

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force
From: Heike Jacob, Highland Planning
Date: April 6, 2026
Subject: **Summary of March 25, 2026 Meeting**

Next Meeting

Date & Time: April 22, 2026, 6:30PM

Location: Ashford Office Complex, 9030 U.S. 219, West Valley and Zoom

Zoom registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_51sHvXD-QRqKHg3g7aOEgw

CTF Members and Alternates Attending (in person or via Zoom)

Members: John Eberth, Kathy McGoldrick, Jordan Buffalo, John Pfeffer, Raymond Raffel, Pat Townsend, Ray Vaughan

Alternates: Joanna Panasiewicz, Todd Gates, Shannon Seneca

Facilitator and Notetakers: Heike Jacob, Leanne Voit, Katrina Lim

Agency Participants and Observers

Department of Energy (DOE): Bryan Bower, Bill Frederick, Steve Bousquet, Jeff D'Agostino

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA): Paul Bembia, Brad Frank, Lee Gordon

West Valley Cleanup Alliance (WVCA): Peggy Loop, Joe Pillittere, Elizabeth Lowes, Steve Kirschenmann

Observers: Abe Zeitoun, David Ohehir, Brian Betts, Frank Zhang, Lynn Winterberger, Jim Werner, Darcy Gates, Sean McCandless, Diane D'Arrigo, Cynthia Costello, Brian Frazer

Welcome/Administrative Updates

CTF Facilitator Heike Jacob opened the March 25, 2026, meeting and conducted a roll call. No administrative updates were reported from NYSERDA. DOE reported that on March 16, a vehicle struck the Felton Hill Bridge in West Valley. Buffalo Pittsburgh Rail confirmed the incident and is currently evaluating the damage. The bridge is expected to be back in service by April/May and is not anticipated to affect operations at the site.

Project Update and Cleanup Progress

Peggy Loop, Waste and Site Operations Manager of the West Valley Cleanup Alliance (WVCA), presented an update on the project and cleanup progress. Cleanup is advancing steadily with key demolition, sampling, and infrastructure projects progressing as planned.

Radiological samples are being retrieved to characterize the soil in order to construct the retention wall needed for the excavation of Waste Management Area 1 (WMA-1). The second phase of radiological sampling was completed with 18 radiological characterization borings collected. The third and final phase of radiological sampling will begin shortly to inform the final design and placement of the retention wall. The retention wall will be made up of interlocking concrete piles known as a secant wall. The retention wall will reach depths of approximately 50 to 70 feet, preventing groundwater infiltration. The same type of retention wall was used to build the new Buffalo Bills stadium.

Other work that is currently underway includes: 1) the changeout of the Permanent Ventilation Unit Filters, 2) the removal of high-level waste piping from the high-level waste transfer trench, 3) planning work for the removal of the Replacement Ventilation Unit building, 4) work on the WMA-1 utility re-route designs/work document development, 5) complete the design of the WMA-1 excavation approach, 6) complete developing of the work plan to remove the former Fuel Receiving and Storage facility, and 7) continue normal monitoring and surveillance activities.

A CTF member asked whether “Phase 2” referred to the EIS process and was told it instead refers to the three phases associated with radiological sampling in WMA-1; they also asked about the plume location, tank farm, and what would be done with the concrete piles after excavation is complete. The plume originates near the southwest corner of the main plant, the tank farm is located in WMA-3, and the piles’ long-term disposition is still under evaluation.

An observer asked for clarification on plume movement and how the planned secant wall would interact with contamination, including whether it would stop the plume; DOE explained the plume trends east/northeast from the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB), the secant wall will be constructed through the plume and associated contaminated soil but is intended to support safe excavation and groundwater control—not stop plume migration—and the goal is to remove the source contamination of the groundwater plume. They also noted that excavation methods are still being evaluated and that the permeable treatment wall is separate from this work. DOE will provide a more detailed map of the site that shows the location of the planned secant wall in relation to the plume, the permeable treatment wall, and other areas of interest at the next CTF meeting or Quarterly Public Meeting (QPM) in May 2026.

West Valley CTF 2025 Evaluation

CTF Facilitator Heike Jacob presented the high-level findings from the annual evaluation. The purpose of the annual evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of the CTF process, identify areas of agreement and disagreement, highlight opportunities for improvement, and strengthen collaboration and outreach. 10 CTF members completed the evaluation. In summary, CTF members feel comfortable working with one another, asking questions, and discussing issues. CTF members also agreed that there is strong information flow between members and the agencies. Facilitation was rated highly for impartiality and engagement, and agency presentations generally meet CTF needs. However, CTF members would like to

strengthen community outreach and awareness, improve communication between CTF members and constituents, and increase opportunities for discussion during meetings.

Challenges in public awareness and suggested improvements were discussed. Community knowledge about the site and cleanup progress is limited, especially among younger generations. Past programs connected with local schools and colleges are being conducted at local schools, Board of Cooperative Extension Services (BOCES), and colleges, with a new Community STEM Program at the Hulbert Public Library. These programs are overseen by WVCA’s Communication and External Affairs director. Suggestions included developing a simple CTF overview PowerPoint for members to use to present about the site to their constituents, an interactive StoryMap to explain the site, and social media posts, videos, or reels. It was noted that there has been significant media coverage of the site in the Springville Journal but that newspapers in Salamanca and Ellicottville could be contacted to expand reach. NYSERDA and DOE reiterated that they are available to present to constituent groups and local organizations, noting that increased interest is expected as Phase 2 cleanup decisions approach.

CTF Business and Updates

The next annual trip to D.C. is being planned to hold meetings with congressional members to continue project support. Multiple date windows are offered in April, May, and June for delegation participation. It was noted that past visits helped secure the introduction of a new West Valley Demonstration Project Reauthorization Act that would double project funding, demonstrating that continued lobbying efforts are critical to sustain financial and political backing for the cleanup.

Other Updates

The annual Water Walkers event will start at the site on April 22nd in the afternoon and proceed to the Ashford Office Complex to observe the CTF meeting. Organizers will ensure that attendees are aware of the updated ID requirements for the office complex.

Next Steps

The next CTF meeting will be on Wednesday, April 22, 2026. The next Quarterly Public Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 27, 2026. Members are encouraged to send agenda items or requests for additional presentations in advance.

Meeting Documents Available on the CTF Website

Description	Generated by; Date
Meeting Agenda	Highland Planning; 3/18/26
WVCA Project Update	WVCA; 3/24/26
West Valley CTF 2025 Evaluation	Highland Planning; 3/18/26