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NOTE: This is a joint release from the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, California Department of Health Services - Radiologic Health Branch, and California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

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1998 BIG TREES PARK SAMPLING DATA AVAILABLE

LIVERMORE, Calif. — All of the samples taken in the August 1998 sampling of Livermore's Big Trees Park showed plutonium concentrations below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's level of concern for residential soil.

The 1998 sampling of Big Trees Park had two purposes. The first was to determine if plutonium is present below the surface at a concentration that posed an unacceptable risk to the public. The second purpose of the 1998 sampling was to determine if a pathway for transport to the park of plutonium at values above global fallout could be identified.

There were 379 samples collected in Big Trees Park last August by the U.S. Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory under the observation of state and federal regulatory agencies. About ten percent of the samples were split and separately analyzed by three different certified analytical laboratories. There was good agreement between the analytical laboratories indicating high reliability of the results.

The analytical results are in agreement with the 1995 surface soil sampling at the park. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and California Department of

Health Services - Radiologic Health Branch concluded in 1995 that there was no significant hazard to the public from plutonium in the park.

A plan for the 1998 sampling was developed by Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. Oversight and approval of the sampling plan, collection of the samples, and quality assurance review of the analytical data were conducted by the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Health Services - Radiologic Health Branch, California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and California Department of Toxic Substances Control. The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry also participated in the development of the sampling plan and the review of the analytical data.

Kathy Setian, the Environmental Protection Agency's project manager, made the following statement after all agencies completed a quality assurance data review and agreed that the 1998 sampling data was representative and reliable: "The analyses show that all the soil samples have concentrations of plutonium below the EPA Region 9 level of concern for residential soils. This outcome is consistent with the results of the previous sampling rounds."

A spokesperson for the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry stated: "In the next phase of ATSDR activities, the Agency will evaluate these data in order to address the issues raised in the 1998 health consultation for Big Trees Park. The results of this evaluation will be discussed at a future ATSDR site team meeting and a written report will be issued to the public as an addendum to the 1998 health consultation."

Anyone wishing to see the plutonium and americium sampling data may use <http://www-erd.llnl.gov/ecr/> for a world-wide-web link to this media release and the study. The metals sampling data will be available on February 1, 1999. The study data itself is available directly at <http://www-erd.llnl.gov/bigtrees/>. Hard copy of the study results is also available by calling Bert Heffner at (925) 424-4026.

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Laboratory news releases and photos are also available electronically on the World Wide Web of the Internet at URL <http://www.llnl.gov/PAO> and on UC Newswire.