

TA-46



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Gene Turner, DOE/AIP/POC
Department of Energy
Office of Los Alamos Site Operations
528 35th Street, MS: A316
Los Alamos, NM 87544

January 27, 2003

Subject: Recommendations for Cerro Grande Tree Thinning Projects at SWMUs

Dear Mr. Turner:

On January 21, 2003, representatives of the DOE Oversight Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department and representatives of the Cerro Grande Recovery Project (CGRP) conducted a site visit at Technical Area 46. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate storm water controls which CGRP had applied to the site after the tree thinning activities of this summer and to determine whether the Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) disturbed by the tree thinning activity have been sufficiently stabilized.

The CGRP representative provided the map used by the thinning crews to identify whether they were operating near SWMUs. It was noted that the map identified SWMUs as points near mesa tops but did not delineate the true extent of the SWMU boundaries into the canyon where the tree thinning had occurred. This suggests that CGRP crews may have been operating within SWMU boundaries without their knowledge.

In order to determine which other sites thinned by CGRP crews may have impacted SWMUs, the Oversight Bureau staff requested their representative provide maps delineating locations of all CGRP tree-thinning activities.

CGRP tree thinning activities – general recommendations:

- All areas of CGRP tree thinning activities near SWMUs should be inspected to determine if additional site restoration is merited. These visits should include CGRP representatives, Environmental Restoration (RRES-R) field team leaders who are familiar with the SWMU boundaries, and appropriate RRES-WQH staff involved with site stabilization activities. Photo documentation of sites Best Management Practices condition prior to tree thinning activities may be used to help determine treatments needed.
- RRES-WQH and ER personnel familiar with the sites condition should review all future CGRP tree-thinning activities in SWMU locations prior to beginning activities to assure all affected SWMUs are stabilized.

TA-46 site-specific recommendations:

- Site restoration on the western end of TA-46 included slope contouring and application of hydro mulch. The hillside contouring was done incorrectly. Contouring was done across the hillsides contours, rather than along the slope's contours. This will promote rill erosion and may cause seeds introduced by the hydro mulch to wash away.
- Wattles, previously installed at TA-46, were removed and piled onsite. We identified specific locations where these could be used in drainages to slow water flow.
- If the TA-46 fire access road project goes forward, the south side of the road starting from the where it crosses over the watercourse should be correctly bermed. This berm should then be inspected and maintained by LANL. This road, located along the down slope side of TA-46 SWMUs, was bermed per recommendation of the Surface Water Assessment Team to prevent drainages from SWMUs located upslope from entering the Cañada del Buey stream course.
- Interim measures should be used until funding for the road project is approved. CGRP staff were informed that wattles could be used to berm the road in the interim.

To assure proper erosion controls are in place after tree thinning activities, we recommend that LANL implement administrative procedures which result in coordination between CGRP staff involved in these activities, RRES-R representatives familiar with the site, and RRES-WQH erosion control representatives.

Please contact Ralph Ford-Schmid at 428-2559 or Barbara Hoditschek at 672-0459 if you have any questions about these recommendations.

Sincerely,



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