



START ERDF

The Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility

Tri-Party Agreement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington State Department of Ecology, and U.S. Department of Energy want your opinion on a proposed plan to build and operate the Hanford Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility. The public comment period begins **October 17** and ends **November 30, 1994**. The Environmental Protection Agency is the lead regulator for this proposal. All comments will be considered by the agencies before a decision is issued.

Send written comments to:
Ms. Pam Innis
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
712 Swift Avenue, Suite 5
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 376-4919

Background

Starting in 1943 and continuing into the 1980s, materials for nuclear weapons were produced at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. In the process, land and water were contaminated with a variety of chemical and radioactive pollutants.

To address some of the most difficult pollution problems in the United States, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Ecology signed in 1989 the *Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order*, better known as the Tri-Party Agreement or TPA. This document guides cleanup by listing Hanford's cleanup needs, setting schedules, and

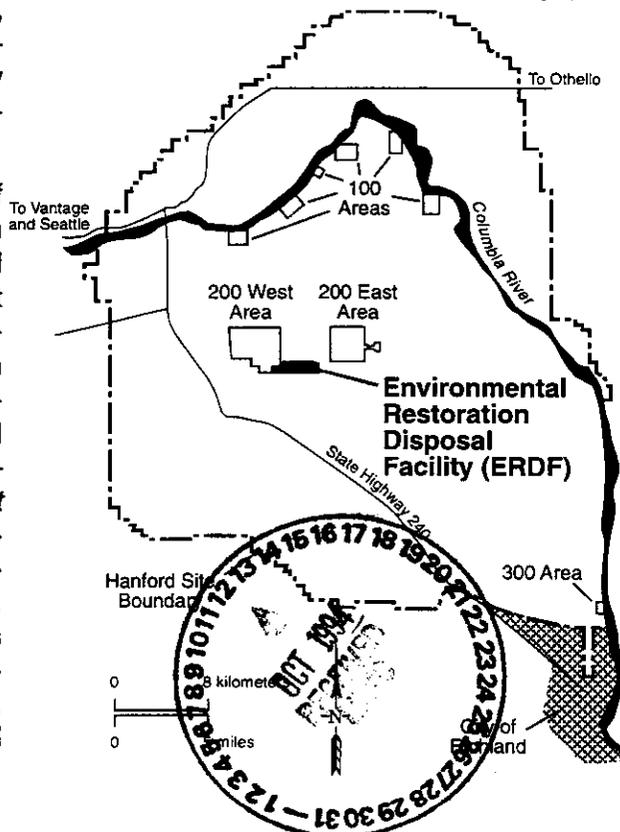
defining legal structures to ensure the work is performed.

Large scale cleanup activities will begin soon at the Hanford Site. These cleanups, called Environmental Restoration, will produce large quantities of solid waste. A proposed central landfill has been designed to safely deposit soil and rubble contaminated with "hazardous" (chemical), low-level radioactive and "mixed" (combined hazardous chemicals and radioactivity) wastes.

Currently, there is no effective technology to remove radioactivity from such waste. Disposal of these wastes at landfills outside Hanford would be expensive and require shipment over public highways and railroads. Existing Hanford burial grounds do not have the capacity for the expected quantities of soil and waste.

What is ERDF?

The proposed Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) would be a landfill authorized under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). It is designed as a single 70-foot-deep trench with two side-by-side cells, each measuring 500 by 500 feet at the base. It could be expanded cell-by-cell as necessary. If used to capacity, the landfill dimensions could be 1,420 feet wide by 9,420 long at ground level (approximately one-half square mile) and 1,000 by 9,000 feet at the bottom. With support facilities such as roads, container handling equipment, offices, maintenance and storage facilities, safety

