

DOE

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 19, 1992

AGENCIES REVISE PIT 9 PROPOSED PLAN, SCHEDULE MEETINGS

The U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and state of Idaho are releasing a revised proposed plan for the cleanup of Pit 9 at the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory. The revision describes: (1) changes to a component of the preferred alternative and, (2) at the request of the public, technical information not included in the previous proposed plan issued last December.

A public comment period on this revision will begin October 22, 1992 and end November 21, 1992.

The agencies have scheduled public meetings during November to discuss the revised proposed plan and solicit comments. Meetings will be held in Idaho Falls (November 4; Elk's Lodge), Pocatello (November 5; Howard Johnson Hotel), Boise (November 9; Boise Public Library), Moscow (November 10; University Inn), and Twin Falls (November 12; Canyon Springs Inn). DOE, EPA, and state of Idaho representatives will be available at 6:30 p.m. at each location to informally discuss the proposed plan. Each meeting will begin at 7 p.m.

Pit 9, located in the northeast corner of the Subsurface Disposal Area at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex, is an inactive disposal pit that received wastes from November 1967 to June 1969. The pit is about 1 acre in size, measuring 127 x 379 feet (39 x 115.5 meters). It is approximately 17.5 feet (5.3 meters) deep, which includes an 8-foot (2.5 meter) waste zone with 6 feet (1.8 meters) of overburden and 3.5 feet (1 meter) of underburden. Materials in Pit 9 are primarily transuranic wastes generated at the Rocky Flats Plant in Colorado and additional wastes (primarily low-level radioactive materials) from generators at the INEL.

Past shipping records indicate the pit contains approximately 44 pounds (20 kilograms) of plutonium and 1.5 pounds (650 grams) of americium, along with trichloroethylene, carbon tetrachloride, and other wastes.

The three agencies are recommending that a stabilization process be added to the preferred alternative of chemical extraction and/or physical separation for treatment of Pit 9 wastes.

Other cleanup alternatives evaluated by the agencies include: (1) in-situ vitrification, which would involve using extremely high temperatures to melt the materials in place, forming a glass or crystalline material when the molten mass cools; (2) ex-situ vitrification, which would involve vitrifying the contaminants by first removing them from the pit; (3) complete removal, storage, and off-site disposal, which would involve removing all the waste and contaminated soil and placing it in interim storage, pending availability of off-site disposal facilities; and (4) no action.

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A public meeting was held in January 1992 in Idaho Falls to solicit comments on the proposed plan and preferred cleanup alternative for Pit 9. Since that meeting, preliminary contract negotiations have begun with teams headed by AWC/Lockheed and Waste Management Environmental Services Inc., for cleanup of Pit 9. Both teams had responded to a Request for Proposal sent out in November 1991 by EG&G Idaho, Inc., to encourage companies with proven cleanup technologies to bid on the Pit 9 project.

Both teams propose to conduct the remediation of Pit 9 within a double containment building and use remotely operated equipment extensively to minimize worker exposure to hazardous material. In addition, both teams propose comprehensive monitoring to detect hazardous and radioactive contaminants.

Copies of the revised proposed plan will be mailed to those on the INEL Mailing List and will be available October 19, 1992 at INEL Information Repositories and Outreach Offices listed below. Additional copies can be obtained by calling the INEL Community Relations Coordinator at (208) 526-6864.

Written comments should be mailed by November 21 to:

Mr. Jerry Lyle, Deputy Assistant Manager
Environmental Restoration and Waste Management
Department of Energy, Idaho Field Office
P.O. Box 2047
Idaho Falls, ID 83403-2047

Information Repositories

Idaho Falls Public Library
457 Broadway
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 526-1450

INEL Technical Library
1776 Science Center Drive
Idaho Falls, ID 83415
(208) 526-1185

Pocatello Public Library
812 E. Clark
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 232-1263

Twin Falls Public Library
434 2nd Street East
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 733-2964

Boise Public Library
715 South Capitol Blvd.
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 384-4076

Idaho State Library
325 W. State
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 334-2150

University of Idaho Library
University of Idaho Campus
Government Document Dept.
Rayburn Street
Moscow, ID 83843
(208) 885-6344

Outreach Offices

INEL Pocatello Office

1651 Al Ricken Dr.
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 233-4731

INEL Twin Falls Office

233 2nd Street North, Suite B
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 734-0463

INEL Boise Office

816 West Bannock, Suite 306
Boise, ID 83702
(208) 334-9572

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Media Contact: Mike Coe (208) 526-2585