



November 27, 2001 Public Meeting Summary with Public Comments / Questions & Answers

Historical Document

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(Slides are reproduced from presentation; speaker comments follow.)

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(Public comments and questions made during the meeting are preceded by the word "Public." Response to the questions/comments are preceded by the responder's name when available.)

Project Update, Access to Records

Time 5-7 p.m.

Location Radisson Santa Fe
Santa Fe, NM

Speakers Paul Renard, CDC Project Officer (photo below)
Tom Widner, Project Manager

Summary Leaders of the Los Alamos Historical Document and Retrieval and Assessment Project reported on progress made on the project to date. Agenda items included the extent to which access to classified documents has been restored, access limitations still in place, and the second draft of the project's historical operations and releases report.



Paul Renard opens the meeting.

Paul Renard introduced speakers and topics, including limitations set by Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) that restrict access to certain types of records. Renard also announced that he has been selected for a new position at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Tom Widner provided details regarding progress made in reviewing documents, access issues and the appeals process, information sources for the public, and the new draft report.

The meeting concluded with comments and questions.







Jennifer McKee, a staff writer from the Albuquerque Journal, interviews Paul Renard and Bob Whitcomb.

Note: Slides introducing the project were presented at the first public meeting. To review this background information, please see the February 23, 1999 meeting summary and slides.

**Slides &
Notes**

Paul Renard
Tom Widner
Public Comments / Questions and Answers

Introduction

Los Alamos Historical Document Retrieval and Assessment Project	
	Paul Renard Bob Whitcomb Phil Green Natasha Friday In attendance this evening....
	Tom Widner Susan Flack Claudine Kasunic
	Joe Shonka
	Cheryl Allen

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Paul Renard introduces key topics.

Paul Renard introduced staff from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Phil Green
- Bob Whitcomb
- Natasha Friday
- Marie Spano

Many months ago, during one of the first meetings, which was held in Española, I made a statement that if we get to the point where access is denied, I would let you know. That is now happening. There are a number of records we were denied access to. For some of these records, it has already been determined that CDC will be allowed to view the records and determine if they are relevant or not. In all cases, CDC needs to be part of verification process.

We will learn more from Tom Widner about records that fall within six categories, which have been determined are not relevant to our study. Basically, CDC will not see all documents. However, the CDC is still optimistic that the team will see all documents relevant to chemical and radionuclide releases.

An appeal process is in place for when the CDC is denied access. During the appeal, the Department of Energy (DOE) in Albuquerque will review the documents and make a determination if they do indeed contain information that must be withheld. The process is being tested. The CDC has been denied access to several boxes. We don't know how the process will go.

As of October 1, 2001, Paul Renard has been selected for a new position at CDC. This was his last public meeting concerning radiation studies, but he will continue to participate. Phil Green will likely be named the next Project Officer. Currently Bob Whitcomb is the Acting Project Officer. Renard has been working to combat the anthrax threats.



Tom Widner provides details about the project.

Topics to be Covered

- **Status of access to documents**
- **Where we have been searching**
- **Procedures for document review**
- **Information sources for the public**
- **New draft of report completed**

Status of Access to Documents

- **We do currently have escorted access to classified document centers**
- **Procedures for document review are outlined in Special Security Plans**

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Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has put together Special Security Plans that prescribe how access to documents is obtained and the process for clearing documents to make them publicly accessible. Plans are in place for the Central Records Center under Roger Meade, the Technical Report Collection under Jack Carter, and the Associate Laboratory Directorate for Nuclear Weapons, whose holdings contain a particularly high concentration of nuclear weapons design information.

Active Document Review Sites

- **LANL Records Center**
- **Report Collection**
- **ES&H Records Center**
- **Office of the Associate Laboratory Directorate for Nuclear Weapons (ALDNW)**

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We have gone through tens of thousands of records including microfiche and technical reports. We prefer to locate and make use of basic data sources (such as notebooks), where we can get as close as possible to the original information.

We are in a new repository, the ALDNW, within the Nuclear Weapons Division. It includes a main vault plus hundreds of individual safes.

Progress with Document Review *through September 2001*

- **Boxes of documents reviewed: 14,814**
- **Drawers of notebooks reviewed: 1,427**
- **Records Center film reviewed: 50%**
- **Reports reviewed: 37,063**
- **Document Summaries prepared: 2,746**

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This slide summarizes the extent of our search. Each roll of microfilm is equivalent to a box of records. So far, we have gone through about one half of the microfilm at the Records Center. We were able to document that about 3000 rolls of microfilm duplicate paper records that we are reviewing, so we do not have to review those rolls. But thousands of rolls remain to be reviewed.

