Tri-Party Agreement

Hanford Update

Spring 2004

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

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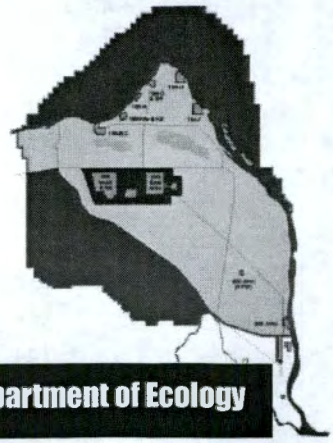

Annual "State of the Hanford Site" Meetings Planned

Regional public meetings also cover Hanford cleanup budget

The Tri-Party Agencies (U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Washington State Department of Ecology) invite you to join them for the third annual series of "State of the Hanford Site" meetings.

Decision-makers from each of the agencies, along with representatives from regional environmental interest groups and the Hanford Advisory Board, will be on hand to talk about recent accomplishments and upcoming challenges in the Hanford cleanup effort. This year, the meetings will also double as the annual forum for discussion about the Hanford cleanup budget.

The meetings are scheduled for:

▪ March 8	Woodland Park Zoo	Seattle, WA
▪ March 9	Mid-Columbia Library	Kennewick, WA
▪ March 17	EcoTrust building	Portland, OR
▪ March 18	Hood River Senior Center	Hood River, OR

For more information, or for directions to specific locations, please contact the Hanford Cleanup Line at 1-800-321-2008, or visit the following website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/calendar/caldetail.htm#sos

Public Comment Periods & Meetings

Jan. 21 – Mar. 8, 2004 Public comment period for the Radioactive Liquid Waste Tank Procedural Closure. No hearing is scheduled at this time.

Feb. 23 – Apr. 9, 2004 Public comment period for the Draft Tank Waste Treatment Plant Permit Modifications. No hearing is scheduled at this time.

←See State of the Site meeting information in feature article!

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Hanford Cleanup Line

1-800-321-2008

Call the Hanford Cleanup Line for more information about these and other Hanford cleanup issues and activities.

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News & Notes

Updates & Status Reports

Tri-Cities Business Gets $9.1 Million Soil Cleanup Subcontract

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE)-Richland Operations Office contractor, Bechtel Hanford, awarded a subcontract valued at $9.1 million for soil remediation to Federal Engineers and Constructors (FE&C), a small Richland-based business. Site work began in late January and is expected to be completed in October 2006.

This project includes locating, characterizing, and remediating as many as fourteen waste sites and burial grounds in the 100 B/C Area. These waste sites are the result of construction and operation of the B and C Reactors between 1944 and 1969.

Of the fourteen identified sites, the boundaries of two must be clearly defined due to the expected wide range of radiologically or chemically contaminated soil, debris, equipment, building materials, as well as non-radioactive materials. In addition, the need to remediate at least four of these sites must be established.

FE&C will excavate, sort, reduce, stockpile, package, load, weigh, and transport the materials from the waste sites to a container transfer area. A separate subcontractor will then transport the material to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) on the Hanford Site.

Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA)

As cleanup progress continues at the Hanford Site, a number of surplus buildings will be decommissioned. Decommissioning activities include decontamination and/or demolition. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) provides the framework to decommission facilities that is protective of worker and public health and the environment, ensures public involvement, and achieves timely risk reduction.

Most Hanford facilities will be decommissioned under a non-time critical (NTC) removal action. The process begins with the development of a document called an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA). The EE/CA evaluates the facility, establishes the objectives of an NTC removal action, identifies and analyzes the alternatives, and recommends a given alternative. A 30-day public comment period is required before.

Hanford's Risk-Based End State Vision Document

The USDOE-Richland Operations Office and Office of River Protection sent a draft "Hanford Risk-Based End State Vision Document" to USDOE-Headquarters in November 2003 and held four public meetings throughout the month of December to collect public comments. Headquarters reviewed the first draft and provided draft comments. Hanford is required to submit a second draft to Headquarters by February 1, 2004. The submittal will include public, regulator, and tribal comments received on the first draft. The document will also be released publicly the same day.

