



Tri-Party Agreement

HANFORD UPDATE

A bulletin on Hanford cleanup and compliance

January/February 2001

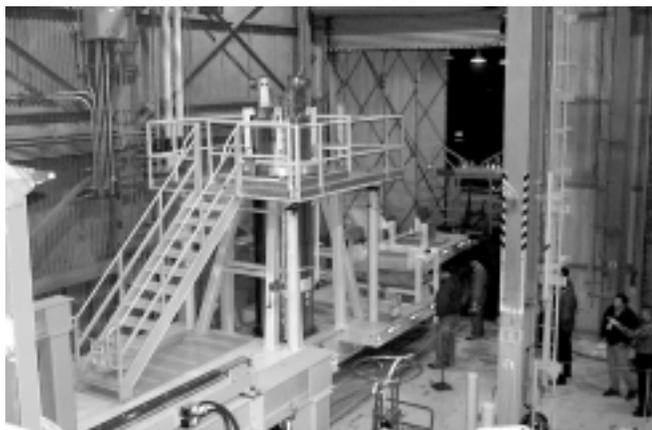
Hanford Begins Movement of Spent Nuclear Fuel *Significant Risk to Columbia River Addressed*

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) and contractor Fluor Hanford, Inc. (FHI) on December 7, 2000 successfully completed the first-ever shipment of Hanford spent nuclear fuel from the K Reactor Basins to a newly constructed treatment facility, where it will be dried and prepared for long-term safe storage. Over the

next four years about 2,300 tons of fuel will be moved out of the

K Basins — two water-filled and leak-prone pools located about 400 yards from the Columbia River. The spent nuclear fuel in the K Basins is one of the greatest threats Hanford poses to the environment.

The fuel moved was retrieved from the K-West Basin, then cleaned and inspected using two underwater robotic arms. The nearly 300 fuel elements were loaded into six custom baskets, which were placed into a multi-canister overpack (MCO) while still underwater.



Workers placed the MCO on a special transporter for the approximately 400-yard trip to the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility, where all the water was removed from the MCO and fuel through a four- to-five-day process.

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Energy Department Selects Contractor for New Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant at Hanford

Secretary of Energy Bill Richardson announced on December 11, 2000 that Bechtel-Washington has been selected to design, construct, and commission a new waste treatment and immobilization plant that will remediate Hanford tank waste.

The contract is valued at approximately \$4 billion over a ten-year period. More than 53 million gallons of highly radioactive tank waste are stored in aging underground tanks at the Hanford Site. The tank waste, a byproduct

of plutonium production for World War II and Cold War defense purposes, will be vitrified — or turned to glass — as an inert waste form.

In order to maintain momentum during the contract competition period, vitrification project activities have been performed by CH2M HILL Hanford Group Inc., (CH2M Hill) the contractor responsible for managing day-to-day operations at the Hanford tank farm. Bechtel-

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Town Hall Meeting Held to Discuss "Hanford 2012" Proposal

Roughly eighty people gathered Monday night, December 11 at the Red Lion in Richland to hear Hanford officials present and discuss the "Hanford 2012: Accelerating Cleanup and Shrinking the Site" proposal. Jim Cochran, founder of Washington State University, Tri-Cities served as moderator for the evening.

Keith Klein, USDOE-RL Manager, presented an overview of the proposal, including highlights of the three outcomes — restoring the river corridor, transitioning the central plateau, and preparing for the future. While discussing the future outcome, Klein enthusiastically commented, "the future is bright." He also noted the significant progress made at Hanford in 2000, including the successful movement of Spent Nuclear Fuel on December 7.

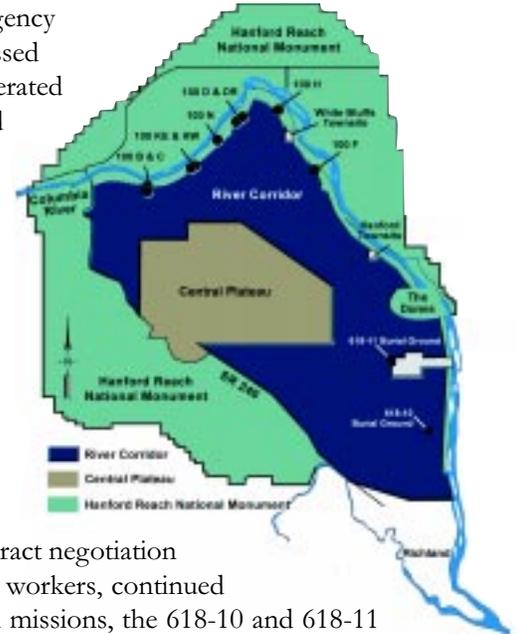
Harry Boston, USDOE-ORP's Acting Manager, briefly described ORP's role at Hanford, the benefits of having two site offices, and the importance of working together to achieve common cleanup goals. He opened with the news that ORP had selected Bechtel-Washington for the design and construction of a Vitrification Plant.

