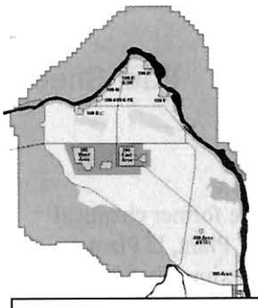

Fact Sheet

Proposed Changes to Hanford Central Plateau Cleanup Work and Schedule

The U.S. Department of Energy Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies – are proposing changes to the TPA. These proposed changes affect the schedule for completing cleanup work on the Hanford Central Plateau and in the 300 Area, which is adjacent to the Columbia River near the main north-south road leading into the site. The agencies want your input on these proposed milestone changes before they are finalized.

U.S. Department of Energy • Washington State Department of Ecology • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Background

The Hanford Site is located in southeastern Washington State along the Columbia River. This 586-square-mile site was created in 1943 as part of the Manhattan Project to produce plutonium. Today, waste management and environmental cleanup are the main missions at Hanford.

The *Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order* (also known as the Tri-Party Agreement or TPA), a legal agreement between DOE, Ecology and EPA, identifies cleanup actions and schedules, called milestones. The TPA agencies are proposing changes to milestones that affect the schedule for cleanup work on the Hanford Central Plateau and 300 Area. To learn about Hanford projects and facilities visit: http://www.hanford.gov/page.cfm/ProjectsFacilities.

The TPA agencies want your input on these proposed changes. You can provide input during the public comment period being held **Oct. 26 through Dec. 11, 2015**.

What changes are proposed?

Overall, the proposed changes set new dates for completing work on the Central Plateau to allow for continuous progress that balances the needs of maintaining a trained workforce with available funding. Changes are being proposed to the M-015, M-016, M-085, M-037, and M-094 milestone series.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a TPA Milestone?

A TPA milestone is a legal agreement between DOE, Ecology, and EPA, that identifies cleanup actions and schedules.

How do milestones affect work at Hanford?

Milestones set the pace for completing cleanup work. They also set priorities for which work is completed first.

How do milestones affect budget?

DOE must request a budget to finish milestones due in any given year. Having milestones in place identifies how much money is needed to complete work at Hanford each year.

Why are the TPA agencies proposing changing milestones?

Prioritizing work on the River Corridor has pushed back difficult work on the Central Plateau. However, we now have more information from taking soil samples and doing characterization to schedule Central Plateau work. Also, our current schedules require more money and resources than are currently available.

Public Comment

The Tri-Party Agencies want your feedback on the proposed Tri-Party Agreement changes. The public comment period runs from **October 26 through December 11, 2015.**

Tri-Party Agreement
U.S. Department of Energy
Washington State Department of Ecology
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

What work is associated with each milestone series?

- **M-015 Milestones**: Deal with completing investigation of waste sites and issuing cleanup decisions. The documents associated with this work are Remedial Investigations (RIs), Feasibility Studies (FS), and Records of Decision (RODs). This work excludes Hanford tanks and canyon buildings, which are addressed through different processes.
- **M-016 Milestones**: Deal with the implementation of cleanup decisions identified in RODs. The documents associated with this work are Remedial Design/Remedial Action (RD/RA) Work Plans and Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAP). RD/RA work plans establish schedules for completing cleanup work and require approval by the regulatory agencies.
- **M-085 Milestones**: Deal with the completion of cleanup actions for canyon facilities. The documents associated with this work are RI/FS Work Plans, RODs, and Removal Action Work Plans.
- **M-037 Milestones**: Deal with the completion of cleanup of Treatment, Storage, and Disposal (TSD) units as required by DOE's Hanford dangerous waste permit. Specific units are identified as part of these proposed changes.
- **M-094 Milestones**: Deal with the completion of cleanup of the 300 Area. There are proposed dates for completing cleanup of all 300 Area surplus activities and a separate milestone and schedules proposed for the complex work associated with the 324 Building, the 300-296 waste site located beneath the 324 Building, and the 618-11 Burial Ground.

