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(file: TA-73 Airport landfill drainages)

LANL Ordered To Clean Up Arroyos

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The state environment department issued an order to Los Alamos National Laboratory to clean up hazardous material and debris in arroyos at the Los Alamos Airport landfill.

Accompanying the order is a fine of more than \$167,000 for failing to clean up the site and for not submitting an adequate cleanup plan, among other regulatory violations.

"I hope that this order sends a strong signal that the days of repeated extensions, investigations that never end, and waste that is allowed to remain unaddressed are over," said New Mexico Environment Depart-

ment's Deputy Secretary Der-rith Watchman-Moore in a statement.

The arroyos discharge storm water runoff to Pueblo Canyon, which flows into the Rio Grande.

LANL spokesman James Rickman said the airport parcel, owned by the Department of Energy, is slated for transfer to Los Alamos County and so DOE has been directing cleanup plans for the property.

"It would be appropriate for (DOE) to make the response," Rickman said.

DOE officials at the Los Alamos Site Office did not immediately return phone calls.

NMED spokesman Jon Goldstein said soils in the drainage contain elevated levels of radioactive cesium and plutonium, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), pesticides, lead, tires, car bodies and 55-gallon drums, among other debris.

He said that while most of the storage drums are empty, it is not known what they once held.

LANL has been investigating the airport landfill since 1994, Goldstein said; and beginning in 1999, NMED, DOE and the University of California, which operates LANL, began a collaborative effort clean up the site.

A proposed cleanup plan was put forward in 2001, but DOE withdrew its support for the

cleanup plan and has not submitted an acceptable alternative to NMED since, Goldstein said.

"In this case, I think, UC did try to do the right thing but DOE backed out," he said.

The order requires LANL to remove the debris and hazardous materials from the arroyos by August and to conduct confirmatory sampling once the debris is removed and install erosion controls to stabilize the drainages.

The airport landfill was used for the disposal of waste from the town of Los Alamos and LANL operations since 1943 when LANL first opened, Goldstein said.

