

10.0 COMMUNITY RELATIONS/PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

10.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes, in general, the way in which the public will be involved with the implementation of this action plan. The CERCLA, as amended, requires that a community relations plan (CRP) be approved by the EPA prior to initiation of field work related to an RI/FS. The parties have agreed that the CRP is also the proper mechanism to address the public involvement process for all of the RCRA activity to be conducted pursuant to this action plan. In this way, a single document will specify how the public will be involved in these processes.

A CRP is the overall plan for community relations and public involvement. The following sections highlight key elements of the CRP.

10.2 PUBLIC INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Information will be readily available to the public to ensure meaningful participation. One mechanism for accomplishing this goal is the establishment of public information repositories at major population centers. The locations of the repositories are as follows:

- Government Publications Division
Suzzallo Library, University of Washington
Box 352900
Seattle, Washington 98195-2900
(206) 543-4664
- USDOE Public Reading Room
Washington State University, Tri-Cities
Consolidated Information Center, Room 101-L
2770 University Drive
Richland, Washington 99352
(509) 372-7443
- Portland State University
Branford Price Millar Library
934 SW Harrison
P.O. Box 1151
Portland, Oregon 97207-1151
(503) 725-4126
- Gonzaga University
Foley Center
E. 502 Boone
Spokane, Washington 99258-0001
(509) 323-3834, extension 3844

All applicable documents (see listing of applicable documents in the CRP) will be available at the Public Information Repository locations through one of the following methods: (1) Microfilm, (2) indexes listing documents available by request from the Richland Administrative Record office, (3) Internet access, or (4) paper copies. In addition, copies of drafts when submitted for public comment will be placed in the repositories. Any additional information or documents will be placed in the repositories as deemed necessary by the assigned executive managers. In addition to review of documents at the repositories, the public may also review the administrative record files during normal working hours (see Section 9.4 for discussion and location of administrative records).

10.3 MAILING LISTS AND NEWSLETTER

A Hanford Site mailing list(s) will be maintained by the DOE for use by all three agencies to ensure consistency. The EPA, Ecology, or the DOE will periodically distribute information in the form of a direct mailing to those persons on the Hanford Site mailing list(s). Any person may be placed on the Hanford Site mailing list(s) by contacting any of the community relations contacts shown in Appendix E.

A direct mailing will usually be in the form of a public information newsletter. The newsletter is a summary of the status of completed, ongoing, or upcoming activities. In some instances, this newsletter may be used in conjunction with a public notice and/or advertisement (newspaper or radio) to announce an event such as a public meeting, a public hearing, or a formal comment period on a certain document.

10.4 PRESS RELEASES

Any party issuing a formal press release to the media regarding any of the work required by this Agreement shall, whenever practicable, advise the other parties of such press release and the contents thereof, at least 48 hours before the issuance of such a press release.

10.5 PUBLIC MEETINGS

10.5.1 Hanford Public Meetings

In an effort to provide broad and timely perspectives to the public on the Hanford cleanup priorities and budget decisions, the Tri-Parties will conduct public information meetings. At least one public meeting(s) will be held in the spring to carry out the commitment to involve the public and stakeholders in the DOE budget formulation as reflected in TPA paragraphs 148 and 149. An optional meeting in the fall may be conducted to further discuss and evaluate budget issues. At these meetings, the Tri-Parties will discuss the impact of budget decisions and take public comment and questions on cleanup priorities, as well as outline any changes to cleanup objectives and decisions at Hanford. One of the meetings may be conducted in conjunction with the Hanford Advisory Board. Other meetings will be conducted at public meeting facilities (when available) in key cities in Washington and Oregon. In an effort to be more efficient and effective, these public meetings are encouraged to use innovative techniques to encourage public participation.

10.5.2 Other Public Meetings

Additional public meetings on either CERCLA or RCRA matters will be scheduled on an as-needed basis, by the EPA or Ecology. Situations involving complex issues or a high level of public interest will be reasons to schedule separate public meetings.

When appropriate, public meetings will be scheduled approximately halfway through the public comment period. All public comments, along with the lead regulatory agency's response to comments, will be placed in the administrative record and added to the document index.

10.5.3 Public Notification, Location, and Records

The DOE, at the request of the EPA and/or Ecology, will arrange for all public meetings by means of a public notice in a newspaper of regional circulation. When appropriate, any additional cost-efficient means of notification may be used in the area where the meeting is to be held. The DOE will also distribute a direct mail notice to all persons on the Hanford Site mailing list(s). All such notices shall be made 2 to 3 weeks prior to the date of the public meeting. In addition, at least 30 days prior to the beginning of a comment period, an informal contact will be made to regional stakeholders verifying their interest and participation in a Tri-Party Agreement public involvement topic. Public meetings (formal or informal) will be scheduled, to the extent practicable, to coincide with similar topics due for public comment or other significant stakeholder related events.

