



Aerial view of Material Disposal Area (MDA) B

## **BACKGROUND**

### **LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY**

Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) is a multidisciplinary research facility owned by the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and managed by the University of California. LANL is located in north-central New Mexico and covers 40 square miles of the Pajarito Plateau; a series of finger-like mesas separated by deep canyons with perennial and intermittent streams running from west to east.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION & SURVEILLANCE PROJECT**

DOE's environmental restoration efforts began in 1989. The Environmental Remediation and Surveillance (ER) Project is the LANL part of a nationwide DOE program to investigate the presence of chemical and radioactive waste as a result of past LANL operations and to clean up and restore such sites to protect the environment.

### **MATERIAL DISPOSAL AREAS AT LANL**

Material disposal areas (MDAs) are sites where waste material has been disposed of on or below the ground surface in excavated pits, trenches, or shafts. LANL has 26 major MDAs.

### **TECHNICAL AREA 21 (TA-21)**

TA-21, also known as the Delta Prime (DP) Site, is on DP Mesa, situated immediately east-southeast of the Los Alamos town site at an elevation of 7140 feet. TA-21 was the site of chemical research for refining plutonium and plutonium metal production from 1945 to 1978. As a result, most waste disposal activities involved plutonium. MDAs located at TA-21 include MDAs A, B, T, U and V. These MDAs are listed as solid waste management units (SWMUs) in LANL's Hazardous Waste Facility Permit.

## **MATERIAL DISPOSAL AREA (MDA) "B"**

MDA B was the first common disposal area for radioactive waste generated at the Laboratory and received waste related to the LANL processes from 1944 until 1948. There are no official waste inventory records for MDA B. Disposal trenches may contain radioactive and chemically contaminated laboratory wastes, debris and waste products, as well as containers of solvents, chemical mixtures, and corrosive liquids and gases. Initial disposal was in trenches excavated from the far western boundary, working eastward. Historical records state that MDA B consisted of several disposal trenches approximately 300 ft. long, 15 ft. wide, and 12 ft. deep.

## **THE PROJECT**

The MDA B Project objectives are to:

- 1) remove the contents of historical trenches,
- 2) characterize the types of contents removed for proper disposal,
- 3) characterize any residual contamination in the soil and rock adjacent to the disposal trench, and
- 4) gather additional data needed to evaluate other potentially needed remedial alternative.

Direct excavation of the MDA-B disposal trenches and the installation of subsurface soil borings will achieve these objectives.



Geophysical Survey of Material Disposal Area (MDA) B Disposal Trenches

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE**

LANL is committed to garnering significant community input, involvement and assistance throughout the remediation process at MDA B. Presentations and other communications venues are available to interested persons for the duration of the project.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Contact: Outreach Project Leader

Phone: (505) 667-2211

Fax: (505) 665-8190

Email Address: [envoutreach@lanl.gov](mailto:envoutreach@lanl.gov)

Web site: <http://www.lanl.gov/community/environment/>