#### A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR SOCIETY



JANUARY-MARCH 2014

# Spent Fuel/High Level Waste



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*Radwaste Solutions* (ISSN 1529-4900), Volume 21, Number 1. Published four times a year (February, May, August, November) by the American Nuclear Society, Inc., with business, executive, and editorial offices at 555 N. Kensington Ave., LaGrange Park, IL 60526.

Subscription rate for 2014 is \$530, which includes complimentary electronic access, 2003 to current issue; for subscriptions outside of North America, add \$35 for shipping and handling. This rate is valid for all libraries, companies, departments, and any individual subscribers (who are not ANS members). Alternatively, subscription rate is \$480 for Electronic Access Only, 2003 to current issue. ANS member rate is \$45; members who live outside of North America should add \$35 for additional postage and special handling. Single copy price is \$120 plus \$15 for customers outside of North America. Inquiries about the distribution and delivery of Radwaste Solutions and change-of-address information should be directed to the American Nuclear Society. Allow six weeks for a change to become effective. Postmaster, please send changes of address to Radwaste Solutions, 555 N. Kensington Ave., La Grange Park, IL 60526.

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# **Radwaste Solutions**

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#### A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN NUCLEAR SOCIETY

# **Radwaste Solutions**

Volume 21, Number 1 January–March 2014





Decommissioned boilers await shipment from the United Kingdom to Sweden. See the article that starts on page 74 for the lead-up to the shipment.

#### Features

#### Cover Stories—Spent Fuel/High-Level Waste

**Evaluation of Direct Disposal of Spent Fuel in Existing Dual-Purpose Canisters** 26 Costs, worker dose, and complexity of fuel management operations could possibly be reduced through direct disposal of DPCs.

#### Predicting Stress Corrosion Cracking in the Canisters of Used Nuclear Fuel Dry Cask Storage Systems

A research initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's H. H. Uhlig Corrosion Laboratory aims to determine the role of stress corrosion cracking in predicting the life span of dry cask storage canisters.

# Characteristics of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel: Distributed, Diverse, and Changing with Time

Understanding the current and future characteristics of commercial spent nuclear fuel is key to designing and licensing appropriate systems for its storage, transportation, handling, and disposal.

#### Meeting Reports

#### Debate Continues over Part 61 Regulations A report from the Seventh Annual RadWaste Summit, held September 3–6, 2013, in Las Vegas, Nev. The DOE, State Regulators, and Small Businesses—and Budgets A report from the 25th Annual Weapons Complex Monitor Waste Management & Cleanup Decisionmakers' Forum, held October 21–24, 2013, in Jacksonville, Fla. Waste Management 2013 Rest Patpers

#### Waste Management 2013 Best Papers

**Communicating Performance Assessment Results** The primary goal of communicating the results of performance assessments prepared to support the closure of waste tanks at the Savannah River site is to provide a clear understanding of the involved risks.

# Studies, Transport, and Treatment Concept for Boilers from the Berkeley Nuclear Power Plant

In the first project of its kind in the United Kingdom, Studsvik was contracted to transport five decommissioned boilers from the Berkeley nuclear plant site to Studsvik's waste treatment facilities in Sweden for metal treatment and recycling.

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Next Issue:

Low-Level Waste

Comments on this issue

# And we're off!

With this first issue of *Radwaste Solutions* for 2014 comes a change. The frequency of the magazine has returned to four times a year, as it was when the magazine was launched in 1994, from five times a year, as it has been for the last three years. The goal, however, is to keep the total amount of content essentially the same for the entire year, even though we are producing one fewer issue. The four issues are scheduled to be mailed in the middle month of each quarter: February, May, August, and November.

Each year's first issue of Radwaste Solutions is distributed to all attendees at the Waste Management Conference, sponsored by WM Symposia and held in Phoenix, Ariz. And the topic of the issue again this year is Spent Fuel/High-Level Waste. The features on this topic cover three aspects of spent fuel: direct disposal of spent fuel in existing dual-purpose canisters (page 26); predicting stress corrosion cracking in the canisters used for dry-cask storage (page 40); and how the current and future characteristics of commercial spent nuclear fuel affect the design and licensing of systems for its storage, transport, handling, and disposal (page 50).

To keep you up to date on radwaste policy issues and emerging waste management topics, our colleagues at ExchangeMonitor PublicaA change in the frequency of Radwaste Solutions for 2014 has been implemented, but the magazine will still offer a variety of features, meeting reports, and news throughout the year.

tions & Forums provided us with reports on two of their meetings—the Seventh Annual RadWaste Summit, held in September (page 60), and the 25th Annual *Weapons Complex Monitor* Waste Management & Cleanup Decisionmakers' Forum, held in October (page 66). Special thanks go to Make Nartker, editor-in-chief, for his assistance in preparing these reports for publication in *Radwaste Solutions*.

It has also become a tradition for this issue to include articles based on the best oral presentations from the previous year's Waste Management Conference. The ANS Best Oral Presentation Award for 2013 went to Mark Layton, of Savannah River Remediation LLC, for "Communicating Performance Assessment Results" (page 70); and the ASME Best Oral Presentation Award went to Bo Wirendal, of Studsvik Nuclear AB, and David Saul, Joe Robinson, and Gavin Davidson, of Studsvik UK Ltd., for "Studies, Transport, and Treatment Concept for Boilers from the Berkeley Nuclear Power Plant" (page 74).

The subsequent issues of *Radwaste* Solutions for 2014 also have specific topics assigned and will be distributed at meetings throughout the year, including Low-Level Waste (April-June)/EPRI's International Low-Level Waste Conference & Exhibit; Environmental Remediation (July-September)/Exchange Monitor Publications' Eighth Annual RadWaste Summit and 26th Annual Waste Management & Cleanup Decisionmakers' Forum; and the 10th Annual Buyers Guide (October-December), with a Decontamination and Decommissioning editorial feature.

We welcome your contributions to the magazine, and as always, thank the authors and advertisers who have helped make this annual Waste Management Conference Show Issue a big success.—*Betsy Tompkins, Publisher* 

# FIELD REPORT



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#### DOE: Hanford tanks "not actively leaking"

Nineteen of the 20 waste tanks at the Hanford Site, near Richland, Wash., that have shown decreased liquid levels are "not actively leaking," the Department of Energy announced on November 6. "The one tank previously identified as leaking, T-111, appears to be stabilizing," the DOE said in a statement. The 20 tanks are among 149 underground single-shell tanks holding chemical and radioactive waste left over from national defense plutonium production at the site.

The DOE's Office of River Protection and its tank farm operations contractor, Washington River Protection Solutions, confirmed in February 2013 that liquid levels in tank T-111 were decreasing. It was later announced that five additional single-shell tanks could be leaking liquid. The suspect tanks—TY-105, T-203, T-204, B-203, and B-204—were built between 1943 and 1964 and have capacities ranging from 55,000 gallons to 1 million gallons.

The DOE also identified for further evaluation 14 additional single-shell tanks with lower liquid levels, decreasing surface levels, or both. According to the DOE's evaluation, none of these tanks showed evidence of leaking, with estimated liquid loss rates less than the estimated rate of tank evaporation. The loss of liquid in tanks T-203, T-204, B-203, and B-204 can also be explained by evaporation, according to the DOE.

For tank TY-105, the DOE concluded that evaporation is "the probable cause" of lower observed liquid levels and that a decrease in the waste surface level is "likely related to waste settling following evaporation." The surface level in the center of the tank has decreased 14 inches since 1982, according to the DOE's evaluation.

The DOE estimates that tank T-111 leaked between 1,000 and 3,900 gallons of liquid between 1995 and April 2013. In its evaluation, the DOE said, "The leak rate as of April 1, 2013, is estimated to range between 2.0 and 3.1 gal/day, with the most probable rate approximately 2.8 gal/day."

The Washington State Department of Ecology, however, does not agree that the decrease in the levels of tank TY-105 is entirely due to evaporation, or that the leak in T-111 is slowing, according to a November 6 report in the *Tri-City Herald.* The newspaper quoted Nancy Uziemblo, a tank waste retrieval specialist with the department, as saying, "Some of the tanks need to be revisited to look at their liquid waste content. They're not as dry as we think they are."

The DOE, in an effort to stabilize the single-shell tanks, transferred pumpable liquids from the tanks to more reliable double-shell tanks. That work was completed by 2005. The DOE estimates that prior to that, 67 of the single-shell tanks leaked a combined total of roughly 1 million gallons of waste.

"We will continue to keep the state of Washington, Congress, and other key stakeholders apprised of the situation as we continue to monitor the liquid levels inside the single-shell tanks," the DOE said in a statement.

• A record of decision for closing Hanford's waste tanks was issued by the Department of Energy, notice of which was published in the December 13 *Federal Register*. The decision follows the DOE's cleanup plans at the Hanford Site as outlined in the department's final tank closure and waste management environmental impact statement for the site, which was issued in December 2012.

Under the record of decision (ROD), 99 percent of the radioactive and chemical waste currently stored in Hanford's 177 underground storage tanks would be retrieved and vitrified using the yet-to-be completed Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP). After being filled with grout to immobilize residual waste, the 148 singleshell tanks will be left in place and covered with an engineered barrier. Treatment of the tank waste will include pretreatment, with separation into low-activity and highactivity waste (LAW and HLW). The LAW will be disposed of at Hanford and the vitrified HLW will be stored on-site until a permanent repository is available. The DOE did not identify a preferred method for the supplemental treatment of the LAW.

For the decommissioning of Hanford's Fast Flux Test Facility, the DOE has decided on entombment, with the removal of all above-grade structures, including the reactor building. Similar to the waste tanks, the facility's below-grade structures will remain in place and be filled with grout and covered with an engineered barrier. Remotehandled special components from the reactor are to be treated at Idaho National Laboratory and returned to Hanford for on-site disposal, while bulk sodium inventories will be processed at Hanford for use in the WTP. All low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste will be disposed of in a single integrated disposal facility at Hanford, while a separate disposal facility for tank closure waste will be constructed as needed. The DOE is deferring a decision to import waste from its other sites (with limited exceptions) for disposal at Hanford until the WTP

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Also, on December 11, the DOE issued an ROD for the cleanup of contaminated soil and groundwater along the Columbia River in Hanford's 300 Area. This is the first of six RODs that are being issued for the site's 220-squaremile River Corridor. Covering about 40 square miles, the 300 Area was home to nuclear fuel manufacturing operations, as well as experimental and laboratory facilities, including six small-scale nuclear reactors. Previous cleanup work within the River Corridor was done under interim RODs.

#### Canada narrows list of potential repository sites

Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization (NWMO) announced on November 21 that it has completed preliminary assessments of eight Canadian communities that have "expressed interest in learning about Canada's plan for the safe, long-term management of used nuclear fuel," four of which will continue to be studied as possible repository sites. Thirteen other communities that have yet to be assessed also remain in

the running to host the repository.

According to the NWMO, which has developed an "adaptive phased management" approach to selecting a nuclear repository site, the communities of Creighton, in Saskatchewan, and Hornepayne, Ignace, and Schreiber, in Ontario, "were assessed as having strong potential to meet site selection requirements and have been identified for further study." The communities of English River First Nation and Pinehouse, in Saskatchewan, and Ear Falls and Wawa, in Ontario, were not selected for more detailed study. The NWMO said that its findings to date do not confirm the suitability of any site, and no community has yet declared an interest in hosting the repository.

The preliminary assessments are the first phase of study in step three of the NWMO's nine-step, multiyear adaptive process for evaluating the suitability of potential sites. In May 2010, the NWMO launched its selection process for identifying a site location in an "informed and willing host community." Since then, the NWMO said, it has worked collaboratively with the interested communities to explore their potential to meet site selection requirements.

"Each of the eight communities that completed the first phase of assessments has shown strong leadership," said Kathryn Shaver, NWMO's vice president of adaptive phased management engagement and site selection, in a news release. "As we prepare for increasingly more detailed field studies and engagement, it is necessary to narrow our focus to those areas with strong potential for meeting strict safety and geotechnical requirements, and for the project to align with their long-term vision."

For the four selected communities, the next phase of the process will involve more intensive community learning and engagement, with a broader focus that will include surrounding communities and First Nations and Métis peoples. According to the NWMO, this ongoing engagement will be important to understanding the potential to foster acceptance among the broader area and the ability to work together to implement the project. Preliminary fieldwork also will begin, including aerial



Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization selected Schreiber, Ontario, as one of four communities suitable for further study as a possible site for a deep geologic repository. (Photo: Wikimedia Commons)

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surveys, and, at a later date, limited borehole drilling to further assess geology and site suitability against technical safety requirements.

At this milestone in the process, the NWMO said, it is recognizing the contribution that all eight communities have made to advancing Canada's plan for the safe, longterm management of its used nuclear fuel. According to the NWMO, each community, through its participation in the site selection process, has built understanding of the project and helped ensure meaningful citizen engagement.

In acknowledgment of their contributions, the NWMO is providing \$400,000 to each of the eight communities for the establishment of a community use fund. Administered by the communities, the funds will support efforts to build "community sustainability and well-being." This could include projects, programs, or services that benefit community youth or seniors, community sustainability, energy efficiency, or economic development initiatives. The other communities undergoing phase-one assessments will be similarly recognized, according to the NWMO.

The NWMO expects that it will take several years to complete the necessary studies to identify a preferred site and a willing host. Until a final agreement is signed, communities may choose to end their involvement at any point during the site evaluation process.

#### NRC to release Yucca Mountain safety report

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission will complete its safety review of Yucca Mountain, according to an order issued by the agency on November 18. Responding to an August 2013 writ of mandamus by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia that ordered the NRC to resume the licensing review of the Department of Energy's application for the Yucca Mountain waste repository, the commissioners voted 4–0 (Commissioner George Apostolakis has recused himself from Yucca Mountain matters) to direct the NRC staff to finish work on the safety evaluation report (SER) for the repository. Only one of the five planned volumes of the Yucca Mountain SER was published before work on the project was halted in 2010.

According to the NRC order, the staff has indicated that Volumes 2–5 of the SER can be completed and issued concurrently in 12 months at a cost of approximately \$8.3 million. The NRC staff will use the remaining money it has available from the Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF) to complete and release the remaining SER volumes. As of September 30, the NRC had about \$11 million left in NWFappropriated funds for the license review. The NRC also requested that the DOE prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) so that the staff can meet its review obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act.

In resuming its review of Yucca Mountain, the NRC will not reconstitute the Licensing Support Network, the online database of documents used in the application's adjudicatory hearings. Likewise, the nearly 300 contentions against the repository will continue to be held in abeyance until funding becomes available to restart the hearing process, according to the order. The agency staff will, however, place LSN documents into the NRC's nonpublic ADAMS online database. While the NRC said that documents used as references in the SER and SEIS will be publicly released, the publication of all LSN documents will depend on whether adequate funds are available to do so.

• On November 27, parties both for and against the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository filed responses to the NRC's plan for resuming the Yucca Mountain license application review.

Five petitioners in the writ of mandamus case that ordered the NRC to resume the license review—Nye County, Nev., the state of South Carolina, the state of Washington, Aiken County, S.C., and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners—filed a motion requesting that the NRC reconsider its order, claiming that it neither adequately addresses issues originally raised by the five parties nor fully complies with the court's order.

Claiming that the NRC's estimate of 12 months and \$8.3 million needed for completing the remaining four SER volumes is inflated, the five parties are asking that the NRC create a schedule for the release of each individual volume and provide detailed statements of the remaining work to be done on each volume, along with a cost estimate for each volume's completion.

