

NPDES authorization to discharge to waters of the United States, Permit No. NM0031054

The applicant's mailing address is:

U.S. Department of Energy
Los Alamos Area Office
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Under the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes 9922, 9711, 9661, and 9611, the applicant currently operates a large multi-disciplinary facility which conducts national defense research and development, scientific research, space research and technology development, and energy development. Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) has 37 active technical areas (TAs) spread over 40 square miles. Area TA-16 is in the southwestern corner of LANL and was established to develop explosive formulations, cast and machine explosive charges, and assemble and test explosive components for the nuclear weapons program using high explosives (HE). The specific HE used is Royal Demolition Explosive (RDX), hexahydro-1, 3, 5-trinitro-1, 3, 5-triazine. The New Mexico Environment Department entered into a Compliance Order on Consent (the Consent Order) with LANL in 2005 pursuant to the New Mexico Hazardous Waste Act and the Consent Order required LANL to take investigation and remediation actions to address contamination in environmental media, including RDX contamination in the springs in area TA-16. The activity being considered in this permit is designed to implement an environmental remediation consistent with that agreement. Without treatment these springs will continue the discharge of HE/RDX pollutants to the environment and waters of the United States will continue unabated.

TA-16 has three springs that are contaminated with RDX; Martin Spring – Outfall 001, SWSC Spring – Outfall 002 and Burning Ground Spring – Outfall 003. Spring waters from SWSC and Burning Ground Springs flow to Canon de Valle and water from Martin Spring flows to S-Site Canyon. Both Canon de Valle and S-Site Canyon then flows to Water Canyon and thence to the Rio Grande in stream segments 20.6.4.126 and 128. The designated uses for Rio Grande Basin Segment No. 20.6.5.128 New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC); Martin Spring - Outfall 001 and SWSC Spring - Outfall 002, are limited aquatic life, livestock watering, wildlife habitat and secondary contact. The designated uses for the Rio Grande Basin Segment No. 20.6.5.126 (NMAC); Burning Ground Spring (Outfall 003) are coldwater aquatic life, livestock watering, wildlife habitat and secondary contact.

Outfall 001 (Martin Spring): Latitude 35° 50' 33" North, Longitude 106° 20' 11" West

Outfall 002 (SWSG Spring): Latitude 35° 50' 33" North, Longitude 106° 20' 12" West

Outfall 003 (Burning Ground Spring): Latitude 35° 50' 60" North, Longitude 106° 20' 18" West

This is a first time permit.

A fact sheet is available.

State Certification

This Notice also serves as Public Notice of the intent of the New Mexico Environment Department, Surface Water Quality Bureau to consider issuing Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401 Certification. The purpose of

such certification is to reasonably ensure that the permitted activities will be conducted in a manner that will comply with applicable New Mexico water quality standards, including the antidegradation policy, and the statewide water quality management plan. The NPDES permit will not be issued until the certification requirements of Section 401 have been met.

If you want to comment on State Certification submit written comments within the 30 day period to:

Bureau Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
P.O. Box 5469
1190 Saint Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469
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Fax (505) 827-0160
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