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During the DOE/Sandia Public Meeting on 16 October 2008, you asked a question that was being answered when we ran out of time. Our technical expert wanted to provide you with the information regarding your question on the process DOE/Sandia use to identify, characterize, and clean up sites like the Chemical Waste Landfill.

At the Chemical Waste Landfill, once we excavated all the waste from the former landfill based upon visual analysis, we performed a series of final verification steps to confirm this visual analysis. These final steps included a walkover radiation survey of the excavation floor with hand-held radiation detectors (to look for radiation levels greater than background that may indicate radiological contamination), a geophysical survey (to determine if additional buried metal debris is present below the excavation floor), and soil sampling of the excavation sidewalls and floor to confirm that remaining soil concentrations of any contaminants are below levels determined to be protective of human health and the environment for industrial land-use; the current and future land-use designation for the Chemical Waste Landfill area. Only after these surveys and soil sampling were completed and all results evaluated did we know we had completed the cleanup operations. Based upon these final steps additional excavation was performed in discrete areas of the landfill to remove minor buried debris and contaminated soil that exceeded the State-approved levels for specific contaminants. After this final excavation work was completed, the surveys and sampling were repeated in these discrete areas for final confirmation. All of this work, including final survey and sampling results, were included in a final report to the New Mexico Environment Department, who subsequently reviewed and approved the report. The final report included a human health and ecological risk assessment that demonstrated the post-cleanup conditions of the Chemical Waste Landfill are protective of human health and the environment.

I hope this information on the Chemical Waste Landfill assists in your gaining a better understanding of the DOE/Sandia process. It is important to understand that all of this work is required by the Federal and State regulations, and overseen by the New Mexico Environment Department who has ultimate authority to approve our work or require additional actions. Despite the fact that the Chemical Waste Landfill has been cleaned up, groundwater monitoring will be required under a long-term permit currently being negotiated with the New Mexico Environment Department.

For DOE/Sandia Public Meetings information, please contact me by telephone at (505) 844-1810 or via email at kmwagne@sandia.gov. For any other questions, please contact Bruce McClure in our Community Involvement office at (505) 845-7075 or via email at gbmcclu@sandia.gov.