

## West Valley Demonstration Project Summary of Quarterly Public Meeting – May 22, 2013

### Members of the Public and Others Present

Diane D'Arrigo\*, Barbara Frackiewicz, Andy Goldstein, Joanne Hameister, John Jackson\*, Keri Janks, Kathy McGoldrick, Barry Miller, Paul Siepinski, Ray Vaughan, Barbara Warren\*, Eric Wohlers.

### Agency and Contractor Participants

*Department of Energy (DOE)*: Bryan Bower, Marty Krentz, Moira Maloney, Zintars Zadins.

*New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)*: Tom Attridge, Lee Gordon, Elizabeth Lowes, Andrea Mellon, Allyson Zipp.

*CH2M Hill B&W West Valley, Inc. (CHBWV)*: Lynette Bennett, Charles Biedermann, Nate Bridges, Dan Coyne, Jerry Hoch, John Rendall.

*Enviro Compliance Solutions Inc. (ECS)*: Dhananjay Rawal\*.

*New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*: Pat Concannon, Ken Martin, Dan Lightsey, David O'Herir, Dennis Weiss, Lynn Winterberger.

### INTRODUCTIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The facilitator Bill Logue welcomed all present and reviewed the meeting protocols and documents<sup>1</sup>. A moment of silence was observed for Warren Schmidt, a member of the Citizens Task Force who recently passed away.

### PHASE 1 STUDIES UPDATE

Lee Gordon of NYSERDA presented an update on the Phase 1 Studies. At the February Quarterly Public Meeting, the presentation focused on feedback received about the Phase 1 Studies process, and reviewed the erosion recommendations from the Independent Scientific Panel (ISP), as well as feedback from agencies and stakeholders. The general theme of this feedback was that the evaluation and understanding of uncertainties is important in the prioritization of the Phase 1 Studies. Since then, DOE and NYSERDA have been discussing how best to incorporate uncertainty considerations in Phase 1 Studies and in evaluation of study results with respect to Phase 2 Decisionmaking. The agencies hope to be able to discuss this soon in more detail. He noted that the Phase 1 Studies process was not affecting the schedule of decommissioning activities.

A brief update was provided on the three Potential Areas of Study (PAS) for which some work has been completed:

The Exhumation Working Group (EXWG) has been on hold since February while the agencies determine how to address uncertainty. The agencies have identified some EXWG activities that can move forward. The EXWG recommendations will discuss how the studies may serve to characterize and/or reduce uncertainties in support of agency consensus. The recommendations should be completed around August, and will be presented at a future QPM.

The Erosion Working Group (EWG) is the farthest along at this point. The agencies will ask the EWG to prepare a report on uncertainty estimates for a range of erosion prediction methodologies applied over a range of time and

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\* Participated by telephone and WebEx

<sup>1</sup> Documents and materials relating to the Phase 1 Studies are available at [www.westvalleyphaseonestudies.org](http://www.westvalleyphaseonestudies.org) and are listed at the end of this summary. Documents related to West Valley Demonstration Project updates are available in the public meetings section of [www.wv.doe.gov](http://www.wv.doe.gov).

space scales. They will also assess current study recommendations 1 through 3 to identify studies/study components likely to reduce uncertainty regardless of the analytical framework ultimately used.

The Engineered Barriers Working Group (EBWG) has also been on hold since late February while the agencies determine how to address uncertainty. At this time, the agencies feel that progress on the Exhumation and Erosion study areas will allow for more effective definition of objectives for Engineered Barriers study area. Therefore the EBWG is on hold until progress has been made on the other topics.

### **Questions**

Questions were raised regarding the topic of uncertainty as they related to the Phase 1 Studies. A suggestion was made to allow for older radionuclide inventory estimates to be assessed and addressed, in addition to new data that may be gathered. In particular, the issue of discrepancies about the Plutonium inventory was noted. A concern about minor to catastrophic adverse events and whether the working groups would be considering them was also raised. Lee Gordon explained that the working groups will be asked to examine all information already gathered in order to determine what needs to be done. They may look at several scenarios. They also have access to information from the climate change scientists, as well as the public input. Ultimately, they will need to look at the nature of the uncertainty, the magnitude of it, and how it may be reduced.