The location of any public meeting will be decided in each case by the EPA and/or Ecology. In some cases, the agencies may decide to hold an additional public meeting on a subsequent day at another location.

Upon request by the EPA or Ecology, the DOE will provide an individual to accurately record the events and dialogue at each public meeting. This individual will provide a written meeting summary of the public meeting for review to the requesting agency and the DOE project managers, and the community relations contacts within 14 days following the meeting. The meeting summaries will then be added to the public information repository indexes. Any individual may obtain a copy of the meeting summaries by submitting a request, in writing, to any of the community relations contacts listed in Appendix E.

10.6 PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The EPA and/or Ecology will make the documents as listed in this section available for public comment. These documents, during the appropriate public comment period, will be placed in the public information repositories. They may also be reviewed at the EPA Region 10 office in Richland, Washington; the Ecology office in Lacey, Washington; or the DOE office in Richland, Washington, by contacting any of the community relations contacts listed in Appendix E.

Copies of all public comments received and the agencies' responses to comments will become part of the administrative record and will be added to the public information repository indexes. Additionally, copies of all public comments and agency responses will be made available to any person upon written request to any of the community relations contacts listed in Appendix E.

The public notice for availability of these documents for comment will be published in a regional newspaper in the areas of significant public interest and through the direct mailing list (see Section 10.3).

The documents to be made available for public comment are as follows.

- Significant Changes to the Agreement. One of the more significant opportunities for public comments pertains to changes made to the Agreement or its Action Plan. Changes to the Agreement or its Action Plan which are significant, as defined by the CRP, shall be made available for public comment for a period of 45 days.
- Feasibility Study Phase III Report/Proposed Plan or Corrective Measure Study Report. Either an FS Phase III report/proposed plan (CERCLA) or a CMS report (RCRA) will be prepared for each operable unit. When the FS Phase III report and the proposed plan for remedy are finalized, the lead regulatory agency will issue a public notice of opportunity to comment on the documents. If the operable unit is being managed under the RPP authority, rather than CERCLA, the RCRA CMS report will be made available for comment as part of the draft permit modification package. The comment period will be 30 days. There are currently no specific requirements for public comment on the CMS report, but the parties consider this report to be the functional equivalent of the FS Phase III report and the proposed plan and, therefore, will make the CMS report available for public comment in the same manner.
- Draft Joint Dangerous Waste/Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Permits (for Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Units). The permit and associated modifications (see Section 6.2) for either new or continued operation of TSD groups/units or for postclosure care of TSD units will be made available for public comment in accordance with 173-303-840 WAC and 40 CFR 124.10. The comment period will be 45 days.
- Closure Plans (for Interim Status Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Units). All closure plans for TSD units (see Section 6.3) that will be closed prior to or instead of issuance of a permit will be made available for public comment, in accordance with 173-303-840 WAC. The comment period will be 45 days.

- Interim Response Actions and Interim Measures. In any case where the lead regulatory agency believes that a release from a unit meets the criteria for an IRA or IM, as described in Section 7.2.4, it shall direct the DOE to submit either an IRA proposal or an IM proposal for remedy selection. Prior to approval, the lead regulatory agency will make the proposed remedy selection available for public comment for a period of 15 or 30 days.
- RCRA Section 3008(h) Orders and RCRA 7003 Orders. The EPA will propose the selected corrective action remedy to be performed under either RCRA 3008(h) or RCRA 7003 and make it available for public comment prior to final approval. The comment period for 3008(h) orders will be 30 days and the comment period for 7003 orders will be 15 days.
- Community Relations Plan. Any major revisions to the CRP will be subject to public comment for a period of 30 days. The EPA and Ecology will determine whether revisions are major and subject to public comment.

10.7 PUBLIC HEARING OPPORTUNITIES

The draft permit and all modifications are subject to public hearings upon request. A public hearing must be held if any person requests, in writing, that one be held. The request must state the nature of the issues to be raised at the hearing and must include a notice of opposition to the draft permit, in accordance with 173-303-840 WAC and 40 CFR 124.11 and 124.12.

