

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Bill Logue, Citizen Task Force Facilitator  
Date: March 11, 2010  
Subject: **Summary of the February 24, 2010 Meeting**

## Next Meeting

The next Citizen Task Force Meeting will be:

Time & Date: **6:30 – 9:00 PM, March 24, 2010 [NOTE EARLIER START TIME]**  
Location: Ashford Office Complex  
9030 Route 219  
West Valley, NY

Note: Participants must be U.S. citizens and have photo identification. Please contact Bill Logue (860-521-9122, [Bill@LogueGroup.com](mailto:Bill@LogueGroup.com)) with questions or comments concerning this summary or future meetings.

## CTF Participants

**CTF Members and Alternates attending:** Deb Aumick, Rob Dallas, Judy Einach, Chris Gerwitz, Mike Hutchinson, Steve Kowalski, Lee Lambert, Joe Patti, John Pfeffer, Warren Schmidt, Bill Snyder, Ray Vaughan, Eric Wohlers.

## Agency Participants and Observers

*Department of Energy (DOE):* Craig Rieman.

*New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA):* Tom Attridge, Paul Bembia, Andrea Mellon.

*West Valley Environmental Services, LLC (WVES):* Sonja Allen, Charles Biedermann, Dave Biela, John Chamberlain.

*Observers:* Dan Evans, Joanne Hameister.

## Introductions and Announcements

Bill Logue welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting documents.<sup>1</sup> The CTF noted the absence of Peter Scherer who passed away on February 14. Pete was an original CTF member committed to his community and the CTF. Despite the passing of his wife in 2009 and recovering from health issues himself Pete made every meeting held during 2009. His understanding of the site, common sense and humor will be missed.

In an effort to accommodate weather and member schedules the CTF decided to move the start time of meetings to 6:30 PM beginning in March.

## Consent Decree Status

Paul Bembia of NYSERDA advised the CTF that counsel New York are preparing the paperwork for filing with the court concerning acceptance of the consent decree. The proposed settlement addresses allocation of responsibility for mitigation or remediation costs. Prior to the filing, responses will be sent to address the four comment letters including the one from the CTF. He anticipates that the motion for approval of the consent decree will be filed with the court during the month of March.

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<sup>1</sup> The documents are listed at the end of this summary and may be found at [www.westvalleyctf.org](http://www.westvalleyctf.org)

## Radiation Safety at WVDP

Dave Biela, WVES Radiation Safety Manager, gave a presentation on radiation safety at the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP).

At the outset, Mr. Biela noted the worker dose limits set by the federal government of 5 Rem/year and an administrative limit set by DOE of 2 Rem/year. He then compared these with the maximally exposed dose for an individual at WVDP in 2009 of 0.719 Rem and the average doses for 2009 and prior years: 2009 – 0.062 Rem; 2008 – 0.05 Rem; 2007 0.103 Rem; 2006 – 0.034 Rem; and 2005 – 0.024 Rem. The average is calculated by dividing the total dose by number of workers trained and authorized to work in radiologically controlled areas. In 2009 there were 599 workers. The core number of workers performing decontamination work and radiation technician work is a subset of this group, approximately 200 -250 in 2009. Mr. Biela reviewed the statistics for maximally exposed workers over the six year period. This varied from .451 in 2008 to .733 in 2007. Total site dose from 2001 through 2009 from 14.530 Rem in 2005 to 36.985 Rem in 2009. He further noted that the variations, such as the increase in 2007, can be traced back to the nature of the work being performed at the time. He noted that the predicted dose in 2010 is 87 Rem due to the nature of the work in preparing the Main Process Plant Building (MPPB) for demolition. Ray Vaughan noted for historical context that, in its last year of commercial operations, Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc., had an average plant worker dose of 12 Rem. The CTF commended the success at limiting exposure for workers.

The daily maximum dose for a worker is 100 mRem. This may be exceeded with written authorization. In 2009 approximately 4 workers received a maximum daily dose of 110 mRem. Daily doses are monitored by supervisors and weekly reports are generated. Mr. Biela reviewed the WVDP ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) checklist and Radiation Work Permit. These documents ensure all precautions are taken. Although these particular documents are unique to WVDP, similar work plan documents are used at other DOE sites and in the commercial nuclear industry. Information is kept for 75 years to ensure that a later dose reconstruction can be performed if necessary.

