



May 6, 2010

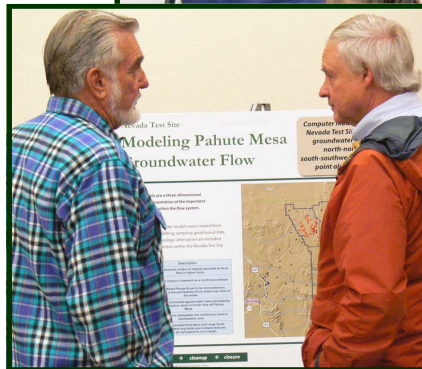
Nevada Site Office Environmental Management

EM NEWS FLASH

NEVADA TEST SITE GROUNDWATER EXPERTS SHARE INFORMATION AT BEATTY OPEN HOUSE

Groundwater affected by historic underground nuclear testing at the Nevada Test Site was the topic of discussion at a recent open house in Beatty, Nevada. Residents of Beatty and neighboring communities attended the April 21st meeting to learn more about the rigorous drilling and sampling efforts conducted as part of the strategy to address the contamination resulting from some of the 828 underground nuclear tests.

Open house attendees made their way through the Beatty Community Center to view a series of [detailed posters](#) on well development, radioactive source term, sampling results, computer modeling, and monitoring. Scientific experts with the U.S. Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office and the national laboratories were on-hand for one-on-one discussions with attendees at each poster.



In one-on-one poster sessions, community members learn about the complex geology and groundwater flow at the Nevada Test Site.

Many of the attendees were interested in recent drilling activities in the northwestern region of the Nevada Test Site, known as Pahute Mesa. [Four of the nine new characterization wells](#) planned in the area were constructed between May and November 2009, with the remaining scheduled for completion by 2012. Data gathered during drilling and sampling these wells was incorporated into information shared during the February 2009 Open House, when the public

was briefed on computer modeling results that forecasted the presence of contamination in the groundwater at Pahute Mesa within 50 years of the first underground nuclear detonation (1965). The [forecasted contamination was verified in October 2009](#) when tritium measuring below federal drinking water standards was identified in water samples taken from a Pahute Mesa well located on restricted U.S. Air force land adjacent to the Nevada Test Site. The Open House held last month gave groundwater experts the opportunity to discuss how these results support computer modeling and how placing additional wells on and near the mesa will provide more complete data to refine the models.

Groundwater information gathered by the [Desert Research Institute's Community Environmental Monitoring Program](#) and the [Routine Radiological Environmental Monitoring Program](#) can also be incorporated into the computer models. These programs regularly gather samples from water sources on and around the Nevada Test Site to increase monitoring and help ensure the public is protected.

“Computer models provide scientists and regulators crucial information needed to make informed decisions on long-term monitoring needs,” explained Federal Sub-Project Director, Bill Wilborn. “More accurate computer modeling, limiting access, and continuous monitoring all come together to help protect the public,” he added.

Protecting the public was a key message throughout the evening, as was keeping the public informed. A member of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for Nevada Test Site Programs was on hand to discuss the volunteer organization's role in maintaining public involvement, such as recommending the site for the first Pahute Mesa well drilled in 2009. Open house attendees were also able to speak with State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection representatives about their role as the regulator.

“We received excellent feedback from those who attended,” said Assistant Manager for Environmental Management, Scott Wade. “They seemed grateful for the opportunity to speak with the experts and gain additional insight into the important groundwater monitoring and studies we are conducting.”

You have received this announcement as a member of the U.S. Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office Environmental Management distribution list. If you would like to be removed from the list, please call 702-295-3521 or e-mail your request to envmgt@nv.doe.gov with the words “EM News Flash Remove” in the subject line. If you know anyone who would like to begin receiving these articles, please have them send a request to envmgt@nv.doe.gov with the words “EM News Flash Subscribe” in the subject line. You can also follow us on Facebook at [NNSA Nevada Site Office](#).

