response to the draft watershed management protection plan may provide for comprehensive risk evaluations or remediation actions, but each PRS will appear individually on the HSWA module. The final determination of which PRSs will be included in a particular aggregated area has not been submitted to HRMB. Regardless, there will still be PRSs outside of priority aggregate areas that will require attention (i.e. MDAs).

The following bullets summarize the data gaps of potential concern for each PRS before it may be considered for a NFA determination. For many of the PRSs LANL has taken insufficient action to resolve HRMB concerns regarding the nature and extent of contamination and human health and environmental risk evaluations.

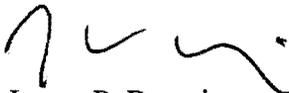
- PRS **01-001(d)**, Hillside 138, an ecological risk evaluation is still needed.
- PRS **01-001(f)**, Hillside 140, the 1996 VCA was driven by radiation screening and therefore did nothing to facilitate an NFA. Chemical concerns will need to be evaluated.
- PRS **01-003(d)**, can dump area and paint spill, lacks adequate delineation of the extent of contamination and an ecological risk evaluation.
- PRS **33-006(a)**, inactive shot pad, lacks risk assessment evaluation.
- PRSs **35-003(d, l, q)**, holding tank, pump pit and pipe trench associated with a wastewater treatment plant. In the past, there have been significant compliance issues at this PRS (e.g. the IA Plan was not approved because it was submitted *following* the action).
- PRS **53-002(a)**, surface impoundments for cooling water at TA-53 LANSCE. This PRS is now part of an aggregate which will be addressed in an overall lagoons "investigation." A work plan was reviewed by HRMB (10/98) and work is scheduled for this fiscal year. An RFI has not yet been conducted at this PRS. During the IA geotextile was placed over the surface impoundments. EPA approved the plan, but questioned the need and cost effectiveness for the action.
- PRSs **10-003(a-o)** and **10-007**, former firing pads and liquid waste disposal complex

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associated with former radiochemistry lab. The EPA stated in their NOD for the RFI report for 10-001(a-d), dated May 19, 1997, that the sample grid implemented for the RFI was "appropriate for determining if there is gross contamination over a very large area, but does not specifically address the firing pads," nor is the report sufficient to ensure that no human health risk is associated with the PRSs. LANL asserts that radiation is the primary environmental concern, but HRMB has not eliminated the need for further documentation regarding chemical concerns. The IA conducted only addressed radiation components. The IA report acknowledges that the placement of snow and silt fencing, as well as BMPs, is a short-term solution until a final remedy is selected for this area. In addition, as of August 24, 1998, HRMB ceased document review of some of the reports submitted on TA 10. LANL requested time to allow for consolidation of the SWMUs and to review the document content in light of the criteria set forth in HRMB's Document Requirement Guide dated March 4, 1998.

In conclusion, several of the tasks in Element 12 of the 3011 RCRA Grant were not achieved. If you have any questions or comments please contact me at (505) 827-1567 or John Kieling at (505) 827-1558.

Sincerely,



James P. Bearzi

Chief

Hazardous and Radioactive Materials Bureau

Cc: R. Dinwiddie, NMED HRMB

J. Kieling, NMED HRMB

Pam Young, NMED HRMB

~~Reading and HRMB LANE 09/13/99~~