

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force
From: Bill Logue, Citizen Task Force Facilitator
Date: October 16, 2009
Subject: **Summary of the September 23, 2009 Meeting**

Next Meeting

The next Citizen Task Force Meeting will be:

Time & Date: **7:00 – 9:30 PM, October 28, 2009**
Location: Ashford Office Complex
9030 Route 219
West Valley, NY

Note: All participants must be United States citizens and must bring photo identification. If you have questions or comments regarding the upcoming meeting or about this summary, please contact Bill Logue (860-521-9122, Bill@LogueGroup.com).

CTF Participants

CTF Members and Alternates attending: Deb Aumick, Chris Crawford, Gladys Gifford, Steve Kowalski, Kathy McGoldrick, Joe Patti, John Pfeffer, Pete Scherer, Warren Schmidt, Tim Siepel, Ray Vaughan.

Agency Participants and Observers

Department of Energy (DOE): Bryan Bower, Mark Bells.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA): Chris Andrzejewski, Tom Attridge, Paul Bembia, Lee Gordon, John Kelly, Andrea Mellon, Dave Munro, Paul Piciulo, Marty Willett, Jean Williams.

West Valley Environmental Services, LLC (WVES): Sonja Allen, Charles Biedermann, John Chamberlain, Steve Warren.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation: Dave O’Herir, Tim Rice.

Observers: Natalie Condor-Smith (Springville Journal), Joanne Hameister, Paul Wojtasjek.

Introductions and Announcements

Bill Logue welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting documents.¹ Several CTF members conducted a brief tour of the site earlier in the day visiting the Main Process Plant Building, the area of the North Plateau Groundwater Plume and the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA) and NRC-Licensed Disposal Area (NDA). Bill Logue noted that a number of events and meetings had occurred since the last meeting of the CTF. These include: a late August walk at the request of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes to see impact of the early August rain events on the SDA, NDA and spillways; a September 2 video-conference between NRC and DOE on the Decommissioning Plan; a September 4 videoconference of interested parties with Assistant DOE Secretary for Environmental Management Inez Triay and NYSERDA President Frank Murray; and a September 16 Open House sponsored by NRC. Several CTF members participated in each of these meetings or events.

John Pfeffer informed the CTF that he hand delivered the letter to Congressman Massa during a meeting with the Congressman sponsored by the National Association of Towns and Townships. Congressman Massa asked the CTF to draft a letter for him proposing their request for future public involvement concerning decisions at the WVDP. Ray Vaughan, Kathy McGoldrick, John Pfeffer and Bill Logue will work

¹ The documents are listed at the end of this summary and may be found at www.westvalleyctf.org

on the initial draft of the letter. Warren Schmidt reminded the CTF of the history of CTF representatives from elected officials and indicated that Congressman Massa asked him to request the CTF add a seat for a representative from his office. The CTF, DOE and NYSEDA agreed this was appropriate and the Ground Rules were amended to add a 19th member. Warren Schmidt will serve as Congressman Massa's Representative.

Kathy Konst, is the new Commissioner of Erie County Dept of Environment & Planning and has assumed the seat formerly held by Holly Sinnott. Paul Kranz will continue to serve as her alternate.

WVES High-level Waste Canister Storage Evaluation & Recommendation

Lettie Chilson, WVES High-Level Waste (HLW) Canister Storage Project Manager, gave a presentation on the HLW waste canister storage evaluation and recommendation. She noted that 275 of the stainless steel canisters, which are 10 feet tall and 2 feet in diameter, are stored in the Main Process Plant Building (MPPB). The average contact dose for the canisters is approximately 2,600 rem/hour. Five percent have a dose in the range of 7,200 rem/hour. If the MPPB is to be demolished the HLW canisters must be moved to another location at the WVDP while awaiting final disposal. Her team is evaluating storage system and potential locations on the site. They reviewed historical documents, conducted an evaluation of potential sites, developed options, conducted site visits to other facilities, developed functional requirements and evaluated options according to identified criteria and requirements.

Potential Location. Prior reports provided comparative options not specific recommendations. A consistent recommendation was above-ground shielded storage. Based on a number of criteria including minimizing impact on current and future work and the least potential environmental impact, they are recommending the construction of an above ground shielded facility in the southwest corner of Waste Management Area number 6. Geotechnical work will begin soon to define area needs for any construction.