Noting that the NRC staff had previously estimated the cost of completing the SER at \$6.5 million, the parties also asked that the NRC provide a detailed analysis of, and justification for, its new cost estimate. "Without such information and analysis, it is impossible to determine why the commission has estimated the cost of completion of all the SERs at such enormous and unsubstantiated levels, between \$6.5 and \$8.3 million," the parties wrote in their

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motion to the NRC. Also, the parties contend that even using an inflated cost estimate for completing the SER, enough money should be available for the first phase of the adjudicatory process and prehearing discovery to be resumed.

Meanwhile, the state of Nevada, which opposes the licensing of Yucca Mountain, filed a petition seeking clarification of the order. Of primary concern to Nevada is the NRC's deviation from its own scheduling rules. In suspending the discovery phase of the adjudicatory process, the NRC made a "temporary modification" to its procedural rules, which hold that discovery should occur in parallel with the completion of the SER.

The NRC's schedule for completing licenses also requires that all prehearing discovery be completed 60 days after the completion of the SER. Claiming that it is unlikely that the suspension of discovery will be lifted after the SER is completed, Nevada said that the NRC should clarify that the 60-day deadline will not apply if discovery is resumed. Even given two months, Nevada said it will not have enough time to finish gathering materials related to discovery. "It will not be possible to complete discovery within sixty days for the simple reason that the depositions of fifty to one hundred witnesses (including NRC staff, DOE, Nevada, and other parties' witnesses) cannot possibly be scheduled and completed within this brief period, even if discovery resumes immediately upon completion of the SER," the state wrote in its petition.

Nevada also is asking that the commission clarify its directions to its staff that it "adopt work previously completed as a first principle, to the maximum extent possible, and should undertake original investigation or inquiry only as necessary to account or adjust for new information." Nevada asserts that this direction "implies, or could be read to imply, a commission judgment that all of the work relevant to Yucca Mountain safety completed by any technical staff personnel to date is adequate based on the information already available, and is therefore suitable for adoption without further 'investigation or inquiry' absent new information."

The state said that it is unaware of any commission review on the adequacy of the staff's SER work that would justify such a conclusion.

• Earlier, on October 28, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia rejected a petition by the state of Nevada for a rehearing of the writ of mandamus case against the NRC. In a one-sentence order, the court denied the state's petition to rehear the case *en banc* (with all 10 of the court's judges presiding). The order offered no explanation for the denial.

The Las Vegas Sun reported on October 22 that Robert Halstead, director of the Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects, which along with the Attorney General's Office of Nevada is fighting the project, told state legislators that about \$9 million would be needed annually for the state to litigate Yucca Mountain should the NRC hearings resume.

#### DOE can't collect waste fees, court says

The Department of Energy has been told by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit to stop collecting Nuclear Waste Fund (NWF) fees. On November 19, the court ordered Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz to submit to Congress a proposal to change the waste fund fee to zero until such time as either the secretary chooses to comply with the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) as it is currently written, or until Congress enacts an alternative waste management plan.

Currently, based on a charge of one-tenth of a cent per kilowatt-hour of nuclear-generated electricity, the DOE collects about \$750 million annually from nuclear power companies for deposit into the NWF. It is estimated that the NWF, which was established to pay for the government's taking possession of used nuclear fuel for disposal at Yucca Mountain, has a current value of over \$28 billion. In agreeing with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the Nuclear Energy Institute, the petitioners in *NARUC v. DOE*, the court said, "So long as the government has no viable alternative to Yucca Mountain as a depository for nuclear waste, [nuclear power plant operators] should not be charged an annual fee to cover the cost of that disposal."

In ordering the suspension of the fee, the court found that the DOE failed to provide a sufficient assessment of the adequacy of the NWF fees as required by the NWPA. In January 2013, then energy secretary Steven Chu claimed that no adjustment of the fee was necessary because it could not be determined whether current fees are either insufficient or excessive. The court, however, called this a "nondetermination," saying that the secretary "may not comply with his statutory obligation by 'concluding' that a conclusion was impossible."

# 

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In a statement, NEI General Counsel Ellen Ginsberg said, "The court's decision should prompt Congress to reform the government's nuclear waste disposal program. We strongly encourage Congress to establish a new waste management entity and endow it with the powers and funding necessary to achieve the goals originally established in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act."

• The Department of Energy's failure to comply with the NWPA was at the heart of \$235-million court award to three New England nuclear power companies on November 14. For failing to take possession of used nuclear fuel as required by the NWPA, the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ordered the DOE to pay damages to Connecticut Yankee Atomic Power Company, Yankee Atomic Electric Company, and Maine Yankee Atomic Power Company.

The companies are owners of three former nuclear power plants that have been fully decommissioned, with only the used nuclear fuel and greater-than-Class-C waste remaining on site in independent spent fuel storage installations. To recover costs for storing the used fuel and waste, the companies successfully sued the DOE in 1998 for breach of the NWPA, and this latest award is for costs the companies incurred between January 1, 2002, and December 31, 2008. The court found that Connecticut Yankee is entitled to the recovery of \$126.34 million; Yankee Atomic, \$73.3 million; and Maine Yankee, \$35.76 million.

# EPA to approve changes in WIPP's panel closure design

The Environmental Protection Agency is proposing a rule change to allow the Department of Energy to use a different method for sealing waste-filled panels at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) than was previously approved. Notice of the proposed rule change and an opportunity for public comment was published in the December 3 *Federal Register*.

Located near Carlsbad, N.M., WIPP is a disposal facility for defense-related transuranic radioactive waste built into an underground salt formation. The waste is placed in groups of mined rooms called panels. Once the panels are filled, they will be sealed using engineered structures that are intended to prevent access to the filled panels and to protect site workers while the facility is still operating, and to limit the release of radionuclides after it is permanently closed. As included in its compliance certification application for WIPP, the DOE originally intended to seal the panels with concrete block walls and poured concrete monoliths. In September 2011, the DOE sought EPA approval to change this design and close the panels using 100 feet of mined salt placed between two steel bulkheads. Over time, as the surrounding salt fills in the open areas, the loosely packed salt will compress into a state resembling intact salt.

The EPA said that it has completed its technical review of the design change and has concluded that the new design will not have a significant impact on the long-term performance of the disposal system. Furthermore, according to the agency, "There is no evidence to suggest that the panel closure has a disproportionate ability to impact long-term performance when compared to other design features of the repository." The EPA added, however, that this does not mean that the DOE can change the panel closure design at will; a departure from the approved design must be submitted to the EPA for approval.

Comments on the proposed rule change were to be accepted through February 3, 2014.

• The DOE's Carlsbad Field Office, which oversees the WIPP repository, participated in the second meeting of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency's (NEA) Salt Club and the 4th U.S.-German Workshop on Salt Repository Research, Design, and Operation, which were held in Berlin, Germany, in September, the DOE announced on November 26.

Represented by the Carlsbad Field Office's international programs and policy advisor, Abe Van Luik, the DOE joined Salt Club members and workshop participants in discussing their research and experiences from the operation of salt-based repositories for nuclear waste. The Salt Club includes representatives from NEA member countries, primarily the United States, Germany, Poland, and the Netherlands, who are studying the use of salt formations as a host rock for deep geologic nuclear repositories.

According to the DOE, as subject experts in salt repository science, the meeting participants shared plans for future work and received almost immediate peer review as they strengthened their professional relationships and promoted best practices. The workshop, meanwhile, enhanced the coordination of U.S.-German research and development in the field, with presentations on many aspects of salt repository science and engineering. Representatives from the U.S. government, the Carlsbad Field Office, Sandia National Laboratories, and Los Alamos National Lab-



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oratory participated in the technical exchanges on the U.S. side, the DOE said.

"German representatives offered lessons learned from their extensive heat testing in salt," Van Luik said in a news release. "These lessons will help EM [the DOE's Office of Environmental Management] more efficiently design its currently planned research on the long-term performance of salt for disposal of heat-bearing radioactive wastes."

Participants also had the opportunity to tour the Asse and Morsleben repository sites in Germany, which, like WIPP, use rock salt as the host repository medium. According to the DOE, Van Luik visited the closed Morsleben site to better understand the work involved in closing and sealing the repository, which will provide the Carlsbad Field Office with information to consider as it plans for the future closing and sealing of WIPP.

#### SRS employee recognized for innovative ideas

A contractor employee at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site in South Carolina has received two

awards for developing new methods for managing transuranic (TRU) waste, the DOE announced on October 30. Ernie Williams, a manager in Savannah River Nuclear Solutions' Radiological Protection Department, received silver awards in two categories during Ideas America's recent conference, held in Orlando, Fla. Ideas America is a nonprofit association serving professional managers and administrators of employee suggestion, innovation, and involvement programs.

In the Idea of the Year category, Williams received the award for using a borescope camera for inspecting highly contaminated TRU waste boxes prior to shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, N.M. Previously, the boxes were cut open for inspection and the removal of prohibited items, which was time-consuming and exposed workers to safety and exposure hazards. The borescope camera can be inserted into the boxes through a small hole, and if no prohibited items are found, the box does not have to be cut open.

Williams also won an award in the Safety Idea of the Year category for using a commercially available mesh bag to contain the absorption media that is used to absorb liquids found in TRU waste storage boxes. Instead of spreading the loose material over the liquid to soak it up and then removing it by hand, as was previously done, workers put the absorbent in the mesh bags before placing it over the liquid. Once the liquid is absorbed, the bags can be removed remotely with a crane, eliminating numerous safety and radiological exposure hazards for employees.

"There are about 20 coworkers of mine at SRNS who contributed in some way to this achievement," Williams said in a news release. "Without them, it wouldn't have happened. This really was a team effort."

This is the first time that SRNS has participated in Ideas America's Idea of the Year Awards, the company said. Ideas America presented 12 awards in four categories: safety, green (environmental), team, and individual. Gold, silver, and bronze awards were presented in each category.



SRNS employee Ernie Williams, left, received two internationally recognized awards for new ideas in handling transuranic waste. Williams' manager, Johnny Lott, right, accepted the awards—which were presented during the 71st annual Ideas America Training Summit, held in Orlando, Fla.—for Williams, who was unable to attend. (Photo: DOE)

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# U-233 to be shipped from ORNL to Nevada National Security Site

The Department of Energy's inventory of uranium-233 will be shipped from its storage place at Oak Ridge, Tenn., to Nevada starting early this year, the *Las Vegas Sun* reported on November 12. According to the report, the DOE said in a press call that it would begin shipping 403 canisters containing U-233 to Nevada for shallow burial at the Nevada National Security Site. The U-233 was generated as part of a research program at the Nuclear Fuel Services plant in West Valley, N.Y., in 1968, and was later transferred to Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee for storage and potential future use.

Early last year, Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval and other state officials, including Sen. Harry Reid, came out in opposition to the shipments after the DOE's disposal plans were reported in the media. In an effort to overcome the impasse, Sandoval and Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz formed a working group in August 2013 to discuss possible resolutions. Following the *Las Vegas Sun* report, both Sandoval and Reid said they remain opposed to the shipments.

#### **D&D Updates**

• A review of decommissioning funding status (DFS) reports by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff found that as of December 31, 2012, U.S. nuclear power plant licensees had accumulated a total of \$45.7 billion for decommissioning work, and that all licensees were able to provide assurance that adequate funds were available to safely decommission their facilities.

The NRC requires nuclear power plant licensees to report on the status of their decommissioning funds at least once every two years, or annually within five years of the plant's planned shutdown and once the plant ceases operation. The NRC staff's review of the 2013 DFS reports for operating power reactors (SECY-13-0105) was posted to the NRC's online ADAMS library on October 24.

The NRC reviewed the DFS reports for all 104 nuclear power reactors that were operating in 2012 and found that all but four of the reactors had more than the minimum prescribed amount of decommissioning funds available. The four reactors for which the full amount was not initially available were FirstEnergy's Beaver Valley-1 and Perry, which had shortfalls of \$14.6 million and \$13 million, respectively; Entergy's Palisades, with a \$10.3-million shortfall; and NextEra Energy's Point Beach-2, with a \$2.5-million shortfall.

The shortfalls were resolved by the licensees by October, according to the NRC report. FirstEnergy committed to increase the amount of its supplemental parent company guarantees for Beaver Valley and Perry, while Entergy and NextEra increased their decommissioning trust funds to meet the minimum requirements. The NRC also said that it was able to resolve an outstanding 2011 shortfall for Exelon Generation's Limerick-1 reactor.

The four reactors that have since ceased operations— San Onofre-2 and -3, Crystal River-3, and Kewaunee—as well as Vermont Yankee, which Entergy plans to close in 2014, all reported decommissioning fund surpluses.

The NRC staff also noted that the quality of the information many of the licensees provided in their 2013 decommissioning funding reports had improved. "In particular, the NRC staff required fewer requests for additional information in evaluating the 2013 DFS reports," the staff said in its report.

• The K-25 building, which was located at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge site in Tennessee and was once the world's largest building under one roof, is no longer. The DOE's Office of Environmental Management announced on December 19 that it completed demolition of the remaining section of the gaseous diffusion building, ending a five-year demolition project ahead of schedule. All shipments of debris from the building are expected to be completed in this spring.

"Today marks a tremendous accomplishment for the American people—advancing our commitment to the safe and complete cleanup of former Manhattan Project sites," Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman said in a news release. "While there is still important cleanup work to do, completing the demolition of the K-25 gaseous diffusion building and doing so ahead of schedule and under budget is a testament to the outstanding Oak Ridge workforce."

Once a massive U-shaped structure, the K-25 building was built in 1943 as part of the Manhattan Project and originally contained 1.64 million square feet of floor space and occupied more than 40 acres near the center of the East Tennessee Technology Park, formerly the Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant. Until 1964, the building was used to enrich uranium for defense and commercial purposes.

Demolition of K-25 began in 2008, and by September 2012 demolition of the west wing and most of the east wing was completed. Removal of the building's north end, which was the smallest of K-25's three sections and formed the base of its distinctive U shape, was finished in



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January 2013. Remaining were portions of the east wing that required further decontamination due to technetium-99 contamination. URS-CH2M Oak Ridge (UCOR), the DOE's primary site cleanup contractor, finished removing those sections in December.

"I'm proud to have been part of this historic achievement," said Leo Sain, UCOR president and project manager. "This project was a massive undertaking involving many people. We are pleased that UCOR, working handin-hand with DOE, was able to safely complete the demolition and bring this project full circle."

While the demolition of K-25 is complete, the building's concrete base slabs will remain in place as a reminder of the facility's footprint. The DOE and local historic preservation agencies also have agreed to take steps to preserve the historic contributions of the K-25 complex.

Under a 2012 agreement with the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the city of Oak Ridge, the East Tennessee Preservation Alliance, and other consulting parties, the DOE will construct a three-story equipment building that recreates a scale representation of the gaseous diffusion technology and contains authentic equipment used in the original facility. A nearby K-25 history center, meanwhile, will display equipment, artifacts, oral histories, photographs and videos related to the plant's history. Also, the DOE provided a \$500,000 grant to preserve the Alexander Inn, a historic structure in Oak Ridge where visiting scientists and dignitaries stayed during their visits to the area.

• Washington River Protection Solutions, the Department of Energy contractor tasked with managing radioactive and chemical tank waste at the Hanford Site, has completed the transfer of sludge and other nonliquid waste from Tank C-110, a single-shell tank, to a more stable double-shell tank, the DOE announced on October 24. The retrieval of waste from Tank C-110 marks the 11th single-shell tank retrieval at the site to date. Hanford, the site of plutonium production during the Cold War, has 149 single-shell tanks and 28 double-shell tanks containing about 56 million gallons of radioactive and chemical waste.

