

**PANEL SESSION 71 - Featured Site: West Valley Demonstration Project –
Accomplishments and Challenges from Past Practices**

Co-Chairs: James Blankenhorn, *West Valley Environmental Services LLC (WVES)*;
Laurene Rowell, *WVES*

Reporter: Sonja Allen, *WVES*

Panelists Included:

- Bryan Bower, *US DOE*
- Paul Bembia, *New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)*
- Larry Camper, *US NRC*
- John McKibbin, *WVES*

An average of 75 conference participants attended the West Valley session that included 7 presentations followed by a panel discussion. James Blankenhorn and Laurene Rowell Co-Chaired the session and introduced the speakers.

Members of the WVES team provided in-depth yet concise presentations on current activities, technology deployment, and project completion status at this combination presentation session/panel discussion.

WVES staff presented the following papers:

- **James Blankenhorn**, *West Valley Demonstration Project – Past, Present and Future* (WMS Paper #11203)

This paper laid the foundation for the session by summarizing the current status of the WVDP by describing the site history, accomplishments over the years and the current regulatory and programmatic environment.

- **Joseph Ebert**, *Deactivation and Decontamination Extraction Cell-1 at the WVDP* (WMS Paper # 11127)

This paper focused on the deactivation and decontamination activities taking place in Extraction Cell 1 (XC-1) of the Main Plant Process Building, formerly used in the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. High radiation levels, the age of the cell's infrastructure, technology excellence and innovation, and the need to conduct these D&D efforts remotely were featured highlights of this presentation, which also included a short video that illustrated the remote applications being used inside XC-1.

- **John Chamberlain**, *Design and Installation of a Permeable Treatment Wall at the WVDP to Mitigate Expansion of Strontium-90 Contaminated Groundwater* (WMS Paper #11138)

The presentation highlighted efforts made possible by funding allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to install a permeable treatment wall (PTW) to contain a Strontium-90 contaminated groundwater plume.

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- **John McKibbin**, *Installation of a Tank and Vault Drying System in the Tank Farm at the WVDP* (WMS Paper #11113)

The installation of the Tank and Vault Drying System, designed under base funding and installation under ARRA funding, was successfully completed in December 2011. The presentation discussed the reasons for installing the system, a description of the system and provided preliminary results.

- **Lettie Chilson**, *Decontamination Using Remote-Deployed Nitrocision[®] Technology* (WMS Paper #11221)

This presentation discussed the remote application of Nitrocision[®] technology in two cells in the MPPB. The technology, high pressure liquid nitrogen, was deployed using remote applications for the first time in these cells. The presentation described the environment, the technology and provided initial results.

- **David Garber**, *CH and RH Legacy Waste Processing at the WVDP: Utilizing All of Your Processing Facilities, Even the Ones You Didn't Think were Processing Facilities* (WMS Paper #11140)

This presentation focused on the importance and possibility of retrofitting existing facilities to provide the right environment for processing and packaging radioactive waste.

Panel member, **Larry Camper**, provided remarks during the panel session. He explained the nature of the NRC's involvement at the unique WVDP site and the complex regulatory framework that involved federal and state agencies. He complimented the site managers on their use of a Core Team of those regulatory agencies in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. He also discussed NRC's role in the development of the Decommissioning Plan (DP), which included a concurrent review of the DP along with the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Due to the short duration of the panel session, panelists deferred remarks and opened the floor for questions and answers (Q&A).

Public Comment and/or Questions:

The following topics were discussed during the Q&A session:

- *End-state for the Waste Tanks.* The end-state of the waste tanks and the two onsite disposal areas will be determined as part of the Phase 2 decision, which DOE and NYSERDA have committed to deciding within 10 years of the Record of Decision that was announced in 2010. The end-state may range from close-in-place, to total exhumation, with hybrid solutions that range in between.
- *Wastes with no pathway for disposal, yet facilities are being targeted for removal.* Most of the waste that will be generated as part of Main Plant demolition is expected to be low-

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level waste, which has a pathway to disposal. Wastes at the WVDP with no current pathway for disposal are being packaged to existing waste acceptance criteria and safely stored on site, ready for disposal. High-level waste canisters will be placed in dry cask storage on site until decisions are made regarding HLW. DOE is evaluating disposition options for WVDP transuranic waste as part of the Greater Than Class C (GTCC) EIS currently out for public review.

- *Details for new cost sharing arrangement between NYSERDA and DOE.* In the past, cleanup work at the WVDP was shared in a 90/10 cost split, with the federal government paying 90% of cleanup costs and New York State paying 10%. The exception to this was that NYSERDA paid 100% of the costs associated with the State-licensed Disposal Area. In August 2010 the agencies signed the Consent Decree establishing the new cost-sharing arrangement. Further information on the new cost-sharing arrangement can be found at www.wv.doe.gov.
- *Labor union contract extension.* The WVES contract is scheduled to end on June 30, 2011 and the contract with the labor union at the WVDP will expire in July 2011. Discussions with the labor union have taken place to explore the possibility of an extension of the labor contract, but no decisions have been made at this time.
- *The role of NRC in establishing clean-up standards and the dichotomy between the restrictive soil clean-up standards in the Decommissioning Plan and the lack of a long-term decision for the tanks and burial grounds.* NRC was directed in the WVDP Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-368) to prescribe cleanup criteria, monitor site activities, and act in a consultative role to the Project. NRC prescribed the License Termination Rule as the cleanup criteria for the WVDP. When the agencies made the decision to adopt a two-phase decision-making option, it was determined that the soil cleanup conducted under Phase 1 should be restrictive enough such that, whatever decision is made for Phase 2, rework should be minimized.

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