



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

# HANFORD

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Watch contamination plume reduction [video here](#)

## DOE Meets FY2016 Groundwater Cleanup Goals at Hanford

RICHLAND, Wash. – Workers at the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Hanford Site are marking another year of significant achievements in protecting the Columbia River from contaminated groundwater.

During the past 12 months, contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) met its goal to treat 2.1 billion gallons of groundwater, removing more than 180,000 pounds of contamination.

“There is an entire groundwater cleanup infrastructure our workers have been fine tuning to make sure we treat and remove the most amount of contamination practical,” said Michael Cline, director of the Soil and Groundwater Division at the DOE Richland Operations Office.

“Workers are continuously raising the bar in groundwater treatment capability.” The 180,000 pounds of contamination removed includes contaminants such as nitrates, hexavalent chromium and carbon tetrachloride,” Cline said.

There are six systems on the Hanford Site that pump contaminated groundwater up through wells, treating it to remove contaminants and returning the treated water back to the aquifer through injection wells.

Scientists are able to track contamination plumes through data collected from monitoring wells across the site. That data is then used to determine where to place additional groundwater extraction wells for treatment of contaminants and how to best contain contaminant plumes.

“Most of our pump-and-treats are performing far better than originally anticipated,” said Karen Wiemelt, vice president of groundwater cleanup at CH2M. “There is a sense of pride among our workforce who continue to go above and beyond to protect the Columbia River.”

Workers are encouraged to identify efficiencies and innovations to improve our treatment of contaminated groundwater. Here is an example of one way workers managed to shrink a contamination plume near the Columbia River: <https://youtu.be/J5Vf897Hxnc>

Contaminated groundwater is a result of intentional and unintentional releases of chemicals from the site’s plutonium production reactors into the soil along the river. Much of the contaminated soil has been removed, and CH2M is operating five groundwater treatment facilities along the river and one at the center of the site to address remaining key contamination.

Interested parties can track groundwater plumes through accessing the [PHOENIX web page](#).

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The Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) manages the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Along with the DOE Office of River Protection (ORP), DOE-RL is responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at Hanford for the nation’s defense. Except for the tank waste mission managed by ORP, DOE-RL is responsible for cleanup of all remaining Hanford waste streams and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and solid waste, monitoring and treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. DOE-RL is also responsible for working with the National Park Service to implement and manage Hanford’s portion of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park, authorized by Congress in 2014.