

Santa Fe El Norte

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THE SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

Sunday

JULY 15, 2001

www.santafenewmexican.com

Groups ready to fight dump proposal

► *Triassic Park' east of Roswell would be state's first hazardous waste dump, but activists say New Mexico has enough toxic waste*

By KRISTEN DAVENPORT
The New Mexican

Santa Fe environmental groups are gearing up to fight a proposed hazardous-waste dump 40 miles east of Roswell that has been dubbed "Triassic Park."

Gandy-Marley Inc., a company based in Texas and southeastern New Mexico, is proposing to build a disposal and treatment facility over a square mile that would accept hazardous materials from across the nation — PCBs, lead, mercury, strychnine and byproducts of

the petroleum industry. The site also would accept waste from American companies working in countries south of the border.

The dump would not be allowed to accept radioactive contamination, however. If approved by the New Mexico Environment Department, the disposal area would be the first hazardous-waste dump in New Mexico. Hundreds exist in other states.

The proposed facility would be buried in rock beds formed during the Triassic period, about 210 million years ago. Gandy-Marley officials say the area is good for a hazardous-waste dump

because no aquifer exists there and thick layers of rock would hold disposal bins in place and keep them from leaking.

But some environmentalists — both in southeastern New Mexico and Santa Fe — say the state shouldn't approve the disposal site because New Mexico has enough toxic waste already, including the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant not far from the proposed Triassic Park. WIPP accepts only defense-related radioactive waste.

Also, environmentalists say, allowing

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the hazardous-waste dump could open the site to possibly accepting low-level radioactive waste when the nation desperately needs a place to put spent nuclear fuel from nuclear-power plants.

"That whole corner of the state, we're calling it the toxic mall," said Joni Arends, director of Concerned Citizens for Nuclear Safety, a Santa Fe environmental group. "They're calling it Triassic Park, but this is a toxic dump, not an amusement park."

The Santa Fe environmental groups, including CCNS, Los Alamos Study Group and Citizens for Alternatives to Radioactive Dumping, are working with one of the only environmental organizations, Conservative Use of

Resources and Environment, in the southeastern part of New Mexico to fight the dump.

Deborah Reade, with CARD in Santa Fe, said the groups are worried the dump will adversely affect the lifestyle of ranchers and farmers in the area. Also, she said, the Audobon Society has come forward to complain the area is habitat for the lesser prairie chicken, a bird with declining populations that has nesting areas on the site.

"They said, 'Don't worry. We're going to build in (protection),' but this is a lot of noise and noxious who-knows-what. It's a big proposed facility," Reade said.

Gandy-Marley already runs two petroleum landfarms at the site. A landfarm is a site where petroleum or other toxic sludge is spread

across the ground and microorganisms are encouraged to break down the toxic chemicals.

Steve Pullen, with the state Environment Department's hazardous-waste bureau, is in charge of issuing draft permits for Triassic Park. Pullen said the site would be permitted to accept "a very long list of chemicals and compounds."

Largely, he said, the waste would come from the petroleum industry and high-tech industry in New Mexico and elsewhere. Also, waste would come from environmental cleanup operations in New Mexico.

The Environment Department's responsibility, he said, is to make sure Gandy-Marley obeys New Mexico hazardous-waste regulations.

"We have to make sure the applicant (Gandy-Marley)

addresses all those regulations—how they are going to handle the waste, what will happen when the facility closes, plus hydrology and geology issues," Pullen said.

Pullen said the Environment Department had drafted a permit; now, the dump proposal must go before the public. Environment Secretary Pete Maggiore will make the final decision.

Pullen said the disposal site probably would not open New Mexico to having another area that would accept radioactive and nuclear wastes, as environmentalists fear. However, he said, the federal government decides what happens to radioactive wastes, not the state.

And, he said, the public

should know that Triassic Park would be different from any old dump on the edge of town.