Mr. Biela showed a number of pictures depicting safety equipment and measures at the WVDP related to radiation exposure and controls. These included Personal Protective Equipment such as bubble suits, respirators and monitors. As appropriate, additional industrial safety measures are used such as safety harnesses with lanyard hoists when working over a pit. Electronic dosimetry allows for real time monitoring by the worker and supervisors outside of the work area as well as audio and visual alarms when dose limits are nearing or a worker approaches a hot spot. Other safety measures are built into work plans. These include engineered measures, such as temporary shielding and ventilation, are preferred because they are not dependent on a worker action. Other measures include hold points where work stops until a set of safety measures is confirmed or implemented. At all times workers are empowered to call a "time out" to stop work and step back to clarify an issue, answer or question, or ensure procedures are being properly

followed. They may also stop work at any point for immediate safety concerns after which management is consulted about how to resolve the situation.

## WVDP Update

Craig Rieman, DOE Deputy Director of the West Valley Demonstration Project, presented a project update.

**Safety.** As of February 19, WVDP has achieved more than 2.3 million work hours without a lost-time accident or illness. A first aid injury in January was reclassified as a restricted case and recordable injury. Two minor first aid incidents occurred in February for a finger abrasions and a small cut. The Total Recordable Case Rate (TRC) and Days Away, Transferred, Restricted (DART) both stand at 0.2.

**Main Process Plant Building (MPPB).** Extraction Cell-1 is the last Extraction Cell to be decontaminated. The monorail was extended to bring equipment into the Extraction Aisle to prepare for decontamination. All in-cell work will be performed remotely due to the level of radiological contamination. Mr. Rieman showed a video of final preparations for the use of Nitrocision® tooling for the Process Mechanical Cell. The process uses nitrogen gas at -300° at 50,000 psi to remove surface contamination. The process allows for immediate capture of 90% of the removed material in a 30 gallon drum. Conditions in the cell will determine the degree of overlap and methodology (lap or cross) to remove contamination.

American Resource and Recovery Act funded work in the MPPB continues. This includes isolating and removing hazardous and asbestos-containing materials and associated piping and electrical work. Twenty specialized operators on three crews are performing the work. The MPPB Liquids Solidification is progressing. The liquids are being tested to determine the design of the cement mix recipe. Surrogate trials are positive for metals testing and the 7-day cure test is underway. Review of equipment and installation drawing will be completed by February 25. Sodium bearing waste equipment is being inspected and repaired for possible reuse in liquids solidification.

There are approximately 7,500 gallons of residual liquid waste which are being sampled and analyzed in order to be stabilized. A subcontract is in place to develop a "recipe" to mix the waste with concrete for disposal. The solidification system will be skid mounted so that it can be used in the future for portions of the MPPB demolition.

**Tank & Vault Drying System.** Also included in ARRA work is the tank and vault drying system. Final design review was completed February 22 and the system which will be installed in 2010. Temporary ventilation lines from the Permanent Ventilation System were installed and mockup operations are being initiated for removal of the highly contaminated 16-inch diameter underground ventilation piping. Liquids from Tank 8D-4 were sampled and on-site analysis revealed lower than expected Cesium-137 levels. (800 curies rather than 14,000.) This means that Cesium has precipitated out of the liquids. A sample was sent to an off-site lab for more extensive analysis. Decontamination of 8D-4 liquid and subsequent solidification is on hold pending further review of the analyses. Preparations to remove a transfer pump and steam jet to allow for more thorough characterization is underway. The pH in the tank was lower than expected and

could be a cause for the precipitation of Cesium. The current schedule is for liquids to be removed by June 2011.

**Waste Processing.** As of January 31 2010, 71,421 ft<sup>3</sup> of stored Low-level Radioactive Waste (LLW) and 35,897 ft<sup>3</sup> of Transuranic (TRU) waste have been processed and 48,504 ft<sup>3</sup> of LLW disposed of. The first waste shipment with ARRA funds left WVDP for Utah on February 23. Newly generated waste from MPPB decontamination and demolition includes piping, switches, controls and general debris.

**North Plateau Groundwater Plume Mitigation.** Thirty-four borings were taken along the location of the proposed Permeable Treatment Wall to determine the depth of the unweathered clay layer. The borings were surveyed for Strontium-90; however, results were not reviewed.

**Ground Level Offices.** Fifty-two of the units are on-site, with 124 employees using them. Five maintenance units will be occupied in early March and several other units are being prepared for use.

