

6.4 Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program

R. W. Hanf

Since 1991, citizens living near the Hanford Site have been actively participating in Hanford Site environmental surveillance activities. Local teachers are managing and operating eight radiological sampling stations positioned at selected locations around the perimeter of the Hanford Site. Each station consists of equipment for collecting air samples and for monitoring ambient radiation levels. Four of the eight stations also include large, lighted, and covered informational displays that provide real-time meteorological and radiological information as well as general information on station equipment, sample types, and analyses (Figure 6.4.1). The station managers' names and phone numbers are provided on the four displays for anyone desiring additional information about the purpose of the station, station equipment, or analytical results.



Figure 6.4.1. Community Members Can See Environmental Surveillance in Action at Four of Eight Local Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Stations

On three of the four display panels, brochure boxes have been installed containing a variety of free pamphlets and brochures about Hanford environmental programs.

Two teachers from schools located near the stations have been selected to operate each station. Each pair of teachers is responsible for collecting a variety of air samples, preparing the samples and collection records for submission to a radioanalytical laboratory, monitoring the performance of station equipment, performing minor station maintenance, and participating in scheduled training. They also serve as spokespersons for the Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program and are points-of-contact for local citizens. Pacific Northwest National Laboratory staff work closely with the teachers to provide training, maintain station equipment and displays, and coordinate sampling and analytical efforts with other Hanford environmental surveillance activities. Analytical results for samples collected at these stations in 1995 are discussed in Section 4.1, "Air Surveillance." Results of gamma radiation measurements are discussed briefly in Section 4.7, "External Radiation Surveillance."

In 1995, the Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program expanded from five to eight stations. In addition to the five stations operating in 1994 in Basin City, Richland, Pasco, Kennewick, and north Franklin County, Washington, the program now includes stations in Othello, Mattawa, and Toppenish, Washington (see Figure 4.1.1 in Section 4.1, "Air Surveillance"). The station in Toppenish is new and located on the campus of Heritage College, a small, regional, 4-year college. This station is similar in design to the three original public information stations established in 1991; however, additional soil and meteorological monitoring equipment has been installed for the benefit of the college's science programs. The other two stations added to the program in 1995 are established air monitoring stations that are part of DOE's routine sitewide radiological air monitoring

network. These two stations have not been enhanced to attract the attention of the public, although the Othello station was relocated to its present site for convenience. The station was formerly located at Berg Ranch, a rural location just south of town.

The long-range goal for the expansion of the Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program is to involve the public to a significant extent in radiological

monitoring activities conducted around the Hanford Site. Environmental sampling on and around the Hanford Site has been conducted by Site personnel for 50 years, so this represents a major change in DOE's approach to accomplishing its sitewide monitoring objectives. It is anticipated that this program will help bolster public acceptance of the surveillance data and increase public understanding of the reported results.