

EM SSAB CHAIRS
Bi-Monthly Conference Call
Thursday, May 10, 2007
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Participants

Chairs/Representatives:

Idaho	Richard Buxton, William Flanery
Nevada	Walter Wegst
NNM	J. D. Campbell
Oak Ridge	Spencer Gross, Pat Halsey, Norman Mulvenon, Pete Osborne
Paducah	William (Allen) Burnett, Rheinhard Knerr, Eric Roberts
Richland/Hanford	Shelly Cimon, Susan Leckband, Kathy McCague
Savannah River	Gerri Flemming, Karen Patterson, 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 and reviewed the agenda.

NEW BUSINESS

Waste Disposition Strategies Update – Christine Gelles

Christine Gelles, Director of the Office of Disposal Operations (EM-12), reported that EM has continued to develop a suite of integrated planning tools that will optimize the program's low-level and mixed low-level waste (LLW and MLLW) disposition efforts across the complex. The program has also made progress in the resolution of a number of technical issues; however, EM is still struggling with the publication of its National Waste Disposition Strategy.

Assistant Secretary James Rispoli has asked EM-12 to revise the LLW/MLLW Disposition Strategy and incorporate all of the comments received to date, rather than publish a document identical to the one distributed for review in fall 2006. Revision 1 of the document will contain substantial reformatting and updated data.

Susan Leckband asked Ms. Gelles if there was a projected date for the publication of the Waste Disposition Strategy Revision 1.

Ms. Gelles indicated that Revision 1 may be published as early as July. She added that EM-12 is also developing revised cost-benefit analysis guidance for the sites. Guidance is necessary because cost-benefit analyses are key components of disposal facility selection.

Current lifecycle waste forecasts show that LLW and MLLW volumes for 2007, and the foreseeable future, are substantially lower than those for the 2001- 2005 time period. This decrease reflects the completion of large closure sites and has a marked impact on the way EM will finance and operate disposal facilities as it moves forward.

The Waste Information Management System (WIMS) has been updated to include validated LLW and MLLW lifecycle waste forecasts. Ms. Gelles indicated that this data will be available to the public within the next two weeks. Transuranic (TRU) waste data, on the other hand, has not been updated. EM is working with the Carlsbad Field Office to collect revised inventory and forecast data to support its compliance recertification application and will upload this information to WIMS once it is collected. Ms. Gelles also added that the functionality of WIMS has been improved.

EM will continue to send LLW and MLLW to the Nevada Test Site (NTS) through 2010 in order to take advantage of the site's disposal trench. However, rather than continue to charge each site a fee for using the trench, EM plans to directly fund the operation through a single project. This would make use of the NTS disposal trench at no additional cost to all generators up to a receipt capability of 1.5 million cubic feet per year, and would require EM-12 to establish a variety of configuration controls. Ms. Gelles explained that previously, NTS received roughly two million cubic feet of waste per year; currently, the site receives between 800,000 and 900,000 cubic feet per year. The significant decrease in volume means that the operation can no longer pay for itself; there is not enough waste coming in with associated fees to fully fund the operation. Waste volume is expected to drop again in 2008.

Walter Wegst asked whether the request for direct funding would be tied to the actual cost of the operation.

Ms. Gelles replied that yes, it will; that is why EM is making the switch. Operation costs an estimated \$21 million per year.

Ms. Gelles also reported that the program is looking to establish a LLW corporate board, chaired by Frank Marcinowski, the Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS) for Regulatory Compliance. This board will impart formality to the management of complex-wide integration issues, and highlight challenges, successes, and lessons learned.

Ms. Leckband asked if Ms. Gelles could address the topic of plutonium disposition.

Ms. Gelles explained that Gary DeLeon, Director for the Office of Program Integration (EM-33), has the responsibility within EM for plutonium disposition and the Nuclear Materials Disposition and Consolidation Coordination Committee (NMDCCC). NMDCCC is working on integrated materials management strategies and has recently developed a plutonium disposition business case that was signed by three DOE corporate offices and delivered to Capitol Hill.

