

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Nancy Raca and Susan Charland, Highland Planning  
Date: November 7, 2022  
Subject: **Summary of October 26, 2022 Meeting**

## Next Meeting

Date & Time: TBD  
Location: TBD

## CTF Members and Alternates Attending

Deb Aumick, Anna Carr, Charlie Davis, John Hood, Tony Memmo, Joe Patti, John Pfeffer, Ray Raffel, Mary Reid, Pat Townsend, Ray Vaughan. Facilitators: Nancy Raca and Susan Charland.

## Agency Participants and Observers

**Department of Energy (DOE):** Stephen Bousquet, Bryan Bower, Jeff D’Agostino, Patrick Hefflinger.

**New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA):** Paul Bembia, Brad Frank, Lee Gordon, Andrea Mellon, Peter Vlad.

**CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC (CHBWV):** Joe Pillittere, John Rendall, Kelly Wooley, and Elizabeth Lowes.

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation:** Pat Concannon, Lynn Winterberger.

**New York State Department of Health:** Cynthia Costello, David O’Hehir.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** Conrad Sherman.

**Neptune & Company:** Sean McCandless.

**SC&A:** Charlotte Salmon.

**Observers:** Ashley Clines, Diane D’Arrigo, Joanne Hameister, Rick Miller, Kelsey Shank, Blossom Vance, Jay Wopperer.

## Introductions, Announcement, Administrative Business

Nancy Raca welcomed all present and explained that she is the new facilitator for the CTF. She reviewed the meeting agenda and materials.<sup>1</sup> John Pfeffer requested an additional agenda item to discuss a grant opportunity with the CTF.

## CHBWV West Valley Demonstration Project Update

Kelly Wooley of CHBWV presented a project update.

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<sup>1</sup> Each meeting material is listed at the end of this summary and may be found at [www.westvalleyctf.org](http://www.westvalleyctf.org)

**Safety:** As of September 2022, the Total Recordable Case Rate is at 0.30, with the last recordable case in April 2022. Days Away Restricted or Transferred (DART) are at 0.30, with the last recordable injury in May 2022.

**Main Plant Process Building Deconstruction:** Mr. Wooley showed photos from the start of deconstruction of the Solvent Storage Terrace Area. Some photos show the blue fixative that is used in the deconstruction. During the deconstruction of the terrace area, pre-packaged sections of duct work were removed and placed into a waste container. This waste is deposited into a black liner and sealed. Slide 6 shows controlled deconstruction of the Upper Warm Aisle and removal of staged duct work. Slide 7 shows the deconstruction of the Lower Warm Aisle. Mr. Wooley noted that this work is proceeding slowly and carefully to ensure that containment methods are working properly. He noted that everything has gone smoothly so far.

**New Scope:** Interior work on the New Guard House continues. Future access to the site will be through this facility. Relocation of Legacy Waste in High Integrity Containers is complete. Tank Sampling of Tank 8D-4 is progressing well. All of these tasks are proceeding at a metered pace.

## LiDAR, Aerial, and Drone Imagery Update

Lee Gordon of NYSERDA provided a review of recent LiDAR, aerial, and drone imagery of the site.

**Overview of watershed** (Slides 2 – 5): The WNY Nuclear Service Center lies wholly within the Buttermilk Creek Watershed, which drains into Cattaraugus Creek and then into Lake Erie. High-resolution photos and ground surface scanning provide 100 billion pixels of data, assembled into a photo mosaic in Slide 4. Slide 5 is a visualization of the LiDAR topographic area. This is comprised of 4 billion laser measurements.

**Overview of WVDP Site Changes** (Slides 6 – 14): Slide 6 shows an overview of the demolition area. Facilities marked in red and white have been removed. The Main Plant Process Building (marked in purple) is in the process of being demolished. Mr. Gordon reviewed aerial photos of changes to the site between 2015 and 2020, including the removal of the annex office complex, the chemical process cell waste storage building, and the equalization basin, which was removed and brought back to grade. In addition, the north slope of the NDA was regraded, and in 2017 a new cover was placed on the SDA. Mr. Gordon noted that the LiDAR data shows subtle topographic changes as a result of alterations made to the SDA and NDA.

