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WM Project 39

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Mr. Leo Higginbotham
Chief, Low Level Waste and Uranium
Recovery, Recovery Projects Branch
U. S. NRC, Mail Stop 623-SS
Washington, DC 20555

Dear Mr. Higginbotham:

Attached is the monthly UMTRA Project status report for the month of October 1985.

Our three sites where remedial action is underway all show excellent progress during the month. Canonsburg is 97 percent complete, Salt Lake City 40 percent, and Shiprock 25 percent complete as of the end of October. Unfortunately, inclement weather at Canonsburg during November has prevented us from making much headway, but we are still optimistic the site will be 100 percent complete by mid-December.

I believe 1985 was a year of substantial progress for the UMTRA Project and that progress was possible only because of the hard work, dedication and cooperation of all the members of the UMTRA Project team. Your help and active participation was particularly instrumental in our accomplishments. I look with great expectation to 1986 and our opportunities for continued success.

Since the November status report will probably not reach you until the first of the new year, please accept my best wishes for a happy and safe holiday season.

Sincerely,

John G. Themelis, Project Manager
Uranium Mill Tailings Project Office

Enclosure

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STATES/TRIBES MONTHLY REPORT
October, 1985

CANONSBURG

Site remedial action is 97 percent complete. Reconstruction of Strabane Avenue is underway with paving having been completed on October 29. Current vicinity property activity supports the scheduled site completion date of November 30. Requests have been received to survey 28 additional vicinity properties, and it is estimated that three to four of these will qualify for remedial action. In the event that additional contaminated materials are generated by these properties after closure of the disposal site, they will be transported to Burrell.

Preliminary construction for Burrell has begun to include clearing of access road and subbase preparation. Burrell subcontractor has located all observation wells with the exception of Well No. 12.

The Project Manager was interviewed by "60 Minutes" on October 31 regarding Canonsburg remedial action. The thrust of the questioning was: (1) why has it taken so long to do something, (2) why haven't there been valid comprehensive health studies performed, (3) why hasn't the Federal Government been honest with the people about the hazardous nature of the site, and (4) why isn't Vitro responsible for the cleanup? In addition, CBS has interviewed several people in Canonsburg including Mayor Passante, State Representative Sweet, and two citizens who have been vocal about the hazards of the site.

SALT LAKE CITY

Site remedial action continues to progress ahead of schedule and is estimated to be 40 percent complete as of the end of October. A total of 478,000 cu yds have been moved to the Clive disposal site.

The Radiological and Engineering Assessment (REA) for R&W Dairy is complete with eight options defined. The State of Utah has been requested to provide additional title data for the Fire Engineering Property. The accelerated site schedule proposed by the State's subcontractor will require the development of an accelerated vicinity property schedule to complete those activities by September 1986. Of the 88 vicinity properties currently included for remedial action 47 have been completed and an additional 36 are under contract.

SHIPROCK

Site remedial action is continuing without significant problems and is estimated to be 25 percent complete as of the end of October. A total of 338,000 cubic yards of contaminated material have been excavated and rock production operations have begun in the NECA borrow area.

DURANGO

A briefing by the Corps of Engineers on the recently completed appraisals at Durango and Gunnison was given to the Project Office and Colorado Department of Health (CDH) in Denver on October 25. Strategies for site acquisition of the sites will follow between DOE and CDH.

A tour of the Shiprock construction site was provided to members of the Durango Task Force on October 28, and a film of an enclosed conveyor system was shown for their information.

Completion of printing of the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has been delayed from October 29 to November 1, due to printing problems. Response to NRC comments on the draft Remedial Action Plan/Site Conceptual Design (RAP/SCD) have been prepared and are undergoing review.

M-K met with Hecla Mining on October 15 to discuss site access agreements. This problem has yet to be satisfactorily resolved and continues to be a concern to the Project Office. Access to the pile is necessary for M-K to complete their engineering design for remedial action.

Remedial action on the three vicinity property construction packages is continuing. Five properties have been completed, 8 are under construction, and 12 remain to be started.

GUNNISON

Test pits were dug in New East Gold Basin to evaluate soils at two possible alternate sites. Test results and cost analyses will be ready for review by the Project Office and the State early in November.