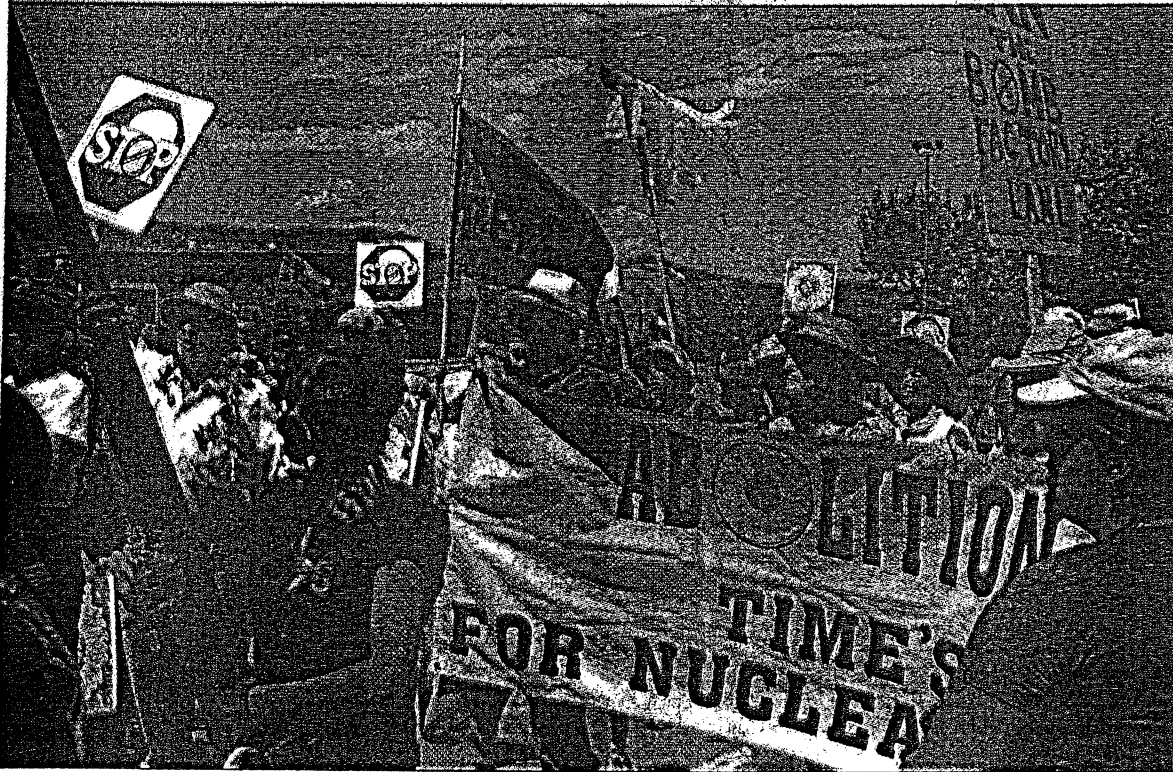
"They are storing contaminated waste and treating it, as well as disposing of it," he said. "I think the public is generally unaware of how comprehensive New Mexico's hazardous-waste regulations are. It is in my opinion the ... most protective set of regulations anywhere in the world. People think it's like the county dump on the edge of town, but it's far more controlled than that."

The first public-information meeting will take place in Santa Fe at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the state land office. More meetings will be held in Roswell, Tatum and Hagerman next week.

7/15/61

PEACE

Activists take annual message to



PEACE BRIGADE Top, protesters banded together at Los Alamos National laboratory to demonstrate their opposition to nuclear weapons Monday afternoon. Right, demonstrators chant and jeer, as Rev. David McGown, of Santa Fe, below, is asked to leave by security. McGown was carried from the property, but released later, along with about 15 others who committed acts of passive resistance.

GARY WARREN/Monitor



Protesters take annual message to the lab



◆ *Their numbers may be declining, but demonstrators remain enthusiastic in ritual protest*

By **ROGER SNODGRASS**
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About 150 anti-nuclear demonstrators marched through town Monday on their way to Los Alamos National Laboratory. Some 15 were detained briefly after trespassing over a line on lab property, but all were released by the end of the day.

For the world's premier nuclear weapons laboratory protest comes with the job and is an exercise in volatile crowd containment. For the protesters, the annual peace march at Los Alamos is an act of communion and of conscience.

No matter how insulting the anger, the lab has learned how to overlook it, while channeling the venom into a relatively safe box of ritual. No matter how gingerly the activists were handled, many of them felt the need to be seen and heard, which meant being strident and, at times, provocative.

This year's march on Monday, the anniversary of the first nuclear test explosion at Trinity Site in southern New Mexico, was not on the usual date for the occasion. For about ten years the march has been held on Aug. 9, the date in 1945 when the Japanese city of Nagasaki became the second objective of an atomic weapon, three days after Hiroshima was the first.

For the last four years, the rally has been sponsored by Peace Action of Santa Fe.

This year another group, the Los Alamos Education Group, which defends the use of the atomic bombs for hastening the end of World War II, preempted both bombing dates, forcing Peace Action to hold their demonstration some three weeks earlier than usual.

Greg Mello, executive director of the Santa Fe-based Los Alamos Study Group, complemented the Los Alamos Education Group for their tactical victory in beating out the marchers for the commemorative dates in August.

"It's something I would have

Protesters banded together at the laboratory to demonstrate against nuclear weapons Monday afternoon. They chant and jeer, as Rev. Gene Fe, below, is asked to leave. Fe is carried from the property along with about 15 others in passive resistance.

GARY WARREN/Monitor



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MARCH Activists reunited from around the country to focus attention on weapons of mass destruction

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done myself," he said.

While fewer in number than in past years, the marchers were no less hostile to the "bomb factory," as one placard called it.

"The numbers are not as important as the act of expressing 'the conscience of humankind,'" said Mello, who added that his message was not to place blame, but to ask people "not to accept uncritically the technologies of power."

"It's sad and outrageous that we're still spending such great sums on weaponry," said Charles Powell of Albuquerque, a postal worker and officer of the New Mexico Labor Party. "The money could do so much good for the country and the world."

The protesters gathered at Ashley Pond shortly after noon. They listened to folk singers, poets, and speakers who typically condemned the laboratory for its existence and commanded that it disappear.

There were young and old, men, women and children. They were from near and far, and a carnival-like atmosphere prevailed. Some men dressed in women's garb, making a statement about perversity. Other men and women wore ghoulsh face

paint. A red devil played the trumpet in the band.

Bishop Tom Gumbleton of Detroit, who spoke at previous rallies, advocated non-violence.

Bruce Gagnon, from Florida, who heads the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, demanded to know, "Who the hell do we think we are to move the arms race into space? To take our bad seed up into the heavens is pure insanity."

With banging drums and clanging cymbals and a blaring parody of a marching band, the group circled a few times, gathering momentum. They picked up their pickets, banners, puppets and hand floats and made their way up Diamond Drive, across Omega Bridge and turned on West Jemez.

They funneled into the parking lot at the administrative area, where a single entrance and exit had been established.

Andrew Toupadakis, a chemist who left the lab three years ago, gave an impassioned speech, as he implored laboratory workers over a portable loudspeaker to join him in rejecting weapons work. He invoked the memory of Polish experimental physicist, Joseph Rot-

blat, who worked on the bomb at Los Alamos and the University of Liverpool, before dedicating his life to peaceful pursuits. Rotblat was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1995.

Gene Tucker, the lab's security chief, backed by several echelons of security guards, glared across the barricades, explaining that he just wanted to make sure they did what they said they would do.

"The visit was pre-coordinated," he said. "We established the groundrules."

Those rules prohibited climbing over the fences. A single point with a big sign designated the "gate," through which those who wished to commit civil obedience were allowed to exit one at a time.

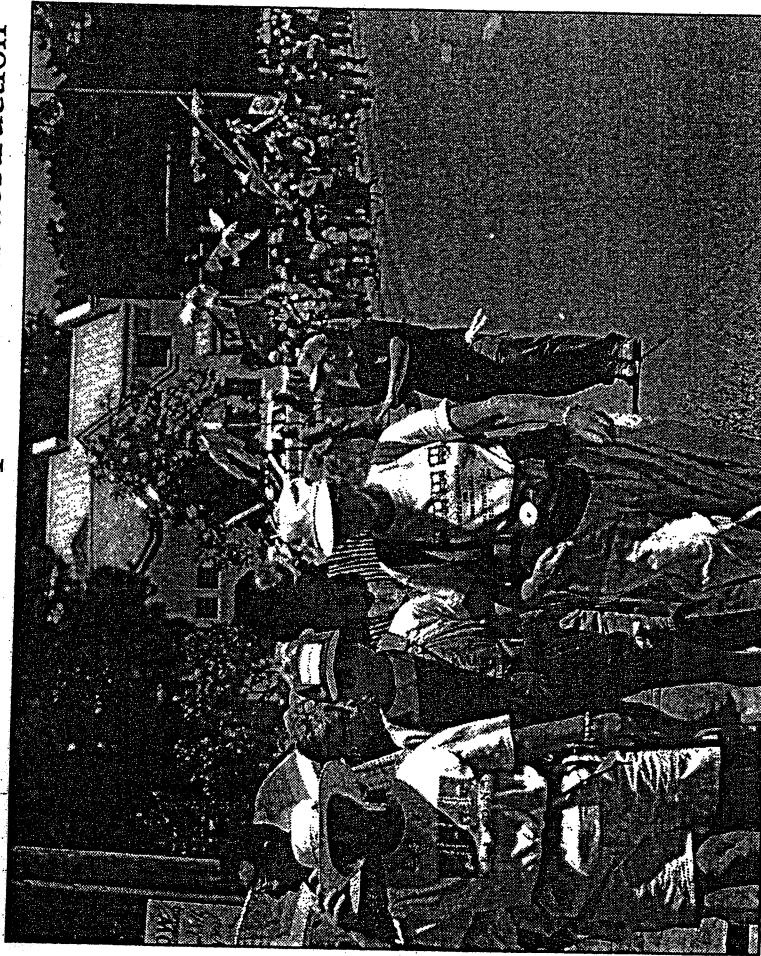
Laboratory workers looked down from the comfort of the cafeteria, or stood in front of the building.

"We should have our own sign," one woman said: "Bombs Are Us."

Several public affairs representatives were also on hand.

Rev. David McGown of Santa Fe, alone of the protesters, sat down in the street outside the barricade on Casa Grande Drive for about fifteen minutes before four guards gently hauled him off.

Tucker said those who



GARY WARREN/Monitor

MARCHERS From Ashley Pond, the marchers organized into a long line and marched to the laboratory to demonstrate their opposition to nuclear weapons work.

crossed the line were risking fine or incarceration, but that they would be detained more or less depending on their behavior. "Their disposition will be based on their disposition," he said, noting that

they were violating federal law and that there were U.S. marshals on hand to enforce it if necessary.

"It's only three forty-five," said Tucker with some relief, as the last protester came through the gate, and the others began heading back to town.