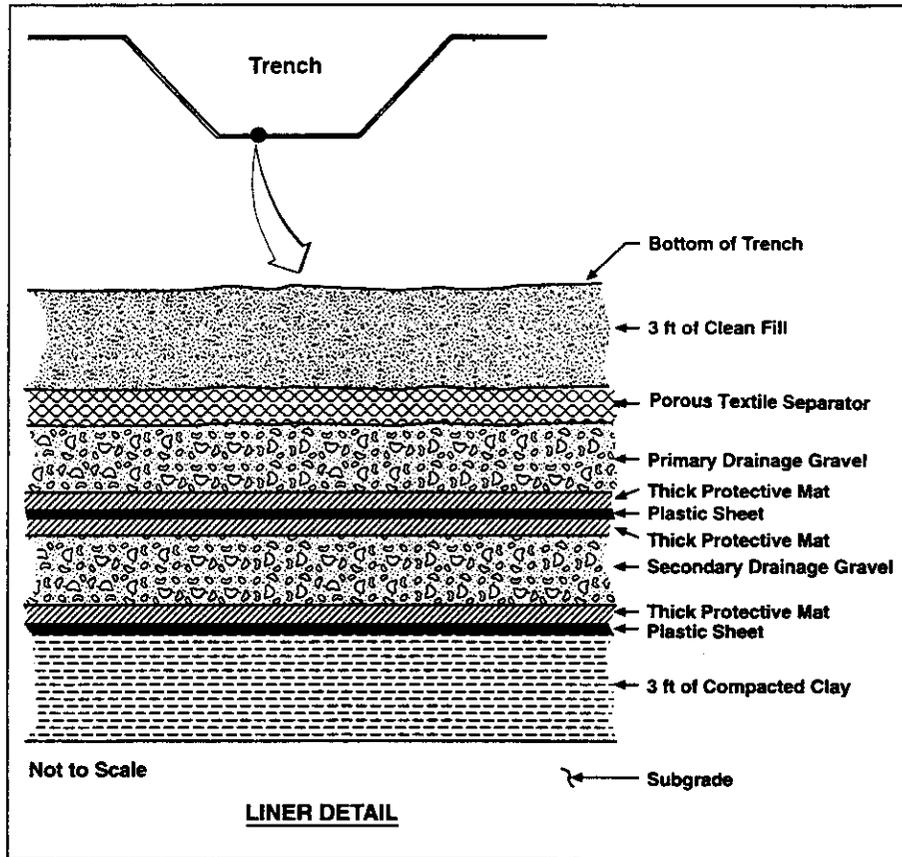


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systems, and buffer zones, total land used for the ERDF would be no more than 1.6 square miles.

location and regulatory requirements. Some parts of the proposal were changed in response

To provide maximum protection to human health and the environment, the landfill would be double-lined, equipped with a leachate (contaminated liquid) collection system (see cross section) and a protective cap to close the landfill.



to comments, other sections stayed the same.

Originally, the regulatory package was to have included Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) cleanup requirements as part of the CERCLA record of decision. However, because portions of the RCRA cleanup rules are currently under legal challenge elsewhere,

What would go into the ERDF?

Only Hanford cleanup waste would go to the landfill. Waste would be transported by truck from cleanup sites to the landfill. Soil and demolition debris contaminated with hazardous, radioactive and mixed waste are expected to be disposed of in the landfill. Wastes originated at the nine plutonium production reactors built in the 100 Areas along the Columbia River, uranium fuel rod fabrication, technical support and research facilities in the 300 Area, also near the river, and later from certain units within the 200 Area.

Response to Public Scoping

In February, the Tri-Party agencies presented to the public a package detailing proposed Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility design,

the three agencies agreed to design and construct this landfill only under CERCLA. The three agencies believe CERCLA rules guarantee that only Hanford site past-practice waste can ever go into the landfill and will provide a faster regulatory timeline. Because the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) does not apply to CERCLA actions, a state environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Many comments expressed concern about the proposed location. The area between the 200 West and 200 East areas remains the site of choice (see map). It is protective because of its distance from the Columbia River and height above the local water table; it is central to transportation and utilities systems; and it allows cleanup to proceed on schedule.

Other critical comments focused on the size of the facility. In response, the original design, which

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would have covered six square miles, was changed so only 1.6 square miles will be needed. Another concern was whether waste from outside Hanford would come to the facility.

How will ERDF be regulated?

To respond to public concerns about getting on with Hanford cleanup, the Tri-Party agencies want to cut back on duplicate processes. They, therefore, agreed to use the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility as a pilot project to integrate regulations.

The ERDF regulatory package includes three parts: a CERCLA proposed plan, a CERCLA remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS), and a National Environmental Policy Act "road map." The CERCLA proposed plan summarizes the remedial investigation and feasibility study and presents the preferred alternatives; it also discusses facility need. The remedial investigation and feasibility study is the actual study done to find a preferred solution. The road map tells how and where National Environmental Policy Act environmental values were considered in the regulatory package; it is included as an attachment to the remedial investigation and feasibility study.

The regulators believe the CERCLA documents for the ERDF are functionally equivalent to an environmental impact statement (EIS) because they both provide environmental analysis of the problem and proposed solutions.

Following evaluation of this round of public comments, the Environmental Protection Agency will issue a CERCLA record of decision (ROD) documenting a preferred course of action. If approved, construction of the first two 500-by-500-foot cells would start in February, 1995. The ERDF is expected to begin taking waste by September, 1996.

How Can You Be Involved?

Give the agencies your opinions about the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility during the public comment period **October 17 through November 30, 1994**. To request a copy of the proposed plan, call Hanford Cleanup toll-free 1-800-321-2008.

Public meetings on ERDF will be held in conjunction with meetings about Environmental Restoration Refocusing. See back page for locations. Environmental Restoration Refocusing are modifications to the Tri-Party Agreement cleanup schedules.

All documents in the regulatory package are available for review at the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement Public Information Repositories:

SEATTLE

University of Washington
Suzzallo Library
Government Publications Room
(206) 543-4664
Attn: Eleanor Chase

SPOKANE

Gonzaga University
Foley Center
E. 502 Boone
(509) 328-4220 EXT 3125
Attn: Tim Fuhrman

PORTLAND

Portland State University
Branford Price Millar Library
Science and Engineering Floor
SW Harrison and Park
(503) 725-3690
Attn: Michael Bowman or Susan Thomas

RICHLAND

Washington State University, Tri-Cities
USDOE Public Reading Room
100 Sprout Road, Room 130 West
(509) 376-8583, Attn: Terri Traub

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Combined Public Meetings Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility Environmental Restoration Refocusing

November 14
Hood River, Oregon
Hood River Inn
Gorge Room
7 - 9:30 p.m.

November 15
Seattle
Seattle Center House
Conference Center Room A
7 - 9:30 p.m.

November 16
Richland
Hanford House
802 George Washington Way
7 - 9:30 p.m.

November 30
Portland
Red Lion Inn, Lloyd Center
1000 N.E. Multnomah
7 - 9:30 p.m.

For special accommodation needs, contact Michelle Davis, Ecology, (206) 407-7126 or (206) 407-7155 (TDD).

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