

WM2016 Conference Panel Report

PANEL SESSION 2: **Hot Topics in Environmental Management**

Co-Chairs: **Martin Schneider** *Longenecker & Associates*
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Panel Reporter: **Martin Schneider**, *Longenecker & Associates*

Panelists:

1. **Frank Marcinowski**, *Associate Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for EM, US DOE*
2. **Barton Barnhart**, *DAS for Program Planning and Budget, US DOE*
3. **Melody Bell**, *DAS for Human Capital and Corporate Services, US DOE*
4. **Mark Gilbertson**, *DAS for Site Restoration*
5. **Christine Gelles**, *DAS for Waste Management*
6. **James Hutton**, *DAS for Safety, Security and Quality*
7. **Ken Picha**, *DAS for Tank Waste and Nuclear Materials*
8. **Jack Surash**, *DAS for Acquisition and Project Management*

Summary of Presentations

The panel focused on upcoming challenges and opportunities for the Department of Energy Office of Environmental Management.

Broadly, EM is focusing on several key priorities for 2016:

- Continued progress in WIPP recovery in support of resumption of waste emplacement operations later this year, when it is safe to do so
- Complete construction of the Salt Waste Processing Facility at Savannah River
- Completion of key nuclear facility demolitions
- Continued progress to treat contaminated ground water
- Retrieval and processing of legacy transuranic waste and reevaluation of stored inventories to ensure full compliance with WIPP's acceptance requirements
- Publication of the Greater Than Class C Low Level Waste Disposal Environmental Impact Statement
- Acquisition planning for follow on contracts at several sites

Several key milestones have been achieved in the WIPP recovery. Most notably, a new integrated PMB was approved by Carlsbad Field Office in January of 2016. The integrated PMB integrates recovery activities with base activities at the site, including capital asset projects, and identifies critical path activities. It identifies resumption of waste emplacement in December 2016

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There is also a new Documented Safety Analysis developed in accordance with new DOE Standard 3009-2014 that involves creating or revising approximately 120 Safety Management Program procedures.

To achieve risk reduction and continued progress, legacy waste TRU retrieval, processing and certification have continued at numerous sites. Waste inventories remain in safe and secure configuration pending resumption of waste emplacement operations. Los Alamos is actively working to prepare for treatment of remediate nitrate salt bearing wastes remaining on site. For low-level waste, DOE sites continue to utilize combination of on-site and offsite disposal paths. There are nation-wide contracts for treatment and disposal which provide are cost-effective vehicles. DOE is monitoring closely potential changes in commercial market. The Nevada National Security Site continues important role in DOE waste management system and planning underway for additional mixed LLW capacity. There are new onsite disposal facilities under evaluation/planning for three former gaseous diffusion sites, to address large D&D and remediation volumes.

Within the tank waste area, DOE is focusing on overcoming regulatory, construction and commissioning challenges at new tank waste facilities which will begin waste processing in next 5 to 7 years:

- Integrated Waste Treatment Unit at Idaho National Laboratory
- Salt Waste Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site
- Low Activity Waste Pretreatment System (as soon as 2022),
- WTP facilities (Low Activity Waste Facility, Analytical Laboratory and Balance of Facilities)

On the acquisition and project management front, DOE has made it a priority to annually assess contract and project management staffing and independently validate the effectiveness and sustainability of improvement actions. In addition, DOE has been working to improve acquisition planning and contract management by adhering to principles described in Deputy Secretary's policy memorandum. Finally, DOE is making it a priority to increase use of prime contractor small businesses, become a stronger owner, and execute world-class contract management and administration of traditional and management and operations multi-year contracts.

Within the Site Restoration area, DOE is focusing on strengthening communities of practice for remedy reviews, compliance, and risk/performance assessments as well as updating DOE O 435.1, Radioactive Waste Management, to include lessons learned and best practices from around the complex. In addition, EM is participating in DOE-wide efforts to focus more resources towards infrastructure to ensure that facilities and infrastructure are maintained in the proper condition to support the EM cleanup mission. The infrastructure effort resulted in \$25M of infrastructure projects being added to the budget request to address priority needs at SRS.

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Infrastructure Assessments for FY-2016 will focus on Mission Unique Facilities (MUF) already identified by sites such as Tank Farms and/or Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Facilities to support safe and effective operations. EM has issued Supplemental Guidance to sites for review and validation on FY-18 resource needs for Infrastructure. EM-13, EM-10, EM-20, and EM-60 are working with sites to validate the most critical infrastructure resource needs (Integrated Priority List) for FY-18 budget integration.

DOE is developing a comprehensive and integrated strategy on management of excess contaminated facilities across DOE program offices. DOE's response is being managed through the Laboratory Operating Board by the Excess Contaminated Facilities Work Group (ECFWG). The Fiscal Year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act establishes requirements for the preparation of a "Plan for Deactivation and Decommissioning of Nonoperational Defense Nuclear Facilities" which is being developed by the ECFWG. NNSA has lead for biennial report and guidance forthcoming to support FY 18 budget process.