



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Hanford Landfill Reaches 15 Million Tons Disposed *Waste Disposal Mark Shows Success Cleaning Up River Corridor*

RICHLAND, Wash. – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its contractors have disposed of 15 million tons of contaminated material at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) since the facility began operations in 1996. Removing contaminated material and providing for its safe disposal prevents contaminants from reaching the groundwater and the Columbia River.

ERDF receives contaminated soil, demolition debris, and solid waste from cleanup operations across the 586-square-mile Hanford Site in southeast Washington state. On Hanford's River Corridor, DOE contractors have already demolished 390 facilities and removed millions of tons of contaminated soil from 751 waste sites near the Columbia River. In addition, contractors have removed complexes of buildings and infrastructure from all nine of the plutonium production reactor areas and have safely sealed up six former reactors.

“Hanford cleanup can be measured by the successes we see at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility,” said Matt McCormick, manager of DOE's Richland Operations Office. “It provides a safe, compliant location to dispose of a variety of waste, and demonstrates the tremendous quantity of cleanup we've accomplished over 24 years of Hanford cleanup.”

ERDF is managed by Washington Closure Hanford as part of the River Corridor Closure Project – DOE's largest environmental cleanup closure project. The landfill is the largest disposal facility in the DOE cleanup complex. It covers 107 acres at the base of the disposal trench – roughly the same area as 52 football fields – and currently has a capacity of 18 million tons. ERDF also accepts hazardous materials such as mercury, asbestos, beryllium, chromium and lead that can be treated onsite before disposal.

The majority of waste material disposed at ERDF – about 13.5 million tons – was generated in a section on Hanford's River Corridor, a 220-square-mile stretch of land that borders the Columbia River. The River Corridor was home to Hanford's nine plutonium production reactors, fuel development facilities, and hundreds of support structures.

“We’ve safely disposed of 15 million tons because of an exceptional workforce committed to protecting human health and the environment,” said Washington Closure President Carol Johnson. “Everybody involved in the cleanup process – whether they are working to decontaminate and demolish buildings, dig up waste sites and burial grounds, or are involved in the disposal process – has contributed to this remarkable achievement.”

Designed to be expanded as needed, ERDF comprises a series disposal areas called cells. Each pair of cells is 70 feet deep, 500 feet wide and 1,000 feet long at the base – large enough to hold about three million tons of material. As each pair of cells reaches capacity, an interim cover is installed to prevent the infiltration of water. A permanent cap will be placed over the facility when Hanford cleanup is completed.

In February 2011, Washington Closure completed the fourth and largest expansion of the facility since it opened. The \$100 million project, supported with funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), increased the facility’s capacity by 50 percent. ARRA dollars also were used to construct three maintenance buildings and an operations center, and for funding new equipment.

“The expansion and upgrades of ERDF have enhanced safety and efficiency,” Johnson said. “The facility is positioned to handle Hanford cleanup activities for years to come.”

The Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office is responsible for several major cleanup projects on the Hanford Site, including cleanout and demolition of the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, demolition of excess facilities, excavation of contaminated soil and solid waste, and treatment of contaminated groundwater, as well as Hanford Site infrastructure. The office oversees approximately \$1 billion in annual funding for Hanford Site work that is conducted by a Federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,200 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov.

Washington Closure, which began work on the River Corridor Closure Project in 2005, is nearly 90 percent complete with its contract. It has completed field work in 136 square miles, having demolished 285 of 318 buildings and cleaned up 374 of 590 waste sites. Washington Closure also has transported, packaged and disposed of nine million tons of contaminated material in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility, the landfill it operates in support of all Hanford contractors. All of the work has been accomplished while saving the taxpayers money. Thanks to cost efficiencies and safe performance, Washington Closure has saved taxpayers \$325 million in cleanup costs and reinvested the savings toward additional work. Visit <http://www.washingtonclosure.com>

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