

Hanford prepares for long-term stewardship

After more than two years of interaction with stakeholders and tribal nations, Hanford has produced a strategic-level document that discusses the care and monitoring of Hanford after the Environmental Management cleanup mission has been completed.

The document helps to resolve external parties' concerns regarding Hanford's safety after the Department of Energy completes cleanup activities. The document was designed to be useful in the near term by including information on activities that need to be accomplished to ensure a timely and successful turnover to a new DOE component or owner.

Jim Daily, DOE's chief architect of the plan, described the process used in generating the plan as unique. "This is the first time that DOE went to its stakeholders with no preconceived ideas," Daily said. "Highly interactive workshops were held with tribal nations, the Hanford Advisory Board and other stakeholders over a two-year period, and we ended up with a win-win situation."

The resulting document is the culmination of a collaborative process in which everyone learned and everyone won, according to Daily. The *Hanford Long-Term Stewardship* document helps to define the strategies and activities necessary for the Hanford Site to thoughtfully transition to long-term stewardship at the completion of the cleanup mission, ensuring continued protection of human health and the environment.

The transition-preparation actions will help to ensure the following:

- that DOE's commitment to meeting its long-term, post-cleanup obligations is reaffirmed and that its planning efforts to comply with these obligations are visible
- that the interface between the cleanup mission and the Long-Term Stewardship program will be clearly defined
- that potential impediments to a safe and timely turnover from cleanup to long-term stewardship are anticipated, and a programmatic risk-management approach is developed and implemented.



As part of the Department of Energy's obligation to maintain stewardship of the Hanford Site after the cleanup is done, close monitoring of the site's groundwater will continue.

Hanford prepares for long-term stewardship, cont.

As cleanup progresses, the surface “footprint” of the site will shrink. However, some residual contamination will remain below soil covers, engineered “caps” will cover waste-disposal sites, and it is anticipated a significant amount of contaminated groundwater will remain.

As a result, DOE will be required to maintain and monitor the soil covers, engineered caps and an extensive network of groundwater-monitoring wells. In addition, DOE will need to limit access to the site as appropriate and prevent unauthorized excavations and groundwater use. These are just a few of the obligations that the Long-Term Stewardship program will address to protect human health and the environment after the cleanup mission is accomplished.

The document will be used as an internal DOE management tool and is being incorporated into the Richland Integrated Management System, known as RIMS.

“This document is considered to be one that will continue to be evaluated and updated as we benchmark to determine best practices and adopt them as appropriate for Hanford,” said Daily.

To view the document, go to the Web site <http://www.hanford.gov/Longterm.html>. ■