According to the DOE, an engineering evaluation of Tank C-110 shows that less than 360 ft<sup>3</sup> of waste remains in the tank, which meets regulatory requirements. Video of the inside of the 530,000-gallon-capacity tank shows that a large percentage of the tank floor is now visible.

Emptying the tank involved the removal of an estimated 178,000 gallons of sludge using modified sluicing, which left about 17,200 gallons of hard-heel waste on the tank floor. A remotely operated, track-mounted tool called the Foldtrack was used to remove the hard-heel waste.

"Foldtrack had its most-successful deployment, which was crucial in completing the retrieval of this tank," said Joanne Grindstaff, a DOE project director, in a DOE news release. "The Foldtrack has a plow blade, two onboard water jet systems, three high-pressure turbo nozzles, and a sluicing cannon that operators use to break down the difficult-to-remove waste and move the tank waste closer to the pump, making it easier to transfer waste to the double-shell tank."

The Tank C-110 retrieval operation was the first at Hanford's C Tank Farm to use a hot-water skid, which produces 100 gallons per minute of 120 °F water to accelerate the dissolution of any water-soluble sludge waste, the DOE said.

• An advisory panel is urging that Vermont Yankee be decommissioned soon after it closes next year. On October 30, the Vermont State Nuclear Advisory Panel passed a resolution urging state officials to pursue a strategy that would lead to the prompt dismantlement of the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant in Vernon, Vt., the Burlington Free Press reported. Entergy announced in August that it would close the 617-MWe boiling water reactor next fall, at the end of the current fuel cycle, and that it intends to place the reactor in SAFSTOR condition to allow time for residual radioactivity to decay to safer levels. While the final decision on Vermont Yankee's decommissioning rests with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the state could pursue the matter in U.S. courts, as it has in the past in its efforts to close the plant. Homestake Mining has requested a license amendment for its Grants Reclamation Project, a former uranium processing mill near Milan, N.M., that would allow it to change the background monitoring location used to measure concentrations of radon-222 in the air. Homestake Mining Company of California said that the current background monitoring location does not best represent background conditions for the site, and it is recommending a location north of the site as an alternative. In the October 29 Federal Register, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission published an opportunity to request a hearing and to petition for leave to intervene in the license amendment request by December 30. Information regarding the amendment request, including instructions on filing electronic submissions, can be found on the Federal Rulemaking website, at <www.regulations.gov>, with a search for Docket ID NRC-2013-0138.

• The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is granting US Ecology a licensing exemption to dispose of low-activity

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Headlines waste from an Environmental Protection Agency Superfund site in Pennsylvania at the company's disposal facility near Grand View, Idaho. An environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact for the license exemption was issued by the NRC and published in the October 31 Federal Register. The exemption will allow US Ecology to receive and dispose of about 7640 m<sup>3</sup> of hazardous

and low-activity waste from Safety Light Corporation's (SLC) site in Bloomsburg, Pa. The waste material, which consists of bulk debris and materials from the demolition of structures on the SLC site, contains radionuclides originating from the production of luminous materials and other commercial products. According to the NRC, the radionuclide concentrations are not expected to exceed acceptance limits for the US Ecology Idaho facility.

• A decommissioning plan for the Crystal River-3 nuclear power plant has been submitted to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Duke Energy announced on December 10. In February 2013, Duke announced that it was ending its efforts to repair the damaged 860-MWe pressurized water reactor north of Tampa, Fla., and would permanently close the plant. Duke has chosen the SAFSTOR decommissioning option, whereby the plant will remain in a safe, stable condition for 60 years until decommissioning work is completed in 2074. The estimated cost of decommissioning Crystal River-3 is \$1.18 billion in 2013 dollars, and Duke said that it believes the company's existing nuclear decommissioning trust fund, plus the fund's future growth, coupled with funds from the plant's nine other minority owners, will be sufficient to decommission the plant. The plant's used nuclear fuel will remain in the existing on-site fuel pool until a new independent spent fuel storage installation is built on the site. Duke said that it expects to begin implementing the tasks outlined in the decommissioning plan in 2014. Crystal River-3 operated from 1977 to 2009.



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# EVALUATION OF DIRECT DISPOSAL OF SPENT FUEL IN EXISTING DUAL-PURPOSE CANISTERS

#### Costs, worker dose, and complexity of fuel management operations could possibly be reduced through direct disposal of DPCs.

#### By E. L. Hardin, D. J. Clayton, R. L. Howard, J. Clarity, J. M. Scaglione, J. T. Carter, W. M. Nutt, and R. W. Clark

The U.S. nuclear power industry is accumulating spent nuclear fuel (SNF) in dry storage at the rate of approximately 2,000 metric tons (t) per year. Dry storage sites are associated with both operating and decommissioned power plants. Currently, there are more than 1,700 dry casks in use containing more than 17,000 t of SNF (as heavy metal; Wagner et al. 2013). Projections show that by the year 2025 there will be more than 3,000 such casks in use (Fig. 1) and that sometime before 2040 more than half of the SNF in the United States will be in dry storage (Hardin et al. 2013a). The disposition of this SNF will become a major part of back-end fuel management strategy.

For most dry storage systems, SNF is loaded and sealed into welded, stainless steel canisters which are then transferred to stationary dry storage casks. Exceptions include a few self-shielded, transportable casks that contain bare fuel assemblies. Canisters that can also be loaded into licensed transportation casks are referred to as dual-

purpose canisters (DPC). The majority of SNF in existing dry storage in the United States is in DPCs, and nearly all new dry storage transfers are to DPCs. These canisters typically hold as many as 32 pressurized water reactor fuel assemblies (or equivalent boiling water reactor fuel) and recent designs hold even more.

The possibility for direct disposal of these DPCs without cutting them open and repackaging the SNF is attractive because it would potentially save money, reduce the complexity of fuel management operations, and likely result in less cumulative worker dose (from fewer handling and packaging operations) at the time of actual disposal in a geologic repository. This paper gives a technical description of some promising direct disposal concepts, and then discusses preliminary analyses of technical feasibility (post-emplacement thermal and criticality analyses), and a preliminary analysis of the timing and cost for disposing of all SNF from U.S. commercial power plants in DPCs.

The preliminary results presented here indicate that DPC direct disposal could be technically feasible, at least for certain disposal concepts. Preliminary analysis also suggests that cost savings might be realized compared to repackaging DPCs, although further analysis is needed to understand economic consequences associated with the many possible scenarios.

The concept of using a common canister design for the storage, transport, and disposal of SNF originated in the 1990s as dry-storage systems were being deployed by the U.S. utility industry. The potential advantages of standardized canisters were recognized, giving rise to multipurpose canister (MPC) concepts developed for the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE 1994). After completing preliminary studies, the DOE made a decision not to pursue the MPC concept. Later, when the Yucca Mountain repository license application was being prepared, another study specifically addressed the disposal of existing DPCs at the proposed repository (BSC 2003). It deter-



Fig. 1. Dry storage canister projection for the United States, using the TSL-CALVIN simulator and assuming existing power reactors are operated with lifeextension licenses.



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Constraints and Assumptions Used in DPC Disposal Concept Development				
Canister capacity	24- and 32-PWR sizes (or BWR equivalent) are typi- cal. Newer designs such as the Magnastor (NAC International) and MPC-37 (Holtec International) systems may hold 37 or more PWR assemblies.			
Fuel burnup	≤ 60 GWd/t (for PWR and BWR fuel, bracketing the range with 5 percent enrichment)			
Transportability	SNF in DPCs can be safely transported to the reposi- tory for disposal, for at least 50 years and for as long as 100 years after reactor discharge.			
Age of fuel at repository (or panel) closure	Less than 150 years (for any canister, the combined duration of decay storage before emplacement plus pre-closure cooling in a repository)			
Post-closure reactivity limit	$k_{eff}$ < 1.0 after repository closure			
Underground handling and emplacement operations	Shielded for all operations until emplacement (self-shielded waste packages are also an option).			
Basis for waste isolation performance	Assume future regulations will incorporate the proba- bilistic approaches from 40 CFR 197 and 10 CFR 63.			
Host rock peak temperature targets: Salt	≤ 200 °C			
Crystalline ("hard" rock)	≤ 200 °C			
Argillaceous (e.g., claystone, shale, etc.)	≤ 100 °C			
Cladding temperature limit after emplacement	≤ 350 °C			
Clay-based engineered material peak temperature target	≤ 100 °C			

mined that post-emplacement criticality was the most important technical issue, and that fuel burnup data from reactor operations could be used to demonstrate subcriticality for a fraction of the DPC inventory.

Direct disposal of existing DPCs (up to 32-PWR size) was also examined by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI 2008a; 2008b), which looked at thermal and criticality issues and found no technical impediment to direct disposal for the repository concept being studied by the DOE at the time. More recently, a German team has proposed direct disposal of the CASTOR-V storage/ transportation cask containing approximately 10 t of SNF in a salt repository (Graf et al. 2012).

This paper summarizes current activities in the DOE's Used Fuel Disposition Program to examine the feasibility of DPC direct disposal. This updated analysis has considered the canister systems currently being used in the United States, the available geologic settings (no site or geology has been selected), and the projected characteristics of SNF that will be placed in dry storage over the next several decades.

#### **OBJECTIVES FOR DIRECT DISPOSAL**

The objectives for direct disposal of SNF in DPCs are the same as for any geologic repository: the safety of workers and the public, and long-term isolation of the radioactive materials from the biosphere. Achieving these objectives will involve 1) respecting temperature limits for the fuel and the repository, 2) mitigating the potential for criticality after waste emplacement, 3) engineering feasibility of underground construction and operations, and 4) achieving acceptance by regulators and the public. Some of the technical constraints and assumptions that could help to ensure that these objectives are met are summarized in the accompanying table.

The present evaluation has focused on the feasibility of repository closure at or before the time when SNF in DPCs reaches 150 years of age out of reactor. It is further assumed that the DPCs can be safely transported to the repository as soon as 50 years after reactor discharge, or at up to 100 years after discharge as appropriate.

Canister capacity and fuel burnup assumptions bracket the DPCs currently in storage, and also address the projected larger canisters and higher SNF burnup. The 150-year time limit on storage and disposal operations avoids more protracted, longer-term commitment to waste management activities (other than monitoring and other activities that may be required).

The assumed reactivity limit ( $k_{eff} < 1.0$ ) is less conservative than values used for storage and transportation safety analyses, but reflects the gradually changing nature of conditions affecting the potential for criticality in a repository. Also, such a criticality event would have to occur in a disposal system with multiple, redundant barriers to waste migration (Hardin et al. 2013d, Section 6). In any event, post-closure criticality is very unlikely in disposal environments where moderating water is scarce, and/or where there is sufficient natural neutron absorption, as discussed below.

The assumption of shielded underground transport and emplacement operations could provide additional assurance that worker dose would be limited for normal operations and a range of possible accidents during repository operations. Post-closure waste isolation safety would be evaluated using probabilistic assessments to demonstrate compliance with regulatory performance objectives (see table). Given the generic (non-site-specific) nature of this examination, this paper provides qualitative safety arguments, comparing direct disposal with alternative disposal concepts that involve repackaging SNF in purposebuilt canisters.

The peak temperature target, or limit, for salt would limit decomposition of hydrous minerals that are often found with halite in salt formations. It would also prevent decrepitation that can occur at temperatures above approximately 250 °C. Whereas these mechanisms would occur only locally, and neither would necessarily compromise the waste isolation integrity of a host salt formation, they could add complexity to the disposal safety case. In any case, the 200 °C target is already high enough to facilitate direct disposal of DPCs.

For crystalline rock such as granite, or "hard" rock such as welded volcanic tuff, or metamorphic rock, the 200 °C target would limit micro-cracking and weakening from differential thermal expansion of mineral grains (Hardin et al. 1997). Again, the effect would be localized and would not necessarily compromise waste isolation, but it could add complexity to the safety case, and the 200 °C target is already high enough to facilitate direct disposal of DPCs.

Peak temperature targets for argillaceous host media and engineered clay-based materials (see table) are based on current understanding from international repository development programs. Alteration of clay-based materials generally involves dissolution, aqueous transport, and precipitation (e.g., silica precipitate). Temperature limits are imposed because alteration could degrade swelling pressure, promote fracturing, and potentially decrease sorption of released radionuclides. For example, the Swedish program has adopted a peak buffer temperature of 100 °C (after swelling; SKB 2011, Section 5.5.1). This study uses a target maximum temperature of 100 °C for clay buffer and clay-based backfill materials, recognizing that this is the focus of ongoing research and development and may change in the future.

Natural clay-bearing formations are subject to the same alteration processes as engineered clay-based materials, and may also contain significant amounts of impurities such as potassium, which can react to form nonswelling illite clay. Temperature limits would be similar to, and possibly lower than, those for engineered materials. Andra, France's National Radioactive Waste Management Agency, has proposed a 90 °C limit for the argillaceous host medium surrounding waste packages in the proposed repository in Callovo-Oxfordian argillite (Andra 2005, Section 1.2.3.4). This study uses a target maximum temperature of 100 °C for argillaceous media, by analogy to clay-based engineered materials, recognizing that this, too, is the focus of ongoing R&D and may change in the future.

The host rock and engineered material peak temperature targets in the table are specified for the waste package surface or surrounding material. Past thermal analyses have shown that if the package surface meets these limits, then the temperature of fuel within the package will meet the 350 °C limit intended to limit Zircaloy cladding creep rupture, by a wide margin (BSC 2008). Thus, the temperature of the fuel is not expected to directly constrain the disposal of DPCs.

#### **DISPOSAL CONCEPTS AND THERMAL MANAGEMENT**

Prospective geologic disposal concepts are readily divided into "enclosed" and "open" modes of waste package emplacement (Hardin et al. 2012). The enclosed modes involve emplacing packages directly into contact with engineered materials, or host rock, which have inherent thermal limits. The open modes maintain air space around each package that can be ventilated to remove heat prior to the permanent closure of the repository. These spaces may also remain open and continue to be involved in heat dissipation after closure. Open emplacement concepts combine the functions of decay storage (e.g., dry storage) with geologic disposal in the same underground facility. An open-mode repository could be constructed and operated much sooner than enclosed concepts that require decay storage of 100 years or longer (Hardin et al. 2012). Earlier emplacement of SNF waste could allow much of the cost for the disposal of SNF in the United States to be incurred at the same time that currently operating nuclear power plants are being shut down (i.e., while contributions to the Nuclear Waste Fund continue).

Most international high-level waste and SNF disposal programs are focused on enclosed modes in argillaceous or crystalline host rock types, with inherent limits on heat generation and SNF capacity for waste packages. Only the salt concept and the open emplacement modes in other media are suited for relatively large DPC waste packages with heat output of 10 kW or more at emplacement. A disposal solution using larger packages is attractive for the United States, which currently faces the disposal of more than twice as much SNF as any other nation among those that do not have the means of reprocessing their SNF.

Disposal overpacks would be used with any disposal concept. A range of overpacks could be designed to accommodate the different types of DPCs, which differ with respect to dimensions and external handling features. Overpacks would be the interface between different types of DPCs and other elements of the disposal system, such as transporters, emplacement equipment, other engineered barriers, and the host rock. DPCs are typically constructed from relatively thin stainless steel plate, and overpacks could provide additional, robust mechanical strength for handling and transport, and for repository closure operations such as backfilling. The weight of fully loaded DPCs ranges up to approximately 50 t depending on capacity, and a 5-cm-thick steel overpack would add approximately 20 t. The overall diameter of waste packages containing DPCs would be just under 2 m, with a length of 5 m or slightly more depending on fuel type.

