

**EM SSAB CHAIRS**  
**Bi-Monthly Conference Call**  
**Thursday, January 11, 2007**  
**3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Participants**

**Chairs/Representatives:**

Idaho	Lisa Aldrich, Shannon Brennan, Richard Buxton, William Flanery, Bob Pence
Nevada	Carla Sanda, Kelly Snyder, Walter Wegst
NNM	J. D. Campbell, Menice Santistevan
Oak Ridge	Spencer Gross, Pat Halsey, Norman Mulvenon, Pete Osborne
Paducah	William (Allen) Burnett, Mitch Hicks, Eric Roberts
Richland/Hanford	Sharon Braswell, Shelly Cimon, Susan Leckband, Todd Martin
Savannah River	Gerri Flemming, Sheron Smith

**DOE representatives:**

EM-13	Patricia Atkinson-Brown, Doug Frost, Melissa Nielson
EM-12	Christine Gelles
EM-20	Mark Gilbertson
CI	Betty Nolan

***OPENING REMARKS***

Doug Frost welcomed participants to the call.

***NEW BUSINESS***

**Technology Strategy**

EM Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Engineering and Technology Mark Gilbertson (EM-20) reported that his office developed a Program-Plan (Plan) document at the request of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Charlie Anderson. The Plan lays out the macro-goals and strategies for EM-20's three main areas of responsibility: waste management; soil and groundwater; and decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) and facilities management. The Plan will be submitted for official approval in March, along with the previously discussed technology road map requested by Congress. Both products are living documents and will be updated regularly.

In the spirit of open government, Mr. Gilbertson will provide the EM SSAB with drafts of both the Plan and the road map in order to solicit their suggestions and to prepare the

Chairs for his presentation at their March meeting. These documents will enter DOE Headquarters' concurrence process parallel to the EM SSAB comment-period; therefore, Mr. Gilbertson will be able to incorporate any recommendations he receives from the Boards prior to finalizing the products.

Recently, EM-20 offered a workshop on Cementation at the Savannah River Site. Members of the SRS CAB were in attendance, and Mr. Gilbertson encouraged the participants to share their experience with others in the EM SSAB.

EM-20 is also scheduled to offer an Aluminum and Chrome workshop in Atlanta, Georgia during the week of January 22<sup>nd</sup>. EM SSAB members are invited to either attend or register for access to a web cast of the event. Mr. Gilbertson agreed to forward the workshop's agenda to Doug Frost and suggested that EM-20 could develop a broader schedule of events in the future if the SSABs found the activities useful. Mr. Gilbertson is willing to explore methods through which EM-20 and the EM SSAB can more effectively interact.

Shelly Cimon of Hanford commented that Larry Bailey, then Director of the Office of Groundwater and Soil Remediation (EM-22), spoke of developing a ten-year plan for EM-22 during his presentation at the last EM SSAB Chairs' meeting. She inquired as to how site ten-year plans correspond with the Plan being developed by EM-20.

Mr. Gilbertson clarified that ten-year plans relate to infrastructure issues. He also noted that the recently-retired Mr. Bailey was instrumental in the development of program plans for his office; the strategies he instituted are part of EM-20's larger Plan.

Norman Mulvenon of Oak Ridge asked Mr. Gilbertson to clarify the D&D and facilities management component of EM-20's Plan. Do D&D plans address current inventory only, or do they account for buildings that will need to undergo the process in the future?

Mr. Gilbertson explained that EM-20's D&D and facilities management responsibilities include infrastructure maintenance, site ten-year plan evaluations, and the use of new technologies to address the technical uncertainties of D&D operations. Each site office is responsible for the organization and management of its current inventory; the aforementioned site ten-year plans address EM program inventory only. Inventory belonging to other programs, i.e. the Office of Science at Oak Ridge, is addressed in a larger master site plan. EM-20 is aware of the EM complex's future D&D needs and works with Site Managers to plan for those projects.

Dick Buxton of Idaho asked if there was consideration for worker safety in the D&D process from a radiological point of view, and asked if Mr. Gilbertson would address that component in his March presentation to the Chairs. The members of the INL CAB have expressed some concern over the footprint the site's contractor has left.