Jane Hedges, Debra McBaugh, and Doug Sherwood represented the Washington State Department of Ecology, the Washington State Department of Health, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency,

respectively. Each agency representative expressed support for an accelerated cleanup schedule and briefly discussed areas of most concern to their agencies.

Following the speakers, the audience had an opportunity to ask panel members questions and/or make comments.

Topics included contract negotiation impacts on Hanford workers, continued funding for Hanford missions, the 618-10 and 618-11 burial grounds, and the future of B Reactor. One individual suggested a public workshop to define end-states, particularly for the central plateau. Hanford officials thanked the audience for attending and promised to continuously evaluate and update the "Hanford 2012" proposal as new information or issues emerged. Overall, USDOE-RL received positive comments on its focus on outcomes and establishing a vision.



U.S. Department of Energy Reaches Cleanup Milestone



More than a million gallons of radioactive waste that threatened the Columbia River have been removed from aging underground tanks at the Hanford Site since 1998.

An aggressive schedule negotiated by the USDOE and the state of Washington tracks progress on the project.

While the million-gallon achievement is not a regulatory milestone, USDOE officials said the

accomplishment symbolizes the hard work and technical innovations that have enabled the department to meet or beat deadline after deadline. Of the eight tanks scheduled to begin pumping operations in fiscal year 2001, five tanks have already been started.

Although solids and sludge will remain in the tanks, transferring the liquid waste to newer, safer double-shell tanks is crucial to reducing the risk of future leaks. In the past, at least 67 single-shell tanks leaked an estimated one million gallons of radioactive waste.

Under the consent decree, October 2004 is the deadline for pumping the retrievable liquid waste from 29 single-shell tanks. Pumping of six of those tanks is complete, and crews with USDOE tank farms contractor CH2M HILL Hanford Group have initiated pumping 11 of the remaining 23 tanks under the agreement. Company officials expect to start seven more tanks by October 2001.

Decision on the Draft Nuclear Infrastructure PEIS (FFTF)

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) announced on November 21 its preferred alternative for the Final Nuclear Infrastructure Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (NI-PEIS). The NI-PEIS was developed to help the department prepare for future missions, including nuclear technology research and development, medical isotope production, and production of Pu-238 to support future U.S. space exploration. A record of decision will be issued in January 2001.

The department's preferred alternative consists of the following three major components:

- ▶ The department will use its existing facilities to the extent possible and consider opportunities to enhance its current infrastructure to maximize the agency's ability to address future mission needs.
- ▶ The department will develop a conceptual design and a research program for an Advanced Accelerator Applications facility to perform future research and testing, for which Congress has

provided funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001.

- ▶ Permanent deactivation of the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) at the Hanford Site, near Richland Washington. Commitments from the private and public sectors were not sufficient to justify restarting FFTF or building new facilities at this time.

The preferred alternative anticipates resumption of domestic production of Pu-238 using the Advanced Test Reactor in Idaho and the High Flux Isotope Reactor in Tennessee. The preferred alternative includes processing of the Pu-238 targets at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Moreover, the department will continue its efforts to make the current infrastructure available for medical research isotope production. The department will continue to work with the private sector to respond to emerging medical isotope needs.

Contact: Al Farabee, USDOE-RL, (509) 376-8089.



Hanford Five Year Review

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 has conducted the first five-year review of the remedial actions implemented at the four National Priorities List (NPL) sites at the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford Site in Benton County, Washington. The four NPL sites are the USDOE Hanford 100 Area, 200 Area, 300 Area, and 1100 Area. The purpose of five-year reviews is to determine whether the remedy at a site is protective of human health and the environment. The methods, findings, and conclusions of reviews are documented in five-year review reports. Only those sites

listed as past-practice units in the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement are covered in this five-year review report. Active treatment, storage, or disposal units, such as the Hanford tank farms, are not part of this review.

