



Hanford Advisory Board Progress Report Fiscal Year 1999

Providing Advice on Site Cleanup and Waste Management to the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the State of Washington, Department of Ecology

*Maintaining the Focus
on Cleanup
in a Time of Transition*

The Board is an independent, non-partisan, and broadly representative body consisting of a balanced mix of the diverse interests that are affected by Hanford cleanup issues. The primary mission of the HAB is to provide informed recommendations and advice to the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington Department of Ecology on major policy issues related to the cleanup of the Hanford Site.

Mission Statement
Hanford Advisory Board

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Marilyn Reeves, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

I'm often asked why it has taken so long to clean up and stabilize Hanford's radioactive and hazardous wastes. These queries generally come from individuals who have never seen the site, cannot envision the size and complexity of its buildings and their contents, and have little understanding about the short and long-term risks to workers, the public or the environment.

It is a legitimate question. Although the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) is ten years old, milestones are still being negotiated on the schedule for removal and treatment of Hanford's most urgent risk, the tank wastes. Meantime, the witch's brew of radioactive and hazardous wastes remain in 177 aging tanks. Shuffling these wastes from one tank to another is a temporary band-aid. Milestones for the construction and operation of a tank waste vitrification treatment plant are urgently needed.

Spent fuel rods in their murky debris stored in the K Reactor Basins remain an urgent risk to the Columbia River. The K Basins were not designed for long-term storage of this high-level radioactive waste.

There are urgent risks associated with 17.8 metric tons of highly toxic, mobile plutonium wastes that remain scattered within 45 facilities that make up the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP). TPA milestones are not yet in place to decontaminate and decommission this risky facility.

Cleanup and stabilization has occurred at many waste sites during the past 10 years. Unfortunately, such successes are overshadowed by the urgent risks that remain.

This past year has been characterized by major managerial changes within the three cleanup agencies, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology). However, the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) and its committees have continued to provide forums so managers, regulators, and stakeholders can share information, discuss technical and financial concerns, and resolve misunderstandings.

Newcomers and all charged with cleanup can benefit from the expertise, experience, and historical perspective of HAB members and alternates. Sharing information and seeking consensus on difficult issues can help speed cleanup.

We hope that the HAB's Year 2000 Progress Report can document real progress on removal of urgent risks. We want to report that the scheduled removal of K Basin spent fuel has actually begun. We want to report that construction has begun for tank waste vitrification. We want to report that PFP decommissioning and decontamination is well underway. We want the second decade of cleanup to begin with real progress toward elimination of these urgent risks.

Marilyn Reeves, Chair

DOLLARS AND SENSE COMMITTEE

In 1999, the Dollars and Sense Committee again provided the HAB, DOE-Headquarters, and DOE-Richland, the Northwest public, and regional opinion leaders with an independent, exhaustive review of the DOE priorities for future Hanford cleanup budgets, focusing on the 2001 budget. The HAB adopted advice developed by the committee that severely criticized DOE plans to seek only “level” funding for Hanford cleanup through 2006 without increases for inflation, urgent safety work and TPA compliance. The Committee developed numerous sound proposals to reduce the compliance gap and increase the amount of real cleanup that could be accomplished, including cost saving efficiencies and eliminating funding for non-cleanup activities. The Committee noted much work needs to be done to reduce costs at Hanford, but other DOE sites need to reduce their indirect and direct overheads dramatically to free up funds for cleanup of the entire DOE complex. The Committee offered to work with DOE-Headquarters on this as well as contract reform to enhance complex-wide savings.

Regional and HAB concern over the price tag for the privatized tank waste vitrification contract between DOE and BNFL remains high. In order for DOE to have a sound business plan and credibility with Congress and the public, DOE must conduct credible studies comparing the current privatization path’s costs, budgets and risks with alternative contracting and financing mechanisms. The HAB believes that the amount of tank wastes to be retrieved and vitrified by 2018 needs to be more than the 10% planned under the current baseline at a cost of \$6.9 billion. The Committee and the HAB asked that independent advice be provided to the HAB to assist in reviewing DOE studies and that the HAB be able to nominate an outside expert to participate in DOE’s own reviews of alternative financing, but DOE turned down this request. The Committee expects to interact with the external and independent reviewers and follow up on HAB advice on the scope of these studies and potential savings from alternative contracting and financing.

Gerald Pollet, Chair

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION COMMITTEE

The Environmental Restoration Committee has spent the past year focused on building an understanding of the issues surrounding the efforts of the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project across the site. Now, with the recent formation of the Office of River Protection, we are trying to understand how each of these entities will interact with each other for the common vision of expediting cleanup at Hanford.

Our work scope also includes Facilities Transition and currently we are tracking the clean-out of the 324-B Cell, the investigation of the 241-Z-361 tank, and the work of the DOE in the resumption of stabilization of plutonium at the Plutonium Finishing Plant. We are starting to look at biological pathways for movement of radioactive material, and will also research the Miscellaneous Underground Storage Tanks so that we can better understand how they will be included in remediation efforts. We are continuing discussions on hazardous waste laws and regulations and what long-term stewardship means in the context of reducing the footprint of contaminated land back from the Columbia River.

The common thread among all the diverse activities we are monitoring centers on the complexities of uncertainty. The data gaps are voluminous, groundwater movement is not adequately understood, and the volume of waste in the soil and groundwater is not yet quantifiable. Getting our arms around the question of what else is out there will continue to drive our workload. Quantifying uncertainty as it pertains to risk-based decisions for cleanup and the safety of the work force, the public, and the environment is foremost in our minds. Our concentration will intensify on all of these issues as they pertain to cleanup and facilities transition in the 100, 200 and 300 Areas. We will help coordinate public workshops and use them as the locus for public policy development. Our hope is that fully informed decisions on remediation at Hanford will reflect the values of everyone living in the Northwest.

Shelley Cimon, Chair

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

In 1999, the Health, Safety and Waste Management Committee (HSWM) focused its efforts on three major areas. The latest DOE Environmental Management (EM) Integration effort provoked much concern in committee members over the manner in which public involvement was being handled for this effort. Several meetings were devoted to understanding the structure, function and status of the various program area integration teams and providing the DOE with feedback on the public involvement portion of this effort. Dissatisfaction with the original Integration effort public involvement plan from this committee and elsewhere resulted in the issuance of new public involvement guidelines by EM in May.

The HSWM Committee continued to follow closely the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project. Committee concerns included staffing, baselines, budgets, and equipment. Feedback was provided to DOE on the need to allot sufficient time and money in the schedules and budgets for staffing and staff training. A cask drop scenario and the adequacy of cranes used to lift the spent fuel casks were the major technical concerns for the committee. These issues will continue to be followed in the coming year, as they are resolved.

Finally, the HSWM Committee met jointly with the Environmental Restoration Committee to closely monitor the efforts at the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP). The two committees developed draft advice on PFP operations that was adopted by the HAB at its February meeting.