GRAND JUNCTION

CDH representatives visited the Project Office on October 15 to discuss data on the alternate close-in sites. A meeting was held on October 22 with Mesa County Commissioners to hear their concerns regarding the close-in sites.

During the month, remedial action was initiated by Bendix on 7 properties, and 31 radiological and engineering assessments (REAs) were submitted. Bendix is ahead of schedule on REAs but is behind the FY 86 schedule for remedial actions. Bids were issued on 17 properties which will help bring up the schedule in November.

RIFLE

Estes Gulch has been determined to be the most acceptable of the close-in alternate disposal sites. The Task Force and the State endorsed this option at a meeting on October 29. Further characterization of this site will continue.

RIVERTON

The State verbally advised the Project Office on October 17 that the Governor has taken the position that the tailings must be relocated and the preferred site is the ANC licensed mill in the Gas Hills. A meeting will be held with the State on November 13 to discuss options for implementing this action. Written notification of the State's position is expected to be sent to DOE following this meeting.

TUBA CITY

A public meeting was held with the Hopi Tribe at Moenkopi Village on October 8. Navajo and Hopi Tribal officials were also visited and they emphasized their continued strong support for the project.

Another public meeting was held on October 20 with Navajo Chapter members. Their primary concern continues to be ground-water contamination. A meeting concerning the ground-water problem was held on October 28 with the Navajo Technical Departments. The Tribe has requested that raw data and calculations be provided for their evaluation.

A design review meeting will be held in San Francisco on November 14, 1985. Bids have been received for the Phase I site remedial action which is scheduled to start in November, pending resolution of FY 1986 funding.

MEXICAN HAT/MONUMENT VALLEY

A meeting was held on October 20 with the Oljato Chapter officials regarding current status of characterization efforts and project schedules. The major concern at this point is employment of Navajos to work at the sites.

LAKEVIEW

The preliminary design for site remedial action was presented to the State and NRC on October 22. Comments are to be completed and submitted by November 22. The meeting to discuss remaining State and NRC concerns regarding the RAP has been rescheduled for November 1, in Denver.

A briefing to contractors on how to prequalify for remedial action work took place in Lakeview on October 24.

On October 8, a meeting was held with the owners of Precision Pine and State officials. Operations at the site during remedial action were discussed and the outline of a remedial action agreement was also reviewed. Precision Pine will prepare and transmit a draft "agreement of good faith" for signature of all parties.

It now appears likely that the anti-nuclear activists, who developed Proposition 9 requiring no release of radioactivity from nuclear waste sites, will sue the state on the basis that the proposed remedial action doesn't comply with Proposition 9 requirements.

AMBROSIA LAKE

Work is continuing on the preparation of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and RAP/SCD, and a briefing on conceptual design progress is tentatively scheduled for early November. Site characterization work has been completed. A public meeting was held in Grants, New Mexico, on October 9 to explain the schedule of activities.

FALLS CITY

Weather conditions have delayed Bendix radiation survey start date to November 4. A meeting was held with Texas Department of Health on October 18 to discuss alternative cost estimates and the status of Solution Engineering work.

GENERAL

Program Review: The year-end project review was held with HQ program staff October 28 and 29. Significant concerns discussed were (1) ability to complete Grand Junction vicinity properties by 1992, (2) when can the project stop taking applications for vicinity properties surveys, (3) procedures for property record documentation, and (4) FY 1986 funding level constraints from Congressional requirements for work at Canonsburg, Salt Lake City, Durango, and Lakeview.

IG Inclusion/Exclusion Review: The Main Hurdman auditor is finalizing the report on the inclusion/exclusion process.

UMTRA Vicinity Property Certification Plan: The comments provided by Project participants and NRC have been incorporated in the draft Vicinity Property Certification Plan. The final plan will be distributed in early November.

States/Tribes Coordination Meeting: On October 16 and 17, a States/Tribes coordination meeting was held in Salt Lake City. Primary subjects were project status, review of the recent project cost estimate and schedule update, changes to the mill sites planning process that will enhance coordination among the participating agencies, and a review of the certification, licensing, and surveillance and maintenance processes. The Vitro engineering site and Clive disposal site were toured on the 17th.