

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Group Releases List, Photos of 24 LANL Nuclear Disposal Areas

WASTE VOLUME IS THREE TIMES THAT OF WIPP

**LITTLE CLEANUP HAS BEEN DONE OR PLANNED
DESPITE MILLIONS SPENT**

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The Los Alamos Study Group released today a list of 24 nuclear waste disposal sites at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), together with location and site maps, aerial photos, and a summary of each dump's contents, to the extent it is known. The study's author, Michael Baetz, is a senior at St. John's College and a summer intern at the Study Group.

The study is available today and will be posted at www.lasg.org this afternoon. (More maps and photos will be added tomorrow.)

The total volume of waste in the dumps is well over 17.5 million cubic feet so far. The largest dump, "Area G," continues to receive radioactive waste at a rate of 100,000 cu. ft. per year and is slated to double in area soon to accommodate more wastes. Area G is now a clearly visible feature of the landscape from virtually any hill between southern Santa Fe and Truchas.

Further information about Area G, including photographs and site maps, can be found at <http://www.lasg.org/areag.htm>.

By comparison, the 35-year total allowed capacity of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) is "just" 6.2 million cu. ft., or about one-third of volume already buried at LANL. Unlike at WIPP, the LANL wastes are usually covered with just three feet of earth.

The LANL dumps contain at least one hundred pounds of plutonium, a million curies of tritium (radioactive hydrogen or water), tons of hazardous waste and high explosives, and a variety of other radionuclides and contaminants. According to DOE sources, the dumps' total plutonium inventory may actually range into the hundreds of kilograms. Several of the dumps are thus *de facto* transuranic waste disposal sites.

Despite the expenditure of more than one-half billion dollars on "cleanup," only one of these sites is being removed, and there are no plans to remove or even stabilize any of the others at the present time. Nearly all the cleanup money spent at LANL has been spent on studies of various kinds.

Sixteen of the dumps are thought by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to pose "moderate" to "high" risk of long-term groundwater contamination. So far, NMED has not required stabilization, let alone cleanup, at most of the sites.

These 24 dumps are only a small portion of the universe of contaminated sites at LANL.

Photos of radioactive plants and insects at some of these sites can be seen at www.lasg.org.

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