Pam Brown, Chair

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

The Public Involvement Committee's role is to help the TPA agencies improve their public involvement processes. The Committee continues to review and offer advice on the agencies' upcoming public involvement activities and has developed consensus advice on TPA processes for responding to the public's comments as well as to the HAB's consensus advice. The Committee also developed procedures for the HAB's review of the agencies' responses to consensus advice.

Norma Jean Germond, Chair

TANK WASTE TREATMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE

The history of the tank waste treatment program at Hanford has been characterized by failures, false starts, and delays. The Tank Waste Treatment Ad Hoc Committee is determined to ensure that Hanford does not fail in the current attempt to obtain functional tank waste vitrification capability. The Committee's work scope is focused solely on those items critical to success: strong external regulation through enforceable TPA milestones, a sound and realistic technical baseline, and financially responsible contracting mechanisms that ensure performance. The Committee's sincerest hope is to work itself out of a job by pushing for successful design, construction, and operation of a vitrification facility.

Todd Martin, Chair

	HAB LEADERSHIP	
ORGANIZATION	CHAIR	VICE-CHAIR
Hanford Advisory Board	Merilyn Reeves	George Kyriazis Ken Bracken (elect) Shelley Cimon (elect)
Dollars & Sense Committee	Gerald Pollet	Harold Heacock
Environmental Restoration Committee	Shelley Cimon	Gordon Rogers
Health, Safety & Waste Management Committee	Pam Brown	Doug Huston
Public Involvement Committee	Norma Jean Germond	Ken Niles
Tank Waste Treatment Ad Hoc Committee	Todd Martin	Doug Huston

During 1999, the HAB focused on strategies and progress toward addressing the three biggest and most difficult challenges at Hanford — tank wastes, spent nuclear fuel, and the Plutonium Finishing Plant. Because of the very high risks posed by these, the very large budgets required to handle them, the technical challenges, and the many years it will take to complete their cleanup, the HAB has continued to urge the agencies to “get on with it” and to do so in a cost-effective, safe and timely manner.

TRI-PARTY AGREEMENT MILESTONES

What is the Issue?

Ten years ago, the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) was signed by DOE, EPA, and Ecology to provide the roadmap for characterization and cleanup of wastes and contamination at Hanford. The TPA is a legally enforceable document based on the Federal Facilities Compliance Act. The intent of the TPA is to bring Hanford into compliance with environmental laws, including the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA or Superfund), the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), and Washington State hazardous waste regulations.

The main goals of the TPA are to bring waste management activities up to current practices, safely dispose of and treat waste, and clean up contamination that has or could reach the environment. The TPA establishes milestones for cleanup and restoration of the Hanford Site over a 30-year period by outlining deadlines for completion of major activities.



HAB Expectations

- Maintenance of the integrity and enforceability of the TPA and its milestones
- Establishment of TPA milestones for cleanup activities that are not currently in place
- Commitment to obtain adequate funding for TPA compliance
- Limiting TPA revisions to those based on new information that will allow cleanup to be achieved faster and better

HAB Actions and Advice

The HAB spent considerable time in FY99 seeking TPA milestones for tank waste treatment. In December, the HAB expressed concern that the health, environmental and economic consequences of a failure of the tank waste treatment and disposal program are extreme. It urged the agencies to get on with negotiating enforceable, near-term TPA milestones to hold DOE accountable for progress on this effort. By March, the HAB was extremely disappointed in the lack of agency action on this and took the unprecedented step of recommending a set of milestones to start dialogue and move forward with the urgency this important program demands. The HAB’s disappointment continued, so it urged Ecology to issue an order with compliance requirements if the impasse and lack of action continues.

“TPA milestones remain the single most important cleanup driver at Hanford.... Without milestones today, this [tank waste treatment] program may not have a tomorrow.”
HAB Consensus Advice #90 and #93

The HAB continued to track progress toward meeting newly negotiated TPA milestones for removal of spent nuclear fuel from the K Basins by November 2000. Attention focused on baselines and technical strategies to meet the revised milestones.

The lack of TPA milestones to comprehensively regulate the Plutonium Finishing Plant, one of the highest cleanup priorities at Hanford, became a focus for the HAB in 1999. The HAB reiterated advice given previously in 1996 that DOE should resolve the dispute over whether materials in the plant are waste and subject to Ecology’s regulation. The HAB stated it is imperative that the agencies enter negotiations and work out a solution that removes obstacles to regulation and ensures independent oversight of RCRA chemical hazards.

TANK WASTE TREATMENT

What is the Issue?

The mission of the tank waste program at Hanford, which is now managed by the Office of River Protection, is to store, treat, immobilize, and dispose of highly radioactive tank waste in an environmentally sound, safe, and cost-effective manner. This program continues to top the priority list for immediate attention at Hanford. There are 54 million gallons of radioactive waste in 177 single and double-shell tanks, which will be turned into glass through a process known as vitrification. Most of the single-shell tanks have already exceeded their design lifespan and at least 67 of these are known or suspected to have leaked an estimated 1 million gallons of waste into the ground and groundwater. A privatization contract to complete the design of the tank waste vitrification plant and authorization for construction is scheduled for 2000.



HAB Expectations

- Design, construction and operation of a tank waste vitrification plant
- TPA milestones negotiated and in place to ensure timely removal and treatment of tank wastes
- A technically sound approach to successfully achieve vitrification of the tank waste
- A fiscally and financially responsible approach to vitrification of tank wastes

TPA Actions in FY99

- Began a 24-month design phase to complete 30% of the treatment facility design, begin construction preparations, and obtain the necessary private financing
- Began sluicing of Tank 106-C, removed over 80% of the sludge, and reduced the temperature over

100 degrees, so cooling water additions are no longer needed

- Developed a consent decree and schedules for pumping the remaining 29 single-shell tanks
- Removed 18 tanks from the organic complexant watch list, leaving 28 tanks on the list
- Began operation of the new cross-site transfer line for moving tank wastes from 200-West to 200-East
- Reached agreement to equip all 28 double-shell tanks with complete leak detection systems
- Continued tank waste characterization to support planning for transfers from single-shell to double-shell tanks and, ultimately, to the treatment facility

HAB Actions and Advice

The HAB continued to communicate its message to DOE, national decision-makers, and the region's stakeholders that Hanford must have tank waste treatment capability. To emphasize the highest priority this has for stakeholders, the HAB formed a special ad hoc committee to focus on proposed changes to the TPA, design, regulatory submittals, and negotiation of the contract for construction and operation of a vitrification plant. This committee developed four pieces of advice that were subsequently adopted by the HAB to address tank waste treatment schedules, decision-making processes and criteria, integration with other activities, regulatory activities, funding, and public involvement. To maintain a spotlight on this critical program, an aspect of tank waste treatment was a major topic at every HAB meeting this year. This included hearing from a representative of the General Accounting Office on its review of vitrification and privatization plans for tank waste treatment and sharing the HAB's concerns with this supporting arm of Congress.

“The [HAB’s] advice is aimed at maintaining...financial commitment to the total vitrification program, obtaining vitrification capability in the near-term... maintaining financial, contractual and technical fall-back positions in the event privatization fails...and obtaining a credible treatment solution for all Hanford tank waste.”
HAB Consensus Advice #93

SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL

What is the Issue?