Ms. Melissa Nielson suggested that the EM SSAB Chairs invite Mr. DeLeon to participate in the next conference call.

Congressional Update

Betty Nolan from the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs (CI) reported that DOE has completed its initial budget briefings to the Congressional appropriations subcommittees.

CI expects the Energy and Water Development Subcommittee of the House's Appropriations Committee to complete its markup of the Energy and Water bill during the week of May 21st. Upon subcommittee approval, the bill will be moved to the House floor. The Senate is expected to take up the bill in either late June or early July.

Lastly, Ms. Nolan stated that there is a bipartisan commitment to pass all appropriations bills by Fiscal Year (FY) 2008, which begins on October 1, 2007. Neither party was satisfied with the FY 2007 Continuing Resolution.

Status of Chairs Letter to Assistant Secretary Rispoli

The following boards have approved and/or signed the EM SSAB Chairs' letter to Assistant Secretary Rispoli from the March 27-29, 2007 meeting: Hanford, Idaho, Nevada, Northern New Mexico, Oak Ridge, and Paducah.

Savannah River expects to approve the letter during its next meeting.

Update on the EM SSAB Chairs' Meeting in Paducah – Steering Committee

Mr. Frost reported that the Steering Committee held its first conference call on Thursday, May 3rd, and noted that the next Steering Committee conference call has been [re]scheduled for Thursday, May 31st.

The fall Chairs' meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place on Wednesday and Thursday, September 26-27, and possibly Friday, September 28th.

Eric Roberts and Kim Crenshaw of Paducah developed and distributed two alternative agendas for the EM SSAB's review and approval. It appears that in addition to Mr. Rispoli's presentation and the traditional Round-Robin, the meeting will include the following: a workshop on public participation and lessons learned, as captured in the

“Politics of Closure;” a discussion of the EM budget development process and the EM SSAB’s role; and a presentation on waste disposition, specifically focusing on pre-1970 TRU waste. Mr. Frost encouraged participants to provide the Steering Committee with additional suggestions.

Norman Mulvenon stated that it is somewhat difficult to reach Paducah, and cautioned that it may require a full day of travel.

Mr. Frost agreed and added that the Steering Committee has taken this into account. One option is to compact the meeting and site tour into a two-day period and dedicate the preceding Tuesday and the following Friday to travel. Furthermore, the Steering Committee has tried to ensure that participants are not excluded from the event due to scheduling conflicts; however, because of her board’s regular meeting, Karen Patterson, the Savannah River Chair, will be unable to attend the site tour.

AROUND THE COMPLEX

Idaho – Richard Buxton and Bill Flanery

- The Board is busy preparing for its next meeting, which will include a site tour of Idaho National Laboratory’s (INL) Test Area North.
- DOE Headquarters (HQ) has reviewed and approved the Board’s revised operating procedures and satisfactorily resolved its concerns regarding the membership recruitment and selection process.
- The Board plans to review INL’s bioremediation of the chemical waste found in the underground aquifer and will continue to monitor the site’s liquid tank waste grouting.

Nevada – Walter Wegst

- The Board has continued to review and comment on the Technology and Engineering Roadmap.
- The Underground Test Area (UGTA) Committee is completing its review of NTS’s UGTA project. The Committee will submit its final report recommending the establishment of two additional test wells to DOE shortly.
 - o DOE has tentatively accepted this recommendation; pending approval, additional wells will be drilled in either 2009 or 2010.

Northern New Mexico – J. D. Campbell

- The Board has scheduled its annual retreat for May 23rd, followed by a half-day Board meeting on May 24th.
 - o During the retreat, the Board will review the contents of the New Mexico consent order and other regulatory matters with new members, and discuss updates on Los Alamos National Laboratory’s (LANL) cleanup.

