



**MEETING SUMMARY**

**HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD**

Health, Safety & Environmental Protection (HSEP)

*May 19, 2020*

*Virtual Meeting*

**Topics in this Meeting Summary**

Opening..... 2

Heat Stress Physiological Monitoring Program..... 2

WRPS Industrial Hygiene Respiratory Protection Program ..... 3

Industrial Health and Safety Program Update ..... 5

Committee Business and Open Forum..... 5

Attachments ..... 6

Attendees ..... 6

*This is only a summary of issues and actions discussed at this meeting. It may not represent the fullness of represented ideas or opinions, and it should not be used as a substitute for actual public involvement or public comment on any particular topic unless specifically identified as such.*

## **Opening**

Richard Bloom, Health, Safety & Environmental Protection (HSEP) vice chair welcomed everyone and members made introductions.

JoLynn Garcia, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Federal Coordinator provided members with a safety update.

## **Heat Stress Physiological Monitoring Program**

Ken Way, Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) and Brad Eccleston, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) gave a presentation on the Heat Stress Physiological Monitoring Program<sup>1</sup>.

Ken discussed the physiological monitoring and the differences between Wet bulb globe temperature (WBGT). While WBGT was determined to be a good process, it wasn't without issue considering it doesn't take into account the individual's response to heat. Initially there were both process and trust issues whereby the workforce felt they could be excluded or can be affected negatively with the implementation of physiological monitoring before the 2015 High Heat Season. However, the processes, procedures, and communications were improved with WRPS.

The High Heat Season is not just the warmer months of June through August but Ken explained it is when one adds personal protective equipment (PPE) the High Heat Season could start as early as April, usually running through October. One of the processes included in the approach is better physiological monitoring data collection forms to support the task. The heat stress mitigation checklist was also revised and used as a tool for evaluation on a day-by-day basis.

The heat stress control and implementation procedures as well as physiological monitoring training have been revised. The current process is now protective and well implemented. This was one of the concerns related to physiological monitoring that time and trust to work through. Some individuals thought they could/would be kept from working due to high heart rates.

The WRPS Heat Stress Physiological Monitoring Program has been recognized as a "best in class" Heat Stress Control program for protecting workers. Some of the highlights from the program are that they can remove employees from a workplace stressor before it reaches a critical stage. Emergency medical services can be activated before a heat sensitive related event. There has been no heat related illnesses since implementation of the revised program approach and there have been no heat related work stoppages in the last five seasons, thus increased productivity.

Representatives from labor and safety organizations have approved these processes and the employees value the processes where quantitative measurements can be used for process improvement and better equipment.

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<sup>1</sup> [Heat Stress Physiological Monitoring Program](#)

***Committee Member Questions (Q), Responses (R), and Comments (C):***

*Note: This section reflects individual questions, comments, and agency responses.*

*Q: “Thank you so much for this presentation. Is there a plan to pass this information, lessons learned, checklists, etc., along to the new tank farms contractor? And to ensure a site-wide standard of heat stress worker safety? A new contractor is going to be taking over and the good information you have doesn’t get passed on.”*

R: “We as the DOE have spent a significant amount of time on transition planning to ensure we keep the ball rolling. We believe a significant portion of our personnel will remain at tank farms and they will help maintain our effective systems. DOE is supportive on making sure we don’t lose traction and plan for transition. I’m not super concerned. I think we have good processes in place to move on with the new contract.”

C: “You’re moving into the IDIQ, it’s an extra wrench in there and I’m just concerned it will get lost in the contracting.”

R: “DOE has been super supportive.”

*Q: “During this period of COVID-19, are there surveillances out there on the tank farm and what is the process for the essential work that is planned?”*

R: “There is quite a few surveillances. Not only is the facility safe but my staff is out there to make sure the people out there are safe. It’s a phased approach over time.”

**WRPS Industrial Hygiene Respiratory Protection Program**

Ken Way, Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) and Brad Eccleston (DOE), gave a presentation on the WRPS Industrial Hygiene Respiratory Protection Program<sup>2</sup>.

Ken discussed WRPS continuing to use respiratory protection equipment. There was a third party that reviewed and provided a professional opinion on the Interim Respiratory Protection Selection Template. WRPS has been working carefully so they do not go backwards. The longer-term solution isn’t risk based and we are working towards that currently.

There was a transition from Scott air-purifying respirator cartridges to Mine Safety Appliance (MSA) cartridges due to charcoal-dusting issue in summer 2018. There was a leakage of the activated charcoal, which was why there was a shift to MSA brand respirator cartridges. WRPS also implemented the MSA cartridges across the farms and have since experienced no issues with those.

On November 14, 2019, there was a stop work issued related to the effectiveness of the cleaning of the respiratory masks. Ken described “fuzzies” that could have come from some rags that were from the

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<sup>2</sup> [WRPS Industrial Hygiene Respiratory Protection Program](#)

sanitizing facility. They had inspected a large quantity of masks and sent out communication on how the process works. Ken remarked that whether it was dirty or a quality issue, it was documented so they have a process of working through that.

