

Communities for Clean Water

**A network of community groups coming together to address water issues
at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL)**

Water Issues At LANL

Studies by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and LANL itself show that New Mexico's future water supply is being threatened by a number of pollutants, including nitrates, fluoride, 1,4-dioxane, high explosives, mercury, PCBs, perchlorate, selenium, hexavalent chromium, neptunium, americium, cesium, cobalt, plutonium, strontium and tritium.

According to LANL's own estimate, cleanup of contaminated sites is also being threatened. The Department of Energy (DOE) has proposed a \$90 million cut for LANL cleanup in Fiscal Year 2008, which begins October 1, 2007. Under these circumstances, it will be extremely difficult for LANL to meet federal Clean Water Act requirements.

Evidence of LANL's pollution and its impact on our water continues to mount on a regular basis. We need to act now as the tip of this iceberg is emerging. It is easier and more cost effective to act before the pollution gets to our drinking water.

What Is At Stake?

- Our collective environmental and individual health
- The spiritual and ceremonial practices of indigenous cultures that depend on the ingestion of pure, clean natural water and the use of herbs and medicinal plants
- The ethical and moral imperative to care for the gift of water for future generations
- The survival of species that depend upon the Rio Grande
- Santa Fe's future drinking water supply. The Buckman Wellfield, which supplies Santa Fe with approximately 40% of its drinking water, gets 60% of its recharge from the Pajarito Plateau where LANL is located
- Drinking, irrigation and recreational waters for downstream communities from Northern New Mexico through Texas and Mexico into the Gulf
- Future economic development potential for downstream farmers, ranchers and industries that depend on clean water for sustainability

Action

On May 23, 2006, community-based organizations from New Mexico announced their intent to sue DOE and the Regents of the University of California for violations of the Clean Water Act at LANL by sending them a 60-Day Notice as required by law. These violations include:

- Failure to conduct adequate monitoring
- Failure to report violations
- Failure to have pollution controls in place
- Failure to comply with water quality standards
- Unauthorized discharges

These failures threaten public health by allowing toxic contaminants to migrate to the Rio Grande, a future source of drinking water for Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and which continues to be used for fishing, recreating and farming all along its length.

Groups signed on to the original 60-Day Notice of Intent to Sue

Amigos Bravos: www.amigosbravos.org

Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety (CCNS): www.nuclearactive.org

Embudo Valley Environmental Monitoring Group (EVEMG): serit@cybermesa.com

Partnership for Earth Spirituality: www.earthspirituality.org

Rio Grande Restoration: www.riogrande restoration.com

Tewa Women United: www.tewawomenunited.org

On March 29, 2007, a second 60-Day Notice of Intent to Sue was sent from groups and individuals in New Mexico. Re-sending the Notice allowed for the inclusion of the new corporate management for LANL, which is now responsible for dealing with LANL's toxic legacy. The corporation, Los Alamos National Security, LLC (LANS), was created specifically to manage LANL and includes Bechtel, BWX Technologies and Washington Group International, and LANL's original managers, the Regents of the University of California. The new Notice also includes new groups and individuals that have signed on.

New groups and individuals signed on to the 60-Day Notice

Don Gabino Andrade Community Acequia

New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA): www.lasacequias.org

SouthWest Organizing Project (SWOP): www.swop.net

Kathy Sanchez and Gilbert Sanchez

These groups and individuals are represented by Matthew Bishop of the *Western Environmental Law Center*: www.westernlaw.org

Goals of Communities for Clean Water

- Zero contaminants discharged from LANL, a Clean Water Act goal
- Cleanup of over 1,400 contaminated sites
- Stronger enforcement by federal and state regulators at LANL
- Monitoring and implementation of Best Management Practices for discharges and dumping at LANL
- Vigorous pursuit of fines, which are possibly in the billions of dollars, from prior and on-going violations. These fines must be allocated to effective independent monitoring and remediation of the sites in question to prevent future contamination of our waters