



October 5, 1999 Public Meeting Summary with Public Comments / Questions & Answers

Historical Document

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

(Statements are not direct quotes, they are paraphrased.)

(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.)

Interviews with Current and Retired Workers

Time 4-6 p.m.

Location Fuller Lodge
Los Alamos, NM

Speakers Paul Renard, CDC Project Officer
Charles Miller, CDC Technical Lead
Tom Widner, Project Manager

Summary Paul Renard opened the meeting stressing the importance of conducting interviews with active and retired workers. He said retirees will be an essential part of the projects. Their interviews provide information that help researchers find valuable documents. He also said that interviewees may remain anonymous, that security concerns will be dealt with, and all material will be reviewed for classified information before being released.

Tom Widner spoke second. He summarized the project's goals and methods, gave a brief progress report, and detailed the interviewing process.

The meeting concluded with public comments and questions.

Note: Some slides previously presented at the introductory meeting were again presented during this meeting as background information. Please see the February 23, 1999 meeting summary and slides to view these slides.

Slides & Notes Tom Widner
Public Comments / Questions and Answers

REVIEW OF HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AT LOS ALAMOS— OVERVIEW OF METHODS AND PROGRESS

**Thomas E. Widner, MS, CHP, CIH
Project Manager
ChemRisk, a Service of McLaren/Hart**

October 1999



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Document Searches

- ★ LANL Central Records Center**
- LANL Archives
- ★ The Report Collection**
- Technical Areas' Records
- "Work for Others" Records
- Other sites; e.g., Federal Records Centers



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The groups involved in the project are ChemRisk, the prime contractor to CDC; Shonka Research, which is providing nuclear engineering and science support; Tech Reps, communications support, and other local contacts.

The document search began at the Central Records Center. The Technical Report Library is another important LANL repository. Technical Areas (TAs) will be a challenge. The search process identifies where documents are and evaluates the types of information they contain. Other sites will be included to locate and evaluate those records that were shipped off-site. The research team is following the guiding principle of "No Boxes Left Unopened" to ensure that the search is thorough and comprehensive.

The LANL Central Records Center

- The first focus of our records review
- Contains about 18,900 cubic feet of historical records by our count (not including microfilm and fiche)
- Most records are in paper form in boxes and drawers or are images on microfiche or microfilm

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The initial focus of the study was the Central Records Center, which contains row after row of these drawers of records. Records include many varieties from computer punch cards to typical paper records. Other records are stored in boxes.

Stamps for Marking Boxes

CDC/NCEH*
REVIEWED

* CDC/NCEH *
DO NOT DESTROY

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As part of the process, materials reviewed are stamped indicating that they have been reviewed. Materials determined to be essential to the study are also stamped. Researchers keep logs of the materials in the boxes.

Records Center Review Statistics

(as of August 31)

- Approximate number of "boxes" reviewed: 5,650
- No. of these flagged for classification review: 298
- Boxes added to list for review each week: ~10 to 15
- Boxes that have been reviewed by S7: ~55
- No. of these that required Privacy Act review: 26
- Boxes reviewed & publicly releasable: 41
- Number of Document Summaries prepared: 1,043
- Notebooks reviewed to date: over 3,500
- Notebooks flagged for review: 15

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This slide summarizes what we have been able to complete so far at the LANL Central Records Center. These numbers do not include microfilm and microfiche. The site classification reviewers are available only 4-8 hours per week, which has limited the amount of material that has been released to the public. Documents are being prepared for release and document summaries are available in a database.

Progress in the Records Center

Storage Area	Number of Locations	Locations Reviewed	Percent Reviewed
B Bay	2,453	1107	45%
C Bay	3,870	917	24%
E Bay	2,385	1759	74%
F Bay	3,084	1,406	46%
G Bay	4,184	461	11%

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The Records Center is broken up into bays. G Bay is lagging behind other bays because it is in a separate building making it harder to access. It also requires more logistical support since it does not have any staff. We are seeing some duplication of paper records in microfiche.

Interviews with current and retired workers help us:

- Identify and describe operations possibly associated with off-site releases
- Identify relevant collections of records
- Develop our understanding of historical operations

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We find, more and more, that records are stored all over the place, and workers are helping us identify these places. Workers help us assemble the big picture.

Interviews with current and retired workers help us:

- Identify interview candidates with knowledge about specific subject areas
- Interpret information from documents or other interviews, or fill in gaps
- Understand record-keeping practices of years gone by

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Workers can help identify those people who are a wealth of information. They can also help us interpret the records we are finding. They identify jargon, meanings, and fill in the gaps in what we are seeing. They can tell us what might be out there, what to look for, and where to look.

Who do we interview?

- Candidates are often identified from author or distribution lists from key documents, from division rosters or progress reports, or from other interviews
- Interviews can be conducted with individuals or with groups

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Interviews can be conducted in a variety of places to help maintain privacy or secrecy, as needed. In another study, a retiree was interviewed at a McDonalds 20 miles away that was close to his home. Interviewees may also remain anonymous.