The public comment period will run from mid January to mid February 2001. The five-year review document will be made available through the Hanford Information Repositories and can also be downloaded from the EPA internet site at <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/webpage/Hanford,+Washington>. For further information contact Larry Gadbois, EPA 509-376-9884.

NEWS BRIEFS

Draft Long-term Stewardship Study out for public comment. One of the commitments resulting from the settlement of the Natural Resource Defense, et. al., vs. Department of Energy was the requirement for the Department to develop a USDOE national Long-term Stewardship Study. Scoping meetings were held, comments solicited from the public and a draft of the report was developed. The document is now available for public review and comment. The website from which to download a copy with Acrobat Reader is <http://lts.apps.em.doe.gov>. Comments were due on December 15, 2000, however, reviewers who wish to submit comments after that date may do so.

Anticipated release of NDAA Long-term Stewardship Report. The Fiscal Year 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required the preparation of a report to Congress on the anticipated status of Long-term Stewardship around the USDOE complex as of 2006. The report is to describe sites or portions of site where cleanup was complete and long-term stewardship activities including institutional and engineered controls were anticipated to be in place and functioning by that date. Hanford information was included in the Report which could be issued soon.

Hanford Long-term Stewardship (LTS) Plan. USDOE's Richland Operations Office, with the involvement of the Office of River Protection, intends to begin developing a Hanford Long-term Stewardship Plan in the late winter time frame. Tribal Nations and the Hanford Advisory Board have been invited to participate in LTS planning at Hanford.

Spent Nuclear Fuel

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Workers then moved the MCO to the newly constructed Canister Storage Building on the Central Plateau, in the center of the Hanford Site, where the fuel is stored in one of 220 forty-foot-long, carbon steel tubes in a below-ground vault.

Removal of the approximately 105,000 fuel elements from the two basins will take nearly four years to complete. The legally enforceable Tri-Party Agreement among USDOE, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), calls for removal of all spent fuel from

the basins by July 31, 2004, and all radioactive sludge, debris, and approximately 2.5 million gallons of basin water by 2007.

After removal of the spent fuel, sludge, water and debris, both basins will be turned over to the Environmental Restoration project for disposition along with Hanford's other reactors along the Columbia River.

Moving spent fuel away from the Columbia River is a key component of USDOE's work to restore the Columbia River corridor by completing key pieces of cleanup work by 2012. In addition to moving spent fuel, USDOE and its contractors are "cocooning" reactors, addressing waste sites and groundwater contamination, and disposing of aging buildings along the Columbia River.

Energy Department Selects Contractor

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Washington will begin work immediately, and coordinate with USDOE and CHG to ensure a swift and seamless transition.

Harry Boston, the USDOE Office of River Protection Manager said, "We are excited to have the Bechtel-Washington team start work. Two qualified teams with the experience to perform this project submitted credible proposals. However, Bechtel-Washington provides USDOE the highest confidence of delivering a plant that

works within budget and schedule. The competitive process for this award helps give us confidence that this job will be completed in a fiscally responsible manner."

Bechtel-Washington will locate its project team in Richland, Washington. Bechtel, based in San Francisco, California, teamed with Washington Group International, Inc., based in Aiken, South Carolina, will perform the contract. The Washington Group International, Inc., includes the former companies of Westinghouse Government and Environmental Services Company, Morrison Knudsen, and Raytheon Engineers and Constructors.

Department of Energy Completes Fire Report

An investigation into the U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office (USDOE-RL) response to this summer's 24 Command Wildland Fire concludes that the Hanford Fire Department and other emergency responders were proactive in attacking the fire. The report on the June 27 - July 1, 2000 blaze that occurred on and around Hanford lands also points out areas for improvement. It covered only Hanford-specific emergency response actions for USDOE-RL and the USDOE Office of River Protection.

Key positive conclusions of the investigation included the immediate and proactive actions to protect site employees, the deployment of Hanford Fire Department fire fighters to protect facilities and waste management areas, and the sound preventative fire planning and execution. The investigation team determined there were no substantial gaps in management systems or the emergency preparedness infrastructure.

The team did identify some general areas where suggested improvements would benefit future fire fighting efforts based on the lessons learned in fighting

the fire. These are categorized as "judgments of need" and include:

- ▶ USDOE should evaluate and strengthen existing emergency response processes related to Hanford events affecting state and national systems, as well as evaluating responses necessary due to state and national events affecting Hanford systems.
- ▶ USDOE should review and revise site wide and long-term emergency and recovery operations, including emergency communications and resource readiness.
- ▶ USDOE should improve the corrective action management system to ensure improvements are made.

