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Los Alamos
NATIONAL LABORATORY
Memorandum

Environmental Science and Waste Technology (E)
Environmental Restoration
E/ER

To/MS: A. Jackson, ESH-19, MS K490
From/MS: D. Katzman, E/ER, MS M992 DK
Phone/FAX: 7-0599/7-9553
Symbol: E/ER:00-044
Date: February 16, 2000

SUBJECT: Transmittal of the document "Summary Status of Environmental Restoration Project Investigations in Upper Sandia Canyon"

Attached please find three copies of the document "Summary Status of Environmental Restoration Project Investigations in Upper Sandia Canyon". The document provides a status of the ER Project investigations, and summarizes the PCB analytical results for sediment and surface water baseflow. Submittal of this document to EPA Region 6 TSCA Branch by ESH-19, satisfies "Activity #2" identified in correspondence "LLAME:3JP-127," H.L. Plum to L. Roberts, dated October 26, 1999.

If there are comments that require incorporation into the document, please contact me and we will set a schedule for the revision.

JC/DK/ni

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Summary Status of Environmental Restoration Project Investigations in Upper Sandia Canyon
(LA-UR-00-777)
by
Danny Katzman
ER Project Canyons Focus Area

1.0 Introduction

This summary discusses the investigations of sediment, surface water baseflow, and storm-water runoff in Upper Sandia Canyon and satisfies "Activity #2" identified in correspondence "LLAME:3JP-127," H.L. Plum to L Roberts, dated October 26, 1999. The summary focuses on the current status of the investigation, existing PCB data, and related data gaps. Upper Sandia Canyon is under investigation by the Environmental Restoration (ER) Project in accordance with the Sampling and Analysis Plan for Upper Sandia Canyon submitted to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) in March 1998 (LANL 1998). The investigation is being conducted to assess the nature and extent of contamination and human health and ecological risk associated contamination attributed to Potential Release Site (PRS) 3-056(c), a former transformer storage area. The presence of significant PCB contamination identified at PRS 3-056(c) led to an expedited investigation of Upper Sandia Canyon driven largely by the potential risk or impact to a large wetland area approximately 350 feet down canyon of the PRS. In 1995, a cleanup effort at PRS3-056(c) resulted in removal of approximately 1000 yd^3 of contaminated soil. Details regarding investigations and remedial activities at PRS 3-056(c) are presented in the Sampling and Analysis Plan for Upper Sandia Canyon (LANL 1998).

2.0 Description of Investigation Area

The investigation area in the SAP is divided into distinct reaches. Reaches S-1 north and S-1 south extend from the present-day head of Sandia Canyon approximately at Diamond Drive to a point just beyond the confluence of the two tributaries at the western edge of the debris area. Reaches S-1 north and south are narrow and relatively steep canyons with boulders and discontinuous, narrow terraces comprised of up to 1-meter thick, young (post laboratory-aged) sediment. The channel consists of thin (<1m) deposits of coarse sand and gravel on bedrock and is on bedrock in many locations. Reach S-2 extends from the eastern edge of the debris area down canyon approximately 0.5 km. (Figure 1). Reach S-2 is characterized by a wide, low-gradient valley floor and thicker (>1m) deposits of alluvium. A wetland environment is prevalent throughout most of the eastern two-thirds of the reach. The main active channel is incised approximately 1 meter into young sediments in the upper 1/3 of the reach, and is progressively less incised eastward through the reach. Both reaches are situated within industrial portions of Technical Areas (TAs)-3 and 60. The Los Alamos County Landfill is located on the mesa to the north of reach S-2 and exists along the entire length of the reach.

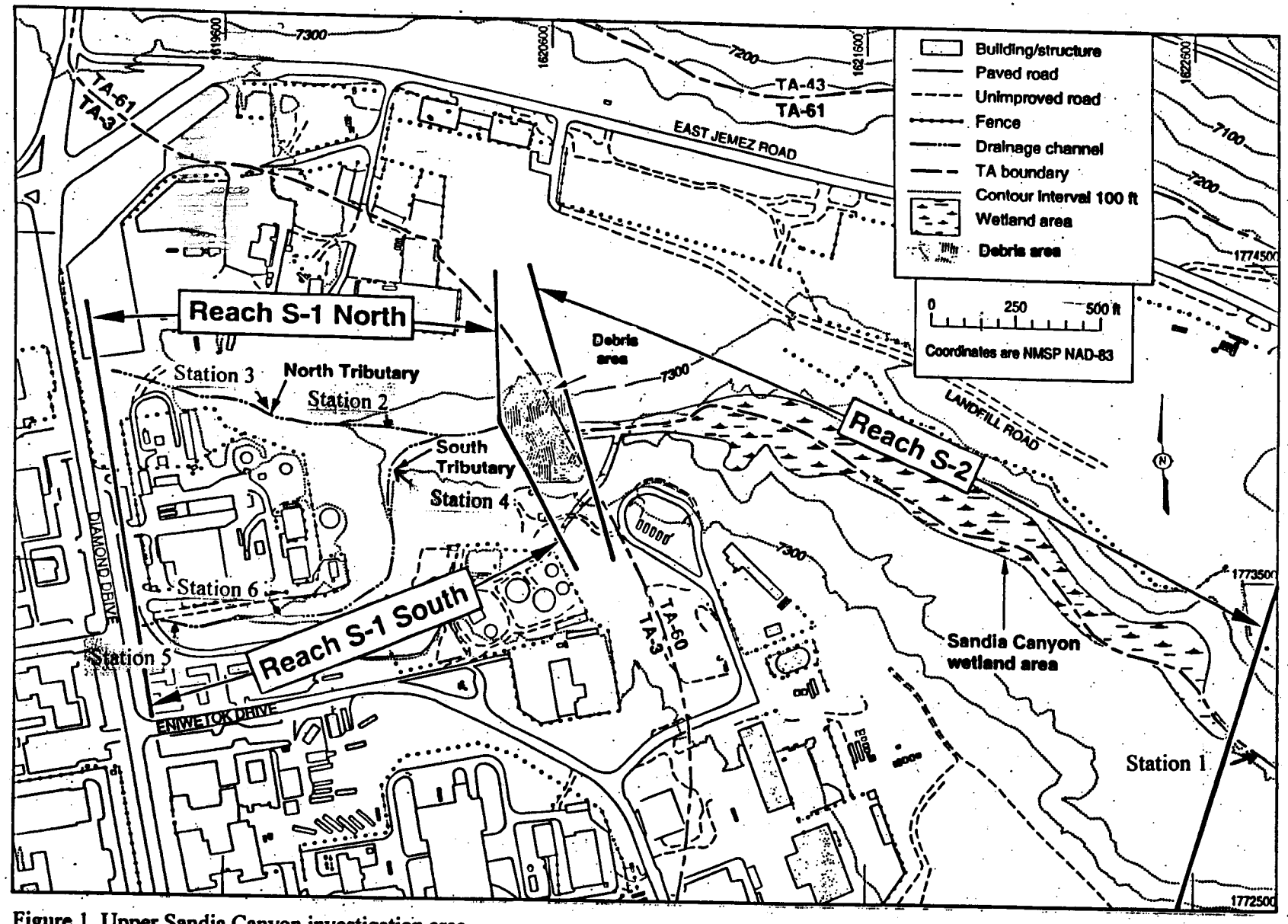

Figure 1. Upper Sandia Canyon investigation area.