



LAST FUEL SHIPMENT LEAVES K WEST BASIN

The Department of Energy (DOE) and contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company have successfully transported the last fragments of irradiated fuel from a reactor basin along the Columbia River to a storage facility on the Central Plateau of the Hanford Site in southeast Washington State.

Moving the highly radioactive fuel marks a major step forward in preparing the basin for demolition and protecting the Columbia River.

CH2M HILL completed the last shipment of irradiated fuel fragments to Hanford's Canister Storage Building in April 2012, where other irradiated fuel removed from the K Basins is stored. Approximately 2,300 tons of fuel was previously removed from the fuel storage basins of the K East and K West reactors from 2000-2004.

The irradiated fuel fragments resulted from reactor operations to produce plutonium, including N and K Area reactors, as well as approximately 90 pieces of reactor fuel recovered from waste sites near reactors along the river since the 1990s by other Hanford contractors. DOE and its contractors have since cleaned up the waste sites near reactors along the Columbia River where pieces of irradiated fuel might be encountered.

To remove the waste for shipment and storage, workers used long-reach tools to load the fuel fragments and scrap material into baskets in the basin and the baskets were loaded into a larger container called a multi-canister overpack. The pieces range from ¼-inch to 26 inches in length and were stored under approximately 17 feet of water that served as protective shielding.



The container was then transferred to the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility adjacent to the K West Reactor where it was purged with helium gas to vacuum dry the fuel. The container was then shipped for interim storage at the Canister Storage Building until a disposal alternative is available.

For more information about how DOE and its contractors are cleaning up the Hanford Site, visit:

www.hanford.gov
www.plateauremediation.hanford.gov

For more information:

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