Mr. Gilbertson stated that safety is, of course, the number one priority, and agreed to address the issue in his presentation if the EM SSAB requested. However, Mr.

Gilbertson also cautioned the Boards against waiting until March to address current safety concerns, and urged them to share any issues sooner rather than later. Mr. Gilbertson suggested that the EM SSAB work with Melissa Nielson and Doug Frost to bring specific matters to EM-20's attention and stated that his office would ensure that concerns regarding technical issues and uncertainties facing the EM program are addressed.

### **Congressional Update**

Betty Nolan from the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (CI) reported that DOE will continue to operate under the current Continuing Resolution through February 15<sup>th</sup>. At this time, Congress is working to organize itself and develop a Continuing Resolution that would run for the remainder of the Fiscal Year (FY).

The proposed Continuing Resolution will allow the Department to operate under its FY 2006 allocations, less any earmarks and the across-the-board 1% appropriations bill rescission. A joint House-Senate committee is expected to be formed to conference and make appropriate adjustments to the Continuing Resolution as soon as feasible.

Due to the Republican and Democrat members' respective party retreats, action on the new Continuing Resolution is expected to coincide with the release of President Bush's FY 2008 budget request on February 5<sup>th</sup>. In any event, it would be reasonable to expect approval prior to the February 15<sup>th</sup> expiration of the current Continuing Resolution.

Ms. Nolan added that the majority of full committee assignments have been made, but subcommittee assignments and staffing are still under review.

### **Waste Disposition Strategies Update**

Christine Gelles, Director of the Office of Disposal Operations (EM-12), provided an update on the National Disposition Strategy for Low-Level and Mixed Low-Level Waste. According to Ms. Gelles, Charlie Anderson has reviewed the Strategy document and, having recognized its significance, agreed to sign off on the concurrence package once a distribution list is cleared by the Office of Public Affairs and CI. The document is a dynamic program management tool, and as such it will be recognized as a living document managed by configuration control and identified by a revision number.

The official document will be published as *The National Low-Level Waste Disposition Strategy, Revision 0*, under Ms. Gelles's signature. It will be nearly identical to the draft advanced to the EM SSAB Chairs in September 2006, with the addition of a disclaimer indicating that comments are being held and will be addressed during the document's annual update. EM-12 will include the SSABs in the document's official distribution along with the leads of various intergovernmental organizations, and will make an electronic version available as well.

Ms. Gelles indicated that Mr. Anderson expressed a desire for the development of similar strategy documents and integration tools to address other major waste streams. Therefore, EM-12 will begin to develop a strategy document for transuranic (TRU) waste and work to update existing documents with the latest inventory estimates and program reorganizations, within the calendar year.

Susan Leckband of Hanford asked if there was a similar strategy document for plutonium disposition.

Ms. Gelles stated that plutonium disposition falls under the purview of DAS Mark Frei in EM-30. However, Ms. Gelles noted that Mr. Anderson chairs the Nuclear Materials Disposition and Consolidation Coordination Committee (NMDCCC) composed of program officers from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) and the offices of General Counsel and Nuclear Energy. The NMDCCC develops plans for the optimized management of certain nuclear material streams and is currently developing a surplus plutonium implementation plan, a uranium-233 implementation plan, and a complex-wide data call update. The efforts of the NMDCCC often overlap with those of EM-12 and other EM offices.

Ms. Gelles also reported that EM-12 has continued to update the sites' life-cycle waste forecasts in the Waste Information Management System (WIMS). Her office has received responses from several non-EM sites, including eight from the Office of Science and two from NNSA, and will combine the submissions in order to perform a data-integrity review by the end of January. She expects that updated life-cycle waste forecast information for Mixed Low-Level and TRU waste will be available to registered WIMS users in February.

### **Discussion of the March Chairs' Meeting Agenda**

Mr. Frost stated that the EM SSAB Planning Committee has done an excellent job in preparation for the March Chairs' meeting. The Committee's next conference call is scheduled for Thursday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Frost noted that the latest iteration of the agenda has been distributed to the EM SSAB, and asked the participants for any comments or suggestions.

