

**APPENDIX L**  
**PROPERTY VISIT REPORT**

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

FROM: John A. Phelps, CENWO-ED-GI, 402-221-7693

DATE: 29 July 2005

SUBJECT: 1947 Quitclaim Property Preliminary Assessment (PA) Site Reconnaissance at the Former Gopher Ordnance Works (FGOW) on 18-22 July 2005

1. 18 July 2005 – In-Briefing

a. Ms Patti Thomason and I met with the following people:

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Mr. Gordon Girtz  | Institutional Environmental Affairs, Program Director Environmental Assessment and Compliance, University of Minnesota |
| Mr. Rick Kubler   | Gray, Plant and Mooty (Attorneys for the University of Minnesota)  |
| Mr. Gary Krueger  | Environmental Planner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency  |
| Dr. Philip Larson | Director of Operations, UMore Park, University of Minnesota  |
| Mr. Steve Scott   | Environmental Specialist, Dakota County (MN)   |

Ms. Susan Mahowald (a Dakota County intern) and Mr. Ryan Miller (a Dakota County contractor) assisted Mr. Scott's presentation

b. Dakota County personnel provided a slide presentation that reviewed the history of the FGOW production processes. This helped us to understand the chemicals used to turn cotton cellulose into cannon guncotton and rifle gunpowder. This data will be helpful when determining the types of sampling required during the Site Inspection (SI) phase of the program.

c. Dakota County also presented an overview of the extent of the drainage systems on the surface as well as underground to display where waste streams originated and where they were either processed/released or just released into the waste/drainage ditch on the east side of the FGOW.

d. Before starting on a tour of the former ordnance works property, Mr. Girtz and Mr. Kubler raised a concern about what they understood the proposed content of the PA to be.

(1) According to a 6 April 2005 letter (prepared by the University of Minnesota) from Minnesota Congressman John Kline to Mr. Raymond Fatz, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety, and Occupational Health), Mr. Girtz believed that we should be inspecting not only the 1947 Quitclaim property but a 26-

acre part of the 1948 Quitclaim property as well as building demolition and debris removal across the entire FGOW site. I referred to the 24 May 2005 memorandum from BG William Grisoli (CENWD-DE) affirming that the Corps of Engineers (COE) would conduct a PA only on the 1947 Quitclaim property.

(2) I called both the Project Manager, Ms. Taunya Howe, and Mr. William Bonneau to seek clarification based on the letter from Mr. Kline to the Army. Mr. Bonneau said that the contents of Mr. Kline's letter was not his understanding of the decision made at 16 February 2005 meeting with Congressional staff and that we would proceed according to direction provided by BG Grisoli. Since Mr. Dave Nusz (CENWD-PDE) was present at the February meeting in Washington DC, I called him but he was unavailable.

d. Dakota County personnel conducted a tour of the former nitrification facilities located on the 1948 Quitclaim property. While this land and facilities will not be addressed in the 1947 Quitclaim property PA, understanding the process that contributed to the contamination was helpful. Only concrete structures remain, indicative that the facilities have gone through physical demolition, demolition by burning, or decay. Noted throughout the tour the potential safety hazards from rough terrain, debris and numerous uncovered holes/pits/sumps/drainage lines – this will require modification of site safety plan for future work at FGOW.

## 2. 19 July 2005 – Continued tour of the FGOW 1947 Quitclaim property

a. Before starting on the tour, I talked with Ms. Howe and she reiterated that funding that had been received was specifically designated to conduct reconnaissance on the 1947 Quitclaim property.

b. We started tour with inspection of the underground Laminex Woodbox sewers that were used to carry process water from the acid preparation and use facilities to the Waste Disposal Ditch along the east side of the FGOW (Photos 01-06). This provided background on where waste-streams originated and flowed to, as well as illustrating significant safety hazards from the Laminex boxes, which are deep, have collapsed in some places, and can be difficult to see due to brush growth.

c. At the point where 170<sup>th</sup> Street crosses the Waste Disposal Ditch, we climbed down into the ditch on the north side of the road (located on the 1948 Quitclaim property) and observed building debris. We were informed that in the 1940s, 170<sup>th</sup> Street was not a through street and was constructed over building/construction debris during the late 1940s-early 1950s. [NOTE: After returning to Omaha, I asked that Dakota County investigate this information since a 1945 aerial photograph of the area clearly showed a road crossing the ditch.] We were also told that debris had been deposited in the ditch south of 170<sup>th</sup> Street (1947 Quitclaim property) but that the University voluntarily covered it with dirt with agreement from the State of Minnesota. Anecdotal information about the debris identified at that time included transformers that may not have been removed from the site.

d. We entered the ditch further south and walked through brush and trees to the southwest toward the Primary Settling Basin (Photos 07-10). At this point, the ditch was about 20-feet deep with sides sloping about 45-degree. We entered the basin area that is now agricultural cropland at the point where the University, Dakota County and the State had collected samples in 2003 (detected elevated levels of total chromium and selenium as well as 1,4- and 2,6-dinitrotolunene).

e. We looked at a couple of low-lying areas as we traveled toward the west edge of the FGOW where surface runoff from nearby storage areas may have collected. Thick trees and bushes covered the areas.

f. We walked through a plowed field where shipping houses were once located (Photos 11-14). The undisturbed ground supported vegetation except where the shed had been built on pile supports above a gravel bed. Soil in those locations was poor quality with minimum vegetation cover.

g. We stopped just west of the intersection of 170<sup>th</sup> Street and Akron Avenue and looked south over the location where 1945 aerial photograph shows a building that has only been identified a temporary facility. Ground was covered with vegetation so we didn't see any foundation. Remains of this structure may be located in trees to the south of the open field.

h. The group then drove from the south part of the FGOW to the northern part to look at a waste disposal area located south of 155<sup>th</sup> Street (Photos 15-21). This pit is approximately the size of a football field and at least 20-feet in depth. 1945 aerial photographs show activity in this area as well as scarring to the west and northeast (we inspected the latter two areas and they appear to be borrow areas). Site is overgrown with grasses, shrubs and trees though demolition debris – concrete, steel rebar and asphalt is visible on the surface.

i. We returned to the conference center and discussed what we had seen with Mr. Girtz and then we planned activities for the next two days.

j. Later that evening, Patti and I drove by the DNT Storage Bunkers (located now in the Central Research Complex that is south of 160<sup>th</sup> Street and east of Station Trail Road) to inspect the drainage ditch (Photos 22 and 23) as well as driving further along Station Trail to the southeast (Lone Rock Trail) toward the settling basins.