Robust overpacks could also help to ensure containment for a range of potential accidents or disruptive events during repository operations. Overpacks made from lowalloy steel with wall thickness of a few centimeters have been proposed for various disposal concepts (Hansen et



Fig. 2. Repository concept for dual-purpose canister waste packages in bedded salt.

al. 2010; Sevougian et al. 2012). The materials used and the methods for fabrication and treatment would likely be selected for performance in the disposal environment, as has been demonstrated for a range of disposal concepts internationally (DOE 2008; SKB 2011; Andra 2005).

#### Salt Concept

A repository in salt was proposed for heat-generating HLW based on lessons learned from the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and salt investigations at Asse and Morsleben, in Germany (Hansen and Leigh 2011). The concept (Fig. 2) was then extended to SNF (Hardin et al. 2013b). Excavation and construction would likely be similar to WIPP, an operating geologic repository for transuranic (TRU) waste located in southeastern New Mexico. The repository could be excavated using standard mining practices. Floors could be bare rock suitable for rubber-tired equipment, and ground support could consist only of rock bolts in traffic areas. Both bedded salt and salt domes could be suitable, differing mainly in lateral extent and moisture content. Less moisture in domal salt means less potential for brine to accumulate, but both types of formations offer very low brine mobility and no radionuclide releases under normal, undisturbed conditions (Vaughn et al. 2012). Accumulation of brine at waste packages might be important in criticality analysis for certain conditions, but 75 percent of natural chlorine is Cl-35, a thermal neutron absorber.

DPC disposal overpacks could consist of low-alloy steel or other low-cost structural material, sufficient to maintain containment through handling and for at least 50 years after emplacement (e.g., to facilitate possible retrieval). Steel wall thickness of 5 cm could impart ample mechanical strength for handling and transport, and some allowance for corrosion as well. The limited abundance of moisture in a salt repository would limit the extent of corrosion damage (water is consumed by corrosion reactions), so the overpack could remain intact and available as a redundant isolation barrier for much longer than 50 years. Emplacement drifts would be backfilled immediately, so that subsequent nearby repository monitoring or closure operations could be performed without additional shielding. Nonemplacement access openings would be backfilled with crushed salt prior to closure.

Waste packages could be handled underground in the horizontal orientation to limit the height of excavations. To limit handling operations underground, they could also be transported from the surface in horizontal orientation. Transport of DPC packages would require a ramp from the surface, or a shaft hoist such as that tested at Gorleben and scaled up to sufficient capacity (175-t payload). This capacity is roughly twice the 85-t capacity tested at Gorleben in the 1990s, which was demonstrated then to be technically feasible. The larger capacity (175 t) has been proposed in connection with the German DIREGT concept for direct disposal (Graf et al. 2012). It is important to note that site-specific factors may constrain possibilities for shaft or ramp construction. For example, the existence of an aquifer in the geologic section above the host formation could favor vertical shafts if they are considered to be safer to construct or simpler to seal at repository closure. Not all potential host formations are associated with aquifers, however, and bedded salt formations or salt domes may offer both shaft access from above and ramp access through adjacent rock strata.

Salt has thermal properties that facilitate disposal of larger, hotter waste packages. Thermal conductivity is higher than many other rock types, and salt can tolerate a



Fig. 3. Temperature histories for a 32-PWR package with 60 GWd/t spent nuclear fuel burnup, stored 70 years before emplacement in salt (at zero time; from Hardin et al. 2013c).

peak temperature of 200 °C. Finite-element thermalmechanical analysis of the disposal of large packages (32-PWR size) using the salt concept was reported previously (Hardin et al. 2012). Temperature histories (e.g., Fig. 3) show that the salt peak temperature target can be met with DPC decay storage of 50 to 70 years.

While salt does creep, it does so under stress conditions imparted by overburden pressure, not from the much smaller weight of waste packages. Stresses from reaction loads near emplaced waste packages are small compared to stress redistribution caused by excavation. Even thermally activated salt deformation in response to waste package weight is minor, as demonstrated by coupled thermal-mechanical simulations (Clayton et al. 2013) using constitutive laws for salt that were developed from laboratory data and validated against field-scale observations (summarized by Hansen and Leigh 2011). Salt constitutive behavior at low stresses and low strain rates typical of long-term waste package behavior in the salt concept is an area of continuing investigation in the Used Fuel Disposition Program.

#### Hard Rock (Crystalline) Unsaturated, Unbackfilled Repository

In this open-mode concept, waste packages would be emplaced axially in open drifts, and ventilated for up to 100 years to remove heat (Fig. 4). The concept could use a corrosion-resistant package and other redundant engineered barriers as needed for defense-in-depth. Other barriers could include water diversion features such as drip shields, or multiple corrosion-resistant packaging materials such as titanium or nickel alloys. This concept is similar to previous work (DOE 2008) and to a previous proposal for direct disposal of DPCs (EPRI 2008b).

Hard rock (e.g., igneous or metamorphic, and crystalline) offers better long-term opening stability and typically has greater thermal conductivity and higher temperature tolerance (to approximately 200 °C) than rock types containing significant clay or other hydrous minerals. Virtually all hard rock types have some fracturing, so mitigating rock permeability is potentially important. If the host rock is unsaturated, the existence of sufficient permeability will make it free-draining. With drainage there is little possibility of focused groundwater flow along repository openings, so plugging, sealing, or backfilling of emplacement and access drifts may not be need-



Fig. 4. Repository concept for dual-purpose canister waste packages in hard rock (crystalline), with extended repository ventilation and without backfill.



Fig. 5. Temperature histories for a 32-PWR waste package with 60 GWd/t burnup, stored 50 years and then emplaced in an unbackfilled hard rock (crystalline) repository and ventilated for an additional 100 years (from Hardin et al. 2013c).

ed. In saturated settings, a low-permeability backfill could be installed at the time of repository closure. Thermal calculations (Fig. 5) show that a 200 °C host rock peak temperature target could be readily met for SNF with high burnup, with fewer than 150 years of combined decay storage plus ventilation. The results shown in Fig. 5 suggest that the repository layout could be optimized with respect to drift and waste package spacings, and shorter durations for decay storage and ventilation.

#### Other Disposal Concepts

The other concepts amenable to DPC direct disposal would use backfill, installed at closure, in argillaceous or crystalline host media. A range of alternative concepts for DPC direct disposal was examined by Hardin and Voegele (2013) in a study that focused on how to meet peak temperature targets in various geologic settings: argillaceous rock types (with thermal properties typical of indurated mudstone, claystone, or shale); hard rock (properties of typical granite or tuff); and salt (bedded or domal). As noted above, with the exception of disposal in salt, DPC disposal concepts need to be "open" for ventilation to remove heat until repository closure. For DPC disposal, the alternatives to open emplacement or to disposal in salt would be "enclosed" concepts in which buffer and/or backfill materials would be installed at emplacement. Such enclosed emplacement modes could require many hundreds of years of surface decay storage before disposal (Hardin et al. 2012).

Some of the open concepts that have been identified might remain open if unbackfilled after repository closure, which could improve heat dissipation, until eventual collapse of the emplacement openings. Drift collapse, however, would increase the radial extent of the disturbed rock zone (DRZ) in the rock around the openings. While this could be inconsequential in unsaturated hydrologic settings, in saturated settings the collapse rubble and the DRZ could later act as pathways for groundwater flow and possible transport of radionuclides. Thus, backfill would be needed in saturated settings to mechanically stabilize the host rock, minimize the DRZ, and control groundwater flow. Further, isolation of adjacent waste packages from one another using low-permeability backfill could be advantageous in the analysis of future inadvertent human intrusion (Hardin et al. 2013d).

Granular backfill materials generally have relatively low thermal conductivity (e.g., 0.6 to 1.2 W/m-K (watts/meter-Kelvin), which subjects those materials and the waste package to higher peak temperatures (Hardin et al. 2012). This would generally not be a problem for waste packages, which can withstand surface temperatures approaching 300 °C without significant damage to the SNF contained within (or to the packaging, depending on the selection of material and the chemical environment, and the post-closure safety function assigned to the package; see BSC 2008). Nor is the installation of backfill likely to significantly affect temperature in the host rock. Elevated temperature in the backfill, however, could have an impact on the properties of the backfill itself, and, in particular, alter clays that are used to produce swelling behavior and low permeability. Scoping calculations show that backfill material capable of withstanding 150 °C peak temperature (plus the associated thermal history) could make the use of backfill a viable option in DPC direct disposal (Hardin and Voegele 2013). This possibility is the objective of ongoing materials research in the Used Fuel Disposition Program, intended to develop and maintain options for disposal in a broad range of geologic settings.

Argillaceous (containing clay) host media typically have lower thermal conductivity than salt or crystalline media, which presents an additional challenge for repository thermal management. There is some flexibility in selecting repository dimensions to limit temperature rise in such media. The dimensional variables are emplacement drift diameter, the spacing between packages, and the spacing between drifts. These variables trade against one another to some extent, and they determine excavation volume and repository layout size. Repository layouts have been described (Greenberg and Wen 2013) that limit host rock peak temperature in argillaceous media, while limiting excavation volume and repository size. To accommodate direct disposal of moderate- to high-burnup SNF in DPCs, repository layout size (and the extent of tunneling needed) would be approximately doubled in argillaceous media as compared to salt or hard rock. Scoping studies have also shown that allowing slightly higher peak host rock temperature could significantly reduce the repository layout size. The peak temperatures and other thermal criteria appropriate for various argillaceous host media are another area of ongoing research in the Used Fuel Disposition Program.

#### SAFETY OF DPC DIRECT DISPOSAL

Generic demonstration of waste isolation performance could be achieved by evaluating the potential differences between direct disposal of DPCs and disposal of the same SNF in packaging (including canisters) designed specifically for disposal, in the same geologic setting. Repackaging could produce smaller packages for use with enclosed disposal concepts, or it could produce packaging similar to DPCs in size, with features specific to disposal. Generic safety analysis for DPC direct disposal, and generic safety analysis in general, are currently under development. The approach taken here focuses on qualitative differences, pointing out important ways that DPC direct disposal could differ from other disposal concepts involving repackaging:

• Emplacement mode and engineered barrier system de*sign*—DPC disposal concepts that could be implemented in 150 years include open emplacement modes that use ventilation to remove heat, and the salt concept, which could be closed immediately after emplacement. Backfill emplaced remotely at closure (in a thermal and radiological environment) would likely have less density and uniformity than material emplaced before waste emplacement. Hence, comparisons of open-mode DPC direct disposal with concepts that involve repackaging should include effects associated with greater permeability and the potential for groundwater flow and advective radionuclide transport in the near field. If transport of radionuclides through the far field to the biosphere is diffusion-controlled, such differences may be insignificant. • Thermal effects (DPC disposal vs. large purpose-built *packages*)—DPCs are not necessarily much larger than purpose-built disposal canisters would be-for example, a previously designed transport/aging/disposal (TAD) canister would hold 21 PWR assemblies (DOE 2008). Peak temperatures for larger packages could be controlled with decay storage and repository ventilation, but postpeak temperature would be higher for DPC-based packages than for smaller packages, for hundreds of years. Aging attenuates short-lived fission products, but larger packages contain more heat-generating nuclides with intermediate half-lives that are not as amenable to aging, such as americium-241. Thus, elevated temperature in the near-field host rock and backfill could persist longer with larger packages. The consequences could be minimal if host rock and backfill transport characteristics are relatively insensitive to thermal exposure (e.g., as for the salt concept).

• Thermal effects (DPC disposal vs. enclosed modes and small packages)-Enclosed emplacement modes in argillaceous and crystalline rock types were shown to require 4-PWR size waste packages to limit peak temperature to less than 100 °C, with disposal at up to 150 years (Hardin et al. 2012). DPCs would need decay storage for many hundreds of years to meet this temperature limit. Both the peak temperature and the duration of elevated temperature would be greater for in-drift disposal of DPC-based packages (with decades of repository ventilation) compared to smaller packages used with enclosed emplacement modes (and no ventilation). The waste isolation performance of enclosed modes would resemble that analyzed for the Swedish (SKB 2011) and French (Andra 2005) SNF disposal concepts, whereas performance of DPC direct disposal would likely place more emphasis on backfill and the geologic setting (particularly in the far field that is relatively unaffected by waste heating).

A notable exception to the need for small packages is the salt concept, which could accommodate SNF waste packages up to 32-PWR size or larger. Radionuclide transport characteristics of salt backfill and host rock are insensitive to temperature, or are improved through thermally accelerated creep consolidation. The package thermal power limit for the salt concept could be met by 32-PWR size packages after decay storage of approximately 70 years or less (Hardin and Voegele 2013).

• *Quantity of SNF*—If a waste package breach were to occur, more SNF would be exposed to the disposal environment with DPCs than with smaller containers. The difference would be greatest in comparing DPCs with the small canisters (e.g., 4-PWR size) needed for enclosed emplacement modes in argillaceous or crystalline media. This difference could potentially result in a reduction in waste isolation performance for DPC disposal as compared to smaller canisters, depending on the dominant transport mechanism controlling radionuclide transport from the disposal package to and through the host rock. This potential reduction in performance would tend to be more significant for settings where transport is dominated by advection. The importance of advective transport is the most important factor of interest in the long-term safety of DPC direct disposal related to the quantity of SNF per package.

• Inner canister design—Canisters purpose-built for disposal could have features not found in existing DPCs, such as inserts (in lieu of baskets); thicker shells, plates, and/or spacers to extend structural lifetime in corrosion environments; more corrosion-resistant materials; thicker neutron-absorbing elements that can function after >10<sup>4</sup> years of exposure to groundwater; and fillers that can exclude moderating groundwater after a package breach. Existing DPCs cannot include any of these features (assuming they cannot be reopened), and so post-closure criticality is an issue for DPC direct disposal. As discussed below, the potential for criticality can be mitigated by moderator exclusion and by chloride in groundwater, and by measures to address conservatism in the reactivity analysis.

To summarize, for generic (non-site-specific) comparison of DPC direct disposal with disposal of the same waste repackaged in purpose-built containers, important factors that help to ensure post-closure disposal safety include: 1) diffusion-controlled transport, 2) near-field transport properties that are insensitive to temperature, 3) backfill and natural-barrier contributions (particularly the far field less affected by heat), and 4) mechanisms that limit potential post-closure criticality. These are general disposal system attributes that could benefit any geologic repository, whether it involves DPC disposal or repackaging. Eventually, the availability of site-specific data will support more resolution of differences in postclosure safety performance associated with DPC direct disposal.

#### **POST-CLOSURE CRITICALITY SCOPING ANALYSIS**

Canisters licensed for transportation are typically analyzed for reactivity when fully flooded with fresh water (maximum reactivity) after accidental breach (10 CFR 71.55). In such analyses, the neutron absorbers and basket geometry are assumed to function as designed. By contrast, the analysis of post-closure criticality must consider the potential for the degradation of neutronabsorbing features, and the possibility for collapse of the basket holding the fuel assemblies, in addition to flooding. These mechanisms may be important for 10,000 years (§10 CFR 63.114) or longer, which is likely sufficient for the chemical breakdown of aluminum-based absorber materials—such as Boral, currently being used in DPC construction—when exposed to water.