Almost 80% of DOE's national inventory of spent nuclear fuel is housed in the K Basins at Hanford. The K Basins are located only 1,000 feet from the Columbia River and have leaked more than 15 million gallons of waste into the ground. The facilities were constructed in the early 1950s and designed to operate for 20 years. The fuel rods contained in the basins are highly radioactive and many have corroded, creating a dangerous uranium-contaminated sludge in the basins and making removal very difficult.

The long-term goal calls for beginning removal of spent fuel from the K Basins in 2000, all spent fuel to be placed in dry storage in 2003, all sludge to be removed in 2005, and all other Hanford spent fuel in dry storage by 2005. This project has been plagued with schedule delays, escalating costs, management problems, and complex technical issues. The status of this project and its progress continue to receive close scrutiny from the regulators, DOE-Headquarters and Congress.

HAB Expectations

- Compliance with TPA milestones for removal of spent fuel and sludge from the K Basins
- Construction of equipment and facilities to remove, treat, and store the spent fuel completed
- Preparations for operations completed
- Establishment of the safety basis for operations
- Technically sound and fiscally responsible approach for management of sludges from the basins
- Compliance with the current schedule and budget for the spent fuel project

TPA Actions in FY99

- Completed construction and installation of equipment for fuel retrieval and integrated water treatment
- Completed 85-90% of the construction of the Canister Storage Building and the Cold Vacuum Drying Facility
- Identified a path forward for sludge removal to store it in T Plant until it can be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant



HAB Actions and Advice

The HAB continued to emphasize the need to complete removal of the 2100 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel stored in the K Basins on schedule and within budget. With construction of facilities and equipment for removal, treatment and storage of spent fuel from the K Basins nearing completion, the HAB shifted its focus in FY99 to preparations for operations, including providing sufficient lead-time for hiring and training of workers. The HAB continued to express concern that DOE complete its review of safety analysis reports in a timely manner that would not delay the start of fuel removal. The CERCLA Proposed Plan for spent fuel, including a revised path forward for sludges from the basins, was reviewed. The HAB also discussed proposed plans for addressing a potential cask drop accident during removal from the basins through a series of risk management measures and to avoid further delays in an already tight schedule. Other concerns address quality control problems that occurred throughout the year, including major findings from an audit in May.

“The HAB expects the K Basin project team to successfully complete this project on schedule and within budget.”
HAB Consensus Advice #94

PLUTONIUM FINISHING PLANT

What is the Issue?

The Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) was used for four decades to produce the plutonium metal for nuclear weapons. The plant consists of 45 facilities, many contaminated with plutonium. The PFP contains 17.8 metric tons of plutonium-bearing material in various forms and locations, pending treatment, repackaging, and shipment to South Carolina for storage until a long-term disposal facility becomes available. This inventory is housed in an aging facility that was originally scheduled for decommissioning in the 1970's. The highly toxic, mobile material represents one of the greatest risks to Hanford workers, the public, and the environment.

HAB Expectations

- Establishment of TPA milestones to comprehensively regulate the PFP
- Decontamination and stabilization of the PFP
- Development and implementation of an integrated baseline to provide for deliberate and careful progress towards removal of plutonium from the plant and decontamination and decommissioning of the facility
- Continued worker training that incorporates lessons learned to avoid future accidents such as the explosion at the Plutonium Reclamation Facility in May 1997
- Open lines of communication with the tribes, states, local communities, and other stakeholders on the risks associated with the PFP and its cleanup

TPA Actions in FY99

- Resumed stabilization of plutonium-bearing materials after a two-year suspension to address criticality and emergency response procedural issues
- Conducted sampling of vapors and sludge in the 241-Z-361 tank

“It is imperative that DOE and the regulators are forthright regarding the uncertainties, safety issues, regulatory issues, and hazards associated with activities at PFP.”

HAB Consensus Advice #91

HAB Actions and Advice

The HAB identified the PFP as one of the top three priorities for cleanup at Hanford in FY99. Work resumed there in January 1999 for the first time since the May 1997 explosion at the Plutonium Reclamation Facility. The HAB reviewed plans for restart of materials stabilization, repackaging, and eventual decommissioning, and comprehensive advice was issued in February to urge that this plant receive the high priority it deserves. In addition to resolving the dispute over the definitions of “material” and “waste” to remove obstacles to regulation and independent oversight of chemical hazards, the HAB called for DOE, contractors and the regulators to cooperate in expeditiously completing an integrated baseline for cleanup of the plant. Noting that no new research or technologies are needed, the HAB recommended that DOE and its contractors continue to make deliberate and careful progress with cleanup, tapping into the wealth of institutional knowledge still available around the site and community.

HAB attention also focused on the delicate efforts to characterize the contents of Tank 361-Z-241, which contains a sludge laced with as much as 35-75 kilograms of plutonium. The potential for flammable gases, criticality, and structural failure of the tank, located near the PFP, has caused the TPA agencies to take a very cautious approach to determining what is in the tank and what to do with it. The HAB recommended in February 1999 that these characterization efforts be given high priority and be safely and expeditiously completed.

“Completing the PFP cleanup and stabilization will result in significantly reduced mortgage costs for DOE and greatly reduced risks.”

HAB Consensus Advice #91

CLEANUP ALONG THE COLUMBIA RIVER

What is the Issue?

The 100 Area of the Hanford Site includes 9 reactor sites, associated facilities and structures, low-level waste burial grounds, irradiated fuel storage in the K Area basins, and the land between these. This area covers 26.6 square miles south of the Columbia River. The area includes many archaeological sites, Native American burial sites, and traditional fishing and food gathering sites. Many threatened or endangered species of plants and animals inhabit the undeveloped sections of this area. Extensive contamination exists in some areas of the soil, vadose zone, and groundwater. Contamination reaches the River through groundwater seeps and springs.

The 300 Area includes laboratories for energy research and development as well as facilities for reactor fuel fabrication. Various technical and service support functions are housed here as well. There are 190 buildings in the 300 Area. In the past, liquid wastes have been disposed in 14 ponds, trenches, and landfills in this area.