We are completing Document Summary Forms that contain information for inclusion in the project information database. The summaries contain information relevant to chemical and radionuclide releases. Each summary is entered into an Access database, a version of which is available on the Internet.

Procedures for Document Review

- **Classified documents are to be pre-screened by “owners” to judge our need-to-know.**
- **Six categories of information are to be withheld from us.**
- **We can appeal to DOE when documents are withheld.**

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LANL has established procedures that outline the process for our document review. Document owners review documents to determine if information falls within six categories for which access will be denied. Decisions to deny access can be appealed to the DOE in Albuquerque.

**Categories of Information for which
Access is to be Denied**

- **Nuclear Weapons Design Information**
- **Sigma 14 and 15 Information**
- **Sensitive Compartmented Information**
- **Special Access Program Information**
- **Foreign Government Information**
- **Unclassified Sensitive Vendor
Proprietary Information**

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We agree that Nuclear Weapons Design Information does not contain information needed for a dose reconstruction. However, these types of records are sometimes mixed in with other information that is necessary and relevant. This is where the difficulty lies.

Sigma 14 and 15 are categories of classified information that touch on areas such as vulnerabilities of nuclear weapons and systems used to prevent their unauthorized use.

Sensitive Compartmented Information - is a category that includes information regarding some specific programs that require special access control.

Special Access information is highly secretive. The "Star Wars" program is an example. Only a very small fraction of records at LANL are Special Access.

We need special permission to review information from Foreign Governments. We will soon have access to some United Kingdom records.

Proprietary information includes trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, and proposals with salary information.

If we feel that a record was inappropriately assigned to one of these categories, we will appeal.

Experience with Screening by Owners

- **Records Center**
- **Report Collection**
- **ALDNW vaults and safes**
- **ES&H Records Center**

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After the missing hard drive incident and the Wen Ho Lee case, prescreening of records was initiated. Problems we have encountered include difficulty in finding document owners and getting them to respond to our requests for "need-to-know" reviews. These problems are detailed in the next few slides.

Experience at the Central Records Center

- **Need-to-know requests were sent by Center staff to owners of 44 sets of documents-**
 - **Access has been granted for 13,**
 - **Access has been denied for 6, and**
 - **No response regarding the remaining 25.**
- **The process for gaining access to UK documents appears nearly complete.**

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The system needs to be improved. We have discovered that the document owners need to be educated so that they know what they are supposed to do. They also need to understand what the criteria are for determining if a document should be withheld. We will fine-tune the system, seeking more accountability and providing clear instructions.

We found 12 drawers of information from the United Kingdom that we were initially denied access to. However, we have sought special permission, and we will soon be given access.

Experience at the Report Collection

- **Access has been granted for classified reports issued before 1963.**
- **Review “by title only” was required for a small fraction of those pre-1963 reports.**
- **Prescreening by “owners” for reports from 1963 or later has been problematic-**
 - LANL requested we review by titles alone.
 - From about 1,200 reports reviewed, review of titles alone is not conclusive for at least 200.
 - Prescreening by a contractor is being proposed.

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The Report Collection contains a wide variety of technical reports, including some that document the histories of weapons systems--when they were designed, when they were retired, and more. We have access to virtually all the records produced before 1963. After 1963, we were initially denied access to all LA reports because they might contain information that falls within the six secure categories. Then LANL asked us to review only the titles of documents to determine their relevance for a dose reconstruction. We are trying to improve the system so that we can look beyond the titles to determine relevancy.

Experience with ALDNW Documents

- **Contents of the main ALDNW vault were prescreened by a retiree (~12,500 documents).**
- **Over 99% of documents were restricted to review by title only due to stated presence of deniable category material.**
- **We completed review of the vault, requesting review of some documents beyond their titles.**
- **Hundreds of safes are being prescreened by owners, and review has begun.**

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Contents of the ALDNW vault were first prescreened by a retired LANL worker. He noted which documents had restricted access. Later, we reviewed these restricted documents by title only. We found that the material has very little information about releases. However, we may appeal a few of the restricted documents that we think may be

relevant to our study.