For the TAD canister discussed above (DOE 2008), degradation was addressed in the design by fabricating absorber plates from borated Type 304 stainless steel, and all other components of the canister from nuclear-grade Type 316 stainless steel, with sufficient thicknesses for corrosion allowance. The accumulation of corrosion damage to structural and absorber components over 10,000 years of exposure to groundwater was bounded based on the extrapolation of laboratory test data, with acceptable margins on load-bearing and neutron absorption properties. These features are not available on the current inventory of DPCs. Hence, the challenge for post-closure criticality analysis for existing DPCs is to account fully for other factors mitigating the potential for criticality, including as-loaded margin analysis, burnup credit, flooding with brine (for certain geologic settings), and moderator exclusion. Note that if water is excluded from the repository or from entering waste packages, there is no potential for criticality.

Existing DPCs have been loaded using conservative assumptions-for example, in accordance with specifications based on analysis with unirradiated fresh fuel. Detailed information about the reactor in-service history of each SNF assembly, along with actual cask-specific loading arrangements, can be used to exploit this type of reactivity margin. Scoping calculations of reactivity for two representative DPC systems (Clarity and Scaglione 2013) demonstrate this approach: the Transportable Storage Canister (TSC-24) from NAC International and the Multi-Purpose Canister (MPC-32) from Holtec International. Detailed analyses were conducted for the TSC-24 and MPC-32 canisters in use at two storage sites. These two DPC systems were selected because they are reasonably representative of the overall population of DPCs. As of June 2013, there are 185 MPC-32 canisters and 220 TSC-24 canisters currently loaded in dry storage in the United States. Actual DPC loading specifications and assembly in-service history information used in these calculations were provided by the operating companies.

The SCALE (ORNL 2011) CSAS6 criticality analysis sequence was used to perform criticality calculations for loaded fuel canisters with the KENO-VI Monte Carlo code, with the continuous energy ENDF/B-VII cross-section library to determine the effective neutron multiplication factor ( $k_{eff}$ ). Depletion calculations were performed using the TRITON two-dimensional depletion sequence to generate used fuel isotopic compositions (Clarity and Scaglione 2013).

Initial scoping calculations were performed for three representative configurations: 1) as-loaded, with all canister internals represented in original condition; 2) complete loss of neutron absorber panels (replacement by groundwater), but assembly-to-assembly spacing unchanged; and 3) complete degradation of basket structure (and loss of neutron absorber), resulting in minimal assembly spacing and the collapse of assemblies into a cylindrical arrangement. These configurations are stylized and may be unrealistic, but they do show the potential benefit from more detailed analyses of postclosure criticality.

Fuel assemblies were represented as fully intact in each



Fig. 6. Reactivity vs. time calculations for TSC-24 canisters, and degraded cases for representative canister TSC-5 (as loaded).

configuration, allowing penetration by groundwater. Burnup credit included actinides and fission products (i.e., uranium-234, -235, -236, and -238; neptunium-237; plutonium-238, -239, -240, -241, and -242; americium-241 and -243; molybdenum-95; technetium-99; ruthenium-101; rhodium-103; silver-109; cesium-133; neodymium-143 and -145; samarium-147, -149, -150, -151, and -152; europium-151 and -153; and gadolinium-155). To account for computation bias and uncertainty, a +0.02 ( $\Delta k_{eff}$ ) margin was added.

The NAC TSC-24 canister calculations (Fig. 6) show that when actinide and fission product burnup credit is taken in conjunction with canister-specific loading, calculated  $k_{eff}$  ranges from 0.61 to 0.81 for the 37 canisters evaluated, when flooded with pure water. For a representative canister (called TSC-5), the absorber loss and basket degradation cases resulted in reactivity increases on the order of +0.17 and +0.38 ( $\Delta k_{eff}$ ), respectively. Additional evaluations of the degraded basket case were performed to see if chloride present in groundwater could control system reactivity (Cl-35 has a thermal neutron capture cross-section of about 44 barns). For the TSC-5 canister, flooded with a 1-molal NaCl brine, reactivity decreased moderately ( $\Delta k_{eff} \sim -0.08$ ). Similar reduction was calculated for 2-molal NaCl. The concentration of NaCl in seawater is about 0.5 molal, but brines present in some crystalline rocks are more concentrated than seawater, and brines in salt formations have a chloride concentration on the order of 6 molal.

Canister and basket materials may continue to function for thousands of years in some disposal environments. Further investigation into the geochemical behavior of canister materials and their interaction with groundwater could determine whether the degraded basket case is needed, and how basket degradation would vary for different canister and disposal overpack designs. For example, the basket used in the NAC TSC-24 canisters evaluated includes 0.5-in.-thick stainless steel spacer discs, and aluminum heat transfer discs that maintain assembly-to-assembly spacing. These discs would need to degrade faster than the fuel assemblies for the degraded basket configuration to develop.

Calculations for the Holtec MPC-32 system (Fig. 7)


Fig. 7. Reactivity vs. time calculations for MPC-32 canisters, and degraded cases for representative canister MPC-068 (as loaded).

show that when actinide and fission product burnup credit is taken in conjunction with canister-specific loading, calculated  $k_{eff}$  values range from 0.80 to 0.88 for the 26 casks evaluated, when flooded with pure water. For a representative canister (MPC-068), absorber loss and basket degradation resulted in reactivity increases on the order of +0.12 and +0.20 ( $\Delta k_{eff}$ ), respectively.

Discharged burnable poison rod assemblies (BPRA) are actually present in these MPC-32 canisters but were not represented in the calculations. Discharged BPRAs could be credited for moderator displacement, and typically decrease  $k_{eff}$  by -0.02 to -0.03 ( $\Delta k_{eff}$ ) or more. With burnup credit, canister-specific loading, and moderator displacement credit for discharged BPRAs, all of the MPC-32 canisters evaluated would be subcritical for the absorber loss case. For the basket degradation case, reactivity increased significantly for all canisters, and the effect was much greater than the decrease available from burnup credit and canister-specific loading. For the basket degradation case, flooding with 1-molal NaCl decreased reactivity by approximately -0.07 ( $\Delta k_{eff}$ ), and 2-molal NaCl showed another similar decrease in reactivity.

#### TIMING AND RELATIVE COST OF DPC DISPOSAL

The TSL-CALVIN transportation-storage-logistics simulator (Nutt et al. 2012) was used to determine when DPCs loaded by the existing fleet of nuclear reactors could be sufficiently cool to meet repository emplacement thermal power limits. The simulator logic explicitly links DPC shipments to the repository from reactor sites, or from a centralized storage facility (CSF), to a thermal power limit for emplacement in the repository. All dry storage canisters and casks are assumed to be transportable either to a CSF (subject to transport cask limits) or to a repository (subject to the thermal power limit for disposal). For this analysis, DPCs are assumed to include all welded dry storage canisters and bolted dry storage casks.

Forecasts of when DPCs could be cool enough for disposal were made for a range of thermal limits (Hardin et al. 2013d). For this paper, the results for the 10-kW limit are shown (Fig. 8). This limit is appropriate to represent disposal of any DPC, with either the salt concept (Hardin et al. 2012) or the hard rock (crystalline) unsaturated, unbackfilled concept (Hardin 2013). The simulation is based on a set of assumptions including the following:

• SNF will be generated at all currently operating power plants, with 20-year life extensions, and gradual increases in burnup (approaching what can be achieved with 5 percent enrichment). As power plants are decommissioned, all SNF will be put into dry storage.

• A CSF would serve as the principal surface decay storage facility for DPCs (in addition to at-reactor storage prior to shipment). The shipment of DPCs from reactor sites to a CSF would begin in 2025, at a rate of either 3,000 or 4,500 tHM per year.

• A repository would open and begin to package and emplace DPCs underground in 2048. The inventory of SNF in the CSF at that time would be 69,000 tHM or 103,500 tHM, depending on the assumed CSF receipt rate (3,000 or 4,500 tHM per year).

• Once the repository is operating, DPCs cool enough for disposal would be shipped directly from reactor sites, or from the CSF if DPCs at the reactor sites are not cool enough.

• Shipments to the CSF would continue after 2048, as needed, to transfer fuel from decommissioned plants (subject to CSF receipt rate limits).

The CSF and repository starting dates are consistent with the current high-level strategy of the DOE (DOE 2013).

The simulator tracks the amount of SNF that becomes available each year for disposal, the amount emplaced in a repository, and the status of SNF in storage at reactor sites and at a CSF. The incremental cost for storing DPCs at a CSF until they are cool enough for disposal is estimated and compared with the cost of repackaging into smaller containers for disposal. Results (Figs. 8 and 9) show that emplacement could be substantially complete by calendar year 2130 for the 10-kW thermal limit (with a few outlying, high-burnup canisters). For the salt concept, closure could soon follow, while for the hard rock (crystalline) unsaturated, unbackfilled concept, a few decades of repository ventilation would be needed before closure. For comparison, disposal schedules for other



Note: Color bars are timelines for repository emplacement of the full inventory of 140,000 tHM, at the indicated throughput levels, starting in 2048.

Fig. 8. TSL-CALVIN forecasts for dual-purpose canisters cooling to a 10-kW thermal limit in 2048 and each following year, expressed as quantity of spent nuclear fuel.



Fig. 9. Projected annual repository dual-purpose canister acceptance rates for 3,000 tHM/yr throughput limit, for various thermal limit values.

thermal-limit values are also shown (Fig. 9). An optimal disposal acceptance rate of approximately 1,700 tHM/year was calculated for the 10-kW case, to complete disposal by 2130 (Hardin et al. 2013d). In other words, repository throughput capacity of only 1,700 tHM/year could complete DPC emplacement in the same time as a 3,000-tHM/year facility.

The incremental CSF life-cycle cost of additional decay storage needed to implement the 10-kW disposal schedule was estimated to be \$5.4 billion (Hardin et al. 2013d). For comparison, the life-cycle cost of a 3,000 tHM/year repackaging facility was estimated to range from approximately \$6.5 billion to \$14.5 billion, depending on the size of the disposal canister, with smaller canisters resulting in higher cost. This repackaging cost estimate is only for canistering fuel at a CSF, and does not include disposal.

Higher disposal costs would result from the use of smaller waste packages because more disposal overpacks would be needed, along with more handling operations and larger underground facilities. For example, Kalinina and Hardin (2012) compared the disposal of 140,000 tHM in a salt repository with 4-PWR- and 12-PWRsize waste packages (or BWR equivalent) requiring 86,049 and 28,648 packages, respectively. The analysis assumed that waste would be received at the repository already in canisters appropriate for disposal. The additional 57,401 packages added more than \$30 billion to the estimated disposal cost, just for the procurement, loading, and sealing of disposal overpacks. Thus, when disposal costs are taken into account, the repackaging of SNF in DPCs into smaller containers could add on the order of \$10 billion (and possibly several times that) to the total disposal cost for commercial SNF in the United States if the option to use smaller waste packages were selected for disposal.

### **ENGINEERING FEASIBILITY**

The handling and packaging of large DPCs in surface facilities at the repository or at upstream installations are well within the state of current practice. The operations needed to transfer each DPC to a suitable disposal overpack are essentially the same as those used for initial DPC loading, storage, and transportation. Handling and packaging would be very similar for any DPC direct disposal concept, no matter where the repository is located or in what geologic host medium. Thus, there are no significant feasibility questions associated with repository operations until the waste is transported underground.

Options for surface-to-underground transport of the heavy loads associated with DPC-based waste include vertical shafts, shallow ramps with tire-mounted vehicles, and steep ramps with rail-mounted conveyance (Fairhurst 2012). Note that a complete transporter that includes the waste package, additional shielding, wheel mechanisms, and motive power could weigh 250 t or more, but a minimum configuration of waste package, shielding, and transport cart could weigh 175 t or less.

A shaft friction hoist with 175-t capacity could be built following principles tested at the Gorleben repository facility, in Germany, for 85-t capacity (Englemann et al. 1993). Alternatively, such loads could be transported in ramps at up to 10 percent grade with a rubber-tire, selfpowered transporter such as the Cometto system tested by the Swedish repository program (90-t capacity). Transport in steeper ramps (up to 45 degrees) could be engineered using a funicular system with a counterbalanced friction hoist and conveyance riding on a steel track, as is being considered for France's repository (Fairhurst 2012). Shallow ramps (with a grade of approximately 2 percent or less) can be served using more conventional rail equipment (e.g., DOE 2008). Each of these options has redundant safety features, and different considerations for safety analysis. The choice of which option to use for waste transport may be influenced by site-specific geology and local experience. All are technically feasible, although the shaft hoist or funicular could be the largest of its kind. Any underground repository would be accessed by shafts for construction, men and materials, utilities, ventilation, and other functions except possibly for waste transport.

Handling underground presents a different set of engineering challenges. The disposal concepts described here use in-drift emplacement, whereby waste packages would be placed on the floor in open drifts (or onto low pedestals). Rubber-tire transporters could deliver waste packages from the surface all the way to emplacement drifts, providing shielding for all operations except final emplacement, which could be done by remote control. These transporters are hydraulically driven and can kneel, thereby accommodating travel over rough surfaces, and simple loading/unloading.

Other transport options might require an underground transfer station, and specialized equipment for underground transport and emplacement. One such railmounted machine for vertical borehole emplacement (including package up-ending) was demonstrated at full scale in Sweden (Mützel et al. 2001). The machine developed for this test included many components that were standard in other applications, but improvements in the areas of measurement and control were identified as being needed. Machines for in-drift emplacement could be simpler with potentially less demanding tolerances. Engineering development and testing for underground handling and emplacement, as well as licensing to verify safety, would be needed, but technical feasibility is a relatively minor issue.

### Preliminary Results

Preliminary results indicate that DPC direct disposal could be technically feasible, at least for certain disposal concepts. Preliminary analysis also suggests that cost savings might be realized compared to repackaging DPCs, although further analysis is needed. The results can be summarized as follows:

• *Disposal Concepts*—DPC direct disposal could be implemented in a range of geologic settings, while meeting thermal limits and with a reasonable expectation of needed stability of mined openings. Disposal options range from the salt concept, to disposal in argillaceous or crystalline rock. All options could use in-drift emplacement to simplify the handling of large, heavy packages. Low-permeability backfill could be used for all concepts, although unbackfilled variants could be viable depending on site-specific characteristics of the host medium and the geologic setting. The need to backfill at closure could be accommodated in the repository design.

• *Thermal Management*—The salt concept and hard rock (crystalline) unsaturated, unbackfilled concept described here could readily meet peak temperature targets because both types of media can tolerate temperatures of 200 °C (or higher), and have relatively high thermal conductivity. The salt concept could be backfilled immediately after emplacement, while openings in hard rock could be backfilled at closure after a few decades of repository ventilation. Hard rock (i.e., crystalline) formations exist that could have excellent long-term stability.

Argillaceous (containing clay) media could have lower temperature limits in order to limit alteration of the clay, and such media have relatively low thermal conductivity. Accordingly, longer duration of surface decay storage and repository ventilation, or larger repository layouts, could be needed. Argillaceous media typically exhibit less longterm stability than hard rock, and this could be important for a repository with more than 100 km of drifts.

• Safety—Important factors that could help to ensure post-closure disposal safety include 1) diffusioncontrolled transport in the engineered barrier system and/ or the natural barrier system, 2) near-field transport properties that are relatively insensitive to temperature, 3) limited radionuclide transport in backfill and the host rock (particularly in the far field), and 4) attributes that limit potential post-closure criticality. These general factors would benefit any geologic repository. When prospective repository sites are identified, site-specific data will support more resolution of differences in post-closure safety associated with DPC direct disposal.