HAB Expectations

- Compliance with TPA milestones and completion of cleanup along the River
- Reduction of future stewardship needs through cleanup and waste stabilization
- Cleanup of soils in the 100 Areas to unrestricted use
- Cleanup of soils in the 300 Area to industrial standards
- Containment and cleanup of groundwater to unrestricted status in the 100 Areas and industrial use in the 300 Area
- Containment and elimination of source terms for further contamination
- Removal and interim stabilization of reactor cores
- Protection of the River from contamination from the Hanford Site
- No restrictions on future public access because of residual contamination
- Remediation of pipelines and islands in the Columbia River
- Definition of institutional controls



TPA Actions in FY99

- Placed C Reactor in interim safe storage, reducing its footprint 40%, and started work on DR and F Reactors
- Completed removal of contaminated soils from the 100-BC-1 area
- Began contaminated soil removal from old liquid waste disposal sites in 100-H Area
- Removed about 702,000 tons of contaminated soil from 100-D, 100-BC, and the 300 Areas and transported it to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility
- Began construction of the third and fourth cells at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility
- Pumped and treated over 3 million gallons of contaminated groundwater, removing over 3100 pounds of carbon tetrachloride, 148 pounds of chromium, and 0.13 curies of strontium
- Completed plans for remediation of burial grounds in the 100 Areas and issued these for public review
- Determined the extent and content of drums containing uranium found unexpectedly in the 300 Area and initiated planning for disposition of these
- Initiated a 300 Area revitalization project to attract private industry to decontaminate and reuse excess buildings

HAB Actions and Advice

The HAB's focus in FY99 for the 100 and 300 Areas was on maintaining cleanup of contaminated soils in the face of declining budgets. The HAB urged consideration of lessons learned from the 116-BC-1 operable unit and application of these to the record of decision for the remaining soil sites in the 100 Areas. In September, the HAB examined plans for remediation

of waste burial grounds in the 100 Areas. In response to comments from regulators and stakeholders, DOE changed its preferred alternative from capping the burial grounds to removing, treating, and disposing of the materials at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility. Individual HAB members participated in a series of public workshops on cleanup levels to be achieved in the 100 Areas, considering potential future uses, scenarios for exposure, and applicable regulations. The HAB conducted a similar workshop to elicit HAB values on 100 Area cleanup in December 1999. The HAB requested clarification on DOE-Richland’s cleanup goals and the basis for setting cleanup levels and its position on its Trust obligations, the relationship of land use to health-based cleanup levels, and the relationship of interim RODs to long-term environmental protection.

“Hanford management’s strategic choice to eliminate all cleanup work along the Columbia River in FY2001 is not acceptable and does not reflect public priorities.”
HAB Consensus Advice #94

GROUNDWATER AND VADOSE ZONE CONTAMINATION

What is the Issue?

The Hanford Site in eastern Washington State is a very large site (547 square miles) used for four decades for plutonium production for nuclear weapons. This mission left a legacy of hazardous and radioactive waste. Those wastes are located in nearly 1400 sites, including 177 high-level waste and 60 miscellaneous underground storage tanks; water basins for 2300 tons of spent nuclear fuel and 1900 strontium and cesium capsules; over 600 near-surface burial grounds, trenches, cribs, ponds, and spill sites; storage pads and buildings for almost 13,000 cubic yards of plutonium-contaminated waste; 9 aging reactors; and numerous processing buildings, piping, and other places across the site. Contamination from the wastes as well as past practices of disposing of wastewater into the ground has affected over 200 square miles of groundwater beneath the site. The contaminated groundwater has already tainted the Columbia River. Recent findings that contamination from wastes stored on the Central Plateau is reaching groundwater much faster than expected indicate the potential for this contamination to reach the River in as little as 25 years.

A major challenge for the Site is to identify what wastes and contamination are where, what characteristics they have, and how they could move through soil, groundwater, surface water, plants, animals, and air to reach and affect the public, workers, and the environment.

HAB Expectations

- Identification and accurate characterization of wastes stored in tanks, burial grounds, and other locations as well as other potential sources of contamination to soil and groundwater
- Adequate understanding of pathways for movement of contamination through soil, groundwater, surface water, plants, animals, and air to identify potential cumulative impacts of decisions on waste management and environmental restoration

TPA Actions in FY99

- Began integrating DOE programs to characterize wastes and contamination and research on groundwater and the unsaturated vadose zone

HAB Actions and Advice

During FY99, the HAB continued to follow DOE’s Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project and its efforts to develop an inventory of wastes and other sources of contamination at Hanford and to understand and model movement of contamination through soil and groundwater to the Columbia River. The HAB and its Environmental Restoration Committee received numerous updates on the strategy and continued to provide feedback on the project direction, questions that need to be answered through this project, and progress toward those answers. The HAB also continued to interact with the groundwater/vadose zone expert panel that has been convened to provide nationally recognized technical expertise on the content and direction of the project. This interaction has been directed toward ensuring that stakeholder concerns are considered during the expert panel’s deliberations.

“Progress must occur on the groundwater/vadose zone integration project... contractors must do better in involving interested stakeholders in decision making on this issue.”
HAB Consensus Advice #97

HAZARDOUS, RADIOACTIVE AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

What is the Issue?

DOE-Richland is preparing a Hazardous, Radioactive and Solid Waste Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to address site-specific implementation of records-of-decision to be issued from the complex-wide Waste Management Programmatic EIS. DOE-Richland's EIS will address alternatives for treatment, storage, and disposal of transuranic waste, low-level radioactive waste, hazardous waste, mixed low-level waste, and non-hazardous solid waste at Hanford.



HAB Expectations

- Impacts of proposed importation of off-site wastes on inadequate site budgets factored into decisions
- Fully-burdened costs of disposal and restrictions on new wastes going to non-compliant facilities factored into decisions
- Independent regulation of DOE low-level radioactive waste
- Compliance with Washington State Dangerous Waste law for mixed waste decisions

TPA Actions in FY99

- Completed EIS scoping and identified four alternatives for evaluation
- Began operation of the Waste Receiving and Packaging Facility to prepare transuranic wastes for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

HAB Actions and Advice

During FY99, the HAB engaged in dialogue with DOE on the alternatives to be evaluated in the Hazardous,

Radioactive and Solid Waste EIS and the factors to be considered in making decisions among these alternatives. In July, advice was issued that outlined the expectations summarized above and that called on DOE to define the relationship between the process to finalize records of decision coming out of the national Waste Management PEIS and the Environmental Management Integration initiative. A clear public involvement process for the waste integration efforts was also urged.

“The HAB recommends DOE consider...in its decisions on...offsite waste disposed at Hanford the full life-cycle costs of storage and disposal at each site...”
 HAB Consensus Advice #98

HANFORD COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

What is the Issue?

The Hanford Comprehensive Land Use Plan Environmental Impact Statement on the potential impacts associated with establishing future land use objectives for the Hanford Site was finalized in September 1999 and identified wildlife preserve as the preferred alternative for most of the site. The first draft was issued in September 1996 and was the subject of HAB discussion. Comments from HAB members and others led to removal of remedial actions from the scope of the EIS.

HAB Expectations

The HAB has not reached consensus on a particular land use alternative. However, it has said that previous positions adopted by the Future Site Uses Working Group and the values expressed in HAB advice continue to represent the HAB's views on a range of compatible land uses.

HAB Actions and Advice

In June 1999, the HAB issued consensus advice on the revised draft, supporting the name change to the Hanford Comprehensive Land Use Plan EIS and the removal of remedial actions from the scope. The need to base the plan on other plans for cultural and biological resources and to protect high-quality habitat and tribal use areas was emphasized.

What is the Issue?

Effective and efficient management requires a focused, streamlined decision-making process that is linked to a defined schedule, adequate funding, and a clear path forward toward achieving cleanup goals. It is imperative that tax dollars are spent in an efficient and cost effective way, taking into account cleanup goals and the increased costs caused by unnecessary delay. Efficiencies must be implemented and programs held accountable so that a maximum amount of dollars are spent on measurable cleanup. DOE must have clear lines of authority for oversight of contractors and accountability for program management. Steps must also be taken to ensure that DOE has the most capable and responsive contractors to carry out the cleanup.