The interviews are flexible. Generally, at least two project members participate so that one can talk and the other can take notes. This method allows the team to capture the information while keeping the interview moving.

Public: Will you send letters stating your wish to interview someone?

Response (Tom Widner): We don't do mass mailings, but we use a number of methods including going through our LANL contact Joe Graph. Everything is done individually depending on the circumstances. The process is informal. We are trying to put together an accurate record. We are not trying to amplify or hide information. We'll interview anyone who wants to provide information.

Important facts about interviews:

- All interviews are voluntary
- Interviewees can remain anonymous; names can be excluded from our records
- Those who held security clearances in the past can receive authorization to speak freely during the interviews

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Important facts about interviews:

- We prepare a summary of each interview
- Summaries are reviewed for classified information
- Interviewees are given the opportunity to review summaries for factual accuracy
- Summaries enter our project database



As we go through the process we hope to build your confidence. The interviews are voluntary and can be anonymous. We will maintain confidentiality. For people with security clearances, we can get approval to talk about potentially classified information for a specified time for a specified purpose. We will protect information and people.

Summaries may be excluded from the database.

Public Comments / Questions and Answers

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

Public: What are you focusing on regarding materials?

Response: Use, containment, toxicity, quantities, evidence of off-site release or release into the environment. For many materials, we are seeing that a lot of the original toxicity research was conducted at LANL.

Public: Were you involved in the Hanford search?

Response (Tom Widner): No, Charles Miller and Paul Renard were.

(Charles Miller): Two or so years ago the CDC released a draft form of the dose reconstruction study of Hanford. Some people were not happy with the way the report was released. The biggest problem with a study like Hanford is that an epidemiology study will never establish whether or not a personal illness was directly caused by a release. Hanford is one of the reasons we are conducting the LANL study in the manner we are. Hanford was a directed study. There never was a search of ALL records. That's why we are looking at EVERYTHING carefully. We are committed to completing Phase 1 right now and to establishing a very good historical record of LANL operations.

Public: If the study showed thyroid cancer four times higher than elsewhere, would a full-scale study be conducted?

Response (Charles Miller): Cancer rates are one piece of information that is considered.

Public: Have you published a list of criteria that cause you to flag a document?

Response (Tom Widner): We prepared a search plan that contains some criteria. We also rely on the knowledge and experience of the researchers. We can share search plans that describe the type of information we are looking for.

(Paul Renard): CDC does not want ChemRisk to do a lot of analysis in this phase. The second phase is reserved for the analysis of records.

Public: What happens if you cannot declassify records?

Response (Paul Renard): We have always been able to release all relevant records, although some come out sanitized.

(Charles Miller): We have never found dose information that has been nationally sensitive. It was always able to be sanitized and released showing the pertinent information. I'm aware this site is different. We will tell the public if a document can't be released.

Public: Does the focus include things that came here and then went off-site? I mentioned earlier Utah and the NTS as concerns for exposure to people working there. Workers here had the potential for a lot more exposure.

Response (Mary Schubauer-Berigan): NIOSH has a study going on regarding leukemia. The agency is interested in information from this study. They are providing NIOSH with a log of information that NIOSH may find useful.

(Tom Widner): The focus is on off-site exposure, but we are also cataloging worker exposures for NIOSH.

Public: Can you elaborate on where the documents will be held for public review?

Response (Tom Widner): The official DOE public reading room is at the Zimmerman Library at UNM in Albuquerque. We are still looking for a more local public reading room. Currently we are making previously scanned records available and will start sending documents there in a couple of weeks.

(Paul Renard): This is one of the hurdles we face. Once we were told the reading room was on Kirtland Air Force Base. The UNM library is more accessible, but we still want to get something more local. We will announce when the reading room is set up and the documents are available.

Public: I know LANL information was found at Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL). How much has already been shipped out?

Response (Tom Widner): There is a lot of ORNL stuff here--a lot of sharing of information.

Public: Off-site test documentation is available in Nevada at the reading room there.

Response (Ken Silver): The Rio Arriba Environmental Health Partnership steering committee sent a letter to Bill Richardson to get a local library in Espanola. The letter was sent about five weeks ago. No response has been received yet.

Public: We also sent him a letter to get more declassifiers made available.

Response (Paul Renard): We are wrestling with the declassification system. The University of California has a contract announcement out to get more people made available in the short term and get classification review officers on a permanent basis for the project.

(Tom Widner): What Paul just said is an important step. We can't do much with the documents in the boxes until they are released. We want to make them available to the public as soon as possible. Sample documents that were released earlier this year were useful to several members of the public.

Public: Where are you at with the FACA?

Response (Paul Renard): A FACA is the only way the federal government listens to consensus advice. The RAEHP and others around Espanola are not interested in a FACA. CDC is very interested in looking at alternative ways to enhance public involvement. FACAs are expensive, and we are unable to conduct them properly at all 17 dose reconstruction locations. We pledge to have regular public meetings at various locations to give updates on findings and hurdles. If you are not on the mailing list please sign up, and please spread the word.

Page last reviewed: November 06, 2018

Page last updated: November 06, 2018

Content source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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