• Engineering Feasibility—Waste handling and transportation for DPC direct disposal would be essentially the same as current practice, with no associated engineering feasibility questions until the DPC-based waste packages are to be transported underground. Several options exist for surface-to-underground waste package transport in shafts or ramps, including shaft hoists, funiculars, and tiremounted or rail-mounted ramp transporters. These transport options are technically feasible, although some systems would be the largest of their kind. The choice would likely depend on site-specific geology and local experience. Additional engineering would be needed to develop systems for underground transport and emplacement, but such systems have been demonstrated for the Swedish repository concept using existing technology.

• *Criticality*—Control of criticality for at least 10,000 years after disposal is an important factor in the case for DPC direct disposal. Preliminary analysis indicates that many, although not all, existing DPCs would be subcritical even if chemically and mechanically degraded in the disposal environment. An additional reactivity margin is available for many existing DPCs by using as-loaded assembly information and updated burnup credit. With further analysis, existing DPCs could be categorized according to the potential for criticality in different disposal environments (i.e., with different groundwater availability and composition).

• Acceptance—Once technical feasibility, safety, and cost have been evaluated, it is important to communicate analysis findings, collaborate with industry, discuss safety with regulatory bodies, and promote reviews by external stakeholders. The ongoing study—for which preliminary results are described here—represents the beginning of that process.

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### Acknowledgments

The authors wish to thank the additional contributors, reviewers, and administrative staff who assisted with the study reported here, including Tom Cotton, Bob Jubin, Michael Voegele, Tom Severynse, Jim Blink, Harris Greenberg, and Laura Connolly. This paper is approved for unclassified, unlimited release (SAND2013-6854J). Sandia is a multiprogram laboratory operated by Sandia Corporation, a Lockheed Martin Company, for the United States Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration under Contract DE-AC04-94AL85000.

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## **Nuclear Fuel and Waste Management**



### Predicting Stress Corrosion Cracking in the Canisters of Used Nuclear Fuel Dry Cask Storage Systems

A research initiative at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's H. H. Uhlig Corrosion Laboratory aims to determine the role of stress corrosion cracking in predicting the life span of dry cask storage canisters.

### By Sara Ferry, Ronald Ballinger, Isabel Crystal, Dominic Solis, and Bradley Black

s 2014 begins, the ultimate fate of used nuclear fuel in the United States remains uncertain. For the foreseeable future, used nuclear fuel will remain in spent fuel pools and in dry cask storage. The number of loaded dry storage casks in the United States is increasing each year. According to *StoreFUEL*, a total of 1130 loaded casks as of 2009 grew to a total of 1570 casks in 2012 across 45 independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) sites [1-2].

It is difficult to predict the total length of time these dry cask storage systems will remain at the ISFSI sites, where they are exposed to variable weather and local, in-canister environments. It is even more difficult to predict when a decision on the final destination of used nuclear fuel will be made and implemented. The possibility that used fuel may remain in aboveground storage for decades, or even up to a century, is increasingly likely.

The general design of a dry cask storage system consists of a stainless steel canister that contains spent fuel assemblies that have been removed from wet storage and dried. This canister is then bolted or welded shut before being enclosed in a thick concrete overpack. These sturdy canister-and-overpack systems were designed to withstand all manner of natural and man-made disasters, but they were also intended only as interim storage for a period of approximately 20 years. It was not anticipated that the used fuel might remain at ISFSI sites for periods that may now approach 100 years.

It is known that the dry cask storage systems can withstand earthquakes, aircraft impacts, and flooding. The dry storage facility at the Fukushima Daiichi site withstood not only the earthquake but also the subsequent tsunami with no damage. But how well can the dry storage canisters weather the slower, less dramatic processes of environmental degradation? This article will detail a description of the MIT H. H. Uhlig Corrosion Laboratory's research initiative, funded by the Department of Energy's Nuclear Engineering University Program to understand the likelihood of one of the key degradation processes in particular: stress corrosion cracking (SCC) in the stainless



Fig. 1. Diagram showing the three criteria that must exist for stress corrosion cracking (SCC) to occur.

steel canisters that contain the used nuclear fuel assemblies [3].

Anyone who has read about SCC in the past is likely to be familiar with the diagram in Fig. 1. For SCC to occur, three criteria must be met: An aggressive (usually aqueous) environment must exist, the material in question must be susceptible to SCC in that specific environment, and tensile stress (either residual in the material or applied) must be present at a sufficient "threshold" level [4]. This complicated phenomenon is difficult to predict because of the complex, nonlinear interplay among these three factors. Change the material composition slightly, and the same environment that once caused SCC no longer poses a threat. Vary the chemistry of the environment, and suddenly, a material that was performing admirably begins to suffer pitting and cracking that leads to failure. Insofar as used nuclear fuel storage at ISFSI sites is concerned, the question then becomes: Given the canister material, the stresses therein, and the environment without, what is the possibility—or, more appropriately, the probability-that SCC could damage the stainless steel



Fig. 2. U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission map of ISFSI sites in the United States [5].

canisters in a dry cask storage system?

The canisters used in U.S. dry cask storage systems are fabricated of welded austenitic stainless steels, namely, the Type 304/304L and Type 316/316L grades. These grades of stainless steel—in particular, Type 304/304L—are known to be susceptible to pitting and transgranular SCC if they are exposed to a chloride-containing aqueous environment [4]. Therefore, a susceptible material is present, and the first criterion for SCC is met.

What of the aggressive environment, however? The term "dry cask storage" seems to eliminate entirely the possibility of an aqueous environment. But consider a typical dry cask storage system design: The stainless steel canister is inside a vented concrete overpack. The vent openings are a conduit between the canister and the outside environment, allowing for convective cooling of the canister surface. Therefore, given the right combination of canister surface temperature, humidity, and air temperature at the ISFSI site, the development of aqueous films on the outer canister wall is not an impossibility.

Of course, pure water is not expected to be problematic with regard to SCC in these steel grades, and the canister surface temperature is expected to remain quite high during storage, making condensation unlikely in the first place. But the presence of chlorides in an aqueous film on the canister surface, which would satisfy the second criterion for SCC, cannot be discounted. Maps of ISFSI sites in the United States (Fig. 2) reveal that most dry cask storage is located in lakeside or in coastal regions, where a high salt content in the air is expected. Salt can be carried through the vents in the concrete overpacks, where it can settle on the canister surface. Sodium, calcium, and magnesium salts are likely to be present.

Given the right temperature and humidity conditions in the gap between the canister and concrete overpack, these salts can deliquesce following deposition on the canister surface. During the deliquescence process, the deposited salts absorb moisture from the air until a highly saturated chloride-containing solution is formed on that surface [6]. These highly saturated salt solutions can be sustained at temperatures above 100 °C. As time progresses, two things happen: The canister surface temperature drops due to a decrease in the level of decay heat from the fuel, and the buildup of salts and other airborne particulates on the canister surface is expected to increase. The possibility that a highly concentrated film of chloride solution will develop on the canister surface increases as the dry cask storage system ages.

Criterion three, the presence of a tensile stress at sufficient levels, is the last requirement for SCC to be possible. Consider the welds used to construct the steel canister. A common configuration involves a circumferential weld at the center of the canister, and two axial welds opposite each other in each half of the canister. In Fig. 3, a modified image of a Holtec HI-STORM canister, the canister welds are highlighted in red [7,8].

The welding process results in high thermal gradients as melting and solidification occur, causing thermal expansion and contraction of the steel. Residual stresses are consequently left behind in the canister welds and in the heat-affected zone adjacent to the welds (where local material chemistry and structure may also be altered significantly). In other applications, these residual stresses are relieved by subjecting the weld material to a postweld heat treatment (PWHT), but such a treatment can result in the sensitization of austenitic stainless steel grades such as Type 304/304L and Type 316/316L. Sensitization occurs when the steel is held for long periods at the temperatures required for successful stress relief, and precipitation of chromium carbides at the grain boundaries occurs. This precipitation causes a depletion of chromium in the region adjacent to the grain boundaries, potentially leaving the steel susceptible to intergranular corrosion attack. For this reason, PWHTs are typically avoided during canister fabrication when using stainless steels in order to circumvent intergranular corrosion degradation processes. The tradeoff of this design decision is that high residual stresses remain in the canister welds and in the adjacent heat-affected zones, and increase the likelihood of transgranular SCC. The welds and heat-affected zones are expected to be



Fig. 3. A Holtec HI-STORM canister system, with the canister welds highlighted in red. [7,8]

the part of the canister most likely to experience SCC damage, since local tensile stresses are highest in those regions.

Therefore, none of the three criteria for SCC in the canisters—susceptible material, aggressive environment, and tensile stress—can be ruled out, which means that SCC cannot be ruled out either. Previous experimental research on canister materials has also indicated that the possibility of SCC should be investigated further. For example, Mayuzumi, Tani, and Arai studied dry storage canister materials and concluded that they were unlikely to survive beyond 30 years [9]. Kosaki studied Type 304 steel in accelerated laboratory and environmental conditions and concluded that SCC penetration of an 11-mm-thick can-



Fig. 4. The as-received flat-plate welds, November 2013. A section of the flat-plate weld (inset) was cut for microstructural analysis from the end of each weld.





Fig. 5. Results of photographing the weld microstructure. Clockwise from top left: the full weld, as visible to the unaided eye following polishing and etching; a composite of half the fusion line between the weld and bulk material; the juncture between the two "vees" of the weld.

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ister wall, which is close to the thickness typical of the canisters used in the United States, would occur in as little as 25 years when subjected to stress and a salt-containing environment [10].

The crux of this research initiative is this. Can a probabilistic mathematical model be developed that describes the likelihood of SCC in a canister, when it will initiate, and how it will propagate? Furthermore, can the uncertainty in this model be quantified to make it truly useful for canister life prediction?

### **OBTAINING THE WELD MATERIAL**

One of the key variables in the degradation process is the level of tensile stress present. In fact, if the stress can be reduced sufficiently, SCC can be effectively eliminated as an issue. And so, quantifying the residual stress distribution in the welds is of key importance. As a result, a main focus of the project is the quantification of these stresses.

The project team first explored the feasibility of having representative canister shells made by the three major canister vendors in the United States: Holtec International, NAC International, and Ranor Inc. (which fabricated canisters for Transnuclear).

A consideration of the cost of these shells, combined with the time and money that would be needed to experiment on each canister mock-up, quickly resulted in the realization that we would have to narrow our scope. The decision was made to focus the experiments on just one type of weld: flat-plate welds, ordered from a single vendor, that would be fabricated using the same material and welding procedures used by the chosen vendor in the fabrication of actual canisters. These welds were received in November 2013. The project's goal became the development of a predictive model for SCC that used these welds as a reference. Ideally, this model would be adaptable to canisters that utilized different weld geometries. If the residual stress distribution is critical to life prediction in this weld, it is likely important for all types of canisters.

The as-received welds are shown in Fig. 4. The bulk material is Type 304 stainless steel, and the weld is Type 308. The  $6 \times 4$ -ft (1.83  $\times$  1.22-m) plate is 5/8-in. (1.59-cm) thick and contains two welds that run its length in order to maximize the amount of experimental material available for use. They are far enough apart that neither weld influenced the other during the fabrication of the plate.

To begin, a section of the weld was cut from the plate for microstructural analysis. Weld samples were mechanically polished and etched to reveal the microstructure (Fig. 5).

### UNDERSTANDING RESIDUAL STRESSES IN THE CANISTER WELDS

Understanding the residual stress profile in and around canister welds is a key step toward predicting SCC behavior. First, as discussed earlier, the presence of a certain threshold level of tensile stress is required for SCC to occur. There is some controversy in the materials community as to the existence of an actual threshold, but there is general agreement that at some point, SCC ceases to be an is-



Fig. 6. Prediction of hoop stress in a typical canister wall [6].

sue as a practical matter. Knowing whether, and where, this threshold stress level is reached is a necessary initial step toward predicting the likelihood of SCC. Second, the three-dimensional residual stress profile will affect the way that SCC, once initiated, will proceed. An increase in tensile stress speeds up crack initiation time, and it will also increase crack propagation rate. Of course, even welds that are nominally "identical" are never truly exact copies of each other. Thus, residual stresses—and the likelihood and behavior of SCC—will vary throughout the welds of an individual canister, and across different canisters. Understanding the extent of this variation, therefore, is also an important aspect of predicting SCC in different canisters.

The next phase of experimentation with the flat-plate welds shown in Fig. 4 will involve measuring their residual stress profiles. While there are some finite element analysis studies that predict residual stresses in the canisters as a result of welding, there is very little information available that involves direct measurement of the residual stresses in canister welds.

In the beginning of this project, before any weld material had been obtained, an attempt was made to begin predicting the stresses that might be observed in a "prototypical" canister weld. Data were collected from published measurements of residual stresses in stainless steel welded pipes. The project then extrapolated these residual stress profiles from the literature to the residual stress profile that might be observed in a geometry selected to represent an average used nuclear fuel canister. These predictions are shown in Fig. 6 and represent three predictions: the best estimate, and then two modifications to the best estimate—one assuming that stresses were more tensile than predicted, and one assuming that the stresses always remained just above the cracking threshold, which was estimated as 4 MPa√m [6]. The best estimate predicted compressive hoop stress at the canister wall's midpoint.

It should be stressed that this technique was far from exact, but it raised a possibility that had not been previously considered: that it might be found that there was always a point at which the stresses became compressive. Would this mean that even if a crack initiated, it would always be stopped before it could propagate all the way through the wall? The need for a definitive residual stress measurement became more pressing. In addition, since the stress state is three-dimensional, it is important to consider the complete residual stress distribution and its uncertainty.

There are multiple methods for measuring residual stresses in a metal. The more common ones, however, were ruled out for use in this project. X-ray diffraction was eliminated because of the need to understand residual



Fig. 7. This schematic shows where neutron diffraction measurements might be taken in a weld sample. The dashed diagonal lines in the center approximate the location of the "double-vee" weld. The black ellipses show proposed measurement locations. The highest resolutions are required in and near the weld, so measurement points are concentrated there.

stresses all the way through the weld sample, and X-ray diffraction measures only surface residual stress. Deephole drilling was eliminated as an option because the resolution of the results it provides was too coarse for the purposes of the project due to the thin plate thickness. The two other methods that were settled on were neutron diffraction and the contour method.

Neutron diffraction operates on the same basic principle as X-ray diffraction. The processes that cause residual stress—here, constrained thermal expansion and contraction during welding—distort the regularly spaced, stressfree lattice of the original material. By observing the diffraction behavior of particles or radiation that are scattered from the stressed material, the location-specific distortions in the lattice spacing of this material can be measured. From these measurements, the corresponding stress profile can be determined. An advantage of neutron diffraction is that it can measure residual stress in three dimensions up to depths of several centimeters, making it ideal for measuring residual stresses in the 5/8-in.-thick flat-plate welds.

Currently, the project team is in the process of planning neutron diffraction measurements of the weld at a neutron beam user facility. The plan is to work with researchers who have years of expertise in measuring stresses in stainless steel welds and to carry out two tests with their assistance. In the first, residual stresses will be determined in detail in a weld sample. Measurements will be taken at three depths in a weld sample and will be concentrated in the weld and material immediately adjacent to the weld, where a highly resolved stress distribution is of the most interest. Figure 7 shows one possible scheme for measurement locations in a weld sample.

In the second test, "spot" measurements will be performed at regular intervals along approximately 1.2 m of weld material. In an ideal weld, the residual stress profile through the wall would be absolutely identical at every point along the weld's length. The goal of these spot measurements will be to quantify the extent of stress variation in an individual weld, as this will be an important source of uncertainty in the predictive model for SCC.

