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MEMORANDUM



TO: Job File No. 931-064.200

FROM: Frank J. Blaha

DATE: August 30, 1995

SUBJECT: Water Management Activities and Plan at Rocky Flats

I wanted to document my current understanding of the water management activities and plans that are currently underway at Rocky Flats. This is my best understanding of the situation based upon interviews with a number of people, but a considerable amount of confusion on this issue exists at Rocky Flats, and it may very well be that my 'understanding' is only a garbled version of the truth. But, at this point it all makes sense to me, so I will document what I believe that I know.

Immediate Water/Wastewater Treatment Capabilities Evaluation: At the current time RTG is performing an assessment of water/wastewater treatment capabilities for Rocky Flats. One of the prime issues that drove this project to be started was the realization by DOE that costly and significant upgrades to the Building 374 Evaporators were imminent, and yet DOE did not feel that they had adequate and complete information on the anticipated water/wastewater treatment needs and capacities. Therefore, the Integrated Water Management Plan was started. In this project RTG is being asked, by the end of September, to assess the likely water and wastewater treatment needs and capacities for Rocky Flats. It is my understanding the treatment units being considered in this two year plan consist of Building 374, Building 995, and the OU1 and OU2 treatment units. Total volumes of wastewater to be generated are being estimated, including some estimate of the likely volumes of contaminated groundwater that could be treated. However, it is my understanding that the estimates of the contaminated groundwater volume are only an input to the project, not a direct work product. I do not believe that the terminal pond treatment units are being evaluated at this time, I have only heard these treatment units referenced in relation to the post-October 1 activities.

In October this project will be taken to the next stage in which the likely water treatment needs and capacities for Rocky Flats over the next twenty years are assessed. Again, this assessment will include groundwater volumes that might require treatment.

So, in summary, the main focus of these two year and twenty year evaluations of water and wastewater treatment needs and capacities is identification of needed upgrades or major new facilities in the arena of water and wastewater treatment. I understand that surface water runoff is not addressed in these two and twenty year treatment capability assessments.

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Surface Water Runoff and Drainage Pond Management: At the current time surface water runoff, Building 995 discharges, and base flows from streams at the Rocky Flats Plant are held in the drainage ponds on plant site. These waters are released in a modified batch mode system. The desire is to only release water after sampling and analysis of the pond water. However, pond storage volumes are not sufficient given the hydrologic system and laboratory analysis turn-around times to allow true batch mode release of waters from Rocky Flats. Thus, at times, the water is released prior to complete characterization of the released water.

The intent of the Rocky Flats Plant at this time is to return to a more flow-through management system for the pond waters. This flow-through management system will be re-instituted through a number of transition steps. The effectiveness of each major phased transition step will be demonstrated prior to implementing subsequent transition steps. Thus, pond waters discharged offsite will remain of high quality following any water management change.

A document has been prepared that identifies the steps currently anticipated in returning to a more flow-through management system for the drainage ponds. This document is the "Draft Rocky Flats Surface Water Pond Operations Plan, 1995 - 1997," August 10, 1995, which was transmitted to the Jacobs Engineering Group on Friday, August 25, 1995. This document identifies additional details and specific actions to be taken in returning the drainage ponds to a more flow-through form of operation.

Groundwater Strategy Project: As discussed above, there are groundwater issues and concerns that feed into the evaluations being conducted by RTG. However, there is also a separate and distinct project to prepare a "Site-Wide Groundwater Strategy" which is being technically headed up by Tim Lovseth. Annette Primrose and John Law are the "clients" that are being serviced by Tim Lovseth with this project. The driver behind the "Site-Wide Groundwater Strategy" is the thinking that now is the perfect time to treat groundwater differently than it has been treated to date at the Rocky Flats Plant. Some very basic changes may be possible in the management and related strategy for groundwater at Rocky Flats, allowing contaminated groundwater to be handled separately and differently from the IHSSs and OUs. For instance, perhaps the entire groundwater program can be divorced from the CERCLA process allowing earlier and cheaper remediation of contaminated groundwater.

The "Site-Wide Groundwater Strategy" document is not prepared yet, and when it is prepared it will constitute an initial trial balloon to float some new ideas for review and evaluation. It is considered, at this time, an internal strategy to Rocky Flats. The "Site-Wide Groundwater Strategy" may become part of the 20 year water and wastewater plan that RTG will be working on after October 1st, but this is not given fact. At this time the RTG evaluation and the "Site-Wide Groundwater Strategy" are entirely separate documents.