HAB Expectations

- Results-oriented management
- Clear, streamlined decision-making
- Clear path forward, schedule, and accountability for DOE, its contractors, and regulators
- Resolution of coordination and management between Richland Operations Office and Office of River Protection
- Improved safety performance
- Protection of workers, including timely training
- Improvement and enhancement of worker morale and productivity in light of reorganizations

“...contract incentives, both positive and negative, are part of what drives progress...Cost savings or scope acceleration should be incentivized...”
 HAB Consensus Advice #97

TPA Agency Management Changes in FY99

- DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management Carolyn Huntoon was confirmed and reorganized the program and senior managers
- John Wagoner retired as Manager of the DOE-Richland Operations Office
- Keith Klein was named to replace Mr. Wagoner, completed a field office reorganization, made changes in most of the senior managers, and pushed to accelerate spent fuel, plutonium stabilization, and transuranic waste programs
- The DOE Office of River Protection organized with Dick French as Manager; changed a number

of senior managers, and moved DOE staff over to this organization

- Alice Murphy, DOE-Richland Chief Financial Officer and Deputy Designated Federal Official for the HAB, moved to the Federal Energy Technology Center
- Pete Knollmeyer, DOE, was designated Acting Deputy Designated Federal Official for the HAB
- A number of senior DOE managers with whom the HAB has worked, including Linda Bauer, Charlie Hansen, Beth Sellers, and Susan Brechbill, left Hanford for key positions with other DOE sites
- Fluor Daniel Hanford reorganized and consolidated the management and integration contract into a management and operations contract by absorbing subcontractors and enterprise companies
- Fluor Daniel Hanford absorbed the functions of the spent fuel project that had been under the direction of Duke Engineering Services
- The Lockheed subcontract under Fluor Daniel Hanford was changed to a prime contract with the Office of River Protection; Lockheed announced that this contract would be sold
- Fluor Daniel Hanford announced it would recompetete management of the Facility Stabilization Project, which is currently under subcontract to B&W Hanford Company
- Former DOE-Richland Manager Mike Lawrence returned to head BNFL’s tank waste vitrification program
- EPA’s regional Superfund program manager Randy Smith moved to EPA’s water program and was replaced by Mike Gearheard
- Jeff Breckel, who represented Washington State on the Environmental Management Advisory Board and many other national environmental policy activities, left Ecology for new and different challenges

HAB Actions and Advice

FY99 was a year of major change and transition with respect to management of the Hanford cleanup program. The HAB sought to understand the changes with respect to the impacts on cleanup of Hanford, focusing on the following key areas:

Maintaining Commitments to Cleanup

Members of the HAB’s Executive Committee met with DOE Secretary Richardson in October 1998. Urgent issues pertaining to Hanford that were discussed included protection of the Columbia River, adequate

funding for cleanup, tank waste treatment, public and worker safety, and the groundwater/vadose zone integration project. Subsequently in September 1999, the Executive Committee met with the new DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, Carolyn Huntoon. The Committee presented her with a statement of principles from the HAB, outlining the HAB's long-term vision for the Hanford Site, near-term needs, and issues of concern.

Tank Wastes

Formation of the Office of River Protection, management changes, and the need for new TPA milestones for tank waste treatment were a major focus for the HAB in FY99. Concerns were also expressed about the impacts of the tank wastes on the vadose zone, groundwater, and the River. The HAB has been very concerned about the interfaces between the Office of River Protection and DOE-Richland, including staffing, multi-year work plans, integrated priority lists for the budget, performance agreements, and schedules.

To meet design and construction schedules, the HAB identified the need for a clear, sound, and nimble decision-making process, established decision points and criteria for considering alternative financing mechanisms, and a funding plan for the entire program. The HAB suggested the need for all stakeholders, tribes, regulators and the Office of River Protection to better work together to understand the impacts of the creation of this office. A number of questions regarding regulatory issues, budget and contract authority, public, stakeholder and tribal relationships, and bureaucratic structure of the office were also raised.

Spent Fuel

Schedule delays and cost control for the spent fuel project received major attention from the HAB in FY99 as projected costs doubled from the original \$814 million to \$1.7 billion and schedules were pushed out 4 years. Growing alarm over the rapidly shrinking contingency allowance in the project's schedules was also expressed by the HAB. Numerous management changes in the project also caused considerable concern about DOE and the contractor's ability to meet milestones while shrinking the costs.

Plutonium Finishing Plant

Slow progress on establishing TPA milestones and

cleaning up the Plutonium Finishing Plant was noted by the HAB in FY99. The HAB urged DOE, contractors, and regulators to cooperate in expeditiously completing the integrated baseline, which is absolutely critical for successful cleanup, with the goal of negotiated TPA milestones in 2000.

Performance Agreements and Fees

The HAB spent time at its February 1999 meeting reviewing the status of the FY98 performance fee determination for Fluor Daniel Hanford, the Project Hanford Management Contractor. Advice was also provided in July 1999 on the FY2000 performance agreements between DOE and the contractor. Recommendations included the need for an independently validated baseline. The HAB advised that cost savings or scope acceleration should be incentivized and performance agreements should be tied to TPA milestones and regulations and treaties. Performance agreements should address reduction of overhead and indirect costs, economic diversification, public involvement, and a safety-conscious work place. The HAB also suggested that incentives and disincentives should be included in subcontracts and the value of negative incentives for exceeding costs and schedules should be recognized.

National Decision-Making

DOE has had an effort underway for several years to evaluate if there are opportunities for cost savings or cleanup acceleration by consolidating some waste streams and materials (i.e., Environmental Management Integration). The HAB sought in FY99 to have opportunities to review and provide input on alternatives being considered prior to decisions. In July, the HAB called on DOE to define the relationship between this effort and the records of decisions coming out of the Waste Management Programmatic EIS and to develop a clear, integrated, and understandable intersite public involvement process.

During FY99, the HAB continued to attend meetings with advisory boards at other DOE sites. The HAB's chair and vice-chair participated in a semi-annual meeting of the site-specific advisory board chairs in Savannah River, South Carolina. The HAB also hosted the second semi-annual meeting in September. HAB members participated in an intersite workshop on transportation at the Fernald site in Ohio and a similar workshop on long-term stewardship in October 1999 at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

What is the Issue?

The success of cleanup depends strongly on actions by DOE and contractors and enforcement by TPA regulators, the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, the Washington Department of Health, and others. In addition, DOE's Regulatory Unit, in consultation with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, regulates the design, construction and operation of the proposed tank waste treatment facility at Hanford.

