



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
HANFORD

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RICHLAND
OPERATIONS OFFICE
United States Department of Energy



Hanford Workers Accomplish FY 2017 Groundwater Treatment Goals

RICHLAND, Wash. – Workers at the Hanford Site continued their work to protect the Columbia River from contaminated groundwater by accomplishing two key treatment goals in Fiscal Year 2017, removing contaminants and reducing the size of contaminated areas, or plumes, of groundwater.

During FY 2017, workers with Department of Energy (DOE) contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) treated more than 2.2 billion gallons of groundwater and removed more than 145,000 pounds of contamination, including radioactive elements.

Five pump-and-treat systems along the Columbia River remove a toxic chemical, hexavalent chromium, from groundwater, while a large pump-and-treat facility on the center of the Hanford Site removes more than a half-dozen contaminants, including radioactive carbon tetrachloride and uranium. The facilities pump contaminated groundwater up through wells, transfer it to treatment systems where contaminants are removed, before the treated water is returned to the aquifer through injection wells.

To accomplish the FY 2017 treatment goals, one main focus was on further optimizing Hanford's groundwater treatment facilities.

"Half of our pump-and-treat systems are approximately five years old, and it was time to perform major maintenance activities to keep them running efficiently," said Michael Cline, federal project director for cleanup of soil and groundwater for the DOE Richland Operations Office. "It's been impressive to see the ideas workers put into practice to keep our facilities operating efficiently."

During the past year, workers also increased groundwater treatment capacity by up to 300 gallons per minute at some facilities, by adding specialized pumps at those facilities.

"This increases our treatment abilities, because our pump and treat facilities operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," said John Rendall, vice president of the Soil and Groundwater Remediation Project at CH2M.

Modeling and sampling from the areas of concern show positive results from the groundwater treatment efforts and a reduction in contaminant plumes over time. The contaminants' concentration levels are also coming down. In one particular area along the Columbia River, groundwater treatment efforts have shrunk contamination plumes by more than 20 percent over the past two years. Other plumes have been reduced along the Columbia River as well ([click here for plume map PDF](#))

Since treatment facilities began operating in the mid-1990s, nearly 18 billion gallons of contaminated groundwater have been treated on the Hanford Site.

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.

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