Some Sample Document Titles

- **“Theory of Radio Flash- Part III”**
- **“Leotard”**
- **“Lowcard Program”**
- **“Pajara Pinex”**
- **“Input and Output for Clyde”**
- **“Bowie”**
- **“Quarterly Status Report on Weapons R&D”**
- **“Mix- Past and Future”**
- **“Nuclear Materials”**

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Assessing a document to determine if it is relevant to our study by using the title alone is often very difficult. As you can see by the titles on this slide, titles are often cryptic and determining the type of information a document contains by reviewing the title alone is in many cases impossible. If we are only allowed to determine relevancy on the basis of title alone, we want to err on the side of safety. If there is any possibility that a document could be relevant, we will appeal any restrictions.

Information Sources for the Public

- **The project Web site is available at**
www.shonka.com/ReConstructionZone
- **Copies of relevant documents are available at the reading room in Albuquerque.**
- **A database describing publicly available documents is available at**
<http://www2.cdc.gov/nceh/radiation/LANL/default.htm>

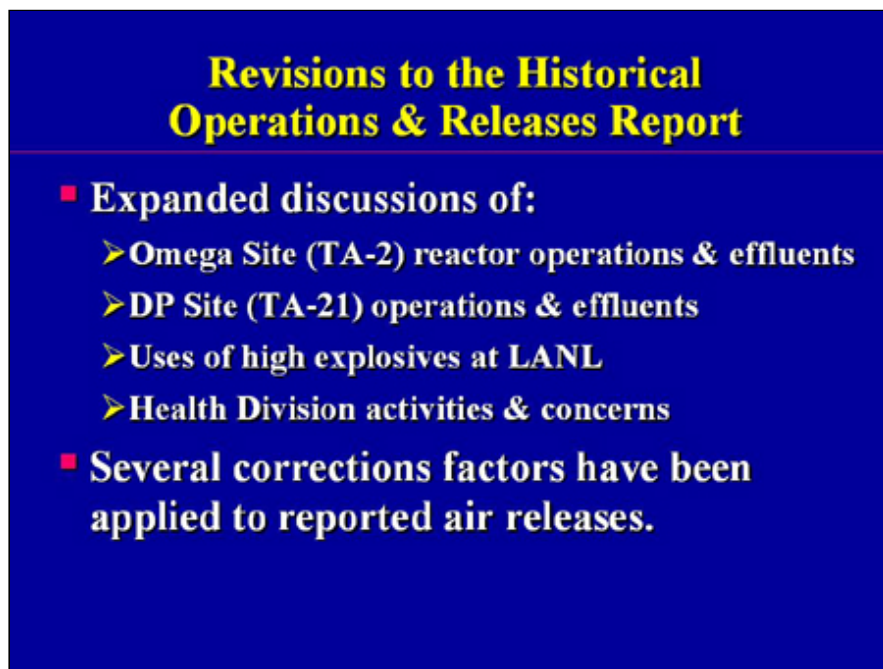
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The project web site is available to the public. Cheryl Allen designed the site, and Shonka Research Associates is hosting it. The site contains information about the project, team, meetings (including copies of slides and meeting summaries), and reports. Our last report is available on the Web site, and our newest version will be made available

their when the reviews are completed.

The reading room in Albuquerque has already been supplied with about 20 boxes of records released from LANL, and we have an additional five boxes ready to go. In addition, there still exists the opportunity for additional reading rooms. The DOE is working with some organizations to work out the logistics.

A database of the document summaries is available on the CDC Web site. It lists all the documents available at the reading room.



Revisions to the Historical Operations & Releases Report

- **Expanded discussions of:**
 - **Omega Site (TA-2) reactor operations & effluents**
 - **DP Site (TA-21) operations & effluents**
 - **Uses of high explosives at LANL**
 - **Health Division activities & concerns**
- **Several correction factors have been applied to reported air releases.**

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The second draft of the Historical Operations and Releases Report has been completed. The CDC and LANL classification officers are now reviewing the report. When the reviews are complete, copies will be made available. Highlights of the report include expanded data on the Omega and DP sites, information about the quantities of high explosives used at LANL and how they were used, and concerns the Health Division identified while monitoring potential effects.

We have also applied correction factors to some of the reported plutonium air releases from the early years. Early monitoring systems did not quantify releases as well as they can today, so we applied correction factors to data obtained before 1975.

Revisions to the Historical Operations & Releases Report

- Estimates of early D-Building Pu releases



- Updated prioritization of nuclide releases to air plus initial prioritization of liquid releases

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Another addition to the report includes estimates of early D-Building plutonium releases. We have collected information on the design of the building and its ventilation systems. These will help us estimate releases. We must make estimates because there are no data regarding airborne effluents from D-Building.

