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WM Project 16

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✓ SRP TRIP REPORT

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(Return to WM, 623-SS)

MEMORANDUM FOR: Robert E. Browning, Director  
Division of Waste Management, NMSS

FROM: Frederick W. Ross, Hydrologist  
Geotechnical Branch  
Division of Waste Management, NMSS

SUBJECT: SRPO SITE REPORT FOR FEBRUARY 9-20, 1987

The purpose of this trip was to act as NRC's On-site Representative (OR) to the Department of Energy's Salt Repository Project Office (SRPO) in Columbus, Ohio. This two week assignment (February 9-20, 1987) was conducted in accordance with the agreement described in the January 30, 1987 letter from J.J. Linehan (NRC) to J.O. Neff (DOE/SRPO).

While reinforcing the NRC presence at SRPO, I gained valuable firsthand knowledge of programs outside and within my technical area of responsibility (hydrology) by interacting with SRPO technical staff, management, and contractors. As with my predecessor (John Voglewede), I met and had brief discussions with most of the SRPO technical points-of-contact identified in the November 24, 1986 letter from J. O. Neff to J. J. Linehan. I found SRPO staff to be very cooperative in providing technical information and willing to discuss technical details of interest. Both SRPO staff and management appear interested in promoting good relations with NRC through these rotational OR assignments.

I spent most of my time at the project office involved in my assigned technical area of responsibility. I examined, from a hydrologic technical perspective, a number of draft technical and programmatic documents not currently available to the NRC, and conducted informal discussions with SRPO and ONWI technical staff. During the afternoon of February 10, 1987, I attended a session of the SCP Author Coordination Workshop as a non-participating observer. The session was part of an extensive two week effort at further developing and organizing individual author input into specific sections of the SCP detailed chapter outlines ("storyboards"). On returning to Silver Spring, a debriefing for other staff members of the SRP review team was conducted during the February 25, 1987 team meeting.

TECHNICAL ITEMS

Andy Avel and Gordon Appel of the SRPO/Licensing Branch were instrumental in making my visit productive. Mr. Avel saw to it that I was properly badged in relatively short order, provided an up-to-date SRPO organizational chart, introduced me to the various technical leads and branch chiefs, and oriented me to the physical surroundings. Mr. Appel helped organize my activities by arranging for the availability of ONWI staff for technical discussions in hydrology and by providing key SCP draft supporting documents such as the Performance Assessment Plan, Synthetic Data Base, Requirements Document, and

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The Steering Committee Report On Performance Allocation. I was also provided copies of the SCP detailed outline (Chapters 1-8) and the ONWI review comments on the outline. Through my technical contact, Vincent Adams, I examined drafts of the hydrologic testing plans for the ESF design/monitor wells and the Shallow (Ogallala Aquifer to top of salt) hydronests prepared for ONWI by S. Papadopoulos of Papadopoulos and Associates.

Examination of the SCP detailed outline indicates that the SCP will not be a stand alone document that can be reviewed properly by the NRC without at least a fundamental understanding of the various supporting documents such as the Requirements Document, Synthetic Data Base, Performance Assessment Plan, Site Study Plans (SSP's) etc. I suggest that the NRC should request up-to-date versions of these documents from SRPO.

The afternoon of February 10, 1987, I attended a session of the two week long SCP Author Coordination Workshop. The purpose of the workshop was for the SCP authors to resolve SCP coordinator (ONWI) comments concerning the scope and organization of each SCP chapter section. The workshop was organized by chapter with authors contributing to individual chapters and commentators assembled in a single room. The session I observed was on chapter 3 (hydrology), which describes, based on current data, what is known about the region and site for determining future data needs. During my presence, the authors discussed the level of available site data and to what extent regional data could be used to generalize hydrologic conditions at the site. It was determined by SRPO prior to preparation of the outlines that only data from the Synthetic Data Base will be used for the SCP.

On Wednesday, February 18, 1987, as arranged by Gordon Appel, John Kircher and Sumant Gupta of the ONWI Performance Assessment Branch and myself discussed NRC's major FEA comment on groundwater travel time. From this discussion, I concluded that our comment was well received and understood, and it appears that our concerns about the PTRACK model and uncertainty in the G.W.T.T. calculations will be factored into future efforts by the contractor technical staff. John Kircher expressed a desire for more technical contact with the NRC and is anxious to receive our final guidance on groundwater travel time.

#### CONCLUSIONS

In place of a substantial menu of technical meetings between NRC and SRPO, review team members rely heavily on secondhand sources (OR and SRPO points-of-contact) for technical information. Therefore, I found this rare firsthand opportunity at gathering information at SRPO extremely worthwhile. What I learned about the current state of the SRP program, which occurred only through working directly with SRPO and ONWI personnel, will be invaluable in helping me plan for the SCP review in hydrology. I firmly believe that too much emphasis

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is placed on obtaining information through the efforts of the OR, and recommend that the NRC continue arranging for staff to be periodically assigned to SRPO after a permanent OR is appointed. I think that this is a valid recommendation for the other projects as well. I discussed these conclusions with Gordon Appel and he agreed that this type of arrangement could be beneficial to both NRC and DOE.



Frederick W. Ross, Hydrologist  
Geotechnical Branch  
Division of Waste Management, NMSS

cc: P. Prestholt, NRC  
F. Cook, NRC  
J. Knight, DOE-HQ  
J. Neff, SRPO  
G. Appel, SRPO  
A. Avel, SRPO  
S. Frishman, Texas, NWPO

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 Division of Waste Management, NMSS

FROM: Frederick W. Ross, Hydrologist  
 Geotechnical Branch  
 Division of Waste Management, NMSS

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