Terms and Definitions

- **Canyon facilities** – Any of Hanford's five former chemical extraction plants. They include B Plant, T Plant, U Plant, REDOX and PUREX. Canyons are approximately 80 feet high, 70 feet wide, and hundreds of feet long and resemble large warehouses.
- **Central Plateau** – Also known as the 200 Area, it is 300 feet higher than the Columbia River shoreline and located at the center of the Hanford Site. This is where nuclear materials, such as plutonium, were processed during active production.
- **CERCLA** – The *Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act*, also known as Superfund, is a federal statute enacted in 1980 and reauthorized in 1986. Superfund provides the statutory authority for cleanup of hazardous substances that could endanger public health or welfare or the environment. EPA and Ecology divide the lead regulator role for CERCLA work at Hanford, but EPA must approve all CERCLA Records of Decision.
- **Feasibility Study** – The step in the CERCLA process in which alternatives for a remedial action are investigated and screened.
- **RCRA** – The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act is a federal law enacted in 1976 that regulates the generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous wastes. The Department of Ecology has delegated authority to regulate Hanford cleanup under RCRA.
- **Remedial Investigation** – The CERCLA process of determining the extent of hazardous substance contamination and, as appropriate, conducting treatability investigations. The RI is done in conjunction with the Feasibility Study.
- **Record of Decision** – The CERCLA document used to select the method of remedial action to be implemented at a site after the Feasibility Study/Proposed Plan process has been completed.
- **Remedial Action** – An action taken under CERCLA authority to permanently resolve a hazardous substance release or to significantly reduce the potential for a release from a unit or group of units.
- **Remedial Design** – The CERCLA design process for the remedial action alternative that was selected in the Record of Decision.
- **Removal Action** – A short-term response under CERCLA authority to deal with a release or imminent threat of release of hazardous substances. At Hanford removal actions are followed up by remedial actions.
- **Sampling and Analysis Plan** – A sampling and analysis plan documents the procedural and analytical requirements for a one-time or time-limited project that involves the collection of samples of water, soil, sediment, or other media to characterize areas of potential environmental contamination.
- **Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Unit** – A unit used for treatment, storage, or disposal of hazardous waste. These units must be permitted and/or closed pursuant to RCRA requirements.

What is the Basis for Proposing these Changes?

In order to propose new milestones, the TPA agencies needed to estimate budgets for these milestones, and the TPA agencies estimated the budget at approximately $1B per year for the next several years. If funding should drop dramatically from approximately $1B, the TPA agencies may need to discuss changing these milestones again.

How Will This Affect Work on the Central Plateau?

The proposed changes would allow for issuance of cleanup decisions for all non-canyon work by 2025 and issuance of canyon cleanup decisions by 2032. The following table provides a summary of the proposed overall changes.

	Investigation work on Central Plateau	Cleanup Work on Central Plateau	300 Area Work	Canyon Cleanup	TSD Units
Associated Milestones	M-015	M-016	M-094 and M-016	M-085	M-037
Affected Work	Complete the RI/FS Process for Central Plateau units (except tanks and canyons)	Complete cleanup on Central Plateau (except for tanks and canyons)	Complete 300-296 waste site, 324 Building, and 618-11 Burial Ground cleanup	Submit dates for completion of canyon cleanup	Complete cleanup of TSD units
Current Date	12/31/2016	9/30/2024	9/30/2018	9/30/2022	9/30/2016
Proposed New Date	6/30/2026	TBD (dates will be determined through RODs and associated RD/RA Work Plans)	9/30/2021	6/30/2026	9/30/2022

Get involved!

The public comment period on *proposed changes to the TPA M-015, M-016, M-085, M-037, and M-094 milestone series* runs from **Oct. 26 through Dec. 11, 2015**. The TPA agencies would like your feedback on these proposed changes. Full versions of the TPA change packages documenting the proposed changes are available at www.hanford.gov and at pdw.hanford.gov/arpir/index.cfm/viewDoc?accession=0079726H

For more information please contact Kristen Skopeck, DOE-RL, 509-376-5803.

Please submit comments by December 11, 2015 to:

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The documents are available for review at the Public Information Repositories listed below

HANFORD PUBLIC INFORMATION REPOSITORY LOCATIONS

Portland
Portland State University Library
Branford Price Millar Library
1875 SW Park Avenue
Portland, OR 97207
Attn: Claudia Weston (503) 725-4542
Map: http://bit.ly/1K7BfuK

Seattle
University of Washington
Suzzallo Library
4000 15th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98195
Attn: Hilary Reinert (206) 543-5597
Map: http://bit.ly/1QMtUog

Richland
U.S. Department of Energy Public Reading Room
Washington State University, Tri-Cities
Consolidated Information Center, Room 101-L
2770 University Drive
Richland, WA 99352
Attn: Janice Scarano (509) 373-7443
Map: http://bit.ly/1LpZKUa

Spokane
Gonzaga University
Foley Center Library
East 502 Boone Avenue
Spokane, WA 99258
Attn: John Spencer (509) 313-6110
Map: http://bit.ly/1Cp0mRT

Administrative Record and Public Information Repository
2440 Stevens Center Place, Room 1101, Richland, WA
509-376-2530
http://pdw.hanford.gov/arpir/