



U.S. Department of Energy

Grand Junction Office
2597 B³/₄ Road
Grand Junction, CO 81503

NOV 01 1999

Ms. Madeline Roanhorse, Director
Navajo UMTRA Program
Division of Natural Resources
P.O. Box 1875
Window Rock, AZ 86515

Subject: Activities at the Mexican Hat UMTRA Project Site

Dear Ms. Roanhorse:

The Department of Energy is in receipt of your letter of October 21, 1999, regarding issues at the Mexican Hat UMTRA Project Site discussed at the meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado, on July 1, 1999.

As a best-management practice, based on repeated discussions with the technical consultants to Navajo UMTRA, DOE will drill one additional monitor well into the uppermost aquifer (lower unit of the Halgaito Formation) downgradient from the Mexican Hat disposal cell in July 2000 in conjunction with a drilling rig mobilizing to the Monument Valley UMTRA Project Site. The well will be located as near to the disposal cell as reasonable but will not penetrate any part of the disposal cell cover system. You will be notified so that your consultant may be present during the well installation. Ground water from this well will be collected during the scheduled August 2000 sampling round and analyzed for constituents of potential concern (in particular, uranium, sulfate, and nitrate). These results will be provided to the Navajo Nation when validated, and discussions will ensue to consider their significance and any subsequent action at the site. No further investigation will be undertaken during Fiscal Year 2000 as funding will not be available. Ground water from the existing monitor wells will also be collected during August 2000 and analyzed for the same constituents.

The 3-year monitoring period proposed in Section 2.4 of the *Ground Water Compliance Action Plan* (March 1999) will end in 2002, at which time the need for continued monitoring will be determined. Monitor wells will be sampled and water levels measured during this period on a semiannual basis (August/February). It is also anticipated that the seeps will be monitored on the same semiannual basis as this will provide sufficient data to establish trends in water quality.

No new seeps have been identified recently in the vicinity of the Mexican Hat Site. If new seeps are noted during the sampling rounds, they will be identified and sampled.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is in the process of reviewing the most recent documentation to verify the compliance strategy at the Mexican Hat Site. Their response will be

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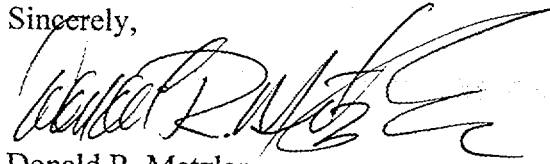
Ms. Madeline Roanhorse

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forwarded to you upon receipt. The principle contact at NRC is Michael Layton. His telephone number is 301/415-6676. Feel free to also contact me if I can answer any questions for you.

Sincerely,



Donald R. Metzler
Technical/Project Manager

cc:

M. Layton, NRC
R. Edge, DOE-GJO
R. Heydenburg, MACTEC-ERS
C. Jacobson, MACTEC-ERS
S. Marutzky, MACTEC-ERS
Project File GWHAT3.5 (R. Burrows)

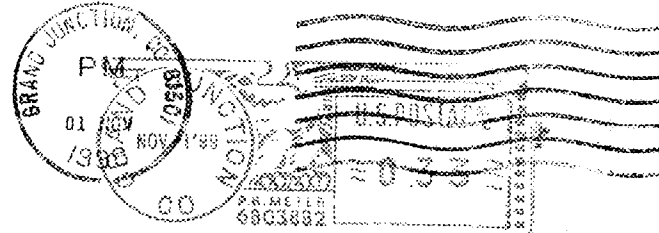
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