- The Board's Executive Committee is scheduled to meet with the new EM LANL lead, Susan Steiger, on Monday, May 14th.
- The National Academy of Science (NAS) is expected to publish a report on LANL's groundwater evaluation. DOE requested the report after receiving inquiries from the Board and private citizens regarding concerns about the site's monitoring well network and the impact of drilling substances that may have masked trace-level constituents.
- The Board is reviewing excavation alternatives for the Area-G landfill, which contains MLLW and pre-1970 TRU waste. The Board will facilitate an informed discussion between DOE, regulators, and the public to explore the alternatives' various components; i.e. disposition, transportation, health and safety, etc.

Oak Ridge – Norman Mulvenon

- The Board recently approved three recommendations, the first of which asked DOE-HQ to establish a stewardship resource/position at ongoing mission sites.
 - o Mr. Rispoli indicated that the Roles and Responsibilities Working Group will examine this option.
- The Board provided comments and recommendations on EM's FY 2009 budget submittal and the Office of Legacy Management's (LM) Draft LM Plan.
- During the Board's April meeting, members revised the bylaws to change the definition of the quorum required to make recommendations and the number of votes required to pass them.
- The Board's meeting on May 9th was abbreviated to a brief business meeting, followed by a public meeting on the 2006 CERCLA Five-Year Review and the Remediation Effectiveness Report, sponsored by the Board and DOE. Attendance was high and the meeting provided an opportunity for the community to discuss the status of the program with DOE and regulators.
- The Board recently formed a subcommittee to research how it can facilitate the establishment of a comprehensive oral history program for Oak Ridge.

Paducah – Allen Burnett

- In January, it was reported that several contaminated rubble and soil piles were discovered outside of Paducah's security fence in a wildlife management area. Sampling of those piles began in April.
- Paducah is considering the development of a Class-3 CERCLA cell. Long-term, DOE has proposed that the cell be used to disposition fusion facilities after operations are completed. A study on this topic is expected in early 2008.
- The Board recently accepted the resignation of its chair-elect, Janet Miller. Current membership comprises ten individuals with one appointment and four reappointments pending.
- The Board has scheduled a retreat for the first weekend of August.
- Currently the Board is reviewing DOE-HQ's suggested changes to its revised bylaws.

Richland/Hanford – Susan Leckband

- The Board recently held a leadership retreat for its committees' chairs and vice chairs.
 - o Participants worked with DOE regulators to develop a list of priorities to guide the Board's work for the next year.
 - o The list will be presented to the full Board in June and includes topics such as the Waste Treatment Plant, pre-1970 TRU, and Hanford's new contracts.
- One Request for Proposal has been issued for the infrastructure portion of Hanford's work, and is due back in either late June or early July. The Board remains concerned about the integration of three new contractors, especially since the site's cleanup extends across their purviews.
- Hanford's remaining site manager will retire at the end of May and neither field office has identified a replacement. The Board would like to ensure that cleanup is not interrupted as new managers and contractors come on board.
- At its June meeting, the Board will debut its Groundwater Values Chart. The Chart attempts to identify stakeholder values as they apply to cleanup decisions for waste sites with groundwater issues. It is similar to the Board's Barriers Values Chart and leaves room for the incorporation of new technologies.
- Lastly, five budget workshops have been scheduled throughout the Board's region, the first of which took place on Wednesday, May 9th in the Tri Cities.

Savannah River – Karen Patterson

- Tritium was found beneath a CERCLA cell at one of Savannah River's disposal facilities. It is unclear whether or not the tritium was the result of a leak in the cell, but as a precaution, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has discontinued the disposal of CERCLA waste at that particular facility. A meeting was held on Monday, May 7th, to determine a schedule for resolving this issue.
- On May 7th, Savannah River hosted a waste management subcommittee meeting focused on the 3116 Determination. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), DOE-HQ, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), and EPA were in attendance and addressed a number of topical issues that must be resolved prior to consultations regarding Savannah River's high-level waste (HLW) tank closure.
 - o It appears that this issue will not be resolved until 2010; therefore, the tanks cannot close until 2010. This means that the site will not be able to comply with its Federal Facility Agreement.
- DHEC has issued a modified permit for the disposal of three additional waste streams in Savannah River's Salt Stone Disposal Facility. The modified permit follows a December lawsuit that has prevented waste disposal in that facility and strained the HLW tanks' sludge processing capabilities. The issue is still in the lawyers' hands.
- The Board is in the process of integrating six new members.

- Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Charlie Anderson attended the Board's March meeting to discuss a three-pronged plutonium disposition plan that would utilize Savannah River's MOX Facility and H-Canyon, and require the construction of a vitrification plant.
 - o That was the plan in March; however, according to the Weapons Complex Monitor, the vitrification plant may not come to fruition.
 - o Plutonium cannot be brought to the site unless there is a disposition strategy. If there is no vitrification facility, how can EM's disposition strategy be valid?

Engineering and Technology Update – Mark Gilbertson

Mark Gilbertson, DAS for Engineering and Technology (EM-20), reiterated that the Engineering and Technology Roadmap is a living document. Comments and recommendations received after the original June 30th deadline will still be incorporated on a regular basis. The Roadmap was posted on the EM website in April and opened for additional review. EM-20 has tried to accommodate several of the EM SSAB's recommendations and has identified core areas that require further evaluation, i.e. spent nuclear fuel and special nuclear materials.

EM-20 has asked the NAS to provide advice and align its previous EM work with the new Roadmap. In support of this effort, NAS held a workshop for regulators, laboratory, and site personnel. EM received a compilation of the proceedings in early May and has begun reviewing the results of the workshop. Mr. Gilbertson will provide the document to Ms. Nielson and Mr. Frost for distribution to the EM SSAB. **[Provided to Chairs on May 10, 2007]**

EM-20 is trying to restructure its activities and priorities in order to move forward and tackle the Roadmap issues identified by the EM SSAB and the NAS workshop participants. As the program progresses, it recognizes that new information will be made available and is open to new perspectives and input.

Mr. Gilbertson explained that EM-20 will use the Roadmap to speak with other programs and leverage existing DOE investments to address EM needs. The document will enable EM to interface with the Office of Science (SC) and identify applied research and technology initiatives that could benefit from SC's basic research efforts. Furthermore, the Roadmap will help Mr. Gilbertson's office collaborate with the Office of Nuclear Energy in support of EM's mission.

Ms. Leckband expressed appreciation for the continued focus on technology and relayed that her Board will review all of the documents Mr. Gilbertson has provided, and submit its comments by the end of the month.

Ms. Cimon stated that Mr. Gilbertson's discussion provided a framework for how the Roadmap will be used programmatically. She also encouraged him to update the EM SSAB on the collaboration he spoke of.

Mr. Wegst asked Mr. Gilbertson to provide Engelbrecht von Tiesenhausen with a copy of the Savannah River Cementitious Waste Workshop CD, as previously discussed.

Mr. Gilbertson will work with Ms. Nielson to provide Mr. von Tiesenhausen with the requested material.

Closing Remarks

Ms. Nielson summarized the action items resulting from the Chairs' conference call:

- Mr. Gilbertson will provide the NAS workshop document for distribution to the EM SSAB.
- Mr. Wegst will provide Ms. Nielson with the contact information for Mr. von Tiesenhausen so that she may send him the Cementitious Waste Workshop CD.
- The Steering Committee will hold its next conference call on May 31st and will consider adding Mr. Gilbertson to the agenda so that he may provide an update on the Engineering and Technology Roadmap.
- The Chairs will invite Mr. DeLeon to participate in their next conference call to discuss plutonium disposition.
- The next EM SSAB Chairs' conference call will be held at 3:00 pm EST on Thursday, July 26th.

Ms. Nielson thanked everyone for their participation.