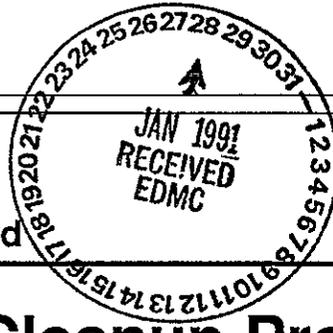




The Environmental
Restoration of Hanford



Facts

Expedited Cleanup Projects

Background

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) have been working on a strategy to speed up the cleanup of waste sites at Hanford. Three projects have been selected to undergo expedited cleanup actions, and a fourth, to undergo technical evaluation on its feasibility.

The Tri-Party Agreement, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) require numerous studies to take place before cleanup can occur. Currently, it takes 3 1/2 to seven years to complete site investigations, to study the various methods to clean up a site, and reach a decision for final remedial action. However, these same laws allow cleanup actions to occur before completion of these studies in those instances where threats exist to people or the environment or where preventive measures are appropriate.

Work on procedures to accelerate cleanup investigations and waste removal actions has been pursued by all three parties for the last eight months. However, work on specific cleanup actions came to the attention of the general public on October 18, 1990, when DOE, EPA and Ecology signed an agreement identifying three potential sites for expedited cleanup action. The Tri-Party Agreement project managers have since then agreed that three projects should undergo expedited cleanup, and a fourth, be evaluated for technical feasibility.

The actions at the three sites are interim actions and not the final cleanup activity. The results of the expedited cleanup will be folded into the ongoing investigations and decision-making processes relating to each area or operable unit.

The Tri-Party Agreement project managers are finalizing methods in which sites will be evaluated continuously on whether expedited cleanup is necessary. These procedures will be incorporated into a strategy dealing with all site investigations at Hanford.

What are the three projects?

The three expedited cleanup projects include a site where barrels filled with radioactively contaminated hexone, an organic solvent, were buried in Hanford's 300 Area; a vapor plume above the groundwater in the 200 West Area which contains carbon tetrachloride; and contaminants in trenches in the 300 Area which could reach the Columbia River and Richland's drinking water supply.

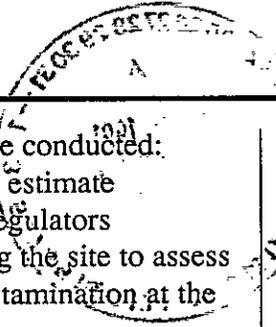
At 100-N Springs the groundwater has been contaminated with trace amounts of strontium-90 by discharges from N Reactor. This area is being evaluated for the technical feasibility of including it as an expedited project.

Steps toward cleanup

Expedited cleanup requires the same careful planning and approval needed for all cleanup actions, but on a shorter time schedule.

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START



The following steps must still be conducted:

- develop a schedule and cost estimate agreeable to the DOE and regulators
- prepare a plan for evaluating the site to assess the nature and extent of contamination at the site
- conduct the evaluations
- develop a proposal which includes an evaluation of the various cleanup alternatives as well as information about public health and welfare, environmental impacts, technical feasibility, institutional considerations and cost. In addition to being approved by Ecology and EPA, this plan must be reviewed by the public.

safety documents and technical activity plans have to be developed and written. Equipment that might be used in the cleanup also has to be prepared or purchased.

Once the proposal is approved, the cleanup action can be taken. All steps are carefully documented, so they will not interfere with the final cleanup plan.

For further information about the expedited projects, contact one of the following people:

- EPA: Paul Day at 509-376-6623
- Ecology: Tim Nord at 206-438-7021
- DOE: Steve Wisness at 509-376-6798

While the proposal is being prepared, other documents and plans are also finalized. Permits,

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