Using the contour method, a sample is sectioned in half, allowing the residual stresses to relax and resulting in deformation at the cut surface [9]. The extent of the deformation at each location on the surface can be mapped back to the residual stress that must have existed at that location prior to cutting. The contour method yields a twodimensional map of residual stresses normal to the cutting plane and provides higher-resolution results than neutron diffraction [10]. Ideally, at least one of the samples used in the contour method measurements will have been used previously for neutron diffraction-based measurements. This will provide a direct comparison of the results achieved by both methods.

### **OBTAINING STRESS CORROSION CRACKING DATA**

Currently, exposure tests utilizing the prototypic weld material are being planned. Environmental chambers will be used to expose samples to humidity and a salt-air environment. Exposure tests that mimic real-world conditions, however, pose a particular challenge. Corrosion under these conditions occurs very slowly, and the data to be collected—on pit initiation time, pit growth rates, crack initiation time, and crack growth rates—would not be available within the timescale of this project. Therefore, it is likely that these tests will be artificially accelerated, either by increasing the aggressiveness of the environment or by applying an external stress load to the weld samples, or both. Corrosion data can then be used to refine a model.

Data already available in the literature for SCC experiments in stainless steels are being collected and organized in a large data library. These data compare the parameters that can affect SCC in canister material to indicators of SCC damage. For example, the accompanying table illustrates a few of the categories of interest to the project. The collected data show how the SCC damage indicators listed in the right column are changed when an experimental input (examples are given in the three leftmost columns) is varied.

Among the objectives of the data collection effort are the following:

• *Basic validation of the predictive model.* When a parameter—such as chemistry, temperature, or stress—is varied, the model should predict a change in SCC behavior that is generally consistent with the experimental results found in the literature.

• Use in the planning of in-lab corrosion experiments. The plan is to identify experimental gaps in the literature for understanding SCC in steels, particularly as they relate to the conditions of interest to potential canister degradation. This will help narrow down the experiments that must be conducted as part of this project in order to sufficiently develop the predictive model without "reinventing the wheel."

Changes in SCC Damage Indicators with Variations in Experimental Input			
Residual Stress + Strain	Chemistry + Environment	Crack Tip Effects	SCC Damage Indicators
Strain rate	Potential	Crack tip chemistry	Crack density
Applied stress	pН	Bulk chemistry	Crack growth rate
Cold work	Chloride concentration	Film composition and film mechanical properties	Area covered by SCC or corrosion damage
Weld type	Temperature	Stress at crack tip	Time to pit initiation
Material	Humidity	Strain rate at crack tip	Time to crack initiation
Time of load application	Material		Time to material fracture
Residual stress profile	Concentration of other relevant species		

### **DEVELOPING A PREDICTIVE MODEL**

The ultimate goal of the project is to develop a probabilistic model that can be used to predict the occurrence and behavior of SCC in canister welds. Figure 8 illustrates the three facets of model development: modeling the formation of the aggressive environment, modeling the stages of SCC, and accounting for experimental data. It is useful to think of this project as the development of two separate models: one describing the likelihood that an environment is sufficiently aggressive to cause SCC, and one describing the probability that SCC will progress once the threshold environment exists. The most difficult, but essential, part of the effort will be the combination of these



Fig. 8. This diagram illustrates the facets of the development of a probabilistic model for predicting SCC in canister welds.



Fig. 9. Turnbull developed a probabilistic model for SCC in stainless steels that describes the distribution of pits on the surface, the growth of those pits, the initiation of cracks from the pits, and crack growth [11].

two components to account for damage accumulation and its effect on the probability of failure.

Modeling the formation of the environment will be a significant challenge, which becomes clear when one considers the sheer number of parameters that influence the outcome. Dry cask storage systems cannot be treated as identical units. Among the models available, variations exist in canister-and-overpack geometries; materials and welds; and assemblies, which have different compositions, irradiation histories, and temperature profiles. The 45 ISFSI sites at which these systems are located experience a variety of weather patterns and are subjected to different environmental chemistries. Even within the same canister, the environment considered to have "threshold aggression" will vary across the canister surface, due to variations in residual stress and temperature. The environment will change over time and salt may build up, or an aqueous film may develop due to deliquescence and then disappear as the humidity of the air adjacent to the canister changes. The task becomes one of (a) modeling the time-dependent conditions at the canister surfaces, (b) establishing whether, when, and where these conditions reach "SCC threshold" values, and (c) determining the length of time the conditions remain at or above threshold.

For the purposes and timescale of this project, the scope of environment modeling will need to be narrowed significantly. For example, we may focus on (1) identifying the threshold chloride concentration in an aqueous film as a function of surface stress of Type 304 stainless steel, and (2) developing a time-dependent model for the establishment of an aqueous film and its concentration of chloride ions only as a function of relative humidity and temperature for one simplified, prototypical dry cask storage system, using weather and environment data from only a few ISFSI sites. The goal, then, would be to establish a useful framework for modeling the environment at the canister surface that can be expanded with additional research and data, rather than attempting to specifically model *all* canisters at *all* ISFSI sites.

Once the environment has been modeled, it becomes necessary to model SCC behavior itself. For this model, it will be assumed that stress corrosion cracks initiate from pits, and so, it is necessary to model pit initiation and growth first. Criteria must be established for the transition from pitting to cracking. Crack growth as a function of time must then be modeled, given the environment at the crack tip and the residual stress profile present in the weld. A crack that propagates through the canister wall constitutes a canister failure.

A comprehensive review of deterministic and probabilistic approaches to modeling SCC in stainless steels has been undertaken. This will allow for an understanding of the possible modeling approaches, the limitations and advantages of each model, and a comparison of the assumptions made in each model. A series of decisions remains to be made: Should the model incorporate deterministic elements, or should pit initiations, pit growth rates, and crack growth rates be described purely with probabilistic distributions? Or, to rephrase the same question: Should factors such as stress and temperature be incorporated as variables in the model, or encompassed in fitting parameters? Figure 9 outlines a recent, well-known example of the later approach by Turnbull [11].

Next, what assumptions about SCC behavior in canister welds should be made? A few of the common assumptions made in the SCC modeling literature include the following:

1. Pits are perfectly hemispherical.

2. Cracks initiate at the pit base and grow normal to the surface.

3. Pit growth rates (PGR) and crack growth rates (CGR) can be expressed as functions of stress.

4. Crack initiation occurs at the point where PGR = CGR [11-12].

Experimental evidence to contradict all four assumptions exists, but making simplifying assumptions such as these will be a necessary step in model construction.

Finally, the model must account for experiments—both those conducted in-lab and those from the literature whose results were collected for the data library. The model's predictions should be consistent with the trends observed in data from SCC experiments. The data will also allow us to identify sources of uncertainty (with stress variation in a weld being one example cited here), and to quantify uncertainty in the model.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

Investigating the possibility of SCC in the canisters of used nuclear fuel dry storage systems is of significant current interest to the nuclear engineering community. Dry cask storage was originally intended as a temporary storage solution at sites whose wet-storage capacity had been reached while preparations for transferal of all used nuclear fuel to an ultimate storage site were under way. As it stands today, however, ISFSIs are becoming a longterm, rather than a temporary, storage solution. Until the ultimate fate of used nuclear fuel in the United States is decided, they are the storage solution. The expected lifetime of dry cask storage systems will exceed their original design lifetime. It was never expected that dry storage casks would be stored at ISFSI sites for so long that outer canister surface temperatures would drop to levels that could support a deliquesced salt film, or long enough for such a film to possibly develop and to yield SCC damage.

This research initiative aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the probability of failure resulting from SCC as a function of time?

2. What is the uncertainty in this prediction?

The intent is that this research will provide the nuclear industry with guidance as to whether preventive measures must be taken to preclude SCC in the canisters, and to provide a robust initial framework for understanding and modeling SCC behavior in the canisters that can be expanded and improved by future research endeavors.



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Sara Ferry is a doctoral candidate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Ronald Ballinger is a professor at MIT and principal investigator; Isabel Crystal and Dominic Solis are undergraduate research associates at MIT; and Bradley Black was an MIT master's student who was involved in this project and whose master's thesis was on some of the work presented here. Acknowledgment is also made to the contributions of Sebastien Tesseyre—a research scientist at the Idaho National Laboratory—to the research presented in this article. For additional information, contact Ferry at seferry@gmail.com.

The MIT H. H. Uhlig Corrosion Laboratory's research initiative is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy's Nuclear Engineering University Program under DOE NEUP Award Number DE-AC07-051D14517.

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Fig. 1. Location and quantity of discharged commercial spent nuclear fuel (CSNF) at nuclear power plant sites in the United States as of 2013 (excludes gas-cooled reactor CSNF, as the quantity in tHM is small in comparison to PWR and BWR CSNF inventories).

# Characteristics of Commercial Spent Nuclear Fuel: Distributed, Diverse, and Changing with Time

Understanding the current

and future characteristics

of commercial spent nuclear

fuel is key to designing and

licensing appropriate systems

for its storage, transportation,

handling, and disposal.

By Joshua Peterson and John Wagner

The domestic inventory of discharged commercial spent nuclear fuel (CSNF) has been and continues to be managed safely and securely. Maintaining a strong technical basis for the safe and secure storage, transportation, and disposition of CSNF is essential for the long-term sustainability of nuclear power generation in the United States. Although the Department of Energy is responsible for the ultimate disposition of CSNF, at present, the nation's long-term nuclear waste management strategy is uncertain. In the meantime, CSNF will continue to be stored at the electricity-generating reactor sites in spent fuel pools and dry storage casks.

Regardless of the various long-term strategy options, it is reasonable to expect that some portion of CSNF inventory will remain in storage for decades, followed by transportation to either an interim storage facility or a geologic repository, and subsequent acceptance and handling for ultimate disposal. The planning, preparation, and execution of the various management and disposition operations will span several decades—possibly more than a century and will necessitate a firm understanding of the current and future characteristics of CSNF inventory relevant to the effective design and licensing of storage, transportation, handling, and disposal systems and facilities. In recognition of this need, efforts are under way to develop, document, and maintain this information, which is being used to evaluate fuel cycle options in general and management and disposal options in particular. This article provides an overview of the key characteristics of the domestic CSNF inventory relevant to its management and disposition.

The current inventory of CSNF is distributed, diverse, and changing with time. Through 2013, there were approximately 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal (tHM) of CSNF, which corresponds to approximately 104,000 pressurized water reactor and 138,000 boiling water reactor assemblies [1] and a total of approximately 23 billion curies of longlived radioactivity [2] stored at 75 sites in 33 states [3]. To put it into a more understandable perspective, if all of the CSNF assemblies were placed vertically side by side, they would fit within the boundaries of one and a half regulation-size football fields (78,000 ft<sup>2</sup>). During the past couple of decades, the inventory of CSNF has increased at a relatively steady rate of approximately 2,000 tHM per year [3].

CSNF assemblies vary in their design and discharge conditions and are composed of a range of actinides and fission products that can have a significant impact on the heat, activity, and reactivity of the assemblies. The diversity of types, characteristics, storage locations, and storage conditions of the current inventory of CSNF presents a variety of challenges that influence the approach to managing its safety, security, and cost, as well as disposition options.

### DISTRIBUTED

Commercial nuclear power plants have been operating in the United States since 1957,<sup>1</sup> and there are currently

100 operating nuclear power plants. Figure 1 shows the location and quantity of CSNF in the United States. The wide distribution of the nuclear power plants throughout the nation adds a layer of complexity to CSNF management in technical areas such as security, storage, transportation, and disposition.

Spent nuclear fuel from these plants is stored on-site in spent fuel pools and at independent spent fuel storage installations (ISFSI). ISFSIs are in operation at the majority of reactor sites, including 11 sites in eight states that no longer have operating reactors. A variety of dry storage systems have been designed, licensed, and used, but the majority of CSNF assemblies in dry storage are in welded-metal canisters within horizon-

<sup>1</sup> Note that the CSNF from the first commercial nuclear power plant, the Shippingport Atomic Power Station, is now classified as DOE-owned fuel.

<sup>2</sup> The transportation, aging, and disposal (TAD) canisters that were planned for use in a volcanic tuff repository held 21 PWR assemblies or 44 BWR assemblies. [4]

tal or vertical concrete storage modules or "overpacks." The main difference between the dry storage canisters for PWR and BWR fuel assemblies is the number of fuel assemblies that are stored within each canister. PWR dry storage canisters are certified to contain 24 to 40 assemblies, whereas BWR dry storage canisters can contain between 56 and 89 assemblies.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 72 percent (about 50,000 tHM) of the total mass of CSNF is stored in spent fuel pools, and the remaining 28 percent (about 20,000 tHM) is in dry storage (Fig. 2) [1]. These proportions, however, will slowly change (see Fig. 3) as most spent fuel pools are at or near their capacity. The growing inventory of fuel in dry storage canisters presents a variety of challenges associated with CSNF management. For example, if a different container is required for disposal, then the fuel will have to be repackaged, thereby increasing the cost of disposal.



Fig. 2. Distribution of CSNF inventory in wet and dry storage (from [1]) extrapolated to 2013.



Fig. 3. Historical and projected CSNF discharges based on actual discharge data as reported in [5] and projected discharges, assuming 20-year license renewals for all operating plants.



Fig. 4. Physical characteristics and components of a typical PWR fuel assembly.



Fig. 5. Physical characteristics and components of a typical BWR fuel assembly.

<sup>52</sup> Radwaste Solutions January–March 2014



Fig. 6. Distribution of assembly classes by total mass in the CSNF inventory as of 2002. [5]

### Diverse

Nearly all PWR CSNF is composed of uranium dioxide  $(UO_2)^3$  ceramic pellets inserted into Zircaloy cladding tubes that are bound together by a grid assembly (Fig. 4). Although new cladding materials are being developed and a small fraction of the older CSNF assemblies used SS304H, the predominant cladding materials are Zircaloy-4 and ZIR-LO.<sup>4</sup> PWRs typically have used fuel assemblies arranged in 14×14, 15×15, 16×16, and 17×17 arrays of fuel pins, as well as in some asymmetrical configurations. Additional components of a PWR fuel assembly include a top nozzle, control rod guide thimble tubes, and a bottom nozzle.

BWR fuel assemblies are also composed of  $UO_2$  fuel pellets surrounded by Zircaloy cladding (Fig. 5). The cladding material for BWR fuel is typically Zircaloy-2; SS348H was used in older assembly designs. Unlike the PWR fuel assembly, the BWR fuel assembly has an outer sheath, referred to as the fuel channel, which is used to control the flow of water

<sup>3</sup> A small number of PWR and BWR assemblies contain a mixture of uranium and plutonium dioxide, referred to as mixed-oxide fuel.

<sup>4</sup> ZIRLO is a proprietary Zircaloy alloy developed by Westinghouse. through the assembly. BWR fuel assemblies are arranged in 6×6, 7×7, 8×8, 9×9, 10×10, and 11×11 arrays of fuel pins and a range of lattice variations, such as water holes and partlength rods. Additional components of the BWR fuel assembly include plenum springs, expansion springs, water rods, upper and lower tie plates, a nose piece, and the bar handle.

