

Hanford Advisory Board Draft Advice

Topic: 2013 State-of-the-Site Meetings

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Originating Committee: Public Involvement

Version #1: **Color:** __pink_X_ **yellow** __green __purple__blue__goldenrod

Background:

Since 2002, Hanford State-of-the-Site meetings (SOS) have been successful in providing an opportunity for open, meaningful dialogues between the general public and Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agency decision makers about the status of Hanford cleanup. SOS meetings create a unique environment, unlike the environment one typically finds during more formal, public comment periods, for the discussion of Hanford cleanup issues. The SOS framework allows people who are new to Hanford to get involved, to learn about Hanford, to ask questions, and to talk with decision makers about values and concerns.

The informal atmosphere of SOS meetings also helps establish healthy working relationships between the agencies and the members of the public, and thus improves understanding in a way that can increase the effectiveness of public involvement during more formal, public comment periods and hearings.

As the HAB has observed in previous pieces of advice (HAB Advice #137, #169, #191, #222, #239), the success of SOS meetings relies, in part, on active facilitation, accessible meeting sites in a variety of locations, and adequate publicity. The HAB has also observed that SOS meetings must be regularly scheduled and must provide sufficient lead time to allow community organizers and the public time to plan.

An SOS meeting has not been held for over a year. It is imperative therefore that the TPA agencies begin planning for 2013 SOS meetings as soon as possible. Ideally, effective HAB preparation and participation for a series of SOS meetings requires a minimum three month planning window.

Advice:

1. The Board advises the TPA agencies to schedule a series of SOS meetings for 2013 and to do so in a manner consistent with the goals, expectations, and values identified in previous pieces of SOS HAB advice.
2. The Board advises the TPA agencies to seek Board collaboration and involvement early in the SOS scheduling and design process, to ensure adequate community and HAB membership support.
3. The Board advises the TPA agencies to work with the Board's Public Involvement and Communications Committee to develop and publish an SOS protocol that clearly addresses expected SOS meeting outcomes, methods of meeting evaluation, and the responsibilities of meeting participants.
4. The Board advises the TPA agencies to draft guidelines that promote the effective annual scheduling of future SOS meetings for the Hanford region.