

EM SSAB CHAIRS
Bi-Monthly Conference Call

Thursday, July 26, 2007

3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Participants

Chairs/Representatives:

Idaho	Lisa Aldrich, Richard Buxton, William Flanery
Nevada	Walter Wegst
NNM	Fran Berting, J. D. Campbell, Menice Santistevan
Oak Ridge	Spencer Gross, Lance Mezga, Pete Osborne
Paducah	William (Allen) Burnett, Mitch Hicks, Eric Roberts
Richland/Hanford	Shelly Cimon, Susan Leckband, Karen Lutz
Savannah River	Donna Antonucci, Gerri Flemming, Sheron Smith

DOE representatives:

EM-13	Patricia Atkinson-Brown, Melissa Nielson
EM-12	Christine Gelles
EM-20	Mark Gilbertson
EM-31	Cindy Rheaume

OPENING REMARKS

Melissa Nielson welcomed participants to the call and relayed information on two organizational changes occurring in the Environmental Management (EM) program:

- EM is creating an Office of Management Analysis that will be led by Jim Fiore who previously served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Human Capital and Business Services (EM-40). Barbara Male will take Mr. Fiore's place as EM-40 DAS.
- The Office of Program Integration, which handles plutonium disposition, will be transferred under Frank Marcinowski, DAS for Regulatory Compliance.

NEW BUSINESS

Waste Disposition Strategies Update – Christine Gelles

Christine Gelles, Director for the Office of Disposal Operations (EM-12), reported that the Waste Information Management System (WIMS) has been updated to include revised validated lifecycle waste forecasts for low-level and mixed low-level waste (LLW and

MLLW) and the system's geographic mapping capabilities are active (<http://wims.arc.fiu.edu/wims/>).

EM has continued to work with the Carlsbad Field Office to collect transuranic (TRU) waste data in support of its Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) compliance recertification application. Once collected and validated, TRU waste forecasts will be incorporated into WIMS; EM expects this to occur in either the late summer or early fall. Ms. Gelles clarified that the TRU waste forecasts only cover the waste in EM's inventory for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Therefore, pre-1970 TRU waste will be included in WIMS to the extent that the waste has been accounted for in the inventory destined for exhumation and disposal at WIPP.

Previously, Ms. Gelles reported that her office was developing a suite of integrated planning tools to optimize EM's LLW and MLLW disposition efforts across the complex. In support of this effort EM-12 began collecting "waste stories," which are well-defined narrative descriptions of each sites' waste management scope. This effort has primarily taken place in Oak Ridge where the site has a well-defined waste management system. EM-12 has successfully developed the first part of the Oak Ridge story board and plans to discuss and validate its work when it visits the site in late August. The story boards will help EM and its contractors define waste management activities and build an integrated waste schedule consisting of clean-up plans, required federal actions, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses, and regulatory approvals across the complex.

With regard to ongoing projects, Ms. Gelles reported that there are a number of significant activities occurring throughout the EM complex, many of which pertain to the increase in MLLW disposal at the Nevada Test Site (NTS) planned for Fiscal Year (FY) 2008.

Ms. Gelles also reported that EM-12 has continued to incorporate new data into the National LLW and MLLW Disposition strategy. However, due to her office's focus on the development of integrated planning and disposition tools, there has not been a tremendous amount of progress on the document. Once a revision is available for review, EM-12 will make it available to the public via the EM website, <http://www.em.doe.gov>.

EM-12 is also working on a NEPA analysis to support the disposal of Greater-than-Class C Low-Level Radioactive Waste (GTCC LLW). GTCC LLW consists of commercial waste from the medical industry, reactor decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) activities, and waste not suitable for commercial disposal facilities. It is important to note that the Department of Energy (DOE) also generates waste comparable to GTCC LLW, also known as DOE GTCC-like waste. EM's Notice of Intent (NOI) was approved by Assistant Secretary Rispoli on July 17th and published in the *Federal Register* on July 23rd, thereby beginning a 60-day scoping period for public meetings. The NOI also documents DOE's decision to include its GTCC-like waste stream in the analysis of disposal solutions for regular GTCC LLW. Based on the information received in the public scoping meetings, EM-12 will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

Information on the GTCC LLW project, NOI, and the public scoping meetings can be found at <http://www.gtceis.anl.gov/> along with a scientific report that outlines EM's methods for estimating GTCC LLW and DOE GTCC-like inventories.

Susan Leckband mentioned that at the last Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) Milestone Meeting in Richland, officials indicated that Hanford was preparing to ship the Central Plateau's 3013 containers of stabilized plutonium to the Savannah River Site (SRS) for disposition in August. Ms. Leckband wanted to know if that schedule was still on track.

