Fluor Fernald, Inc.
P.O. Box 538704
Cincinnati, OH 45253-8704

FLUOR

Fernald Closure Project
Letter No. C:CPD:2006-0034

Mr. Johnny W. Reising, Director
U. S. Department of Energy
Ohio Field Office – Fernald Closure Project
175 Tri-County Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45246

Dear Mr. Reising:

CONTRACT DE-AC24-01OH20115, TRANSMITTAL OF THE 2005 CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT FOR RESTORED AREAS AT THE FERNALD CLOSURE PROJECT

Enclosed is the 2005 Consolidated Monitoring Report for restored areas at the Fernald Closure Project (FCP). This document provides the results of implementation and functional monitoring activities completed in restored areas of the FCP in 2005. This is the last consolidated monitoring report to be submitted by Fluor Fernald, Inc. In 2006, restored area monitoring will be the responsibility of the Department of Energy's Office of Legacy Management.

Upon your concurrence, please forward to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resource Trustees. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Eric Woods at (513) 478-1547.

Sincerely,

Cornelius M. Murphy
Closure Project Director

CMM:EW:ldt

Enclosure

c: With Enclosure

Helen E. Bilson, MS1
J. D. Chiou, MS88
Timothy L. Jones, DOE Contracting Officer, DOE/EMCBC
Uday Kumthekar, MS88
Malcolm D. Powell, MS64
Gary Stegner, DOE-OH
Eric Woods, MS90
Administrative Record, MS6
DOE Records Center
File Record Subject – 2005 Consolidated Monitoring Report for Restored Areas at FCP
Letter Log Copy, MS1
Project Number 20900.2.22 (20900-RP-0019)

Without Enclosure
John S. Brown, DOE/EMCBC
Christina Carr, DOE-OH/FCP, MS2
Joe Desormeau, DOE-OH/FCP, MS2
Reinhard Friske, MS52-3
Frank Johnston, MS12
Lisa McHenry, MS90
Dennis Nixon, MS1
Dennis Sizemore, Fluor Fernald, Inc. Prime Contract, MS1

ENCLOSURE

2005 CONSOLIDATED MONITORING REPORT
FOR RESTORED AREAS AT THE FERNALD CLOSURE PROJECT
NARRATIVE SUMMARY
FEBRUARY 2006

The attached tables present the data collected in 2005 for Implementation and Functional monitoring of restored areas at the Fernald Closure Project (FCP). Implementation monitoring included vegetation survival and herbaceous cover within Area 1, Phase III (A1PIII) and the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project, as well as herbaceous cover estimates across the Northern Pines. Water levels were also recorded for the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project. Functional monitoring involved comparisons of restored forest communities in the Southern Waste Units (SWU), Area 8, Phase II (A8PII), and A1PIII to baseline conditions and reference sites.

Site precipitation data for 2005 are presented in Table 1. Monthly rainfall totals were well below average for much of the summer and fall. While this did not result in a regional drought, field conditions at the FCP required a major watering effort throughout the growing season. Restoration personnel used a combination of water tanks, water trucks, and water cannons to irrigate planted and seeded areas.

Implementation Monitoring

Vegetation survival for the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project is presented in Table 2. All vegetation planted across the project area was surveyed pursuant to the methodology established in the 2002 Consolidated Monitoring Report (DOE 2003). Field survival was over 80 percent overall and at or near 80 percent for each individual patch. Increased use of deer exclosure fencing has proved very beneficial. All plants in the Phase II Wetland Mitigation project were protected with exclosure fencing or welded wire cages. As a result, vegetation survival is greatly increased, and the rate of mortality is in line with what would be expected given the scale of the project and the dry conditions experienced in 2005. As with other projects, the planned quantities sometimes differ slightly from the quantities actually installed in the field. A variety of factors can contribute to these discrepancies, including plant availability from a vendor, counting and labeling errors, theft, etc. An improved tracking process was instituted in 2005 to ensure that all planned plant quantities are addressed.

Herbaceous cover across A1PIII and the Northern Pines is presented in Table 3. Again, the methodology established in the 2002 Consolidated Monitoring Report was used to collect field data. Seven random quadrats were sampled: four in A1PIII and three in the Northern Pines. Cover in both areas is well established, as all quadrats sampled had greater than 90 percent total cover. Also, all native herbaceous species composition and relative frequency of native species calculations were greater than 50 percent. Field observations of seeded areas across the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project demonstrate similar

findings. It is anticipated that the percentage of native vegetation should increase, given proper management of the seeded areas.

Water elevations were measured in the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project in the spring of 2005 (Table 4). Data showed that water levels in Basins 2 and 3 were below the planned elevations. As a result, field personnel raised the water elevation of each basin by adjusting the water control structure flashboard heights. Subsequent field observations demonstrate that the wetland hydrology is now functioning pursuant to the design goals.