The Hanford Risk-Based End State Vision describes potential risk-based cleanup options consistent with established land use planning for areas of the Hanford Site. This USDOE-wide approach to cleanup could potentially reduce time and costs by seeking to develop ultimate cleanup criteria earlier, based on analysis of risks associated with expected end state uses. The vision document is not a decision document, nor is it a license to do less cleanup. It's a new approach to "begin with the end in mind."

News & Notes

Updates & Status Reports
(Continued)

River Corridor Cleanup

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) monitor the tons of contaminated soil removed from the Columbia River shoreline as an indicator of progress in Hanford cleanup. The agencies note that the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) passed the half-way mark at the end of 2003. The more than 4 ½ million tons of waste dug up in the last four years is 50% of the estimated total contaminated soil and debris in the Hanford 100 Area. John Price, Environmental Restoration Project Manager for Ecology, said that "USDOE is on a roll in the Hanford 100 Area," and that "they've got a 'production line' mentality to moving really large quantities of soil and debris." This tonnage indicator demonstrates real protection of the Columbia River.

The cleanup work was done under a 1995 Record of Decision signed by Ecology, EPA, and USDOE. From 1944 to 1971, millions of gallons of water that cooled the nuclear reactors were dumped into ditches and ponds that drained into the soil. The water left behind radioactivity and hazardous chemicals, which is what USDOE has been cleaning up.

Future excavation of contaminated soil is more difficult than work already completed because it involves exploring 43 "burial grounds" where radioactive debris from nuclear reactors was disposed. As cleanup of the contaminated soil continues, future cleanup efforts will be focused on groundwater contamination. In December 2003, Ecology asked USDOE to do three things in response to elevated levels of chromium at the 100-D Area: (1) cut and cap water lines that are potentially leaking; (2) extend an existing barrier that treats the chromium in the ground; and (3) take additional samples to find the source of the chromium contamination. USDOE has already completed the first task and will begin the other two tasks in March 2004.

River Corridor Baseline Risk Assessment Project

In order to better assess the potential risk to people and the environment from contaminated materials at Hanford, a Baseline Risk Assessment will be completed for the River Corridor.

This risk assessment will ultimately help decide what cleanup actions are needed along the River Corridor stretch of the Hanford Site. A risk assessment is required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) process in order to achieve a final Record of Decision.

In the Columbia River assessment, workers will gauge potential risks that may remain in and along the Columbia River, as well as the upland areas, after waste sites and burial grounds have been cleaned. To learn more about the project and opportunities for public involvement, visit the Risk Assessment and Site Closure website at: http://www.bhi-erc.com/projects/risk/risk.htm.

Risk assessments for the 100 and 300 Area components of this BRA are scheduled to be completed by April 2007.

News & Notes

Updates & Status Reports
(Continued)

Hanford Releases Final Solid Waste Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) released the final Hanford Solid Waste (Radioactive and Hazardous) Environmental Impact Statement (HSW EIS) on February 9, 2004. They cannot issue any Records of Decision until 30 days following the document being published in the Federal Register, which is expected to occur February 13, 2004.

The first draft of the HSW EIS was released for public comment in 2002. Once the comment period was over, USDOE redrafted the document and released it for another comment period in 2003. After receiving final comments from the Washington State Department of Ecology, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, area Tribal nations, stakeholders, and the general public, the HSW EIS was finalized.

The HSW EIS analyzes alternatives for: (1) disposing of immobilized low-activity waste from the Hanford tanks, low-level waste, and mixed low-level waste; (2) treating mixed low-level waste; and (3) processing and certifying transuranic waste prior to its shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico for disposal.

The entire 4,000 page document and/or a 60-page summary can be viewed online at: www.hanford.gov/eis/eis-0286D2/index.cfm.

First Phase of 300 Area Cleanup Almost Done

The USDOE-Richland Operations Office and contractor Bechtel Hanford, Inc., are nearly finished with the first phase of the 300 Area cleanup effort.

