

## Options for Future of Ale Reserve to be Discussed at Public Meeting

Richland, Wash., May 5, 1995 --The Fitzner-Eberhardt Arid Lands Ecology Reserve (ALE) on the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington, is a special place. For nearly half a century, the 120-square-mile area has been protected from most human impacts as it served as a buffer zone for the secret plutonium production work of the Manhattan Project during World War II and the Cold War. The shrub-steppe habitat on the Reserve is one of the largest of the few such areas remaining in North America.

In 1988 all plutonium production was stopped, and the Hanford mission changed to environmental remediation and management of the left-over wastes from the production era.

Washington Governor Mike Lowry and Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary are sponsoring a public meeting to obtain information and opinion about the future management and use of the Reserve.

The meeting is scheduled for May 10, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Tower Inn in Richland, Washington.

The morning session will be devoted to providing a common base of information about the Reserve. There will be an explanation of the process for transferring excess federal lands.

There also will be a review of the uses for ALE that were identified by Hanford's 1992 Future Site Uses Working Group.

Proposals already received by the Department of Energy will be described, including those submitted by the Yakama Indian Nation and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

During the afternoon, members of the public will be invited to present ideas and suggestions for the future of ALE, both orally and in writing. Written comments can be submitted before, during or after the May 10 meeting. Deadline for written comments is May 19, 1995.

For more information, or to submit written comments, contact:

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