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Hanford invites help for land use

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The Department of Energy is inviting Hanford stakeholders to participate in planning for post-cleanup Hanford.

The first meeting on land use at Hanford is tentatively set for Sept. 27 at a yet-undetermined location.

DOE, Benton County and Richland have launched parallel land-use planning efforts addressing Hanford with the end results not expected until 1997.

Some planning is expected to overlap, but officials hope the three parties can coordinate goals.

DOE and Benton County have launched the most extensive efforts encompassing most of Hanford.

Hanford's North Slope, which is in Franklin and Grant counties, is under consideration for federal wild-and-scenic designation.

Richland is limiting its land-use planning to southern Hanford, which is within the city's urban-growth boundaries. That would include the 300 and 1100 areas.

On Friday, DOE sent letters to Northwest Indian tribes, the four counties encompassing Hanford, city governments and the Hanford Advisory Board to invite them to participate in DOE's planning, said Paul Krupin, DOE's land-use planning project manager.

DOE's land-use planning efforts are linked with an environmental impact study, which also is under way. The aim includes determining how clean to make specific areas, and whether each area should be released from federal control.

DOE plans to have a draft remedial action environmental impact study ready by February, with public hearings in March.

A final set of recommendations is expected by January 1997, with a decision in March 1997.

Meanwhile, Benton County already has begun the public portion of its land-use planning for Hanford.

The county is trying to define "critical areas," which would include wetlands, areas prone to landslides, fish and wildlife areas and places with other ecological concerns.

If the county designates an area as "critical," development in it would be banned, limited or allowed only if mitigating measures are taken.

The county plans to take the bulk of 1996 to tackle the cultural, economical, transportation and infrastructure parts of the land-use plan. And it expects to come up with a recommended plan and some alternate scenarios in the last half of 1996.

The county's planners are aiming for public hearings before the Benton County planning commission in October or November 1996.

Then hearings would be held before the county commissioners with final decisions expected in late 1996 or by February 1997.

