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Hanford Workers Completing Key Elements of 618-10 Burial Ground Cleanup

RICHLAND, Wash. – Workers are in the final stages of completing two components of the cleanup of Hanford's 618-10 burial ground, recently completing the removal of the final buried piece of pipe filled with contaminated waste and the removal of contaminated soil from the 316-4 waste site.

In May, employees from Hanford cleanup contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) completed the excavation, nearly 67 feet deep to groundwater, of the 316-4 waste site, which was historically used for the disposal of uranium-contaminated liquid wastes from the 321 Chemical Separations Laboratory located in Hanford's 300 Area. The excavation removed all sources of soil contamination and amounted to more than 300,000 tons of low-level radioactively contaminated soil being disposed of at Hanford's Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.

"Completing these tasks are truly amazing accomplishments and we have the team of hard-working, highly experienced people at the 618-10 Project to thank for it," said Bryan Foley, federal project

director for the burial ground cleanup at the Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office (RL).

Earlier, workers removed the last vertical pipe unit (VPU) from the 618-10 Burial Ground. A total of 94 VPUs once contained radioactive waste that came from Hanford's 300 Area laboratories and fuel development facilities during plutonium production. These VPUs were buried 20 feet below ground.

Remediation of the first 80 VPUs at 618-10 was completed in February. The remaining 14 units, made of heavy-gauge steel and smaller in diameter, required a new innovative method to remediate that exposed short segments of the pipes, which were then sheared and processed under a grout mixture. Workers finished removing the last of these 14 VPUs May 8.

In March, workers completed retrieval of the 2,201 contaminated drums and other debris waste at the 618-10 Burial Ground.

Altogether, workers have removed more than 400,000 tons of low-level waste from the 618-10 Burial Ground.

"These achievements are the result of years of preparation," said Tammy Hobbes, vice president of the 618-10 Project at CH2M. "We are near the end of this remediation project, and we are proud of the teamwork and safe progress made."

Workers are now removing the remaining contaminated soil in a mass excavation effort that, once completed later this year, will be followed by verification sampling to validate cleanup levels have been achieved and then complete backfilling the excavated site. Crews are also preparing to remediate a nearby waste site that was associated with testing the migration of contaminants through soil during the early years of environmental cleanup at Hanford.

Completion of the VPUs at 618-10 and contaminated soil at 316-4 is one of numerous objectives in RL's 2020 cleanup vision for Hanford, which addresses the remaining cleanup projects along the Columbia River and focuses future operations on the waste sites, aging facilities, and infrastructure in the Central Plateau area of the site.

Video overview of the 618-10 Project

The Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for the federal government's cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at the Hanford Site near Richland, Wash. Except for a tank waste mission managed by the DOE Office of River Protection, the DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, 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. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,000 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov.

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