



# DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HANFORD

[www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov)

**For Immediate Release:**

Oct. 30, 2018

**Media Contacts:**

Mark Heeter, DOE, (509) 373-1970, [Mark.Heeter@rl.doe.gov](mailto:Mark.Heeter@rl.doe.gov)

Patrick Conrad, MSA, (509) 376-5713, [Patrick\\_J\\_Conrad@rl.gov](mailto:Patrick_J_Conrad@rl.gov)



**RICHLAND  
OPERATIONS OFFICE**  
United States Department of Energy



## Hanford Contractor Builds New Homes for Burrowing Owls

RICHLAND, Wash. – The burrowing owl, a candidate for listing as a threatened or endangered species in Washington state, now has a better chance of survival. The Department of Energy Richland Operations Office (RL) and Hanford contractor Mission Support Alliance (MSA) recently teamed up to install or upgrade 45 artificial burrows – or homes – for the owls. The new homes reverse the number of burrows on site that decreased by 64 percent between 2013 and 2017 at Hanford.

“As Site cleanup continues, it’s important we focus on species recovery,” said RL’s Annabelle Rodriguez, who oversees MSA’s ecological monitoring program. “The decline of the burrowing owl is a concern, and we believe these new nesting habitats will help the population recover while restoring ecological integrity at Hanford.”

Workers constructed the burrows using 55-gallon drum halves and six-inch plastic tunnel access, providing a larger nesting space that is easier to monitor and maintain than those previously used.

Twenty-five burrows were installed in new locations, and 20 old burrows were replaced with the updated design.

“Without enough nesting habitats, the burrowing owl population would continue to decline, which would have a negative impact on the rest of the ecosystem at Hanford,” said April Johnson, who leads MSA’s ecological monitoring program.

The new and improved burrows will last longer and allow MSA to monitor the burrowing owl population and track their recovery.

###

---

#### About DOE

*The Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at the Hanford Site near Richland, Wash. Except for a tank waste mission managed by the DOE Office of River Protection, the DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,000 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov).*

#### About MSA

*Mission Support Alliance, a team of [Leidos](#) and [Centerra Group](#), has responsibility for the Mission Support Contract at the Hanford Site. MSA provides a number of cross-cutting services to the DOE and other contractors at the Hanford Site to facilitate cleanup activities. MSA is responsible for areas such as site infrastructure, utilities, transportation, environmental integration, safety, emergency services and training, external affairs, information management and portfolio management. MSA: Partnering to move the mission forward. <https://msa.hanford.gov>*



STAY CONNECTED:

