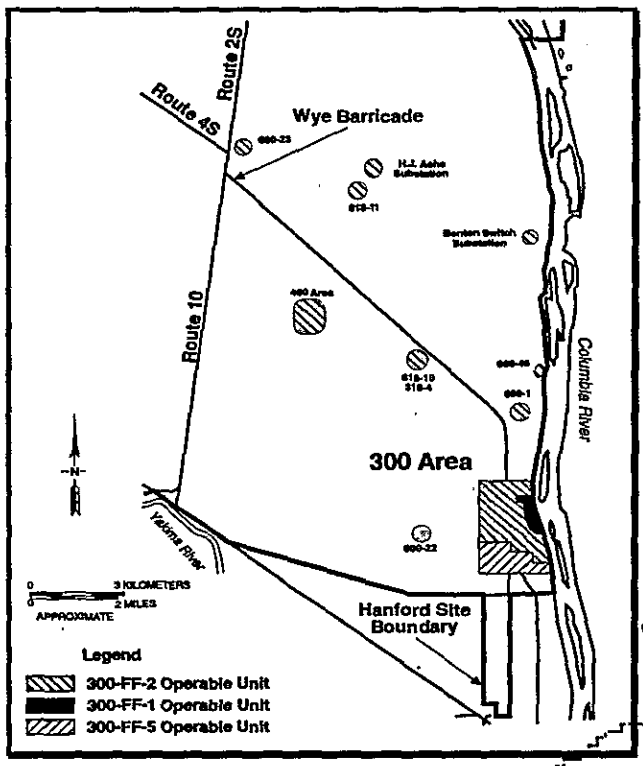
0042477

300-FF-1 and 300-FF-5 Operable Units Proposed Plan
300 Area Process Trenches Modified Closure Plan

FACT SHEET

Tri-Party Agreement

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) are seeking comments on a proposed plan for cleanup of the 300-FF-1 and 300-FF-5 Operable Units and a plan for the modified Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) closure of the 300 Area Process Trenches. The proposed plan briefly describes cleanup alternatives considered for 300-FF-1 and 300-FF-5 and recommends preferred cleanup alternatives. After considering all public comments, the selected cleanup alternatives will be documented in a record of decision. The modified closure plan describes the cleanup and closure of the 300 Area Process Trenches. This is also the public's opportunity to comment on the closure and associated permit conditions which will be incorporated into the Hanford Facility Wide RCRA permit in 1996. Related to the closure, Ecology has made a Determination of Non-significance under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).



BACKGROUND

The Hanford Site's 300 Area, located immediately north of Richland, served as the fuels fabrication complex for the site's defense nuclear materials production reactors, which began operation in 1944. In the 1950s, the 300 Area also became the center for nuclear research and development at Hanford. Although the last of Hanford's plutonium production reactors ceased operations in 1988, the 300 Area has continued its research and development role.

In 1989, the 300 Area was listed on the EPA's National Priorities List for Superfund cleanup. Environmental concerns focused on the site's discharges to the ground of liquids containing radioactive and hazardous waste and the seepage of contaminated groundwater into the nearby Columbia River. Two of the 300 Area's cleanup units are 300-FF-1, which includes three wastewater disposal sites, solid waste burial grounds and miscellaneous soil contamination sites, and 300-FF-5, which addresses the groundwater under the 300 Area.

One of the wastewater sites, the 300 Area Process Trenches, is located on the north end of the 300 Area about 1,000 feet from the river. Built in 1975, the trenches consist of two parallel, unlined ditches. The trenches received up to 2.9 million gallons a day of contaminated wastewater. In 1991, an expedited response action removed contaminated soils from the trenches to reduce further impacts to the groundwater. At the same time, the USDOE reduced the volume of waste discharges to the trenches. All waste liquid discharges to the trenches ended in December 1994 when the USDOE began operation of the 300 Area Liquid Effluent Treatment facility.

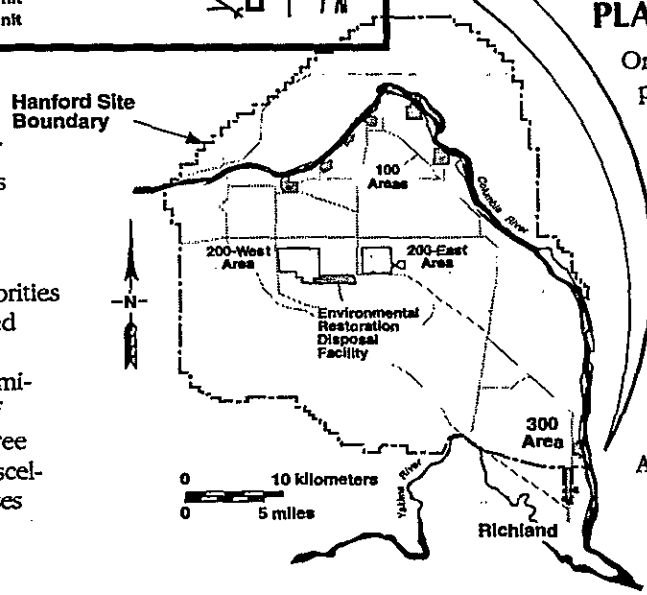
Final closure of the trenches is to be carried out under RCRA and the Washington State Hazardous Waste Management Act because the trenches received dangerous waste after 1980. The 300 Area Process Trenches modified closure is unique because it is integrated with the 300-FF-1 Superfund cleanup to ensure the 300 Area cleanup conforms to the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement and is done in the most economical and efficient way possible.

PROPOSED PLAN

One proposed plan is being issued for two operable units.

300-FF-1

The 300-FF-1 operable unit includes burial grounds and disposal sites for liquid wastes from 300 Area operations.



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Washington State Department of Ecology ▲ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ▲ U.S. Department of Energy

Uranium is the main contaminant of concern although small quantities of other hazardous and radioactive contaminants currently exceed the proposed cleanup standards.

Cleanup is to be carried out under the Superfund law and will achieve cleanup standards and prevent future release of contaminants from the soil to the groundwater. Alternatives for cleanup include no action, leaving waste in place with a soil cap, or excavation of part or all of the waste sites.

The preferred alternative for the wastewater disposal and miscellaneous soil contamination sites calls for excavation and disposal of contaminated soil in Hanford's Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF). The disposal site cleanup in the preferred alternative would take four to seven years to complete at an estimated cost of $24 million. This cost includes the closure of the 300 Area Process Trenches. The preferred alternative also calls for excavation and removal of contaminated materials from the 618-4 Burial Ground in the northwest corner of 300-FF-1. Cleanup of the three-acre burial ground would take two to three years and cost $3.3 million. Contaminated material would be sent to ERDF.

300-FF-5

The 300-FF-5 operable unit investigation focused on groundwater under and river water near the 300 Area. Uranium is the most widespread groundwater contaminant although trichlorothene and dichlorothene are present in the groundwater in a localized area. The cleanup goal is to ensure that there is no unacceptable exposure to contaminated groundwater and that groundwater contaminant levels do not cause a release to the river that could pose an unacceptable risk to humans or the environment.

Groundwater cleanup alternatives include allowing contaminants to diminish naturally over time, slurry wall containment combined with pumping and treating groundwater, and sole reliance upon pumping and treating groundwater. The preferred alternative is to allow groundwater contaminants to naturally diminish over time. Groundwater monitoring will verify the reduction of contamination, and institutional controls such as deed restrictions on groundwater withdrawals will continue until cleanup standards are met. Under the preferred alternative, uranium contamination will drop to groundwater cleanup standards in 3 to 10 years, and other contaminants will not reach the river or surface water in concentrations exceeding cleanup standards.

300 AREA PROCESS TRENCHES MODIFIED CLOSURE PLAN

The 300 Area Process Trenches Modified Closure Plan describes the closure of the trenches' contaminated soil, piping, structures, and debris. Cleanup work will be completed in conjunction with the plan approved for 300-FF-1. The preferred alternative for 300 Area Process Trenches cleanup calls for excavation and disposal of soil until industrial cleanup standards are met.

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

A 45-day comment period will start December 4, 1995, and end January 17, 1996. Copies of the 300-FF-1 Operable Unit and 300-FF-5 Operable Units Proposed Plan, SEPA documents, and the 300 Area Process Trenches Modified Closure Plan, and draft permit conditions are available for review at the following Hanford Public Information Repositories:

SEATTLE
University of Washington
Suzzallo Library
Government Publications Room
Seattle, WA
ATTN: Eleanor Chase

PORTLAND
Branford Price Millar Library
Science and Engineering Library
934 SW Harrison
Portland, OR
ATTN: Michael Bowman or
Susan Thomas

SPOKANE
Gonzaga University
Foley Center
E. 502 Boone
Spokane, WA
ATTN: Tim Fuhrman

RICHLAND
USDOE Public Reading Room
Washington State University
100 Sprout Rd. Room 130 West
Richland, WA
ATTN: Terri Traub

All information in the repositories, plus the administrative record, including all data submitted by the applicants, may be reviewed at the following administrative record locations:

SEATTLE
U.S. Environ. Protection Agency
1200 6th Ave.
Park Place Building
Haz. Waste Div. Records Center
Seattle, WA 98101
ATTN: Dawn Musgrove
(206) 553-4494
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (M-F)

LACEY
Washington State Dept. of Ecology
300 Desmond Drive S.E.
Lacey, WA 98503
ATTN: Tami Schwender
(360) 407-7125
9 a.m. - noon; 1-4 p.m. (M-F)

RICHLAND
Westinghouse Hanford Co.
Environ. Data Management Center
2440 Stevens Center Place
Richland, WA 99352
ATTN: Debbi Isom
(509) 376-2530
9 a.m. - noon; 1-3:30 p.m. (M-F)

While no public meeting is currently planned, a meeting may be requested. To provide adequate notice for all Hanford stakeholders, public meeting requests should be submitted by December 19, 1995, to either of the addresses or phone numbers listed below.

300-FF-1/300-FF-5 Operable Units Proposed Plan
Dave Einan
U.S. Environ. Protection Agency
712 Swift Blvd.
Suite 5
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 376-3883

300 Area Process Trenches Modified Closure Plan
Ted Wooley
Washington Dept. of Ecology
Nuclear Waste Program
1315 W. 4th Ave.
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509) 736-3012

Written comments may be submitted during the comment period to either Ecology or EPA at the addresses above. All who comment will receive responses to their comments. All public comments will be considered in making the final decision on the proposed plans and modified closure plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL HANFORD CLEANUP TOLL-FREE, 1-800-321-2008.

If you have special accommodation needs or would like this material in an alternative format (large type, Braille, cassette tape, or on computer) please contact: Michelle Davis at (360) 407-7126 (Voice) or (360) 407-6206 (TDD).