Additionally, the USDOE is expected to announce several initiatives designed to improve and strengthen fire protection and response at each of its facilities nationwide. The full report can be viewed on the Internet on the Hanford Home Page at the following address: <http://www.hanford.gov/hanfordfire.html>. Copies of the report are available for viewing at the USDOE Public Reading Room in the Consolidated Information Center at Washington State University Tri-Cities.



Conservation and Recovery Act Permit Modification Requested

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) has requested the State of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) grant a temporary authorization in accordance with Washington Administrative Code, Chapter 173-303-830(4)(e) for a Class 2 permit modification. The temporary authorization will allow USDOE to prevent disruption of ongoing waste management activities and facilitate other changes to protect human health and the environment. Specifically, the modifications are associated with the Hanford Emergency Management Plan (DOE/RL-94-02), the Liquid Effluent Retention Facility and 200 Area Liquid Effluent Treatment Facility (Part III, Chapter 4), and the 242-A Evaporator (Part III, Chapter 5).

Modifications to the Hanford Emergency Management Plan (DOER/RL-94-02) were requested in order to

improve emergency response during off-shift hours. In addition, USDOE requested modifications to contingency plan documentation to allow the Treatment, Storage, and/or Disposal (TSD) units to conform with Hanford Site emergency preparedness program improvements.

Ecology plans on evaluating USDOE's request. If Ecology finds the request acceptable, Ecology will grant the temporary authorization and incorporate the modification into the Hanford Facility Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Permit during the next modification cycle. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Conaway, Ecology at (509) 736-3045, or Tony McKarns, USDOE, at (509) 376-8981.

Stakeholder workshop a success

About 35 people attended the Washington State Department of Ecology's workshop on Tank Waste Treatment issues, held in Lacey on October 26th. Participants included representatives from two tribal nations, and several members of the Hanford Advisory Board, particularly those who were part of the 1993 Tank Waste Task Force. Agency participants included Ecology Director Tom Fitzsimmons and Nuclear Waste Program Manager Mike Wilson, and staff from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy Office of River Protection (USDOE-ORP). Discussion topics during the all-day session included the Values & Principles from the task force, Ecology's current path forward on tank waste treatment, and public values. Tank Waste Disposal project manager Suzanne Dahl said one of the main benefits was re-enforcing Ecology's commitment to stakeholders. "When there's no dialogue, people get concerned," she said. "Our openness to discussion fosters a give-and-take atmosphere that generates trust and provides an opportunity for new ideas." Workshop attendees agreed, many adding that they would like to see update sessions held more frequently. The final report on the workshop is available from Mary Anne Wuennecke, (509) 736-3036, or can be viewed on Ecology's web site at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/hwp/pdf/ross.pfd>

Air Operating Permit

The Washington State Department of Ecology is preparing to begin a 30-day public comment period on the draft Title V Air Operating Permit. The tentative schedule calls for the public comment period to begin in mid-January. A public hearing on this issue will be held.

The Hanford Site AOP application was submitted by the Department of Energy, Richland Operating Office (DOE-RL) in May 1995, with substantial supplemental information updated in May 2000. The final draft AOP is nearly ready for public comment and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review after extensive internal review by regulatory agencies, and USDOE-RL and its contractors.

The draft AOP includes emission limitations, monitoring, reporting, record keeping, compliance requirements, and technical bases. The draft permit does not impose new requirements except for those "grandfathered" facilities which are now subject to general standards for maximum emissions, and those facilities which need "gap-filling" for monitoring frequencies.

The proposed Hanford Site AOP includes three major parts: the Health License for radioactive air emissions regulated by the State of Washington Department of Health (Health), the Ecology Permit for non radioactive air emissions regulated by the Department of Ecology, and asbestos and open burning permitting conditions regulated by the Benton Clean Air Authority (BCAA). The Statement of Basis attached to the AOP is a supporting reference document to this permit for clarification where deemed necessary.

Hanford Site AOP will be issued for a term of five years after the public comment process and EPA review. This permit may be modified or amended during its term at the request of the permittee, or for any reason allowed by the FCAA.