Functional Monitoring

Functional Monitoring data summaries are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7. Area-specific species lists are found in Tables 8 through 13. Table 5 shows the native species and Floristic Quality Assessment Index (FQAI) based on the combined woody and herbaceous species lists for each area. Table 6 summarizes herbaceous data and Table 7 summarizes woody data. In general, results are in line with expectations. The SWU and A8PII are showing solid improvement over baseline conditions. For A1PIII, the 2005 dataset is comparable to the baseline successional woodlot. Nevertheless, vegetation survey results and field observations indicate that restoration activities have dramatically improved the project area. Each of these projects is discussed in more detail below.

The SWU datasets are provided in Tables 8 and 11. Two 50-meter transects were used in the SWU: one across a restored beech-maple community and one through the "Carolina Area," where riparian trees and shrubs were planted within a previously seeded excavation area in the southeast portion of the project. The herbaceous layer of the SWU was particularly good, with an FQAI approaching the riparian reference site FQAI. Table 8 shows that a large amount of high quality prairie grasses and forbs are present within the project area. Much of this is attributed to the Carolina Area, which is one of the most diverse areas onsite with respect to native forbs present. Over time, it is anticipated that this area and the other herbaceous layers in restored forest areas at the FCP will convert to a forest understory, as planted trees and volunteers grow and close canopy gaps. The woody data summary for the SWU shows continued survival and growth of planted trees and shrubs (Table 11).

For A8PII, data summaries are presented in Tables 9 and 12. A single 100-meter transect was established from the edge of the existing riparian corridor through a former grazed pasture that was planted with the mesophytic forest template. The herbaceous layer in this area has greatly improved over baseline conditions. This improvement is not due to seeding, but rather to continued expansion of the adjacent riparian corridor (Table 9). Woody vegetation also shows benefit from volunteer recruits, in addition to

restoration plantings (Table 12). With diligent maintenance of invasives, the A8PII restoration project should continue progressing towards the project goals of expanded riparian corridor and upland forest.

Data summaries for A1PIII are included in Tables 10 and 13. A 100-meter transect was surveyed within the early-successional woodlot located just north of the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project. Restoration of this woodlot consisted of extensive removal of honeysuckle and multiflora rose, installation of a beech-maple forest template, and seeding with a woodland seed mix. The invasives removal effort was very successful, as the relative frequency of native vegetation has much improved over the baseline site (Table 7). However, the average Coefficient of Conservatism (CC) values and FQAI scores for this area more closely resemble the site baseline woodlot than the reference forest (Tables 5 through 7). There are several reasons for this. First, the area surveyed is the most recent of the three Functional Monitoring study sites to be restored. Planting and seeding took place in the fall of 2004, less than one year before Functional Monitoring data collection. Both herbaceous data (Table 10) and woody data summaries (Table 13) show some progress in establishing native seeded and planted vegetation (planted vegetation in the woody data summaries are described as "saplings" in the "Type" column). However, more time is needed to demonstrate full benefits from restoration activities. Other projects onsite have shown that native grass and forb establishment takes several years. Woodland seeding may take even longer given the habitat requirements of some species (i.e. shade tolerance). For woody data, field observations demonstrated a variety of planted native vegetation that was not included in the survey because of the sampling methodology (plants under one meter tall are not included in the woody vegetation dataset). It is anticipated that over time, planted trees and shrubs will mature and subsequently improve floristic quality calculations within A1PIII.

The second factor affecting the floristic quality of the A1PIII woodlot pertains to the condition of the woodlot prior to restoration. There is lower diversity and quality of existing trees in the A1PIII restoration area than in the baseline community [Table 13, (DOE 2003, Table C-6)]. This is one of the reasons that the woodlot was restored in the first place. Again, over time, planted vegetation and volunteer recruits will mature, thereby improving the floristic quality of the A1PIII restored forest.

In summary, restored forested areas show some present-day ecological benefit. However, as expected, forest communities will take some time to fulfill their desired ecological functions.

Activities in 2006

The final restoration projects will be completed at the FCP in late 2005 and early 2006. Implementation monitoring will be completed by the DOE Office of Legacy Management starting in the summer of 2006.

The Final Legacy Management and Institutional Controls Plan (DOE 2006) for the FCP identifies the specific monitoring requirements for Restored Areas to be performed after Declaration of Physical Completion. Projects that will be monitored include Paddys Run East, Paddys Run West, the Former Production Area, the Waste Pits Area, and the Silos Area. In addition, water levels and water quality sampling will be conducted for the Phase II Wetland Mitigation Project.

References:

U.S. Department of Energy, 2006, "Comprehensive Legacy Management and Institutional Controls Plan", Final, January.

U.S. Department of Energy, 2003, "2002 Consolidated Monitoring Report for Restored Areas at the Fernald Closure Project," 20900-RP-0017 Rev. B.