Overall, WRPS has seen a significant decrease in workforce concerns and issues. One of the things they are not seeing is failure of equipment when it's in use. Prior to the use of equipment, they are doing inspections so they can address any issues. Ken noted it is a strong training process they have implemented.

***Committee Member Questions (Q), Responses (R), and Comments (C):***

*Note: This section reflects individual questions, comments, and agency responses.*

*Q: "Historically the vapor events have been occurring with some kind of external regularity. Most would occur in the spring so since the farm work has been limited, does that limit any odor detection?"*

R: "It's unlikely that they would detect an odor while wearing a respirator. The personal ammonia monitors are one example of improvements we have implemented in the farm to identify a change in conditions related to tank gases/vapors. We didn't see any of those events occur last year but then again it's pretty sporadic."

C: "We also have to be protective outside the farms. I think there is a lot of effort outside the farm."

C: "Sometime s it's helpful for the folks to really use the equipment I just want to encourage that things don't get lost."

C: "Great ideas are suggested by the workforce and in terms of keeping the ball rolling I mentioned back in November DOE and WRPS are working to make sure that all of the great improvements and progress made is captured and effectively institutionalized so that when contractor turnover occurs, the ongoing commitments and improvements continue and are embraced by the new contractors."

*Q: "When things get better there is a move to get rid of supplied air, what other personal monitoring do you have?"*

R: "We have significant chemical sensors in our tool kit and we continuously evaluate new equipment and methods to detect and qualify vapor hazards. We have a whole list of equipment we have been using."

*Q: "You mentioned personal monitors and did I understand they are only looking at ammonia right now?"*

R: "We have been able to look at a lot of information we have had. One of the compounds we have found consistently is the ammonia. We're monitoring because it's a very good indicator something is happening or changing. We currently own about 900 of the units. It's required for every tank farm worker to wear the monitor. We have a procedure how to respond to an instrument alarm, and have established very low control levels. Worker response to an alarm is more of a work pause, and frankly for that work team to segregate away from that area. But it's so we can figure out what's going on. Those are all documented in our process and procedures."

## **Industrial Health and Safety Program Update**

Mark Hughey, CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CHPRC) provided an Industrial Health and Safety Update<sup>3</sup>.

The (CHPRC) workforce will see a lot of changes when they return to the work place. Additional controls and new guidelines have been implemented for social distancing. They are asking people to wash their hands frequently, wear face coverings to work and to wipe down their surfaces. There have been adjustments made to work areas so people are spread out and they are limiting face-to-face meetings. Some facilities allow for remote operations and monitoring. Mark noted MSA does most of the janitorial work and they have received additional training consistent with CDC guidelines for disinfecting and sanitizing.

### *Agency Perspective*

Ginger Wireman, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology): stated Ecology does not have any plans for people to go back to the office but that it is interesting to see what people can do over the phone and work the best they can remotely.

### ***Committee Member Questions (Q), Responses (R), and Comments (C):***

*Note: This section reflects individual questions, comments, and agency responses.*

*Q: “I do wonder if you are having any trouble accessing any equipment you need? We have heard of some shortages. People who are working in the field can’t work from home and eventually people are going to have to go out there.”*

*R: “We are having a little bit of trouble; we did receive some of it and then it all stopped because the vendors shifted their priority. We are seeing it come back in again. We do have enough supplies to resume some work. We don’t plan on everyone coming back all at once.”*

*C: “I will say when it comes to PPE that supplies is a lot slower than cleaning supplies. We set aside all our PPE and are providing upon request from DOE.”*

### **Committee Business and Open Forum**

The November 2019 joint with Tank Waste Committee summary was approved by consensus.

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<sup>3</sup> [Industrial Health and Safety Program Update](#)

Members had a chance to discuss the 3-month look ahead. Members agreed not to add any additional topics.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: Heat Stress Physiological Monitoring Program

Attachment 2: WRPS Industrial Hygiene Respiratory Protection Program

Attachment 3: Industrial Health and Safety Program Update

**Attendees**

**Board Members and Alternates:**

|                        |                          |                        |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Susan Leckband, Member | Bob Suyama, Member       | Liz Mattson, Member    |
| Pam Larsen, Member     | Richard Bloom, Alternate | Emmitt Jackson, Member |

**Others:**

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|---|--|--|
| JoLynn Garcia, DOE                            | Jim Lynch, DOE-ORP                             | Brad Eccleston, DOE                    |
| Dieter Bohrmann, -CHPRC                       | Geoff Tyree, DOE                               | Ginger Wireman, Ecology                |
| Laura Hanses, WRPS                            | Linda Maiden, CHPRC                            | Lindsay Strasser, Northwind            |
| Lynn Tegeler, CHPRC                           |  | Mark Hughey, CHPRC                     |
| Moses Jaraysi, CHPRC                          | Ryan Miller, Ecology                           | Kenneth Way, WRPS                      |
| Dana Gribble, MSA                             | Kelley Wooley, CHPRC                           | Paul Pak, DOE                          |
| Adrian Woolcock, Facilitation Team, ProSidian | Jasmine Martinez, Facilitation Team, ProSidian | Ashley Herring, Facilitator, ProSidian |
| Stan Branch, DOE                              | Brian Stickney, DOE                            |  |