Ms. Gelles clarified that plutonium disposition falls under the purview of Gary DeLeon and the Office of Program Integration. However, EM-12 is working on the NEPA analysis and record of decision to support the aforementioned shipment. By virtue of legislative requirements, EM must demonstrate to the state of South Carolina that it has an exit-path for plutonium; therefore, construction of the SRS Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, scheduled to begin in August, is a critical milestone.

First Annual RadWaste Summit – Christine Gelles

The First Annual RadWaste Summit will be held in Las Vegas, NV on September 4th. An agenda is still under development, but is expected to appear on the *Exchange Monitor's* website the week of August 6th; <http://www.exchangemonitor.com>.

Shelley Cimon suggested that EM SSAB members interested in attending the summit contact Doug Frost for help with registration.

Revised Budget Guidance for Including EM SSAB Input – Cindy Rheume

In February 2007, Mark Frei, DAS for Program Planning and Budget, distributed guidance regarding EM SSAB participation in the EM budget request process. Cindy Rheume, Director for the Office of Budget (EM-31) reported that a number of the boards have since expressed concern that the aforementioned guidance was not applied consistently throughout the EM complex. As a result, EM-31 began revising the guidance to provide more direction on the information EM should distribute to the EM SSAB and on the input the EM SSAB should provide its sites.

Ms. Rheume noted that there are two major components to the discussion surrounding the guidance revision:

- When EM enters the budget request process, it has an initial project prioritization scheme based on risk assessments. Therefore, EM's budget priorities may differ from those of the stakeholders', specifically with regard to groundwater and D&D activities. EM looks to the EM SSAB to relay priorities that the local communities feel should be more visible or better-funded.
- During the most recent budget request, the sites did not have enough time to incorporate stakeholder input before the budget information became embargoed. EM-

31 is exploring ways to allow sufficient time for the incorporation of this input into budget requests and examining the legal issues pertaining to when that information becomes officially embargoed. The revised EM SSAB guidance will reflect a timeline for stakeholders to truly influence the budget request process as well as a timeline for when budget information becomes embargoed.

Ms. Rheume added that the revised guidance will caution that out-year budget numbers are preliminary estimates. Unfortunately, during the last budget request process, there were several instances where information on out-year budget numbers was unintentionally distributed. EM does not want to create any expectations that Congress and DOE will be unable to meet in the future.

Ms. Leckband asked Ms. Rheume to explain why out-year budget numbers are embargoed and at what point they become embargoed. She noted that it is unclear why the budget request process is not entirely transparent with the presumption that out-year budget numbers are, of course, preliminary.

Ms. Rheume clarified that prior to significant deliberation at headquarters, out-year budget numbers are shared at the site-level. The information becomes embargoed as a result of internal executive branch deliberations between the sites, DOE management, and the Office of Management and Budget. The federal legal interpretation is that once sites make budget requests to DOE, all deliberations become embargoed until the first Monday of February when the president submits his budget request to Congress.

There is no out-year budget breakdown by site in the EM Five-Year Plan because the reality is that the budget is only submitted annually; out-year numbers are subject to change at any time and EM does not want to create false expectations. For example, numbers beyond the budget year under development (FY 2009) are just planning numbers and are not necessarily relevant.

Ms. Leckband stated that the EM SSAB appreciates the opportunity to comment on EM funding and added that the more information the boards are allowed to review, the better the feedback will be that they can provide.

Engineering and Technology Update – Mark Gilbertson

Mark Gilbertson, DAS for Engineering and Technology (EM-20), provided an update on a number of EM-20 activities and thanked the boards for their comments on the EM Engineering and Technology Roadmap. He added that the Roadmap is still a living document and EM SSAB members are encouraged to submit additional comments as they arise; Mr. Gilbertson expects to send the Roadmap to Capitol Hill by the end of September.

EM-20 is closely monitoring the FY 2008 Congressional budget process. Several draft conference reports appear to support additional technology and research activities, with

one report calling for the development of a draft program plan to articulate EM's vision, foreseeable progress, and topical areas that it intends to target going into the future.

Mr. Gilbertson summarized a number of activities that his organization is currently funding. Namely, EM-20 is supporting work in Idaho pertaining to the nature and treatment of strontium plumes. Additionally, his office anticipates a procurement for several innovative technologies capable of addressing EM's high-level waste challenges by the end of FY 2007. Mr. Gilbertson is also excited about EM-20's work with Richland and the Office of River Protection on groundwater issues and supplemental treatment options. And lastly, EM-20 is working closely with several sites to tackle important challenges such as inert tank waste at SRS, safe material removal from the historic facilities in Oak Ridge, development of tools to characterize remote-handled TRU waste (RH TRU), and innovative D&D approaches.