To Get a Copy of the Revised Report

- Sign up at the table at this meeting,
- Contact us at (800) 894-0085 or send an e-mail to twidner@ensr.com , or
- Download a copy from our Web site: www.shonka.com/ReConstructionZone

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To get a copy of the revised report when it is released, either sign up at the table in the back of the room, send me an e-mail, or you will be able to download a PDF version from the project web site. My business card is also on the table and includes the toll-free number and Web site address.

Other Project Activities

- We are continuing to support the “Los Alamos Revisited” oral history project.
- We will be expanding our interviewing of current and former workers.
- We are continuing to share information with NIOSH regarding documents that are relevant to worker exposures.

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Peter Malmgren's oral history project is still in progress. So far, Peter has interviewed 95 people including former LANL workers and area residents. We are also expanding our own interviews. At first we hesitated in conducting interviews because our knowledge about LANL was limited. Now that our knowledge about the site has increased, we will be conducting more interviews. The documents we review provide some of the information we need for our study, but interviews help us interpret these documents and fill in gaps in the recorded information. We also continue to provide NIOSH with information we discover that is relevant to worker exposures.



Peter Malmgren and Susan Flack discuss the upcoming exhibit of Peter's "Los Alamos Revisited" oral history project at the Mesa Public Library in Los Alamos. Inset: One of the photos displayed during the meeting.

Public Comments / Questions and Answers

("Team" refers to either one or more members of the project team who responded to a questions or comment.)

Public: In order to safeguard the Manhattan Project, the president issued a security classification preventing information about radiation effects on humans from being released. Do you see any remnants of this very old security classification?

Response Tom Widner: No. We have seen hundreds of records dealing with litigation of various types. None that we have seen fall within the six protected categories. Some information is protected by the privacy act.

Public: Have you obtained access for other owners, such as the Air Force, other than the United Kingdom?

Tom Widner: Work for others (WFO) is part of our study. When we find relevant documents from other owners we will obtain special permission to review them.

Paul Renard: Our experience has shed some light in regards to WFO documents. In past studies, we learned late in the process that WFO information can be very important and very difficult to get access to. With the United Kingdom documents, we made an early request to push these documents through the system. So far, we have not looked at a lot of WFO, but we will. We also have not seen the United Kingdom documents yet, but access has been granted.

Tom Widner: In regards to Air Force records, we have looked at reports in the Reports Collection on different phenomena related to weapons and releases. We have not been denied access.

Susan Flack: In the early years there were two to three times as many military people as civilians that were part of LANL, and many of the documents we are reviewing are military records.

Peter Malmgren: I have talked to two people who participated in Air Force cloud monitoring activities, mainly at the Pacific islands. I have also talked to people who were charged with cleaning the planes used to collect samples from the mushroom clouds.

Tom Widner: We have seen reports regarding this monitoring.

Peter Malmgren: This monitoring and clean-up of planes was completed by volunteers because the Air Force knew it was dangerous.

Public: Cloud monitoring supposedly ended by 1962. Have you found any evidence regarding later cloud testing around LANL?

Tom Widner: Yes, we have seen records of cloud monitoring of non-nuclear explosives drops around Sandia Base and other military bases.

Public: You said the new draft will address the high explosives issue. LANL has long history of hydro testing, using high explosives. What are the potential impacts of hydro testing?

Tom Widner: The report includes updated analysis with estimates of uranium released in hydro tests. Hydro testing causes uranium to be a priority, but what we must address is how much settled locally or traveled off site.

Public: Don't be obsessed with uranium.

Tom Widner: We are not putting blinders on. We are looking at all materials used at LANL.

Joe Shonka: LANL made their own estimates regarding radioactive lanthanum releases, and we have placed it in our prioritization scheme.

Public: One of the reports available in the reading room addresses natural uranium.

Public: Where else have similar studies been conducted?

Tom Widner: Rocky Flats, the Oak Ridge Reservation, the Savannah River Site , Fernald, and Hanford. Some are finished; others are about half way completed. Savannah River is in a full-blown dose reconstruction.

Public: During the last meeting you said more sample documents would be available at this meeting. Did you bring any samples?

Paul Renard: So you like sample documents. We have a better crowd at this meeting despite the weather; now I know why.

Tom Widner: We can get you more samples.

Susan Flack: At first it was fairly easy to get documents released; now it is harder.