**Buttermilk Creek Changes** (Slides 15 – 37) There are three primary creeks in or adjacent to the site: Quarry Creek; Erdman Brook, which splits the north (main plant and ancillary facilities) and south plateaus (disposal area); and Franks Creek, which wraps around the south side of SDA. The creeks flow together at a location north of the site and then flow further north where they meet up with Buttermilk Creek. Mr. Gordon highlighted the location of the Buttermilk Creek Landslide on Slide 18. LiDAR data shows a visualization of the land surface topography without trees and buildings, representing the actual ground surface, stream channels, and gullies. Mr. Gordon showed a series of aerial photos of Buttermilk Creek from 1939 to 2020 to show how

the channel and valley have evolved over time. All photos show the same section of Buttermilk Creek, so reference points are consistent. In 1939, the photo shows a bright channel. In 1955, it looks like there is more vegetation in the channel itself. When the channel looks bright, that means there has been a high flow event before that, which scoured the area. Later, the vegetation grew back. Slide 31 shows a zoomed in image of the Buttermilk Creek landslide, which happened in 1955. By comparing LiDAR of this area from 2015 to 2020, changes in elevation become apparent. Some material from the upper part of the landslide has slumped down into the lower part of the landslide. The banks of Buttermilk Creek are evolving over time. Slide 34 shows an oblique view of this area, as taken from a drone. Buttermilk Creek's valley is 180 feet from the top of the valley to the creek bed. It is 1,250 feet away from the SDA. Buttermilk Creek/Heinz Creek movement undercuts the bank below the landslide. This landslide has reactivated multiple times over the last 80 years, primarily because of the location of the confluence.

**Franks Creek/Erdman Brook** (Slides 38 – 42). Drone oblique aerial images show Franks Creek and Erdman Brook, though it is difficult to observe these valleys when they are vegetated. The confluence of Erdman Brook and Franks Creek is on the site property. The arrow in Slide 38 points to Outfall W06, where the WVDP fence is located. Franks Creek valley is 85 feet deep at this location. This cross-section overexaggerates the vertical (a 4-1 exaggeration), which makes it seem more dramatic, but allows us to see subtle features. Where Franks Creek comes closest to the SDA, the valley is 45 feet deep.

**Erosion Control** (Slides 43 – 47): Slide 43 is a photo of the NDA from March 2022. The facility to the left is the SDA. The photo shows fractures on the SDA south slope. Slide 44 shows a Geotech investigation, completed in May 2022 to help with mitigation of the fracturing of the slope. Erdman Brook runs to the left of the drill machine. Slide 45, from September 2022, shows the appearance after work started on removal of loose soils near the SDA. Slide 46, a photo from October 2022, shows that a significant amount of upper soils have been removed from that slope. Slide 47 shows erosion controls along the creek, several hundred feet downstream from the disposal areas, including a box culvert and a large pipe culvert. Buried grade control structures installed in 2012-2013 are also here, which can't be seen in the photo.

**Reservoirs and Rail Spur** (Slides 48 – 55): Slide 49 shows the rail spur as it leaves the property. It passes over two dams that are used to fill in local tributaries and create two reservoirs. The Lake 1 dam was inspected and found to be in good condition. Slide 50 shows erosion issues at the spillway. Note that this erosion is not on the Lake 1 dam, but on the Lake 1 spillway, which allows the lake to overflow into Buttermilk Creek so that it does not go over the dam itself. This spillway is constructed into the hillside. It is a drop of approximately 75 feet. This erosion dates to 2015. Mr. Pillittere reported that CHBWV does monthly inspections and has done recent studies of the whole area, which included the spillway and the sides of Lake 1. It was found to be functioning as designed, but CHBWV is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to address lake level.

Anna Carr asked whether an overtopping of the spillway triggers a State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) permit. CHBWV confirmed that their staff notifies the state in the event of any overtopping and performs an inspection at that time. The required notifications are made.

Mary Reid asked how much rain fell in the 2009 event. Mr. Gordon said that it varied but was about five to six inches of rainfall in a three-hour period. Some issues at the spillway were a result of the culvert plugging up. The flood water in this valley was more than 30 feet deep.