Mr. Gilbertson's office has continued to post External Technical Reviews on the EM website and has added a number of Technology Readiness Assessments. These reports break projects down to their technical components in order to assess their maturity and understand technical risks. The assessments are being piloted at Hanford's Waste Treatment Plant and K Basins as well as the SRS waste treatment tanks. As a follow-on to the assessments, sites will prepare technology maturity plans to define their projects' status and decrease technical risks. Pending the outcome of the initial pilot assessments, EM-20 will determine whether or not to adopt the practice program-wide.

Mr. Gilbertson added that the purpose of posting materials such as the External Technical Reviews and Technology Readiness Assessments on the web is to keep interested individuals apprised of the program's activities and performance. He encouraged the EM SSAB to review the EM Engineering and Technology website, <http://www.em.doe.gov/Pages/EngTech.aspx>, and provide feedback on its usability.

Ms. Leckband thanked Mr. Gilbertson for his update and noted that she was very interested in the development of RH TRU characterization tools; she looks forward to sharing the information Mr. Gilbertson provided with the rest of her board.

Ms. Cimon asked if DOE program integration and common issues and challenges were apparent in the Engineering and Technology Roadmap and on the EM website.

Mr. Gilbertson conceded that cross-program integration is an area where EM can improve. He explained that there is integration and cooperation amongst the DOE programs, not only at sites where EM is working in tandem with another program, but also where another program – such as the Office of Science – has work and investments that can be leveraged and supplemented for EM gain.

Joint Intergovernmental Meeting in October – Melissa Nielson

Ms. Nielson announced that the 2007 Joint Intergovernmental Meeting will take place on October 16-18 in Snowbird, UT. Meeting participants will include a mix of

representatives from local, state, and tribal governments and organizations such as the National Governors Association, the Economic Council of States, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the State and Tribal Governments Working Group, and the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA). Generally, the Joint Intergovernmental Meeting allows attendees to network and discuss common issues.

Ms. Nielson encouraged the boards to send a representative to the event and indicated that Mr. Frost would provide members with online registration information once it became available.

Update on the Paducah Chairs' Meeting – Steering Committee

Eric Roberts provided information and details regarding the September 26-27 EM SSAB Chairs' meeting in Paducah, KY.

Following a tour of the Paducah site on Wednesday, September 26th, the Chairs will be able to participate in a workshop on the ECA publication *The Politics of Cleanup* and attend an evening reception at the Paducah River Heritage Museum.

The public meeting on Thursday, September 27th, will consist of the traditional round robin discussion and a number of presentations on topics such as EM budget development and pre-1970 TRU waste disposition.

Online registration is available at: <http://www.pgdpcab.org/request.htm>. Additionally, Mr. Roberts will provide the EM SSAB members with a hard copy of the registration and request for each boards' top three round robin topics.

Questions and/or concerns should be directed to the Paducah EM SSAB staff.

AROUND THE COMPLEX

Savannah River – Donna Antonucci

- The SRS Board was recently honored at the EPA National Community Involvement Conference with EPA's 2007 Citizens' Excellence in Community Award.
- SRS clean-up activities continue to progress with many programs exceeding their targets. However, liquid tank waste continues to be problematic.
- Changes to address seismic concerns in the engineering and architecture of the Salt Waste Processing Facility have been approved; however, legal challenges remain.
- The SRS E-Area footprint has undergone a temporary suspension of off-site accessibility due to EPA's recent discovery of a tritium plume. EPA met with DOE and the SC Department of Health and Control; the three reached a successful agreement to transfer the E-Area to the SRS Federal Facilities Agreement unit.
- Lastly, the community's attention has become increasingly focused on the SRS T-Area. The T-Area is the first really large EM facility to be addressed and the Board looks forward to continued public involvement.

Richland/Hanford – Susan Leckband

- David Brockman was recently selected as the new Richland Operations Office Manager. Previously, Mr. Brockman managed the K Basins Closure Project for DOE at Hanford.
- The three Requests for Proposals (RFP) for the major work at Hanford have not been awarded. As previously reported, the Board is very anxious to ensure that clean-up activities are not stalled during the pending contract transition.
- Recently, the Board published a groundwater flowchart to help TPA agencies apply stakeholder values to technical groundwater decisions. The document is a companion piece to an earlier flowchart developed by the Board that addressed waste management decisions for Hanford's Central Plateau.
- The Board plans to select committee leaders in August with the intention that the newly elected individuals will take office in time for the Board's September meeting.
- Also in September, the Board will collaborate with DOE and the TPA agencies to prioritize and adopt foci for FY 2008. Current foci include tank closure, waste management, the Hanford RFPs, and the TPA negotiations.
- Lastly, the Board and its facilitators are developing a process manual for general board operations.

