

Projects recognized for environmental stewardship

Deborah Dunn, Fluor Hanford

The Spent Nuclear Fuel Project was declared the winner of the Fluor Hanford 2002 Environmental Stewardship Award, winning in a close competition among four Hanford Site projects. Donna Busche, Fluor Hanford vice president of Regulatory Compliance, cited SNF's environmental compliance and cleanup as she presented the second annual award at the May 8 Presidents' Zero Accident Council meeting. The meeting was held at the Trade, Recreation and Agricultural Center during the Hanford Health and Safety Expo.

Environmental Stewardship Merit Awards were presented to the Central Plateau Remediation Project, the Mortar Lining Project and the Plutonium Finishing Plant.

The review process

Selection criteria covered input from environmental regulators and Department of Energy Richland Operations Office project managers; recordable spills, releases and exceedences; waste sent to the 400 Area recycling center; responsiveness to environmental corrective actions; and significant accomplishments.

This year, award applicants hosted the nomination review committee at their facilities for tours and presentations. This approach to award evaluation allowed project employees to demonstrate their understanding of environmental hazards, Automated Job Hazard Analysis reviews, and waste-minimization/waste-management accomplishments.

According to the judging panel, each of the projects rated well with their regulators and DOE-RL, and made significant efforts to minimize waste and excess materials. Three of the four had no recordable spills or releases in 2002.

The SNF Project

Spent Nuclear Fuel Project Environmental Compliance officer Dave Watson said the project's primary cleanup accomplishments were the removal of 730.5 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel from underwater storage near the Columbia River shore into safe, dry, long-term interim storage on the Hanford central plateau, and constructing the sludge-removal system for the K East Basin that progressed to 95 percent of completion in 2002.

The SNF project has been operating since February 1994 to provide safe, economical and environmentally sound management of the Hanford Site's spent nuclear fuel and to prepare the irradiated fuel for long-term storage and final disposition.



SNF workers test a large-diameter container for K Basins sludge removal.

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The CP Project

The Central Plateau Remediation Project demonstrated environmental stewardship in 2002 by saving nearly 1,000 cubic meters of landfill space through recycling or reusing 25 metric tons of materials — much of it large equipment. Its Equipment Disposition project also conserved tax dollars, saving an estimated \$1.1 million in disposal costs by finding other uses for the excess equipment.

Removing spent nuclear fuel from the 324 Building near the Columbia River and Richland to the 200 Area Interim Storage Area on the central plateau reduced environmental and public risk and was accomplished seven weeks early.

In addition, the project made significant strides in regulatory efficiencies and in streamlining requirements, according to a staff presentation led by Jon Perry.



Central Plateau found a new use for this waste box (and railcar) as a grout form for Category 3 waste.

The Mortar Lining Project

Dan Danch of Site Services Project Support Services said the Mortar Lining Project demonstrated a new technique for extending the life of old water pipes by 50 years. The technique involves cleaning them and then using a thin grout material to line the insides of drinking-water lines. The mortar-lining process avoids the costs, risks and solid-waste disposal associated with removing and replacing pipes. It will save tons of metal piping from being discarded. It also maintains the integrity of the drinking-water lines and protects the groundwater from leaks that could move contaminants already in the soil toward the groundwater.

According to Dave Tollefson, a local business provided the mortar-lining expertise. It is one of a handful providing this method of rehabilitating underground water-distribution piping.



Water lines both before and after the mortar lining.

The Plutonium Finishing Plant

Environmental Compliance officer Karl Hadley led the Plutonium Finishing Plant tour and presentation, focusing on removing excess buildings, installing a new stack probe, and cleaning up excess materials stored outside the facility. The project demonstrated waste minimization by returning unused products — 500 gallons of antifreeze, lead-acid batteries and fluorescent lamps. Among aerosol products and excess equipment recycled or redeployed were telephone poles, 100 spools of wire, metal doors and scrap metal.

Hadley said that while conducting highly technical work, the PFP staff's commitment to compliance was evidenced by the fact that they received no regulatory violations and experienced no significant releases in 2002. ■



Tommy Honeycutt, a pipefitter assigned to PFP, removes piping and equipment, making rooms 336/337 “ready for demolition.”