Additional questions were raised about public input and how that information is being shared with the working groups. Mr. Gordon explained that the EIS comments had been indexed by topic and the relevant information provided to each of the working groups. In addition, they are tasked with reviewing the comments and responses posted on the Phase 1 Studies website. In response to apprehension about the volume of information, Bill Logue suggested that if there are concerns about particular input being provided to the working groups, that it may be best to submit a request to share specific information with the working groups.

Other questions were raised regarding how the agencies would decide whether to take a deterministic or probabilistic approach when looking at uncertainty. Lee Gordon clarified that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and they the agencies would not necessarily need to choose one over the other, but rather look at what is best for a particular study topic. He affirmed that the agencies are looking to the scientists to make recommendations for the best ways to approach this. The agencies are dealing with this in the management sense and are expecting the scientists to inform them of what the most valuable and useful information is to further reduce uncertainty.

The question of how and where uncertainty is related to climate change would factor into the studies was raised. Mr. Gordon noted that the Guidance from the climate change workshop made broad suggestions for application to the study areas. For each study area the Subject Matter Experts will make recommendations and there will be opportunity for public input. A question was asked about erosion modeling and erosion and the speed with which radioactive contamination would move from a creek to Lake Erie. Mr. Gordon replied that this was a contaminant transport issue dealing with ground and surface water and the model for that is different from erosion.

Additional questions were raised about the working groups and their selection and the bounds of the studies, with a particular concern raised about the number of industry representatives at the table. Lee Gordon explained that many of the working group members are industry people out of necessity – they have done this work and understand it.

A need for time to have technical, more in depth discussions was raised. The agencies indicated that they are looking into additional opportunities for these discussions.

### **PROJECT UPDATE**

Dan Coyne of CHBWV provided project updates for the four contract milestones.

Milestone 1 – High Level Waste (HLW) Canister Relocation & Storage System. Status: The HLW is in the Chemical Processing Cell, and potentially will be moved to the Vitrification Facility to be put into the canisters. The design of the pad for the HLW canisters shows 56-57 multi-purpose overpack casks. Twenty-seven core borings have been completed to determine where the road needs to be reinforced. Nuclear Assurance Corporation will construct the canisters on site in the parking lot area. The final foundation design for the pad should be completed soon, and will be reported on at the next QPM. Mr. Coyne also reviewed the sequence within the MPPB for the canister removal.

Milestone 2 – Shipment of Legacy Waste. Status: 47,500 cubic feet of legacy waste shipped. Newly generated waste has been more Low-Level Waste (LLW) rather than TRU waste, which currently does not have a pathway for disposal. Processing of the Remote-Handled Waste Facility dissolver and packaging of the LLW is complete.

Milestone 3 – Demolition and removal of the Main Plant Processing Building (MPPB) and the Vitrification Facility. Status: Asbestos abatement and piping removal continues in the MPPB. The next step will be the liquid waste cell. Work continues to segment the MPPB, and continuing to remove hazardous constituents prior to demolition. Some Vitrification facility has occurred and the building it may be used for decontaminating HLW canisters.

Milestone 4 – Complete all work described in the Performance Work Statement. Status: The 01-14 Building metal structures have been removed. Decontaminating the concrete will be the next step for this building. Other Balance of Site Facilities work continues with waste load out for three building slabs complete and deactivation and demolition about to begin for several other structures.

Permeable Treatment Wall (PTW). The PTW was designed to limit migration of the Strontium-90 (Sr-90) groundwater plume and has a design life of 20 years. It was installed in 2010 and is monitored with 88 new and existing wells. The PTW is not significantly altering groundwater conditions and sampling indicates effective removal of Strontium-90 through an ion-exchange process with Sr-90 binding in the wall and sodium and potassium coming off the wall. The levels of Sr-90 at Cattaraugus Creek are indistinguishable from background.

Look Ahead. The HLW storage pad design will be complete in the summer. High moisture cement drums are being processed for legacy waste shipment by October. Vit Cell equipment cleanout will be complete by September. MPPB asbestos removal from labs, laundry and offices will be complete by September. 01-14 Building demolition will be complete in May and Balance of Site Facility work will continue.

## **Questions**

In response to a question, John Rendall of CHBWV explained that the trends are showing that the wall is effectively removing Sr-90, though he added that when the wall was put in there was some groundwater contamination beyond the wall. Charles Biedermann of CHBWV added that, as expected, some of the monitoring wells in the area immediately downgradient of the wall that originally showed slight increases in Sr-90 are now showing decreases.