Storage. Spent nuclear fuel storage systems are adaptable to the HLW canisters. These storage systems, called overpacks, can hold up to 5 HLW canisters. The canisters are safer than spent fuel because they generate less heat, have no neutron dose, have no criticality concerns, do not require inert gas and can withstand a 23 foot drop without breaking. Four storage system options were evaluated including horizontal, vertical, single canister containers and above ground vaults. Criteria included storage life, ability for the storage system to remain uncontaminated, minimization of future operating costs and removal and disposition of the uncontaminated storage system after the canisters have been shipped offsite. Ms. Chilson reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of the options relative to each other. The above ground vault option was eliminated and the horizontal, vertical and single canister options have been deemed competitive based on the conceptual models. There is one vendor for the former and two vendors for the latter. WVES is recommending proceeding with the conceptual design of the single canister container and the vendor options for the spent nuclear fuel storage systems (horizontal and vertical systems). Some systems are assembled on site from components and others are manufactured onsite.

In response to a question about the long terms storage of HLW on site, Bryan Bower noted that the legislative history of the WVDP Act states that the waste is to be stored on-site until such time as there

is a federal repository to receive it. He provided the reference to the relevant legislative history to CTF members at the end of the meeting. He also indicated that decisions concerning the relocation of the canisters and their storage systems was bounded by the Draft EIS and the programmatic EIS on HLW.

DOE Update

Bryan Bower of DOE provided an update on the WVDP.

Safety and New Employees. Mr. Bower noted that the Project has the highest safety performance of all Environmental Management sites in the DOE complex. It has been more than one year since a recordable accident and 2 years five months without a lost-time work injury.

August 9-10 Rain Event. In early August between about 5 inches of rain fell in two separate storm events. There were minimal impacts on the WVDP site with a culvert pipe leading to the NDA plugged, minor erosion on unpaved roads, and a plugged discharge line in the laundry area which may not have been a result of the storm event. All areas have been repaired. The Western New York Nuclear Service Center experienced some high water levels and surface erosion at its lakes and dams. Brush clearing for easier dam inspection has been performed, ongoing inspections are occurring, as is a safety inspection of on-site dams by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). It is likely that some funds will be shifted to making repairs.

MPPB Accomplishments. Two large vessels have been removed from the Hot Acid Cell, the final piping removal is in progress from the Acid Recovery Cell, and 70% of the piping and vessels have been removed from Extraction Cell 3. Mr. Bower noted that a wall opening has been created in the MPPB to aid in the removal of the hot acid vessels. The Acid Recovery Cell work should be complete by mid-October. Five crews are working simultaneously in the building.

Waste processing. As of August 31, 69,928 cubic feet of stored low-level waste (LLW) and 33,068 cubic feet of transuranic (TRU) waste have been processed. Two remote waste processing areas are in operation, one in the Remote Handled Waste facility and the other in the Vitrification Facility. Two contact handled waste processing facilities are operating with TRU waste is being segregated from LLW in order to reduce volume.

HLW Waste Tanks and Vault Drying. The contract for design and installation of the system for drying the HLW tanks and vaults has been awarded. Preparations are underway for pump removal from tank 8D-4 and for the erection of a weather shelter over tanks 8D-3 and 8D-4.

NPGP Mitigation. The preliminary design for the permeable treatment wall to mitigate the North Plateau Groundwater Plume (NPGP) is continuing. A geophysical study was conducted using electromagnetic and radar techniques. Trencher capabilities and zeolite wall material are being evaluated.

Railroad Repair. The Fox Valley Road landslide area is being repaired, some additional work is necessary as a result of the August rain events. Drainage enhancements are being made and the tracks should be installed in the coming weeks.

ARRA Funded Projects. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), 54 WVES employees have been hired including janitors, site operations staff, MPPB dismantlement and demolition workers, waste management operators, supervisors and professionals. A number of existing employees at WVES and their subcontractors have been assigned to ARRA related activities.

DEIS. The comment period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement closed on September 8, 2009. The Final EIS is expected in February 2010 with a Record of Decision in March 2010.

NYSERDA SDA Update

NYSERDA Project Manager Tom Attridge provided a brief background on the NYSERDA's responsibilities for the SDA and introduced the team managing the SDA. He noted that the SDA is approximately 15 acres and is the sole responsibility of NYSERDA. It was operated as a commercial radioactive waste disposal facility by Nuclear Fuel Services (NFS) from 1963 until 1975 when water infiltration caused the trenches to overflow and disposal operations were discontinued. There are 2.4 million cubic feet of waste in 14 trenches. NYSERDA assumed day-to-day responsibility in 1983 and with water infiltration controls were installed in the 1990's stopping the ongoing infiltration of water. Originally 736,000 curries of radioactivity were disposed in the SDA and there are now about 130,000 curries present. The SDA is regulated by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH), NYSDEC, the New York State Department of Labor and OSHA. Mr. Attridge then turned over the presentation to other staff to address particular aspects of the management and operations of the SDA.

