

A wide landscape photograph showing a river winding through a valley at sunset. The sky is filled with vibrant orange, red, and pink clouds. The foreground is a grassy hillside with some shrubs.

## U.S. Department Of Energy Office of River Protection

# Safety Culture Improvement: Past, Present, and Future

Steve Pfaff  
August 8, 2013

# PAST

- **DNFSB Recommendation 2011-1, June 9, 2011, *Safety Culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant***
- **“The investigative record demonstrates that both the DOE and contractor project management behaviors reinforce a subculture at WTP that deters the timely reporting, acknowledgement, and ultimate resolution of technical safety concerns.”**

# PAST

- **HSS Assessment of Nuclear Safety Culture at the Hanford Site Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant, January 2012.**
- **“...in the ORP work environment, there is a definite unwillingness and uncertainty among employees about the ability to openly challenge management decisions. There are definite perceptions that there is not an environment conducive to raising concerns or where management wants or willingly listens to concerns.”**

# PAST

- ORP formed the **Safety Culture Integrated Project Team** and released the *Safety Culture Improvement Plan*, April 2012.
- The *Plan* described nine (9) “Near Term Improvement Actions”
  - those high priority, measurable actions that can produce substantial improvement in ORP’s safety culture within one year.
- ORP reported completion of the nine actions in April 2013, and performed an effectiveness evaluation in May 2013.

# PRESENT

## ORP Safety Culture Improvement Validation and Effectiveness Review results:

- **Action 1 – ORP management development program** (*Partially Implemented / Partially Effective*)
- **Action 2 – ORP employee development program** (*Partially Implemented / Indeterminate Effectiveness*)
- **Action 3 – Implement management and staff expectations for safety culture attributes** (*Partially Implemented / Indeterminate Effectiveness*)
- **Action 4 – Emphasize industry best practices in nuclear operations** (*Partially Implemented / Indeterminate Effectiveness*)

# PRESENT

- **Action 5 – Define roles, responsibilities, authorities, and accountabilities** (*Partially Implemented / Indeterminate Effectiveness*)
- **Action 6 – Implement ORP change management process** (*Partially Implemented / Indeterminate Effectiveness*)
- **Action 7 – Establish Issues Management System** (*Fully Implemented / Partially Effective*)
- **Action 8 – Plan improvements to Employee Concerns Program** (*Fully Implemented / Partially Effective*)
- **Action 9 – Maintain the ORP Safety Culture IPT** (*Partially Implemented / Partially Effective*)

**BOTTOM LINE:** Strong start, much to do

# FUTURE

- **Update the Safety Culture Improvement Plan in collaboration with ORP senior management by August 2013**
  - Using the recent effectiveness review, the safety culture self-assessment, and recent surveys
  - Focus on a few priorities – resolving project uncertainty, improving communication, and implementing roles and responsibilities
  
- **Interact more frequently with ORP divisions and other sites**
  - Provide safety culture training for entire staff
  - Use division and project team meetings to obtain ongoing feedback
  - Query other sites on safety culture improvement efforts
  
- **Anticipate a follow-up HSS review by early 2014**