In July 2004, 117 acres along the Columbia River will be "ready for industrial reuse" following the completion of administrative closure procedures. Numerous trucks crossing Stevens Boulevard across from the 300 Area are in the final stages of work importing backfill from a "borrow" site on the other side of the highway.

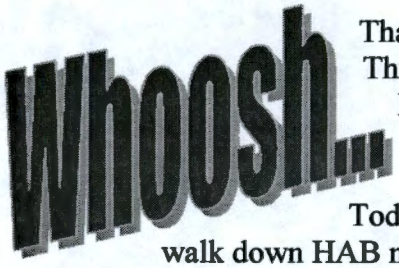
Approximately 288,000 cubic yards of loose dirt are required to backfill the waste sites. The trucks – which carry about twice the load of a normal dump truck – will make about 200 trips per day from the borrow site to the former waste sites. Workers will then re-grade the area for its future use in industrial development. As corporate and public interest grows in developing the land, USDOE and the City of Richland will work together on path forward.

Prior to backfilling the area, workers excavated several process ponds, waste sites, landfills, process trenches, and sanitary sewer trenches. Contaminated soil, waste materials and other debris were removed – some of it treated and some repackaged – and transported to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility for permanent disposal.

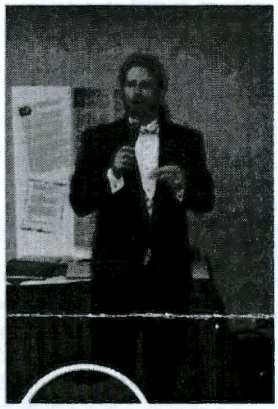
"We believe that a significant amount of material that posed an ongoing threat to groundwater quality as well as a future threat to site users has been removed and the area is now on track to be reindustrialized," said Nick Ceto, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Hanford Program Manager.

Hanford Advisory Board Celebrates 10th Anniversary

by Susan Leckband, HAB Member



That's how fast 10 years seems to have flown by for the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB). Thursday, February 5th, the HAB celebrated 10 years of commitment to providing the Tri Parties consensus advice on Hanford cleanup and support of the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA). The anniversary celebration followed the regular meeting and was sponsored by Fluor Hanford, CH2M Hill, Enviroissues, Bechtel, Battelle, and Hedges Winery. Todd Martin, HAB Chairperson, was the tuxedoed emcee, Susan Leckband provided a short walk down HAB memory lane, and Rick Bond capped the evening with a "roasting" of many folks involved with the HAB plus a memorable new acronym dictionary.



Identifying the organizations to be represented on the HAB, crafting a charter, and coming to consensus on anything seemed nigh on impossible in the early days. But those hardy souls, some of whom had participated in earlier citizen involvement activities such as the Tank Waste Task Group and Future Site Uses Working Group, persevered to identify issues and began to develop into the board it is today. After a tumultuous first year, a new chairperson, Merilyn Reeves, was selected and was instrumental in providing the stability, sensibility, objectivity, and leadership strength the HAB needed to find the path forward to consensus and credibility.

