

ROCKY FLATS STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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Karen Imbierowicz

Monthly Status Report – December 2008

Board meeting summary:

There was no meeting this month.

Legacy Management monthly site inspection summary:

December 2008 site activities included:

- Water quality sampling continued at the Solar Ponds Plume Treatment System (SPPTS). The sampling is needed to determine the effectiveness of the Phase 1 upgrades to the SSPTS. Upgrades were needed as groundwater contaminated with nitrate and uranium was bypassing the SPPTS; changes were made to reroute the contaminated water to pass through the SPPTS. Initial results of the upgrades indicated the system was reducing both nitrate and uranium levels. However the most recent test results indicate the system is no longer adequately removing the contaminants, particularly nitrate. CDPHE speculates that the SPPTS was temporarily overloaded by relatively high contaminant concentrations. DOE is continuing to collect samples in the hopes that the contaminant levels will decrease. However, if the SPPTS continues to show signs of inadequate treatment a change-out of treatment media will be required to re-establish adequate treatment. That media has only been in place for two years, despite the promise that it is supposed to be effective for five.
- Field staff installed a new data logger for the SPPTS telemetry and a larger solar panel.
- Construction on the Original Landfill (OLF) West Perimeter Channel was completed. This work included adding soil to raise berm heights, fill a depression, or fill minor surface cracks. This project completes the OLF repairs that were identified through the geotechnical investigation into slumps and subsidence. Several areas on the OLF were reseeded and will continue as weather permits.
- The Present Landfill and OLF continued to be monitored and inspected. There were no significant changes to report. On December 10th, after a thaw of approximately 8 inches of snow, the OLF was inspected. Positive drainage was verified in all berm and perimeter channels.
- The Annual Dam Inspection Report, which covered ponds A-3, A-4, B-5, C-2 & the Present Landfill Pond, was received from the engineering subcontractor. These dams were rated as “Satisfactory” with a recommended safe storage level of “Full.”
- Dam breach activities continued. Final grading was completed at Dam A-1. Revegetation/erosion control and stoplog installation is scheduled for early January.

Boulder placement and grouting was completed at Dam A-2. The concrete stoplog structure was backfilled at Dam B-2, and at Dam B-3 boulder placement continued.

Rocky Flats Workers:

In yet another important ripple regarding implementation of the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), state and federal officials are grappling with how to address worker claims where federal records are missing but state records are not. In a December 13, 2008, article in the *Rocky Mountain News*, Laura Frank explored the case of a former worker who was denied compensation based in part on the lack of federal records. The state records, which show neutron exposure, were not used by the federal government due to concerns that the federal government could not ensure state privacy rules would be met. Senator Udall is working with both federal and state officials to guarantee state records can be used to support federal claims without violating the state privacy regulations.

Congressional update:

Steven Chu, the Nobel-prize winning physicist, was nominated to head the Department of Energy. Chu, who currently serves as the head of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, has indicated he will emphasize science, focusing on energy efficiency and climate change. One unknown regarding DOE policy and budget priorities will be the extent to which he focuses on cleanup and post-cleanup management issues. Interestingly, some state regulators are seeking to tie in cleanup to energy development, arguing that energy production first requires a commitment to cleaning up the legacy of weapons production. Perhaps a telling indication of the cross over within DOE programs is the extent to which nuclear power will be part of the Administration's energy portfolio, and the corresponding changes on fiscal priorities. As always, Stewardship Council staff will evaluate budget priorities on funding for DOE's Office of Legacy Management.

Another important appointment is the nomination of Colorado Senator Salazar as the Secretary of the Interior. With this appointment, Colorado loses a committed voice for Rocky Flats issues. (The delegation, however, will remain a strong advocate.) In turn, though, Colorado gains a Secretary who understands the value and importance of providing adequate funding for the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. That understanding, though, does not ensure the Refuge will be funded, especially given the many tough budgetary choices the Obama Administration and Congress will have to make, but it certainly increases the likelihood.

Site document update:

On November 7, 2008, DOE and CDPHE approved a contact record codifying changes to the site sampling locations to reflect changes in the site reconfiguration. According to the contact record, which was posted on December 1, 2008, two changes are warranted: (quoting from the record)

1. Sentinel well TH046992 is located in the center of Dam B-3. This well will be abandoned as part of the upcoming dam breach project, following routine RFLMA-required sampling for the fourth calendar quarter of 2008.

2. Construction of the Solar Ponds Plume Treatment System (SPPTS) upgrade in accordance with CR 2008-08 has recently been completed. The SPPTS treated effluent sampling location is identified in RFLMA Attachment 2, Table 2 as SPPMM01, and represents the water in the bottom of the approximately 15-foot deep metering manhole at the SPPTS. The upgrade includes a new effluent line. A sampling port was installed on this line to allow effluent sample collection directly from the line rather than from the water in the bottom of the manhole. Upon the approval of this Contact Record, the new monitoring location, SPOUT, will replace SPPMM01.

The contact record, which serves as the formal notification of the changes, can be found at: www.lm.doe.gov/documents/sites/co/rocky_flats/rflma/RFLMACR200809.pdf

Stewardship Council update:

The upcoming meeting is scheduled for February 2, 2009. The full 2009 schedule will be approved at the February meeting.

Also, in February Lorraine Anderson (Arvada Council) and David Abelson (Executive Director) will attend the Energy Community Alliance conference and board meeting in Washington, D.C. Along with other Stewardship Council board members, Lorraine and David will also meet with Members of Congress and/or their staffs, and with DOE personnel.