Paducah – Allen Burnett

- As previously reported, several small rubble piles were found outside Paducah's security fence in the wildlife reservation area in January. Initial sampling and analyses indicate that some of the higher levels of contamination originally reported are not supported by more detailed levels of testing.
 - The Board hopes to receive an update on the situation in August. In the meantime, DOE has received a request for historical excavation of the rubble piles.
- DOE continues to advance the potential for an off-site disposal license, particularly with future D&D activities in mind; license completion is expected in early 2008.
- Recently, DOE expressed interest in dispositioning 9700 tons of 99.9% pure nickel that has been biometrically contaminated. The Board has made a recommendation regarding this issue and will continue to monitor the situation.
- The Board has been in discussions with Ms. Nielson to combine its operating procedures and bylaws. Furthermore, the Board will finalize its work plan for DOE at its annual planning meeting on August 4th.
- The Board recently agreed to hold its regular meetings during odd-numbered months; working group and committee meetings will be held during even-numbered months.
- Lastly, the Board continues to finalize preparations for the September EM SSAB Chairs' meeting.

Oak Ridge – Lance Mezga

- Oak Ridge’s statement of mission need, Critical Decision – 0, has been approved for the Integrated Facilities Disposition Project (IFDP).
 - The Board is very excited about the IFDP which will target a number of older facilities in the central portions of Y-12 and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory that contain the remaining major work not included in the original closure project’s scope.
- Oak Ridge recently made headlines due to a security breach that occurred when material was removed from the East Tennessee Technology Park.
- Currently, the Board is considering planning a workshop on the establishment of a comprehensive oral history program for the Oak Ridge Reservation. A number of oral histories have already been recorded, but have not been compiled into one accessible database. The Board is reaching out to other groups in the community to make this happen.
- The Board welcomed four new members and two new student representatives in July, and will elect new officers during its annual retreat in August.
- Lastly, the Board is planning to send out a stakeholder survey to local residents in order to provide information and solicit comments on EM issues and priorities.

Northern New Mexico – J. D. Campbell

- With regard to waste management, the Board plans to present a number of closure alternatives to the public early next spring for the 64-acre landfill known as Material Disposal Area G. The Board will prepare for the meeting by reviewing the feasibility study expected this fall.
- The Board has learned that upon completion, the long-term stewardship of EM’s Northern New Mexico sites will be transferred to the National Nuclear Security Administration. The Board would like to understand and explore provisions for integrating long-term stewardship with remediation programs.
- The National Academy of Sciences recently released a report that contained 17 recommendations for improving the Los Alamos National Laboratory’s groundwater monitoring and remediation programs.
- Board members were pleased to host Mr. Frost at their July meeting for the final passage of their revised bylaws.
 - The Board also took that opportunity to demonstrate its members-only website. The website is password protected and allows members to log-in and post comments on draft recommendations, review past presentations, etc. The Board would be pleased to share its experiences with other interested boards.

Nevada – Walter Wegst

- Primarily, the Nevada Board is focusing on the conclusion of its report on the NTS Underground Test Areas, which has been in development for a number of years. The report analyzes DOE’s underground monitoring activities at NTS and recommends that the site establish three new monitoring wells.

- DOE has indicated that it is willing to drill new wells on the basis of the Board's recommendation. The Board expects its report to be finalized within the next month and a half.
- With regard to budget prioritization, the Board realizes that groundwater issues are not necessarily the highest priority. However, members caution that the potential for danger still exists and hope that funding for groundwater issues is not postponed simply because it does not pose an imminent threat.
- Lastly, the Board has decided to hold its meetings every other month and is working to determine how/if to fill its three membership vacancies.

Idaho – Richard Buxton and Bill Flanery

- The Board recently participated in an Idaho site tour and was impressed with the ongoing D&D efforts and progress that has taken place over the past month.
- Idaho has made significant strides in ridding its tank farm of sodium-bearing waste and completing 36 shipments, or 7,441 meters³, of TRU waste to WIPP.
- Unfortunately, Idaho has also made headlines recently for shipping a drum of improperly characterized waste to WIPP. Lisa Aldrich reported that upon discovery of the errant drum, WIPP operations were temporarily suspended in order to allow workers the opportunity to retrieve the material.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Nielson summarized the action items resulting from the Chairs' conference call; her office will provide the EM SSAB with the following:

- The Hanford Advisory Board's groundwater and Central Plateau waste disposal flowcharts
- The registration link for the First Annual RadWaste Summit - http://www.exchangemonitor.com/conferences/07/07radwaste/07radwaste_info.pdf
- The registration link for the Joint Intergovernmental Meeting - <http://programs.regweb.com/nga/2007IntergovUSDOE/generalaudience>
- The link to the EM website - <http://www.em.doe.gov>
- A reminder for the next EM SSAB Chairs' meeting steering call, which is scheduled for August 9th

Ms. Nielson thanked everyone for their participation.