Mr. Gordon said that Slide 51 shows the smaller of the two lakes. There is a pump house located in this reservoir that pumps water to the site. The Lake 2 dam is in good shape. With regard to Slide 53, Mr. Gordon said that while the rail spur into the site remains in service, the railroad tracks north to Orchard Park were removed around 2010. We have seen erosion in that corridor. Since the tracks were removed, the rail corridor is no longer maintained and the creek has begun to circumvent the old railroad bed. Slide 54 shows a tributary on the east side of Buttermilk Creek called Gooseneck. It flows under the railbed and comes out of a bell-shaped culvert that spills into Buttermilk Creek. The rail embankment has started to slip downwards in a number of locations. Slide 55 shows where the rail line now stops as well as the slumping of the old rail bed. The Buttermilk Creek culvert is also shown.

Slide 57 shows the completed West Valley Solar Area on the eastern side of Buttermilk Creek. It is comprised of 52 acres of solar panels, generating 10 megawatts (MW). Joe Patti asked whether there will be an impact to the watershed with the solar panels covering that much area. Mr. Gordon said that the solar panels are set on posts, so the land is not disturbed. It is boggy, swampy land. There was limited tree removal. Overall, the installation was completed with minimal disturbance. Mr. Gordon also stated that there are no historical measurements of water flow in this watershed, so it is difficult to make comparisons since the solar facility was installed.

Slide 58 shows the start of the main plant demolition.

## CTF Discussion

**Washington, DC Visit:** Ms. Raca raised the topic of a CTF visit to Washington. Consensus from the group was that it would be worthwhile and should take place after the new Congress is in session, in early Spring 2023. This would allow the CTF to build relationships and also start to talk to legislators about the FY2025 Federal budget. Paul Bembia noted that Congress has authorized \$75 million per year for WVDP in the past but that the project has recently received more than that. In response to a question from Joe Patti, CHBWV staff said that demolition of the MPPB will still be underway in Spring 2023 and that a year from now (i.e., October 2023) the demolition will be about halfway complete. Phase 1b (underground beneath the MPPB) is scheduled for the second half of 2025. John Pfeffer urged the CTF to communicate with legislators about this timeline, reminding them that the site will not be finished after the buildings have been demolished. More funding will be needed for underground work. John

Pfeffer, Charlie Davis, and Joe Patti agreed to planning the trip. Ms. Raca will work with them to schedule an initial planning session.

**ECA Grant:** Mr. Pfeffer told the CTF about a grant opportunity from the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA). This opportunity is for grants of up to \$50,000 for local governments to increase education and outreach and local government participation in the cleanup mission. The grant can be used for activities such as

- Increasing education at EM sites.
- Providing support to stakeholder groups (like the CTF) to analyze plans and proposals and alternatives in NEPA process.
- Increasing public awareness of impacts and increase public participation in decision-making.

Mr. Pfeffer noted that the Town of Ashford may be able to lead the opportunity, with support from the CTF in preparing the application. Applications are due November 30, 2022, and it is likely to be competitive. Mr. Vaughan suggested that the CTF focus on both education/outreach and technical support in the application. John Pfeffer and Ray Vaughan agreed to be part of a working group to prepare the application. Ms. Raca will distribute the grant application and set up an initial working group meeting.

**December CTF Meeting:** Ms. Raca asked the CTF if they would like to meet (in person or by Zoom) in December. The next QPM meeting will be November 16, 2023. It was decided that the ECA grant work group should meet in November, and Ms. Raca will poll the CTF in mid-November to assess the need for a December CTF meeting.

## Observer Questions and Comments

None.

## Follow Up

Description	Generated by; Date
Plan CTF delegation to Washington	Highland Planning & CTF
Establish Work Group to prepare ECA grant application	Highland Planning & CTF
Poll CTF regarding December meeting	Highland Planning

## Meeting Documents Available on the CTF Website

Description	Generated by; Date
Meeting Agenda	Raca; 10/26/22
CHBWV Project Update	CHBWV; 10/26/22
LiDAR, Aerial, and Drone Imagery Update	NYSERDA; 10/26/22
News Clippings Since the Last Meeting	NYSERDA; 10/26/22