HAB Expectations

- TPA milestones in place for all waste streams
- Enforcement of compliance with TPA milestones and other regulatory and legal requirements
- Aggressive defense of the TPA's integrity in the face of budget pressures
- Responsible negotiation of TPA modifications to address legitimate, unforeseen technical challenges or administrative changes
- Consideration of independent regulation of DOE activities that are outside the scope of CERCLA and RCRA (e.g., low-level radioactive waste disposal)

TPA Actions In FY99

- DOE request to change long-established TPA milestones for tank waste vitrification to match the signed contract with BNFL
- Agreement-in-Principle to renegotiate milestones for tank waste treatment developed by DOE and Ecology but failed to complete those negotiations
- Consent decree between DOE and Ecology to provide enforcement of schedules for pumping the single-shell tanks; negotiated those schedules
- DOE's request to delay pumping of Tank 106-C denied by the Washington State Pollution Control Hearing Board
- Settlement reached between Ecology and DOE to equip all 28 double-shell tanks with leak detection systems in 1999
- \$300,000 fine levied by DOE on Fluor Daniel Hanford for quality control and quality assurance violations
- \$367,000 fine levied by EPA and Ecology on DOE and its contractors for violations identified during a multi-media inspection
- DOE's request to reduce the \$110,000 fine for the 1997 explosion in the Plutonium Reclamation Facility denied by Ecology

HAB Actions and Advice

During FY99, the HAB urged the regulatory agencies to firmly enforce TPA milestones on a number of fronts and to not yield to budgetary limitations as a basis for modifying these. In March 1999, an informational evening session focused on understanding the consent decree for pumping single-shell tanks, including the purpose, contents, and schedules, and how work under a consent decree differs from work under the TPA. Particular concern was expressed by the HAB over regulatory issues associated with formation of the Office of River Protection. These include accountability for TPA compliance, how the Regulatory Unit will operate, how environmental safety and health activities will be conducted, and streamlining of the working relationship between the regulators and DOE.

The findings of a multi-media inspection conducted by EPA, Ecology, and the Washington Department of Health were discussed at the HAB's February 1999 meeting. The HAB continued to interact with the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board to understand its concerns and recommendations on the spent nuclear fuel project, the Plutonium Finishing Plant, and tank wastes. In July, advice on receipt of offsite waste was provided to DOE-Headquarters and this reiterated the need to consider independent regulation of low-level radioactive waste.

“Ecology must have enforceable near-term TPA milestones to hold DOE accountable for progress during the design phase [of the tank waste vitrification project]...the lack of enforceable near-term TPA milestones...increases Board concern over the ability of Ecology to effectively support and regulate the program.”
HAB Consensus Advice #90

What is the Issue?

Funding must be provided to move cleanup forward in a timely and cost-effective manner. In FY99, Hanford continued to receive flat budget allocations, with no adjustments for inflation and in the face of increased need for capital expenditures for critical projects such as tank waste treatment and spent fuel removal. Also, the site faced increased costs from a number of programs and new challenges such as the groundwater/vadose zone integration program.

HAB Expectations

- DOE budget requests that meet compliance with the TPA and other legal and regulatory requirements
- Predictable and adequate budgets to sustain cost-effective progress; high priority given to the cleanup program by Congress, the Administration and DOE and provision of the resources necessary to make progress
- Improved DOE management and contractor efficiencies to lower costs
- Achieving more cleanup for the dollars
- Cleanup funds not to be used for non-cleanup work

TPA Actions in FY99

- Received \$1.095 billion for DOE for cleanup at Hanford in FY99
- Submitted an FY2000 DOE budget request of \$1.17 billion, which was a \$70 million increase over the FY99 budget, but \$98 million short of that needed for TPA compliance
- Submitted a DOE-Richland FY2001 budget request with a compliance gap of \$232 million

HAB Actions and Advice

The adequacy of DOE budgets to ensure progress in cleanup continued as a key focus for the HAB in FY99. Through several pieces of advice, the HAB stressed the obligation of DOE to request adequate budgets to ensure compliance with all laws, regulations, and the TPA. Appreciation was expressed for the effort by Secretary Richardson to increase the budget request for FY2000 as a first step toward securing required funding levels.

The HAB’s advice on the FY2001 budget also pointed out that the tank wastes are the most expensive, highest priority, and longest term program. Obtaining necessary funding is vital for removal of 55 million gallons of high-level wastes from the aging tanks. The HAB opposed proposals to eliminate cleanup work along the Columbia River. Such unacceptable action would not meet public priorities and would increase future costs. The HAB also emphasized the need to fully fund environment, safety and health activities and to incentivize cost savings, particularly for the spent fuel project.

The potentially severe shortage of funds for the tank waste program, based on current estimates of out-year funding for Hanford and the rapidly growing bow-wave of deferred work, is not acceptable and of deep concern to the HAB. The HAB asked DOE to present a long-term funding plan and request adequate funding in FY2001. Concern over whether Congress will be willing to provide the levels of funding needed to support the privatization approach led the HAB to call for a credible review of alternative contracting and financing mechanisms for tank waste treatment. The HAB requested involvement in the formation of an expert panel to review the alternative financing analysis and expertise to help the HAB understand and influence the policy-making decisions on this matter.

“We either invest in disaster prevention now, or our children and environment will pay a far higher price later.”
 HAB Consensus Advice #94

The HAB also urged DOE to identify innovative cost reductions for the Plutonium Finishing Plant, including consideration of life-cycle costs. Completing cleanup and stabilization of this facility will result in significantly reduced risks and mortgage costs for DOE.

“DOE-Headquarters and DOE-Richland must request full funding for the minimum activities to meet safety standards and cleanup schedules. Flat funding is not adequate to meet the minimum work required by safety and cleanup standards.”
 HAB Consensus Advice #94

What is the Issue?

One of the key responsibilities of the HAB is to advise on strategies for effectively and meaningfully involving the public in decisions regarding cleanup of the Hanford Site. The HAB works with the TPA agencies to improve public understanding of the issues and options for action on cleanup and waste management at Hanford.

HAB Expectations

- Maintenance of strong effective public involvement
- Access to timely information
- Proactive public involvement
- Full consideration of public input and explanation of the disposition of this input
- Opportunities for the public to hear from independent experts
- Efforts to seek out and solicit input from the broader public
- Meeting formats that maximize dialogue
- Flexible decision processes that are responsive to project changes and the needs of the public

TPA ACTIONS in FY99

- Held four FY2001 budget workshops
- Conducted public workshops on 100 Areas cleanup to elicit public values
- Held topical meetings on tank waste issues
- Continued quarterly meetings to identify upcoming public involvement opportunities and solicit advice on how to ensure the effectiveness of these
- Issued guidance for public involvement in the Environmental Management Integration initiative

HAB ACTIONS AND ADVICE

During FY99, the HAB focused on three major aspects of public involvement. First, the HAB recognized that openness at Hanford is critical to building the trust and confidence needed to enable sustainable, implementable decisions. Recommendations made by the HAB included using performance measures to promote openness, creating an open environment for Hanford employees, and using information technologies to improve access and openness.

Second, the HAB made recommendations for improved response to public comments by the TPA agencies. These included informing the public about how comments influenced decision-making, using clear and simple language, providing updates when decisions are delayed, using the Internet or phone calls to respond, and providing follow-up opportunities.

