

**ENVIRONMENTAL  
RESTORATION  
PROJECT**

*Los Alamos National Laboratory/University of California*  
Risk Reduction & Environmental Stewardship (RRES)  
Environmental Restoration (ER) Project, MS M992  
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*U.S. Department of Energy*  
Office of Los Alamos Site Operations, MS A316  
Environmental Restoration Program  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544  
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*Date:* August 28, 2002  
*Refer to:* ER2002-0596

Ms. Lee Winn, Corrective Action Team  
Permits Management Program  
NMED – Hazardous Waste Bureau  
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1  
Santa Fe, NM 87505-6303

**SUBJECT: SANITARY SEWER DISCHARGE TO THE TECHNICAL AREA  
(TA)-53 IMPOUNDMENTS**

Dear Ms. Winn:

This letter is in response to your August 6, 2002 e-mail to Steve Veenis (copy enclosed) requesting information about the unintentional discharge of sanitary wastewater to the TA-53 north impoundments [PRS 53-002(a)]. Although the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has not requested this information formally, the answers to the questions in your e-mail are provided below.

The discharge was caused by a pipe leak that was discovered on July 24, 2002. It was evident by a small puddle below the cutoff point of the recently removed line that distributed the sanitary effluent into the north impoundments. The line that extended into the impoundment was removed during the Interim Action (IA) activities that were completed in June 2002. Also removed during the IA was the line that extended into the south impoundment. The leak was initially thought to be a result of precipitation, however, subsequent investigation on the origin of the leak showed that the leak was from the facility's sanitary system. The line that runs to the north impoundments from a manhole had been plugged in 1993, but evidently the plug was inadequate and deteriorated to failure. The plug was located at the point where the line exits the manhole. The 6-inch line was plugged using concrete to permanently seal the line at the manhole on July 30, 2002.

The sanitary wastewater involved in the spill is not classified as hazardous waste. Water samples were collected and analyzed for the presence of radiological contaminants (gross alpha, beta, and gamma, and tritium), metals, and organic chemicals (SVOCs, VOCs, and PCBs). Analytical results indicate no radionuclides in the water samples, and only very low levels of gamma emitting radionuclides in the sludge; also, only low levels of VOCs were detected, and all metals results were below RCRA limits.



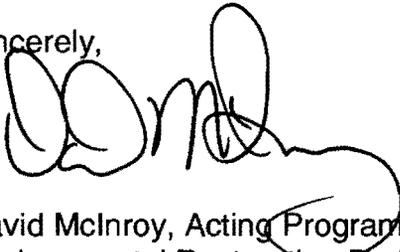
The Environmental Restoration (ER) Project, the Department Of Energy (DOE), and Los Alamos Nuetron Science Center (LANSE) Facility Management have discussed and agreed to remove the lines. The removal will occur as soon as this activity can be scheduled and budgeted.

The e-mail notification of July 30<sup>th</sup> (Steve Veenis, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) to John Young, NMED) was provided by LANL as a courtesy to NMED in keeping with the agreements in correspondence from LANL and the DOE to Mr. Robert S. "Stu" Dinwiddie of your office on February 2 and October 12, 1999, respectively. LANL and DOE are aware that the TA-53 lagoons are of high priority to the NMED. Mr. Veenis's July 30, 2002 e-mail to Mr. Young was erroneously labeled as a "formal notification" and erroneously referred to wastewater discharge as a "release". Since there was, in fact, no release of hazardous wastes or constituents from the LANL facility to the environment (but rather, an unintentional discharge of a small quantity of non-hazardous sanitary waste water that remained entirely within the confines of an existing solid waste management unit), none of the formal reporting requirements in module VIII of LANL's hazardous waste facility permit were triggered by the occurrence.

The Potential Release Site (PRS) number provided by Steve Veenis in the e-mail notification was in error. The north impoundments are collectively identified as PRS 53-002(a), which includes the sumps and associated lines that were abandoned during the installation of the new radioactive liquid waste system (RLW). The southern impoundment is designated as PRS 53-002(b) and the entire system was consolidated as PRS 53-02(a)-99.

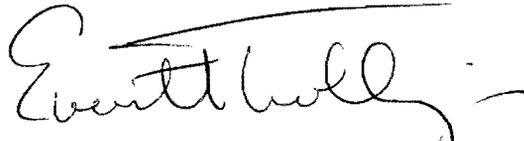
Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your concerns. If you have additional questions, please call Gabriela Lopez Escobedo at (505) 665-7352 or David Gregory at (505) 667-5808.

Sincerely,



David McInroy, Acting Program Manager  
Environmental Restoration Project  
Los Alamos National Laboratory

Sincerely,



Everett Trollinger, Project Manager  
Department of Energy  
Office of Los Alamos Site Operations

DM/ET/GLE/NR/vn

Enclosure: August 6, 2202, e-mail from Lee Winn

Ms. Lee Winn  
ER2002-0596

-3-

August 28, 2002

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