A question was asked about whether the casks could withstand an EF4 or EF5 tornado. The question was unable to be addressed because the design safety analysis has not been completed. An answer will be provided at the next quarterly meeting.

Another question was raised about whether continual work is done on erosion mitigation. Lee Gordon responded that DOE and NYSERDA have active environmental monitoring and if either agency sees something needing remediation, steps are taken to do that, examples are the Erdman Brook and Franks Creek work.

## **AIR MONITORING PROGRAM**

John Rendall of CHBWV presented information regarding the Air Monitoring Program taking place on and around the site. Three kinds of monitoring take place – point source monitoring (e.g. stack monitoring), demolition support monitoring for worker safety and work area control, and ambient air monitoring around the site. All three types of

monitoring include continuous sampling. All sources are a magnitude below the standard dose. Comparatively, natural and man-made sources expose people to significantly more radiation. Plant ventilation stack monitors and portable ventilation units show extremely low emissions of 0.03% of the standard for 2012. Demolition support monitoring for the 01-14 Building typically has 12 locations for monitoring. A daily background is established and it verifies that the data being collected is consistent with the background. Sampling methods include continuous, 30 minute intervals, and dust particulates. There were no observed levels of concern for the 01-14 demolition. The ambient monitoring is monitoring has 16 stations around the site, as well as in the community in order to confirm the information received on the site. Glass fiber and charcoal filters are used. Biweekly gross alpha and beta are measured and key WVDP isotopes are measured quarterly. Results have been non-detect.

The 2011 ASER is on the website now, and the 2012 ASER will be posted once it is done. Detection limits are ultimately lower than what have been committed to. Mr. Rendall provided a map and backup data for ambient air monitoring.

### **Questions**

A question was asked about whether there has been a time when the downwind monitors have all been off at the same time. Mr. Rendall explained that this has not happened, and the likelihood that all monitors in one area would be down is unlikely.

Mr. Rendall responded to a question that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has a radiological monitoring team that oversees these monitoring efforts. Others raised questions about what types of particulates or other contaminants are being monitored. Mr. Coyne responded that other industrial contaminants, such as asbestos, lead, and PCBs were monitored for purposes of worker safety depending on the job being completed. Personnel monitoring results are not required to be posted. Bryan Bower of DOE explained that a FOIA request would be the best way to obtain this information so that DOE can track and make sure that the request is responded to.

### **BUDGET UPDATE**

Bryan Bower of DOE provided an update on FY13 funding and the request for FY14. The FY13 budget was recently resolved, and because the sequestration budget is based on FY 2012 WVDP will, subject to DOE reprogramming, likely receive more than the budget request for FY2013. For FY14, he explained that funding comes through the Office for Environmental Management, which is doing work at 17 different sites (defense and non-defense). West Valley's request for FY14 is \$66 million. In recent years, the money that has been paying for the cleanup of West Valley has remained fairly stable.

### **Questions**

A question was raised about where the Phase 1 Studies fit in the budget. Mr. Bower explained that the high level information being presented represents the federal portion of the funding and does not include the 10% contribution from New York State, which is used to support the Phase 1 Studies as well as other Project-related costs.

### **TOPICS FOR NEXT QPM**

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Logue asked for suggestions of topics for future QPMs. Suggestions were received to discuss PTW monitoring results and other concerns about the plume, additional discussion concerning uncertainty, and further discussion of Phase 1 Studies and suggestions for further studies, with information on the working groups.

**Documents Distributed and Posted Prior to Meeting on the Web Sites ([www.westvalleyphaseonestudies.org](http://www.westvalleyphaseonestudies.org) and [www.wv.doe.gov](http://www.wv.doe.gov))**

<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Generated by; Date</b>
Meeting Agenda	ECS; 5/22/13
West Valley Phase 1 Studies Update Presentation	DOE & NYSERDA; 5/22/13
CHBWV Presentation – Project Update	CHBWV; 5/22/13
CHBWV Presentation – Air Monitoring Program Update & Backup Data	CHBWV; 5/22/13
DOE Presentation – FY 2014 Budget Briefing	DOE; 5/22/13