Environmental Monitoring. Marty Willett provided an overview of environmental monitoring at the SDA. Monitoring is conducted of the trenches, three closed lagoons, an 8,000 gallon leachate storage tank, slurry wall and drainage, and two buildings. The three environmental pathways for contamination, air, groundwater and surface water, are monitored. Air contamination is least likely at the SDA and groundwater the most likely. There are 21 groundwater monitoring wells which are sampled semi-annually for radionuclides and volatile organic compounds. Groundwater elevations are also measured to provide groundwater flow information. These measurements are taken in perimeter wells peizometers in the south trenches, special monitoring wells and the trench sumps. Groundwater flow is generally in a northeast direction perpendicular to the Kent Recessional sequence. Surface water is monitored at streams and five stormwater fallouts. Air monitoring is measured at 50 gamma survey points and 5 thermoluminescent dosimeter locations. All 2008 measurements were within regulatory standards for groundwater, surface water and air.

Erosion Monitoring and Research. Associate Project Manager Lee Gordon presented on erosion monitoring and research at the SDA. He prefaced his remarks by saying that NYSERDA believes that erosion is and will be a significant issue for the SDA and the WVDP. Erosion processes have been observed and studied at the SDA and nearby. These include adjacent to the SDA, knickpoint erosion (waterfalls) on streams and gully advancement on slopes, and landsliding on Buttermilk Creek. He noted the repairs to gullies in the 1990's and identified knickpoints in Erdman Brook and Frank's Creek and several East Slope gullies. The Frank's Creek knickpoint has advanced upstream about 25 feet per year. NYSERDA has expressed concern with the long-term predicted results of the erosion modeling in the Draft EIS.

Erosion inspections are conducted of the SDA, nearby creeks and slopes and of the North Slope. These will become more formalized as a result of NYSERDA's Part 380 permit issued by NYSDEC. Erosion control projects are planned for the two creeks and the gullies. He noted that erosion control is difficult because downstream erosion usually undercuts control structures. Data gathering is ongoing and specialized equipment and services for erosion modeling and monitoring are being obtained. Chris Crawford indicated that there might be an opportunity for NYSERDA and Cattaraugus County to save funds by collaborating on contracts for LIDAR (laser, high-resolution) surveys. Research will investigate rates of gully erosion, spatial distribution and development of gullies, rates and modes of knickpoint development, regional stream channel stability and geologic setting and soil properties. This will be closely coordinated with the Erosion Peer Review Group.

Operations and Maintenance. Associate Project Manager Chris Andrzejewski provided an overview of operations and maintenance of the SDA. NYSERDA maintains the facilities and property including tanks, and buildings; trenches, caps and covers; monitoring wells, equipment and sensors; and roads, drainage, fences and utilities. Routine weekly, monthly, bi-monthly and annual inspections are conducted, as are non-routine inspections in response to changing conditions or observations. Logs are used to track maintenance items. NYSERDA conducts routine work and contractor support. A current project is the North Slope/ Erdman Brook Erosion Mitigation (short-term). Projects to be conducted in the near future include: North Slope/ Erdman Brook Erosion Mitigation (long-term); VLPE geomembrane cover replacement; East Slope erosion repairs and the Frank's Creek knickpoint. In response to questions, Mr. Andrzejewski stated that NYSERDA was examining color options for the geomembrane cover to minimize degradation from sunlight and heat. Paul Bembia noted that the Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) for the SDA would be updated soon and made available to the CTF and public. This will include analysis of slope performance in light of severe rain events.

Waste Management. Senior Project Manager Andrea Mellon presented on waste management activities. She noted that NYSERDA does not routinely generate radioactive waste such as the 8,000 gallons of leachate in the Tank T-1 building and solid waste consisting of motors, pumps and filters. This waste is regulated by NYSDEC and EPA under the Part A permit and consent order and by NYSDEC and NYSDOH under the 380 Permit and Radioactive Waste Materials License. Regular inspections and inventories are performed. The Tank and leachate and solid waste will be removed in October and November and, after a confirmatory study, the area will be clean closed under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. NYSERDA has no intention of storing waste at this location, although the building may be used for other purposes in the future so it will not be demolished at this time. If in the future leachate is pumped from the site, it will be immediately trucked off-site for disposal.

Upcoming Meetings

Paul Giardina of EPA will be invited to October meeting. At a future meeting, as appropriate, the CTF will receive presentations on the status of the litigation between NYSERDA and DOE and the revised QRA for the SDA.

Observer Comments

There were no observer comments.

Action Items

Action	Assigned To	Due Date
Draft letter for Congressman Massa	McGoldrick, Vaughan, Pfeffer, Logue	

Documents Distributed

Document Description	Generated by; Date
Revised Meeting Agenda	9/23/2009
WVES HLW Waste Canister Relocation Recommendations	WVES; 9/23/2009
DOE WVDP Project Update	DOE; 9/23/2009
NYSERDA SDA Maintenance and Operations	NYSERDA; 9/23/2009
CTF Letter to Congressman Massa	CTF; 9/9/2009
Newspaper clippings distributed at the meeting	NYSERDA; 9/23/2009