Tom Widner: We will send you six or seven more samples. In addition, CDC is considering scanning select documents and making them available.

Public: Because of the September 11 attacks, are you seeing increased problems gaining access to documents on the Web?

Tom Widner: No. It may be harder to park at LANL, but the procedures have not changed.

Paul Renard: In fact, our access has improved.

Tom Widner: The security level is heightened and the workload extra spool of personnel who must escort us has increased. As a result, getting to some venues may take longer, but access has not changed.

Public: Are you behind the firewall [referring to our access to LANL computer networks]?

Tom Widner: Yes.

Public: Will you be issuing a description of the documents you are denied access to?

Tom Widner: Yes. The descriptions will be terse but we will be glad to share them.

Paul Renard: Today, we have spent much of our time hashing out the details of the appeal process. The procedures will be discussed at LANL during the next management meeting. Results are promised to us by next week.

Public: Based on worker experiences, you may ultimately be denied access to the chain of information. You will still need to reveal to the public the kind of information not being released.

Paul Renard: CDC is concerned with the credibility of the study. We want to keep the nation secure, but at the same time the increasing restrictions on access to information brings up the issue of credibility and integrity of the study. As promised, if we can't go over a hurdle, we will let you know. This has never happened at this site. I really think people are looking at our efforts in a good spirit.

Peter Malmgren: Can you be challenged to produce reports and summaries making them more comprehensible to the general public?

Paul Renard: First we are extracting scientific data. Then we are preparing citizen summaries that report our findings in language that is as nonscientific as possible.

Tom Widner: We strive to write our reports at the appropriate level.

Public: How long will the study take?

Paul Renard: We will soon pass our original deadline, and have extended the study 3-4 years. I really don't know when the study will be complete. It depends on the cooperation we receive to view records. Plus, there are many more records than we originally anticipated.

Public: Do you encounter the same problems at each site?

Bob Whitcomb: We break new ground at each site. For example, access here is compounded by the fact that everything is compartmentalized, and there are many facets of record repositories, each having a different methodology to access records.

Paul Renard: At Hanford and Fernald, the studies were directed searches. We did not look at all the records. Instead we followed leads to particular records. This caused problems and we had to readjust source terms as an example. Through those studies, we learned we must go through all of the records.

Public: It's good that you are examining reports of the LANL Health Division. Their public monthly reports ended in 1963. Have you found any monthly reports after 1963?

Susan Flack: We have reviewed a 20-page memo that claims monthly reports were issued more sporadically but go through 1967. Jack Carter does not have copies of these because they don't have LA numbers. We will make a request to Roger Meade to get these reports.

Public: The ones I found useful don't have numbers.

Susan Flack: We have reviewed binders in the Oppenheimer Study Center that contain unclassified versions of many of the H Division reports. The collection doesn't have all of the months and some pages are missing.

Tom Widner: We will keep an eye out for health reports issued after 1963.

Peter Malmgren: I brought a taste of the photo exhibit, which has been -delete extra spaceextended to the public at an exhibition held at the Santa Fe Community College. The photos are archival photos provided by Roger Meade. The text comments are those of people interviewed. The exhibit will be displayed in January at Los Alamos in the main library.

Public: In regards to applying correcting factors to air effluent data, I have a comment: the factors can't corrected for deficiencies in the equipment.

Paul Renard: We are not saying that the data are perfect.

Bob Whitcomb: Another way to look at calculating source terms is data verification, for example using environmental data.

Public: Do they tend to jive?

Bob Whitcomb: Yes.

Paul Renard: Some exceptions exist and we find that releases were higher than reported.

Joe Shonka: Reports from all the divisions are very enlightening, and we continue to look for others.

Susan Flack: The X-Division Progress Reports from the 40s and 50s are also very useful. They contain quantities of explosive materials cast and disposed of as waste.

Claudine Kasunic: I have found while looking through different documents from the early years that they tend to be very factual and straightforward. The people that wrote those seem very honest.

Paul Renard: That statement is true at other sites too. This is another reason why we try to go back to the original documents. Monthly summaries are important, but we have found that the original reports are most reliable.

Claudine Kasunic: I find that notations in the margins are also very open. They note disagreements on draft reports. We are seeing initial drafts with actual revision notations.



Following the meeting, project team member Joe Shonka discusses ongoing information gathering activities with Phil Green of the CDC.

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(<https://web.archive.org/web/20230207115430/https://www.cdc.gov/>)