Hanford Board Seeks At-Large Member

Hanford cleanup agencies are seeking a public at-large member to join the 32-seat Hanford Advisory Board. The primary mission of the Board is to provide informed recommendations and advice to the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington Department of Ecology on major policy issues related to the cleanup of the Hanford site. The goal of the Board is to develop consensus policy recommendations and advice.

Most Board members are selected from recognized entities and organizations, including local governments, Indian Tribes, labor unions, and economic development, public health, and environmental groups. There are four "public at-large" seats, filled by people who have an interest in Hanford cleanup issues and who otherwise contribute to the ethnic, geographic, racial, or gender diversity of the Board. Under the Board's charter, these at-large seats may also be used to bring additional leadership skills and technical, economic, and agricultural expertise to the Board.

Board members will be expected to spend a significant

amount of time and effort on Board activities. The Board is scheduled to meet for two full days 8 times each year. In addition, the Board's three standing committees meet approximately once each month for a half -to-full day. The majority of meetings will be held in the Tri-Cities area; the balance will be held in other parts of Washington and in Oregon. Review of written materials, conference calls, orientation sessions and tours may add to this time and travel commitment.

Telephone, travel, meal and lodging expenses will be reimbursed by USDOE. Lost work time and other expenses, however, cannot be covered.

Nomination/Application forms can be obtained by calling the Hanford Cleanup Toll-Free number: 1-800-321-2008. Applications must be received no later than 5 p.m., Friday, January 12, 2001. Ecology and EPA will review nominations and applications, and will then recommend one person to the Department of Energy for appointment. Contact: Max Power, Ecology 360-407-7118.

CALENDER OF EVENTS

January 9, 2001 **9:00 – 4:00**

Environmental Restoration Committee Meeting

3350 George Washington Way, Bechtel Building, Assembly Room. Richland, WA

January 10, 2001 **8:30 – 4:30**

Health, Safety & Waste Management Committee Meeting

825 Jadwin Ave., Federal Building, Conference Room 142. Richland, WA

January 11, 2001 **8:30 – 4:00**

Joint Dollars and Sense and Tank Waste Treatment Committee Meeting

2440 Stevens Building, Conference Room 1600. Richland, WA

January 31, 2001 **1:00 – 5:00 (tentative)**

Public Involvement Committee Meeting

West Coast Hotel (formerly Cavanaugh's), 1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd. Kennewick, WA

February 1, 2001 **9:00 – 4:30**

Hanford Advisory Board

West Coast Hotel (formerly Cavanaugh's), 1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd. Kennewick, WA

February 2, 2001 **8:30 – 3:30**

Hanford Advisory Board

West Coast Hotel (formerly Cavanaugh's), 1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd. Kennewick, WA

April 5, 2001 **9:00 – 4:30**

Hanford Advisory Board Meeting

Red Lion Hanford House, 802 George Washington Way. Richland, WA

April 6, 2001 **8:30 – 3:30**

Hanford Advisory Board Meeting

Red Lion Hanford House, 802 George Washington Way. Richland, WA



HANFORD UPDATE

Consent Decree Modified

Following public comment, a federal judge has signed the amended “Single-Shell Tank Interim Stabilization Consent Decree.” A public comment period was held October 9 through November 9, 2000. Comments received were considered and will be included in a responsiveness summary.

The modifications submitted for comment, and subsequently signed by the judge, establish due dates for moving forward on acquisition of a tank waste treatment facility. The changes include a deadline of January 15, 2001 that requires USDOE to award a contract authorizing design, construction and commissioning of a Phase I Hanford Tank Waste Treatment Complex. This contract was awarded on December 11, a month ahead of schedule. The contract for the treatment complex includes all facilities necessary for the pretreatment and vitrification of no less than ten percent of Hanford’s tank wastes by mass and 25% by activity by February 28, 2018.

The amended consent decree also deletes TPA milestone M-62-05, which required USDOE to issue an Authorization to Proceed with construction of the facility by August 31, 2000.

Historical Note: The U.S. Department of Energy manages the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. Hanford was established during World War II as part of the top secret Manhattan Project to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Weapons material production was halted in the late 1980s. The Hanford Site is now engaged in the world’s largest cleanup effort to deal with the legacy of radioactive and hazardous wastes that resulted from the plutonium production era. Hanford’s cleanup program is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology under a long term compliance contract called the Tri-Party Agreement. This agreement sets the framework and timelines on the cleanup work so that Hanford meets current environmental standards.

Hanford Update
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