Bill Flanery of Idaho asked whether or not the amount of time allotted for Mr. Gilbertson's *Office of Engineering and Technology* presentation was sufficient.

Ms. Nielson indicated that the *SSAB Product Development Discussion* period following Mr. Gilbertson's presentation could be used for further deliberation if necessary.

Mr. Frost suggested that the Planning Committee address this issue during their January conference call and consider adjusting the schedule to allow for more time.

Shelly Cimon of Hanford inquired about the status of the logistics and information packets for the March meeting.

Kelly Snyder of Nevada stated that the EM SSAB Chairs were provided with the initial hotel information and a request for a preliminary headcount in December 2006. The Chairs were to return their counts to the NTS CAB by Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. She indicated that formal registration packets would be assembled and distributed once an approximate number of expected participants could be determined.

Ms. Snyder agreed to re-send the participation request and logistics to Headquarters for distribution to the EM SSAB Federal Coordinators and administrative staff. Mr. Frost appealed to the Chairs and EM SSAB staff to act on this matter as quickly as possible and return their expected headcount to Ms. Snyder by Tuesday, January 16, in order to keep the ball rolling on the March meeting.

Mr. Frost clarified for Shannon Brennan that the March meeting's *FACA 101* presentation would provide insight into the Federal Advisory Committee Act and its implications. Ms. Nielson noted that while the informal session is expected to be particularly educational, it does not replace the FACA training class administered by the General Services Administration.

Ms. Nielson reported that the response to the Chairs' recommendation on technology from September 2006 will be posted on the EM SSAB website shortly; letters to each of the Chairs are in the mail. Furthermore, the EM SSAB Chairs' recommendation regarding consistent budget guidance and communication is under active consideration; a response is expected prior to the FY 2008 budget roll-out. Ms. Nielson also announced that the EM SSAB website maintained by Headquarters has been redesigned and is scheduled to launch by the end of January. Feedback regarding the site's design and content is welcomed.

## **AROUND THE COMPLEX**

### **Idaho – Dick Buxton and Bill Flanery**

- The Board is developing a membership recruitment and selection procedure that complies with DOE guidelines while retaining a significant role for itself. A proposal will be introduced at the Board's meeting on January 16-17 for discussion and delivery to DOE. The Board would appreciate any insight regarding the appointment processes of others in the EM SSAB.
- One member of the Board is grappling with the concept of the time value of money, particularly as it applies to D&D operations. Mr. Buxton suggested that this is a concern that would be best directed to Mark Gilbertson, EM-20.

### **Nevada – Walt Wegst**

- In November 2006, the Board decided to operate on a bi-monthly meeting schedule beginning in January. Feedback has been positive thus far.

- The Board received a presentation on Plutonium-Contaminated Soil Clean-up at its January 10<sup>th</sup> meeting. The significant interest and engagement demonstrated by a number of members suggests an increase in future involvement with this topic.
- The Board's standing committees are functioning well and moving forward with their missions.

### **Northern New Mexico – J. D. Campbell**

- The Board has found membership participation waning and will seek assistance from the March meeting's *FACA 101* presentation to elicit the comments and to increase the engagement of its members.
- The Board will launch a major public participation program for 2007 and 2008. Any insights on how to effectively engage members of the public, in addition to activist groups, would be appreciated. So far, public forum attendance has been mixed.
- The Board has taken issue with its support from NNSA and EM and intends to dialogue with EM-13 on the matter.
- The Board is optimistic and looks forward to a productive year ahead.