The HAB also offered suggestions on how the TPA agencies respond to HAB advice. Written responses should continue and be direct, use simple language, address each of the questions or issues, and indicate how the principle or value in the advice will be implemented or why it will not. Time will also be provided on HAB agendas for verbal responses.

HAB advice also suggested a public process for establishing TPA milestones for removal and treatment of tank wastes. The HAB noted that public involvement in tank waste plans has not occurred for three years. Open lines of communication with the tribes, the states, local communities, and other stakeholders to provide education on the risks associated with the PFP and its cleanup were also urged.

The HAB continued its practice of holding informational sessions on the evening preceding HAB meetings to focus on one of the key topics for the HAB meeting. One informational session focused on promoting an understanding of the current and projected waste streams at Hanford and potential impacts of intersite waste transfers. This highlighted the need to accelerate retrieval of stored transuranic wastes before the drums deteriorate further and to examine the strategy for transuranic wastes buried prior to 1970. An informational session on the PFP brought out the need for DOE and the regulators to reach an agreement on whether materials in this facility are waste or special nuclear material. The consent decree between DOE and Ecology regarding interim stabilization of tank wastes was the subject of a third informational session.

“Citizens have played a key role in helping guide Hanford cleanup decisions...it is imperative that the Tri-Parties respond quickly, clearly and directly to public comments, concerns and suggestions.”
HAB Consensus Advice #92

Major HAB Policy Issues for Focus in 2000

During FY2000, the HAB will continue to focus on the highest cleanup priorities, especially tank waste treatment, removal of spent fuel from K Basins, and stabilization and cleanup of plutonium-bearing materials and wastes at the Plutonium Finishing Plant. Attention will continue for other cleanup issues. The HAB will evaluate cleanup progress in FY2000 through a review of the following and other questions; these are not in any priority order:

- Has a contract been signed for the final design and construction of a tank waste vitrification plant?
- Are TPA milestones in place for removal of tank wastes? Were TPA milestones met? Were consent decree requirements for pumping of single-shell tanks met?
- Have integration and management procedures been established between the Office of River Protection and the rest of the site?
- Are construction, safety document, and preparations for operations to begin removal of spent fuel from the K Basins in November 2000 completed?
- Is the spent fuel removal project within budget?
- Have TPA milestones been put in place for cleanup of the Plutonium Finishing Plant? Have plutonium-bearing materials been stabilized?
- Was progress made in placing reactors in interim safe storage?
- Was significant progress made in learning more about the extent of contamination in soil and groundwater?
- Has work begun to characterize and remove wastes from inactive miscellaneous underground storage tanks?
- Have transuranic wastes been shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant?
- Was the Solid Waste EIS completed? Were deci-

sions made on disposal of transuranic, low-level and mixed low-level wastes at Hanford and potential intersite transfers of wastes and materials?

- Is the TPA regulatory framework in place to ensure timely cleanup and stabilization of all waste streams?
- Were baseline schedules for cleanup met? Were any necessary regulatory enforcement actions taken to ensure TPA compliance?
- Did DOE request adequate budgets for TPA compliance?
- Were appropriate funding priorities, contract structures, and efficiencies put in place to make the most of the funds that were provided?
- Were workers protected and were safety procedures in place and being followed?
- Was a strong and effective public involvement program conducted by the TPA agencies? Was full consideration given to public input?



U.S. Department of Energy - Richland

The U.S. Department of Energy wants a clean and protected Columbia River. We want Hanford's wastes safely treated and stored on the central plateau. And we want to ensure that our assets, including the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, are put to work solving problems of regional and global significance.

How do we get there? Through positive collaborations with our regulators, the HAB, area tribes, and regional stakeholders. By tackling our problems in a way that makes sense, doing things right the first time and putting resources where they're needed most. And, perhaps most importantly, by challenging ourselves to find new solutions that will shorten the process and get better results.

We have already begun to put these things in motion. DOE and its contractors have worked hard to make organizational and functional changes that we believe will result in a more focused and determined effort. We are looking hard for ways to foster creativity and eliminate valueless requirements and mind-numbing red tape. But there is a third critical piece. To achieve the kind of work accelerations we're committed to, we've got to have the flexibility to prioritize work and resources where they can do the most good for the big picture.

The DOE, like our regulators and the board, embraces wholeheartedly the TPA's fundamental objective: a cleaned up Hanford and protected environment, according to a firm and measurable schedule. Our collective task now is to see whether different, more strategic pathways might serve us better and get us to that end result more quickly.

Based on forthright input from the HAB and others, I recognize how important it is for DOE to strengthen credibility. We will do that by managing to our outcomes (river, plateau, future) and working against a well-defined "scorecard." The TPA already contains a number of these mileposts, but there will be others. And that's where we will really need the board's help. As we begin to come up with alternative strategies to get to the same endpoint faster, the board will be critical to determining how to effectively measure our progress.

Hanford is continuing to change. We've moved quickly to clearly define our cleanup outcomes and then adjusted roles, responsibilities, and work expectations accordingly. I want to make sure that we are providing

the board the most current and detailed information so that you can be a part of these changes and provide us with the input we need to be successful.

The Hanford Site is fortunate to have such a diverse, dedicated group of concerned people willing to serve on the HAB. I am counting on the board to offer timely, forward-thinking advice to the three parties as we move through this challenging and important time.

*Keith Klein
Manager*

U.S. Department of Energy - Office of River Protection

Protecting the Columbia River from a massive environmental threat, Hanford's 54 million gallons of radioactive tank waste, was the genesis for establishing the Office of River Protection. Congress created this office in 1998 primarily to focus the Department of Energy on a more efficient, more accountable project to retrieve, treat and dispose of tank waste. The challenge before my team and me is transforming promises of change and progress into reality.

Our stakeholders often refer to Hanford's tanks in two ways – tanks that have leaked and those that will. The Office of River Protection is responsible for Hanford's 177 underground aging tanks; 67 are known to have leaked so far. The regulatory, financial, technical, and political challenges facing this project are immense. The treatment and conversion of the nuclear waste into a stable form is essential to prevent new risks to the environment and regional economy.

Ultimately, securing viable tank waste treatment facilities at Hanford will be the criteria that measure our success. This summer the decision to proceed with the building of a treatment facility will be made. To achieve the decision requires an unprecedented commitment and responsibility on the part of the all – the DOE, our regulators, stakeholders and Tribal nations.

The Office of River Protection is responsible for providing a timely and effective public process for significant policy decisions. In turn, my staff and I will thoughtfully consider the advice, values and principles that the Board has and will provide on Office of River Protection issues. I share your concerns that:

- Postponing tank waste treatment only increases the environmental and financial costs for cleanup.
- Tank waste represents an unmet cleanup obligation from the Cold War; and,
- Now is the time to get on with building tank waste treatment facilities at Hanford.

Obtaining tank waste treatment facilities at Hanford requires regional and national attention. I believe the HAB can continue to play a role in securing tank waste treatment facilities at Hanford. The membership of the HAB is comprised of individuals representing a diverse range of local and regional interests. You can play an active role in communicating to our constituents and to the taxpayers of our nation the long-term benefit of securing treatment facilities.