(1) Seven of the original eight DNT storage bunkers remain and are currently used in the Central Research Complex – two without roofs are used for storage (wood in one of the structures and scrap metal in the other) while the four other structures (Bldgs 605, 606, 607 and 608) have been retrofitted with steel second stories. The seventh structure (Bldg 602) appears to be original construction. Bldg 606 was marked with a NFPA 704 label: Health =1 (exposure would cause irritation but only minor

residual injury); Flammability = 0; Reactivity = 4 (materials readily capable of detonation or of explosive decomposition or explosive reaction); and no Special hazard ratings.

(2) We continued along the Lone Rock Trail to where it intersects the Wetland Trail that winds around both the Primary and Secondary Settling Ponds. Due to vehicle restrictions, we were not able to continue reconnaissance of the Settling Pond area.

3. 20 July 2005 – Visited Dakota County Property Records office in Hastings.

Patti and I drove to the Dakota County Administrative offices in Hastings to research land transfers for property that was obtained by the War Department for installation of four Ranney Wells and two pumphouses along the Mississippi River. In the past, Dakota County has requested the COE to close the wells. We found numerous legal descriptions describing the transfer of land from private ownership or easements to the United States of America in 1942-43 and back again after World War II. These documents should be reviewed by Office of Counsel to determine applicability.

4. 21 July 2005 – Continued tour of the FGOW 1947 Quitclaim property

a. Dakota County took us and Mr. Girtz to look at the Ranney Wells #3 and #4 (northern wells) but we were unable to since the public access road was under repair and we could not gain access without right-of-entry across private land. We would have had the same difficulty with Wells #1 and #2 as well as the pump houses properties so we returned to FGOW.

b. Dakota County led us through the area around the railroad wye that the 1945 aerial photograph showed along with scars on the earth and a pond (Photos 26-33). We located and walked along the railroad embankments but saw no sign of the tracks or gravel.

c. We returned to conference center and discussed with Mr. Girtz what we had seen during our visit and provided him with a draft list of the potential areas of concern (AOCs) that we would report we saw and probably include in the 1947 Quitclaim Property Preliminary Assessment.

(1) AOC 1: Waste Disposal Ditch

Extends about 4-miles from 160<sup>th</sup> Street to the southeast corner of the Segment A property, this excavated ditch connects the process water outfall to Primary and Secondary Settling Ponds before continuing off the property and into the Vermillion River. Chemicals of concern include metals (including mercury), asbestos, PCBs, various dinitrotoluenes (DNTs), acids, and diphenylamine (DPA).

(2) AOC 2: Storage and Shipping Buildings

Over 50 20' x 40' storage bunkers/shipping huts were built south of 170<sup>th</sup> Street to hold guncotton that was awaiting shipment. All of these structures have been removed and the land returned to agricultural use. Chemicals of concern include polynuclear-aromatic-hydrocarbons (PAHs), other chemicals associated with creosote (such as CCA-chromium, copper and arsenic) and DNT.

(3) AOC 3: Stormwater Detention Ponds

Three areas found in the 1945 aerial photograph could have collected runoff from various storage areas. Chemical of concern include DNT.

(4) AOC 4: "Mystery" Building

The function of this building is not known. Chemicals of concern include VOCs, SVOCs, metals, pesticides, herbicides, asbestos, and DNT. [NOTE: Dakota County has conducted further research into the building's function. Based upon interviews and additional photo-interpretation they matched the building's number to a photograph listing the building as a "Sanitation Facility" and concluded that the building was used to service portable comfort stations. We will still request "right-of-entry" to conduct reconnaissance of the site but if Dakota County's conclusion is correct, there will be no need to conduct extensive sampling at this site; perhaps only sampling for fuel oils/coal yard used at the building's heating plant.]

(5) AOC 5: DNT Storage Bunkers

Seven of the original eight bunkers are still present and primarily used as storage areas for agricultural machinery and chemicals. Chemical of concern include DNT.

(6) AOC 6: 155<sup>th</sup> Street Disposal Area

This large area appears to be a depression partially filled with demolition debris – concrete, rebar and asphalt visible on the surface. Chemicals/materials of concern include metals, PAHs and asbestos.

(7) AOC 7: Railroad Wye

Surface scaring and pond are visible in 1945 photograph – site is completely overgrown and nothing much now visible – no rail beds or hardware. Chemicals of concern include PAH and other creosote components (such as CCA – chromium, copper, arsenic).

(8) AOC 8: Ranney Wells and Pump Houses

Though Dakota County identified their locations on maps and Patti and I obtained land transfer documentation, we were unable to visit the sites. [After our return to Omaha we had further discussions with Will and Taunya. Since these properties were not included in the 1947 Quitclaim Properties and were reviewed only because of legal claims, this

proposed AOC will not be addressed in the Preliminary Assessment. We have decided to request the Office of Counsel for further evaluation of land deeds and language of transfer.]

5. 22 July 2005 – Collected and wrote draft report and traveled home