### **Oak Ridge – Norman Mulvenon**

- The Board passed its revised bylaws in December.
- DOE recently completed its Melton Valley Record of Decision (ROD). The Board has recommended that DOE re-write its "Notice of Contamination and Future Use Limitations, and Intent to Provide Notations on Ownership Record (Deed Restrictions) in Melton Valley" to make it more user-friendly for stakeholders.
- The Board provided DOE with a recommendation to hold a public meeting on the 2006 Remediation Effectiveness Report and CERCLA Five-Year Review. Currently, the document is being reviewed by EPA and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.
- EM Oak Ridge has contracted the Oak Ridge Associated Universities/Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education to perform an independent verification of the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) clean-up. This practice has added significance because ETTP is destined to become a re-industrialized site. The Board received a presentation on the effort during its January 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- DOE recently completed its shipment of 7,000+ containers of uranium hexafluoride to Portsmouth, Ohio. The Board's Vice Chair, Norman Mulvenon, attended a ceremony celebrating the shipment of the final 14-ton cask.
- The October 2005 discovery of three unmarked barrels of cesium-137 during the clean-up of an ETTP scrap yard was revisited in a recent newspaper article. While the origin of the barrels remains a mystery, officials suspect that they date back to either the 1960s or 1970s. The largest of the barrels registered 200,000 curies.

- The D&D of buildings K-25 and K-27 has continued; however, the Continuing Resolution is expected to impact the operation's funding. In response to a previous recommendation, DOE has agreed to provide the Board with a quarterly status report on the situation, beginning the week of January 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Due to a variety of maintenance and labor-related issues, work has been temporarily suspended at the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment.
- In the first week of January, DOE hosted a public meeting on the Environmental Assessment to evaluate the impact of on site uranium-233 disposal, as directed by Congress. The Board is concerned because uranium-233 disposal will eliminate Oak Ridge's current thorium extraction for medical purposes.
- The Board's Stewardship Committee remains active.
  - o The Committee has continued to explore and document the filing of contamination notices with Tennessee's Anderson and Roane Counties. County offices have been cooperative, but possess no legal authority in the matter. The Committee is exploring the use of a legislative private act to provide the local County Register with the authority to record contamination notices.
  - o The Committee has also continued to work with DOE to institutionalize a long-term stewardship directive at Oak Ridge, and establish long-term stewardship activities for future reference.

#### **Paducah – Allen Burnett**

- A series of PCB and uranium-contaminated piles was recently discovered by a contractor in the Wildlife Management area of Paducah. Administrative controls have been installed and EPA has directed EM to submit a Sampling Analysis Plan. The Board will receive a preliminary draft of the plan and expects to produce two recommendations regarding the chosen method of sampling and the use of the Wildlife Management area during remediation efforts.
- Three recommendations are forthcoming as a result of the Board's review and comments on DOE's Community Relations Plan. These recommendations will be the Board's first formal recommendations to DOE since 2004.
- Communications with new Deputy Designated Federal Officer, Reinhard Knerr, and Federal Coordinator, Mitch Hicks, have yielded positive results.
- Presently, the Board consists of ten members. Recruitment efforts have been largely unsuccessful and members have turned to the use of personal contacts to garner new applications. The Board has one membership appointment pending and expects to receive 3-4 new applications.
- Preparation has begun for the fall SSAB Chairs' meeting, tentatively scheduled for September 26-28. The Board will consult with the other SSABs to finalize a schedule.

#### **Richland/Hanford – Todd Martin**

- Hanford has issued three Requests for Proposals (RFPs). The Board is very interested in the impact the RFPs will have on the site's clean-up operations and has had difficulty obtaining information.
- The Board is developing a product to aide in groundwater remediation decisions. The product is similar to a regulatory flow chart and will be modeled after an earlier tool, produced by the Board, which focused on soil and waste clean-up in the Central Plateau region. The product is in its infancy, but will be available to the SSABs further into its development.
- The Board continues to revise its charter and bylaws. Although the process has been challenging, the Board was able to make significant progress during its meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Susan Leckband will succeed Todd Martin as the Board's Chair in February. A going away party for Mr. Martin has been scheduled for the evening of February 1<sup>st</sup> to celebrate his service.

### **Savannah River – Gerri Flemming**

- Due to previous engagements, the Savannah River Chair, Karen Patterson, and Vice Chair, Donna Antonucci, were unable to participate in the conference call.
- The next SRS CAB meeting is scheduled for January 22-23.

### **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Frost reiterated his request for all participants to act promptly on the March meeting logistics information and respond to Nevada's request for an anticipated roster of attendees.

Shelly Cimon of Hanford confirmed that Paducah has tentatively scheduled the Chairs' fall meeting for September 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Frost thanked everyone for participating.