**Other News.** The Record of Decision is being reviewed at Headquarters. The NRC is expected to release its Technical Evaluation Report very soon. The Characterization and Analysis Plan (CSAP) was submitted to NRC on February 5 and is available on the WVDP website. The site-wide characterization proposals are under review an award is expected soon, and work is expected to begin this year. The current contract with WVES expires in 2011 and a new solicitation is being prepared for Phase 1 work. The President's 2011 budget was delivered to Congress and with a baseline budget of \$58.1 million for WVDP.

**Discussion.** Paul Bembia noted that the ARRA funding will sunset in 2011 and that in recent years this funding has been a significant addition to base funding. Without additional base funding beginning in 2012, which would be the first year of the new contract and work under Phase 1, there will be a significant drop in funding. He encouraged the CTF to monitor this in the coming year.

## **CTF Review of 2009 Accomplishments and Planning for 2010**

The CTF reviewed the summary of 2009 accomplishments and reviewed the objectives for the group as set out in the Mission and Ground Rules. A number of the objectives have been accomplished; however, both NYSERDA and DOE stated their support for continuation of the CTF as an advisory group. Paul Bembia noted that CTF has a role in advocating for funding, and in providing input regarding ongoing site waste and facilities management and future assessment studies. CTF members concurred in this, and as noted below the importance of outreach. The group asked the facilitator to draft suggested objectives.

Going forward the group discussed a number of topics:

Members noted that they felt the need for better outreach to constituents, which has been limited until recently by limited milestones to report. After discussion, the group asked the facilitator to prepare a brief PowerPoint presentation for members to give their constituents and the general public to raise awareness of the site. The CTF suggested that some meetings be held on the same date as the Quarterly Public Meetings to enhance participation and awareness of both. Joanne Hameister of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes will consult with counsel and the Coalition about this issue.

Paul Bembia noted that the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) is a group of communities which have enhanced their ability to raise awareness and advocate for issues by working in collaboration. He committed to send information to the CTF. The group's efforts have included looking at a federal Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) program. The CTF will revisit this topic later in the year as a potential committee topic to review what ECA communities have done that may be transferable to WVDP.

Mr. Bembia advised the CTF that NYSEDA and DOE were discussing methods to involve the public in the Phase 1 assessment study process. Options include having meetings and workshops with groups in addition to the CTF and/or establishing an independent panel. Possible study topics include: erosion, groundwater, engineered barriers, and uncertainty analysis.

Erosion was discussed as a significant area of interest by the members. However some potential erosion topic can be quite detailed so the option was raised for future consideration of alternating a full CTF meeting with work group meetings for those that want more detailed or technical presentations and discussion. DOE was encouraged to make the CHILD erosion modeling software available onsite, or perhaps at the University of Buffalo, for running multiple variations to assess possible erosion outcomes and calibrate its accuracy.

The CTF reviewed membership and asked the facilitator to call members to gain a sense of their desire to continue to serve and ideas for objectives and meeting topics. Membership and the total number of members will be reviewed again at an upcoming meeting. The group noted that, for the first time, the group had membership from almost all area elected officials. Possible committees include: outreach, erosion, and ECA.

### **Future Meeting Topics**

During discussion, the CTF discussed the following as potential meeting topics and identified potential months for several:

- Record of Decision (March)
- Technical Evaluation Report by NRC (March)
- Characterization and Analysis Plan (April)
- Ongoing Assessment Period Studies (May/June)
- Invitation to meet with elected official – state and federal
- Multiple presentations concerning assessment studies

### **Observer Comments**

Joanne Hameister of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes noted how difficult it is to get the public to understand the long-term issues. She feels that the public is under the impression that with the FEIS and waste being shipped out that the site is cleaned up. She encouraged DOE and NYSEDA in their press releases to note the accomplishments, but also to speak to what remains to be done and that at the end of Phase 1 the site will not be fully clean.

## Action Items

Action	Assigned To	Due Date
Draft revised objectives	Logue	3/17/2010
Call CTF members	Logue	3/17/2010
Provide information on ECA	NYSERDA	3/2/2010

## Documents Distributed

Document Description	Generated by; Date
Meeting Agenda	Logue; 2/24/10
DOE WWDP Update	DOE; 2/24/10
WVES Presentation on Radiation Safety	WVES; 2/24/10
CTF Summary of 2009 Activities and Planning for 2010	Logue; 2/24/2010
Ray Vaughan Letter to DOE Commenting on FEIS	Vaughan; 2/12/2010
Newspaper clippings distributed at the meeting	NYSERDA; 2/24/10