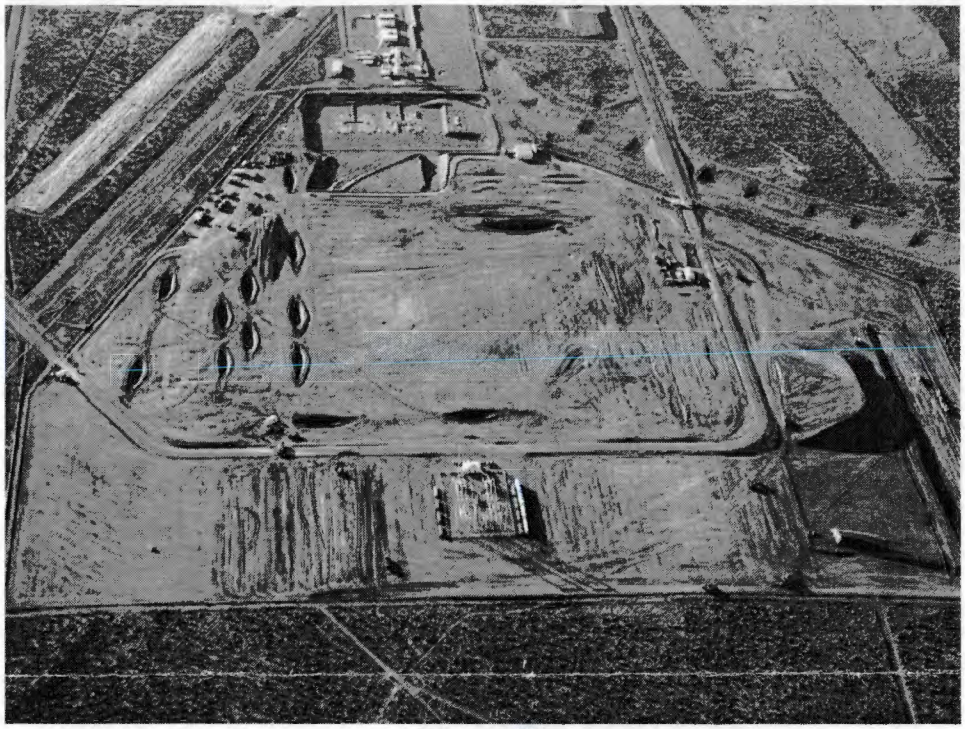
The HAB evolved significantly over the years while providing the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its "regulators", the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with formal advice and informal counsel on policy issues relating to cleanup. Although the interests represented by seats on the HAB are polar opposites on some issues, the board has been able to put partisanship aside in the spirit of the TPA to become effective in influencing some cleanup decisions.

Respect for each other and finding common ground on which to build consensus advice are the cornerstones that help make the board work successfully. There is an overarching understanding that we all want the same thing – a cleaner, safer environment as our legacy to our children and grandchildren. The anniversary cake said it all, the HAB survived by dogged determination to "out-sit, out-talk, and out-last" any attempts to steer the board off course.

Letters to the HAB for its years of service to the agencies and the public were received from Christine Gregoire, WA State Attorney General, Keith Klein, DOE-Richland Manager, and Linda Hoffman, Interim Director, Ecology. The letters recognized the board for its extraordinary diversity, institutional knowledge, dedication, and public process. "You have earned the congratulations and gratitude of all citizens of the Northwest and the nation." – *Christine Gregoire.*

The HAB has been witness to much Hanford cleanup success in its 10 years and recognizes there is much more to be done. The HAB will not rest on its laurels and expects to continue monitoring cleanup and serving the public by providing informed advice to DOE, Ecology, and the EPA.

Hanford Waste Treatment Plant Construction Update



January 2003

As of December 2003, the Waste Treatment Plant project is 30% complete.

Quantities of Work Completed:

- Earth work: 1,205,600 cubic yards
- Concrete: 87,100 cubic yards
- Rebar: 12,340 tons
- Piping: 103.600 feet
- Electrical Raceway: 172,500 feet
- HVAC Ductwork: 72,500 pounds

January 2004

Hanford Happenings

3/2004 **Annual State of the Hanford Site Meetings**
(For locations and times, see front page)

3/2/2004 **Hanford Budget and Baseline Workshop**
Location: Richland Red Lion (Hanford House) Hotel, 802 George Washington Way, Richland, WA
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

3/2/2004 **Hanford Advisory Board Budget and Contracts Committee Meeting**
Location: Federal Bldg., Room 142, 825 Jadwin Ave., Richland, WA
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

3/31/2004 **Hanford Advisory Board Public Involvement and Communication Committee Meeting**
Location: TBD
Time: TBD

4/1/2004 **Hanford Advisory Board Meeting**
Location: Richland Red Lion (Hanford House) Hotel, 802 George Washington Way, Richland, WA
Time: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

4/2/2004 **Hanford Advisory Board Meeting**
Location: Richland Red Lion (Hanford House) Hotel, 802 George Washington Way, Richland, WA
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

U.S. Department of Energy
P.O. Box 550; MSIN A7-75
Richland, WA 99352

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