

ASSOCIATED UNIVERSITIES, INC.

SUITE 603

1717 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N. W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

402-1876

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CABLES: UNIVASSOC

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Files

FROM: V. Bremenkamp

DATE: April 28, 1972

SUBJECT: SOCORRO VISIT APRIL 22-25, RE VLA SITE

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Dr. Campbell Wade and I arrived in Socorro on the night of April 21. Dr. Wade had previously arranged for a luncheon meeting with Mr. Jay Taylor who had expressed his concern that the north arm of the VLA would cut through an irrigation project he had recently started.

We drove to the ranch Saturday morning and looked at the irrigation project before meeting with Mr. Taylor. Our estimate at that time was that the Wye would pass to the west of the currently irrigated area. This determination was made with a hand held compass and may not be accurate.

We then met with Mr. Taylor, his son and daughter and his ranch manager. During our explanation of the VLA and its land requirements, it became clear that quite a few misunderstandings of our intentions were circulating in the valley. These ranged from an expectation of one million visitors per year to a need to control a five-mile strip along each arm of the Wye.

Following our discussion, Mr. Taylor was reassured that we would do our best to build the VLA with minimum disruption to his operation. The explanation of our requirements which we gave to him and to all others was the need for control of a 200-yard wide strip along which would run the double rail system plus any needed power lines and cables. This strip will be unfenced. The only fencing will be around the one-acre telescope sites (100 total for the project) and the headquarters complex, which will require approximately a section of land.

We then visited with Mrs. Benton, whose ranch lies on the southwest arm of the Wye. She was enthusiastic about the project and said she welcomed it.

Sunday we met with Mr. Bruton and Mr. Ake, ranch owners on the southwest arm, in Socorro. Mr. Bruton, who also owns the section needed for the headquarters, was especially concerned that the land requirements would hurt the overall value

of his ranch. He seemed reassured by our discussion, but since he has previously been displaced by the White Sands Missile Range, he views this project as a foot in the door, which will most likely grow and displace him in the future.

Mr. Ake was most concerned that the project would bring many tourists to his ranch and cause related problems. Both he and Mr. Bruton will remain skeptical until our actions prove our intentions.

On Monday we met in Socorro with Mr. Major who owns all private land on the southeast arm. He seemed most relaxed about the project with his main concern being disruption of existing drainage patterns. He has recently purchased the Walker ranch, thus all persons whom the Array will directly impact have been contacted.

cc: H. Hvatum ✓  
C. Wade

VLA site

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MEMORANDUM

TO: H. Hvatum

FROM: <sup>W.B.</sup> V. Bremenkamp

DATE: April 28, 1972

SUBJECT: VLA SITE

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Listed below are some thoughts on the VLA site generated by the recent discussion with the Corps of Engineers, NSF and the San Augustin ranch owners.

1. The Corps of Engineers real estate people seem quite confident of their ability to acquire the necessary land at the site. They do not like land trades (too time consuming) and prefer a perpetual easement for the railway strip. They want to be clearly in charge with no divided authority if they acquire the land. Their estimate is six to eighteen months to acquire the site. If the Corps takes on the acquisition NRAO should have someone involved in all dealings with the ranchers.
2. Jay Taylor mentioned two or three days of 80 miles-per-hour winds this spring plus one ten-inch rainfall. I feel we should set up a remote meteorological station in the Plains in order to have a baseline of information when construction begins.
3. Mrs. Benton mentioned that the area near the center of the Array is a quagmire during the wet season (impassable by four-wheel drive vehicles). The soil conservation people in Magdalena could perhaps provide some information here which might be quite useful in scheduling construction.
4. Bob Weber of the New Mexico State Geological Survey mentioned large cracks which open in the dry lake bed (White Lake) near the center of the Array. He also pointed out that the road through the Plains, which was originally level, now has many sections marked as rough road (i.e. wavy surface). This is caused by ground

movement in the area. We need more information here. Written reports seem scarce but a search should be made and some type of study made.

5. All of the ranchers expressed concern over erosion, both by water and wind, from the Wye construction. The ground cover is extremely fragile and we should write our contracts in such a way as to penalize the contractors if they do excessive damage. They should restrict vehicular traffic to the rail line before, during and following construction. Use of the shortest distance technique (a straight line) for reaching various spots on the Array would be a disaster.
6. It is clear the people have mixed feelings about the VLA, resenting its intrusion but anticipating future opportunities for either employment or some type of commercial venture. We should take care that no one is misled and attempt to preserve the existing good will.

cc: C. Wade

NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY  
Charlottesville, Virginia

May 8, 1972

M E M O R A N D U M

To: D. S. Heeschen, C. M. Wade, T. R. Riffe, V. Bremenkamp

From: H. Hvatum

Subj: VLA Site

I would like to have a short meeting to discuss the status of the VLA site acquisition 11 May 1972, 1330 EDT. The meeting will be held in the conference room.

HH/pj

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MEMORANDUM

TO: The File

FROM: V. Bremenkamp

DATE: May 10, 1972

SUBJECT: VISIT TO SANTA FE AND SOCORRO MAY 3-5, 1972

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On May 3, 1972, the persons listed on the attached met in the State Office Building in Santa Fe. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss land acquisition for the VLA site.

Mr. David King, Director of the State Planning Office, will be the primary contact point for State involvement. The State will assume responsibility for initial contact with regard to land acquisition.

The Corps of Engineers will handle the detailed negotiations and finally acquire the land for NSF.

The meeting resulted in the following priority list:

1. NRAO will prepare a detailed definition of needs, including precise location of headquarters and observatory stations. This should include statements regarding necessary fencing.
2. NSF will add on their requirements and prepare an environmental impact statement.
3. The Corps of Engineers will use this input to prepare a real estate acquisition plan.
4. The State of New Mexico can then determine how they wish to interact with the site acquisition.

The State Planning Office stated they would attempt to organize a meeting with the ranchers who will be affected within a week or ten days. They expressed a desire for Dr. Wade to attend this meeting also.

On May 4, Messrs. Anderson and Phillips of the NSF, and I drove to Socorro to look at the site. We looked at a portion of each of the three arms, up to Bruton's well on the southwest, to Taylor's irrigation project on the north, and to Major's well on the southeast. We also drove and walked to the center of the Array.

Following this we explored the AT & SF railroad in Magdalena. It is obvious that no trains have used the tracks in several years and that considerable repair will be necessary although the tracks look much better outside town. We also looked at the connection with the main line in Socorro. A careful evaluation of the need for the rail line should be made soon, as a decision will be taken which may be unacceptable. Factors which should be considered include the difficulty of unloading and trucking from Socorro, i. e. traffic, overhead lines, etc. Tunnels and underpasses will affect either method of transport and should be looked at as to how they will affect the size of components that can be transported.

Attachment