The DOE will, upon request, assist the EPA and Ecology in the same manner as with public meetings, as previously described. The public notice for any public hearing will be made by the DOE at least 30 days prior to the date of the hearing. Transcripts of the public hearing will be distributed in the same manner as those for the public meetings. Any individual may obtain a copy of the transcript by submitting a request, in writing, to any of the community relations contacts listed in Appendix E.

A public hearing will be held in the locality from which the majority of requests for the hearing was generated. In some cases, a public hearing may be held at more than one location, at the discretion of the EPA and Ecology.

10.8 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS

The provision for Federal technical assistance grants (TAG) is found in Section 117(e) of CERCLA. The EPA will be responsible for administering any Federal TAG that is applied for in conjunction with the Hanford Site. The TAG is a mechanism by which the EPA provides reimbursement to the public for a level of effort spent on CERCLA document review. In this way, the public can be directly involved in the review process of various CERCLA documents in more depth than otherwise might be possible. Information on TAGs can be obtained by contacting:

Technical Assistance Grant Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Avenue, ECO-081
Seattle, Washington 98101
(206) 553-6919

10.9 WASHINGTON STATE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GRANTS

The Model Toxics Control Act, Chapter 70.105D RCW, and 173-321 WAC, provide for public participation grants to persons, and not-for-profit public interest organizations. The primary purpose of these grants is facilitating the active participation of persons and organizations in the investigation and remedying of releases or threatened releases of a hazardous substance. Additional information on this program may be obtained by contacting:

Solid Waste Financial Assistance Program
Washington Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, Washington 98504-7600
(360) 407-6061

10.10 INDIAN TRIBES

The parties recognize that several Northwest Indian tribes have treaty-reserved rights to resources outside their reservation boundaries. In some instances, these resources are either located on the Hanford Reservation or could be affected by activities on the Hanford Reservation. Treaty-reserved rights give these tribes a governmental interest in waste management and environmental restoration activities at Hanford.

DOE and EPA also recognize that, as agencies of the federal government, they have a trust responsibility to American Indian Tribes to consult with the tribes and whenever possible, protect tribal resources which may be affected by agency decision-making. Moreover, DOE, EPA, and the State of Washington have adopted policies which recognize tribal sovereignty and commit to a government-to-government relationship with the tribes.

Given these responsibilities and policies, the parties recognize the unique position of the tribes and the distinction between the rights and responsibilities of the tribes and those of the public. Accordingly, the three parties will seek to facilitate tribal participation in Agreement decision-making at the government-to-government level. Among actions to be taken in this regard are:

1. To involve these Tribes in the hazardous waste cleanup and management processes at the Hanford Site, the parties will hold special briefings for all interested Tribes periodically on major issues that have arisen and/or may arise. Such briefings will include status reports of the significant projects and will be consistent with the methods used to inform and respond to questions of appointed and elected officials, and other governments, regarding ongoing CERCLA and RCRA activities. These briefings may be in writing or in person and may be conducted by either the EPA, Ecology, or the DOE, as appropriate. Notice will be provided to all Tribes in the Hanford region. These briefings and the procedures for determining which Tribes will be briefed are further described in Section 1.0 of the CRP.

2. The DOE will provide copies of any of the documents that are sent to the public information repositories directly to the Tribes upon request. The procedure for determining which documents will be sent is described in Section 1.0 of the CRP. The public information repositories are further discussed in Section 10.2 and in the CRP. The specific list of documents that will be sent directly to each repository is included in the CRP. As discussed in Section 10.2, this may include copies of drafts submitted for public comment. Any comments on these documents must be received by the lead regulatory agency within the time period allowed for public comment. The length of each comment period is specified in Section 10.6, and the specific comment period for each document will be noted in the public notice for comment.

3. In addition to item 2 above, DOE will provide copies of key documents and other pertinent material to the tribes at the time they are provided to EPA and Ecology for review. Such documents include those identified in tables 9-1 and 9-2 of this action plan, but will also include other technical plans, studies and reports related to this Agreement. Other pertinent material includes, but is not limited to, draft change packages, Agreements In Principle between the three parties, and budget information. For large documents containing supporting technical information (e.g. laboratory data packages), DOE will only provide copies of the transmittal letter to the tribes. The document will then be provided upon request. DOE will periodically consult with the tribes to ensure that they are receiving the appropriate documents and material in accordance with this paragraph.

10.11 CITIZEN SUIT PROVISIONS

Statutory provision for citizen suits under CERCLA is found in Section 310 of CERCLA, as amended. Statutory provision for citizen suits under RCRA is found in RCRA Section 7002. The application of these provisions can be found at Articles X and XXI of the Agreement.