The Columbia River is described by many as a “jewel” of the Pacific Northwest. The time is upon us all to commit to a permanent solution for safely containing Hanford’s tank waste.

*Richard French
Manager*

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10

As I look back over my first year as EPA’s representative to the Board, I am impressed with the level of understanding that the Board brings to Hanford Cleanup issues. In a strategic decision the Board chose to focus in depth on several of the most difficult projects facing us at Hanford. It appeared at times, that taking on this challenge frustrated the Board with lack of cleanup progress. However, in reflection, I believe significant progress was made on cleanup. Issues that the Board helped us “get on with it” included work on Tank 241-Z-361, your diligence on K Basins resulted in an enforceable schedule to get the fuel moved away from the River, and your work on securing tank waste treatment for Hanford moved this project closer to success. EPA is always impressed with the depth of advice on the DOE budget and appreciates the Board’s budget advice supporting continued funding to complete cleanup along the Columbia River. The Board’s advice on how we conduct public involvement was such that I shared it with my entire Environmental Cleanup staff and, in my opinion, the Board is the leading model in the DOE complex in promoting public involvement in the decision making process.

Looking to next year, key areas EPA will be looking to the Board for advice on is how to begin to define what cleanup of the 200 Area should look like. Also, EPA will be conducting a five year review of our cleanup decisions and would hope the Board will assist us in defining where the cleanup has been a success as well as areas where we need to do more to reach cleanup goals. We will be making cleanup decisions on burial grounds in both the 100 and 300 Area and would value the Board’s input on these issues. I am sure the Board will continue to hold the agencies accountable for spent fuel removal and getting real tank waste treatment capability.

*Michael Gearheard
Director, Office of Environmental Cleanup*

Washington Department of Ecology

The past year has seen major changes in the forces working for Hanford cleanup. Both the DOE’s Richland office and national Environmental Management program got new managers. The Office of River Protection was born and newly staffed. The “landscape” for cleanup is very different today from a year ago.

In this situation, the Hanford Advisory Board plays a crucial role: The Board becomes the institutional memory, the imperative for all parties involved in cleanup to keep their eyes on the major goals and objectives. I know the Board has felt frustrated, seemingly having to repeat itself again and again. But this “conscience of cleanup” role is very important in a season of change.

We welcome the Board’s renewed focus on the TPA. Ecology will work with the Board to make progress and problems under the TPA more transparent and to increase accountability. We also appreciate the Board’s effort to focus on critical and very difficult issues surrounding retrieval and treatment of Hanford’s tank wastes. These wastes constitute the site’s largest long-term threat to public and ecological health, worker safety, and the spectrum of activities dependent upon the Columbia River.

For 2000, we urge the Board to refocus both its own efforts and those of the Tri-Party agencies on key cleanup goals and successful strategies.

*Mike Wilson
Program Manager, Nuclear Waste Program*

**MEET THE HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD
CURRENT HAB MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES**

SEAT	MEMBER	ALTERNATE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTERESTS		
Benton County	Ken Bracken	Ben Floyd
Benton-Franklin Council of Governments	Robert Larson	Wanda Munn
City of Kennewick	Gary Miller	George Kyriazis Abe Greenberg
City of Pasco	Charles Kilbury	Joe Jackson
City of Richland	Pam Brown	
City of West Richland	Jerry Peltier	Stan Steve
Grant & Franklin Counties	Jack Yorgeson	Art Tackett
LOCAL BUSINESS INTERESTS		
Tri-Cities Industrial Development Council	Harold Heacock	David Watrous
HANFORD WORK FORCE		
Central Washington Building Trades Council	Richard Berglund	Bill Wilcoxsin
Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council	Jim Watts	Thomas Schaffer
Non-Union, Non-Management Employees	Madeleine Brown Susan Leckband	Jeffrey Luke Frederick Roeck
Government Accountability Project	Tom Carpenter	Norm Buske
LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INTERESTS		
Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society and Columbia River Conservation League	Rick Leaumont	Bev Weisbrodt Laura Zybas
REGIONAL CITIZEN, ENVIRONMENTAL AND PUBLIC INTEREST ORGANIZATIONS		
Columbia River United	Greg deBruler	Cyndy deBruler
Hanford Watch of Oregon	Paige Knight	Robin Klein
Heart of America Northwest	Gerald Pollet	David Johnson Paige Leven
Washington League of Women Voters	Betty Tabbutt	Todd Martin Jack Sonnichsen
LOCAL & REGIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH		
Benton-Franklin Public Health	Dr. Margery Swint	Dr. Ross Ronish
Physicians for Social Responsibility	Dr. Richard Belsey	Dr. Jim Trombold
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS		
Nez Perce Tribe	Patrick Sobotta	Kristie Baptiste Rico Cruz
Yakama Nation	Russell Jim	Nanci Peters Barbara Harper Wade Riggsbee Cindy Veneziano

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Oregon Office of Energy

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Patty Yraguen
Mary Lou Blazek
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Washington State University

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Dr. David Stensel
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Gordon Rogers

Leon Swenson
Don Worden

Norma Jean Germond
Martin Bensky
George Jansen, Jr.
Daniel Simpson
Pat Kenny

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Joseph Richards
Debra McBaugh
Allen Conklin

Washington Department of Health

U.S. Department of Energy/Richland
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Washington Department of Ecology

John Erickson

Peter Knollmeyer (Acting)
Michael Gearhead
Dan Silver

MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES WHO RESIGNED FY99

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Wayne Martin

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Additional Written Information

Additional information about the Hanford Advisory Board is available. If you would like to receive a copy of any of the following or additional copies of this report, you can contact Donna Sterba, Nuvotec, (509-943-5319). You can also find information on the Board on its Internet Web page:

<http://www.hanford.gov/boards/hab/index.htm>

- *Hanford in context: public principles guide new mission*
- *Advice Adopted by the Hanford Advisory Board*
- *Hanford Advisory Board Charter and Operating Ground Rules*
- *Site Specific Advisory Board Charter*
- *Comparison of the Hanford Advisory Board's First Two Self Evaluations (A Report)*
- *Hanford Advisory Board Strategic Planning Workshop Report, May 1996*
- *Future Site Uses Working Group Report, December 1992*
- *Tank Waste Task Force Report, July 1993*

Where to Find More Information About the Hanford Advisory Board

Hanford Public Information Repositories

Portland

Portland State University
Branford Price Millar Library
Science and Engineering Floor
934 SW Harrison and Park
Portland, OR 97202-1151
(503) 725-3690

Richland

DOE Public Reading Room
2700 University Drive
CIC, Room 101 L
Richland, WA 99352
(509) 372-7443
Attn: Terri Traub

Seattle

University of Washington
Suzzallo Library
Government Publications Room
Seattle, WA 98195
(206) 543-4664
Attn: Eleanor Chase

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This report was written and designed by the staff of EnviroIssues. Much help and information was provided by agency personnel - Max Power (Ecology), Dennis Faulk (EPA), and Gail McClure, (DOE).