The different reactor types, evolutions in fuel assembly designs, and reactor operating conditions have resulted in considerable variations in the characteristics (e.g., assembly and cladding materials, initial enrichment, discharge burnup, burnable poison types, and irradiation exposure conditions) of the U.S. CSNF inventory. These variations are evident in that CSNF assemblies have been categorized [5] by physical configuration into 22 classes, 16 for PWR fuel and 6 for BWR fuel. Within each class, assembly types are of a similar size. The significant variations in the current inventory are illustrated in Fig. 6, which shows the distribution of the assembly classes. These variations present a variety of challenges for CSNF management (e.g., demonstrating compliance with storage, transportation, and disposal regulatory criteria for all the variations present in the current CSNF





Fig. 7. Assembly-average initial enrichment as a function of time. [2]



Fig. 8. Assembly-average discharge burnup as a function of time. [2]



Fig. 9. Burnup as a function of enrichment for CSNF assemblies. [5]

inventory).

The distribution in the discharged CSNF inventory reflects the evolution of nuclear reactors and fuel assembly designs during the first approximately 50 years of nuclear power plant operation. An examination of discharges in recent years indicates that the variability in discharged fuel assemblies has decreased over time. For example, Fig. 7 shows how assembly-average enrichment has increased across the U.S. commercial reactor fleet and is approaching the current limit of 5 wt% uranium-235; Fig. 8 shows how burnup values have been increasing over time; and Fig. 9 shows that burnup values will ultimately be restricted by the limit on initial fuel enrichments due to the linear relationship between burnup and enrichment.<sup>5</sup> Higher burnup and enrichments have implications for all components of CSNF management, including wet and dry storage (e.g., thermal and criticality safety), transportation (e.g., thermal, dose rates, criticality safety, and fuel integrity), and disposal (e.g., thermal, criticality, emplacement dose rates, and release rates) [6].

Looking forward, less diversity in fuel assembly designs is expected as designs approach the current limit of 5 wt% U-235 for initial enrichment. In addition, discharge burnup values are becoming more uniform as they approach their upper limits, and many of the reactor-specific assembly designs are no longer being used. Also, a review of new PWR reactor designs for which combined construction and operating license applications have been submitted [7]-that is, the AP1000, the U.S. EPR, and the U.S. APWR-indicates that all of these reactor designs will use fuel with the same assembly lattice size (i.e.,  $17 \times 17$ ). This further supports the expectation that CSNF discharges in future decades will likely have more uniform characteristics than past or current CSNF discharges.

### **CHANGING WITH TIME**

Initially, nuclear fuel is composed of uranium consisting of 95–99.3 wt% U-238 and 0.7–5 wt% U-235. As the fuel fissions within the reactor, fission products, along with plutonium and minor actinides, are produced. After the fuel is discharged from the reactor, the majority of the CSNF is still uranium, with only a small portion composed of fission products, plutonium, and minor actinides (Fig. 10).

Due to radioactive decay, the isotopic compositions of discharged CSNF change with time, causing fluctuations in reactivity along with a reduction in activity and thermal output. Relative to reactivity, CSNF increases in reactivity for a short period of time after reactor discharge because of the decay of short-lived fission product absorbers, with the peak occurring at approximately 100 hours after discharge. After that, reactivity de-

<sup>5</sup> Note that if the current commercial reactor-licensing limit of 5.0 wt% U-235 on fuel enrichment were increased in the future, fuel design variations would be implemented to utilize higher enrichments and discharge burnup values would increase.



Fig. 10. Discharge isotopic composition (by mass) of a Westinghouse 17×17 assembly with initial enrichment of 4.5 wt% that has accumulated 45 GWd/tHM burnup.

creases continuously with time, out to approximately 100 years, at which time it begins to increase again. The reactivity continues to increase until a second peak at around 30,000 years (caused by the decay of two major absorbers, americium-241 and plutonium-240), after which time it begins decreasing out to approximately 100,000 years [8].

The decreased activity of CSNF many decades after discharge can be a safeguards concern when or if the dose rate from the CSNF decreases to the point that it is no longer considered "self-protecting." Qualitatively, a CSNF assembly could be said to be self-protecting if the radiation dose rates near the assembly were high enough



Fig. 11. The number of discharged fuel assemblies over time.

to deter a person from attempting to handle the unshielded assembly. Within the NRC regulations in 10 CFR Part 73, self-protection is attributed to CSNF, "which is not readily separable from other radioactive material and which has a total external radiation dose rate in excess of 100 rems per hour at a distance of 3 feet from any accessible surface without intervening shielding."

Studies have shown that the dose rate for typical discharged CSNF will fall below the regulatory definition of self-protection (100 rem/h at 3 ft) between 70 and 120 years after reactor discharge [9]. Therefore, some of the CSNF assemblies may no longer be self-protecting as early as 30 years from now (Fig. 11), and at that point, additional safeguard and security measures may be needed for

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Fig. 12. Decay heat (kW) per assembly for BWR and PWR CSNF (through 2002) as a function of time after discharge (years).

storage and transportation purposes.

The range of discharge dates (Fig. 11), along with the diversity of the fuel characteristics discussed above, results in substantial variation in the composition, activity, and decay heat of individual fuel assemblies in the CSNF inventory, which has important implications for CSNF management. To better understand the variations in the composition, activity, and decay heat of individual fuel assemblies, the RW-859 database [5] was used in conjunction with ORIGEN in the SCALE code system [10]. The RW-859 database, created by the U.S. Energy Information Administration, contains information on all U.S.



Fig. 13. Radioactivity (1 million Ci) per assembly for BWR and PWR CSNF (through 2002) as a function of time after being discharged (years).

CSNF assemblies discharged up to the year 2002 and includes information such as discharge date, burnup, initial enrichment, and assembly type. Previously generated ORIGEN cross-section libraries can be used to rapidly calculate the composition of fuel assemblies over a wide range of parameters, including enrichment, burnup, and assembly type. The information from the RW-859 database was fed into the ORIGEN computer code to calculate the discharge composition of every individual fuel assembly (numbering 160,000-plus). These results were then plotted with a data-mining tool to study the range of CSNF compositions over time. This method was applied





Fig. 14. Activity of selected isotopes (actinides) in CSNF (2048) for fuel discharged through 2002. (Note that the lighter data points correspond to the activity of the isotopes when the fuel was discharged.)

to calculate the total decay heat and activity of CSNF assemblies, along with the activities and masses of individual actinides and fission products within each assembly.

Figures 12 and 13 show the changing characteristics of decay heat and activity, and illustrate the large drop in decay heat and activity within the first five years following discharge. Decay heat and activity for the BWR assemblies is lower than those for PWR assemblies because BWR assemblies are smaller and contain less uranium. The high thermal output during the first few years following discharge is the reason CSNF is stored within spent fuel pools for several years prior to being transferred to dry cask storage. Both decay heat and activity affect storage, transportation, and disposal options, such as when CSNF can be placed into dry storage canisters and when those canisters can be transported off-site for disposal.

Figures 14 and 15 show the range of actinide and fission product activities in CSNF at the year of discharge (lighter data points) and the year 2048 (the strategic target date to open a geologic repository [11]). These fission products and actinides were chosen because they are significant in relation to the storage, transportation, and disposal of CSNF [12]. Their behavior will differ within different repository



Fig. 16. Mass of selected isotopes (actinides) in CSNF (2048) for fuel discharged through 2002. (Note that the lighter data points correspond to the mass of the isotopes when the fuel was discharged.)



Fig. 15. Activity of selected isotopes (fission products) in CSNF (2048) for fuel discharged through 2002. (Note that the lighter data points correspond to the activity of the isotopes when the fuel was discharged.)

media, and it is important to know the potential contribution to dose from individual nuclides. Some of the nuclides with higher activity such as Pu-241, cesium-137, and strontium-90 will be a major contributor to decay heat (important during storage and transportation of CSNF) [13]. Some of the less active fission products, such as iodine-129 and selenium-79 may become the major contributors to dose after emplacement within a geological repository [14].

Figures 16 and 17 show the range of actinide and fission product compositions in CSNF also at the year of discharge (lighter data points) and at the year 2048. Knowing the quantity of these isotopes within CSNF is important for calculating values such as criticality, heat, and dose, and also for examining alternative fuel cycle options for the disposition of CSNF.

One of the alternative fuel cycle options is the recycling of CSNF for use in current reactors (for example, as mixedoxide fuel) or advanced reactors (such as fast reactors). The individual plutonium isotopes found within the recycled fuel determine the quantity of the plutonium needed within a reactor. A comparative parameter that is useful for relating the reactivity worth of recycled fuel is known as Pu-239 equivalence (which is a function of the plutonium



Fig. 17. Mass of selected isotopes (fission products) in CSNF (2048) for fuel discharged through 2002. (Note that the lighter data points correspond to the mass of the isotopes when the fuel was discharged.)



Fig. 18. Pu-239 equivalence for a fast reactor as a function of burnup, discharged date, and reactor type. [16]

isotopes) [15]. Based on this parameter, all fuel with the same Pu-239 equivalence will achieve the same reactivity lifetime and discharge burnup. Figure 18 shows the Pu-239 equivalence for a fast reactor similar to the SuperPhénix reactor, in France [15]. Figure 18 also shows that higher burnup fuels have higher Pu-239 equivalence than lower burnup fuels, making it more desirous to recycle higher burnup fuels in regard to the required quantity of plutonium.

### MAINTAINING AN UNDERSTANDING

The location, diversity, and changing characteristics of commercial spent nuclear fuel can present challenges regarding the continued security and cost of its management, and can have implications for the effective design and licensing of planned interim storage, transportation, handling, and disposition systems and facilities. Therefore, it is in the national interest to develop and maintain an understanding of the current and future characteristics of CSNF.

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This article is based on a manuscript authored by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, managed by UT-Battelle LLC under Contract No. DE-AC05-00OR22725 with the U.S. Department of Energy. The U.S. government retains, and the publisher, by accepting the article for publication, acknowledges that the U.S. government retains, a nonexclusive, paid-up, irrevocable, worldwide license to publish or reproduce the published form of this manuscript, or to allow others to do so, for U.S. government purposes.

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# Debate Continues over Part 61 Regulations

t the Seventh Annual Rad-Waste Summit, held September 3–6, 2013, in Las Vegas, Nev., and sponsored by Exchange-Monitor Publications & Forums, approximately 200 representatives from the Department of Energy, state and local governments, and industry heard from officials and experts on a variety of topics, including the continued debate over the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's ongoing revision of its Part 61 low-level waste regulations.

The key focus of the debate centered on the appropriate period of compliance to be employed. The NRC staff's draft rulemaking would require LLW disposal sites to perform a site-specific analysis to prove that their site is protective of public health and safety for 10,000 years, down from a period of compliance of 20,000 years in previous drafts. The draft rulemaking also calls for a twotier analysis, with the first period covering 10,000 years and the second period covering long-lived isotopes.

During a summit panel session, some questioned the viability of having a period of compliance as long as 10,000 years. In contrast, the DOE uses a period of 1,000 years in its own LLW regulations. "In the analysis that we've done in our performance assessments, we have found the 1,000-year [period] to be really the best as far as evaluating our performance assessments, and [that] evaluation of the 10,000[-year period] because of the uncertainties that you're dealing with over that long time period—didn't really add any value as far as looking at how I would redo the design, redo the facility itself," said Jay Rhoderick, DOE associate deputy assistant secretary for Tank Waste and Nuclear Material.

Dan Shrum, senior vice president of Regulatory Affairs for EnergySolutions, said, "It's a substantial burden to demonstrate that man-made engineered features that we typically assume [to last for] 300 to 500 years [are] going to last for 10,000 years. I don't know how I show that rebar is going to last for 10,000 years."

Scott Kirk, vice president of Licensing and Corporate Compliance for Waste Control Specialists, however, offered support for the 10,000year period. "With regards to the 10,000-year period of performance, we think that's a very good feature, and we do so because the standard that was used in Texas to license our site went beyond that," he said. "The period of performance in Texas has a time of 1,000 years or peak dose, whichever is longer. It was a two-tier sort of process, where the first part of it is quantitative and the second part is qualitative. The standard we had to comply with really allowed us to evaluate the environmental performance of our site."

Larry Camper, the NRC's director of the Division of Waste Management and Environmental Protection, said the question of an appropriate period of compliance ultimately comes down to a policy question. "A period of compliance is a policy call, and watching policy being made in Washington is like sausage—you never want to see it being made, but it's great to eat," he said.

From the audience, John Greeves, a consultant with Talisman International, added, "The prism you have to look at this through is the two-tier system. It's what is safe, and what is safe is for the regulatory construct to evaluate the risks. The two-tier system does that, and a policy call, whether it be 1,000 or 10,000 [years], evaluates the risks early on."

In his remarks, Camper described a 1,000-year standard—as used by the DOE-as "inadequate." "I would suggest that 1,000 years is inadequate, and it's inadequate for several reasons," he said. "First, at 1,000 years, you're only evaluating societal change, you are not evaluating technical or engineering changes. I mean, if you design the system to last for a long time, in 1,000 years you simply don't have enough change to evaluate in a meaningful way in terms of technical and engineering modifications and adjustments." Moments later, Camper clarified his remarks, noting that he meant to say that the 1,000year standard was "insufficient" rather than "inadequate."

From the audience, though, Linda Suttora, a DOE official, disputed that the DOE measures out to only 1,000 years. "We go out to peak dose and look at it," she said. "We don't make a compliance decision directly. We don't do the 1,000 calculation and stop. We go to 1,000 and make our decisions about disposal at that point." She added, "When the error bars become so great that it doesn't make sense anymore, then we may stop our decision-making at that point."

In a statement issued after the meeting, Camper sought to further explain his remarks. "The NRC staff holds the view that 1,000 years is insufficient as a period of compliance, especially for the disposal of longlived waste such as depleted uranium that formed the basis for the ongoing site-specific performance assessment rulemaking. During the panel discussion, I used the term 'inadequate' rather than 'insufficient' but subsequently corrected my language to say 'insufficient' when addressing this point," Camper said. "I want to make it clear that I meant to say 'insufficient' and that in no way should my comment be misunderstood to imply that the DOE process under DOE Order 435.1, which utilizes 1,000 years, is inadequate. The DOE process must be viewed in its entirety, including the fact that the DOE also evaluates for longer terms and includes a significant role for long-term stewardship."

"In the final analysis," Camper added, "there is no perfect time frame to use as the period of compliance, whether it be 1,000 years, 10,000 years, 20,000 years, or some longer period of time in view of the behavior of depleted uranium over a protracted period. Any selected time frame could be subject to legitimate criticism and must be viewed in the overall context of a two-tiered system that will evaluate and document the expected long-term performance of the LLW disposal system. The NRC will make a policy determination on the assigned period of compliance for the ongoing proposed rulemaking, which must consider all of the applicable technical parameters and the various stakeholder views. As I mentioned during the panel discussion, the NRC will solicit comments on the proposed rule, and at least one public meeting will be conducted by the NRC staff to discuss the proposed rule language. Ultimately, the NRC staff will carry out the direction of the commission for the final rule language around this complicated topic."

In a separate statement issued after the meeting, the DOE defended the length of its compliance period. Candice Trummell, spokesperson for the DOE's Office of Environmental Management (EM), said in a statement, "DOE has provided formal comments to the NRC on its Part 61 rulemaking. EM is confident that its low-level radioactive waste (LLW) disposal management system has been, and continues to be, fully protective of human health and the environment."

The stakeholders who will ultimately be affected by the NRC's changes would prefer consistency between the NRC and the DOE, according to some participants at the meeting. "These rules are coming from two federal government agencies, and it would be nice if we could have some consistency there," Shrum said. Camper pointed to state regulations as a reason for a long period of compliance. "Three out of the four Agreement States, with the fourth on its way, have conducted safety assessments that are longer than 1,000 years, and so, from a policy standpoint, one can argue that something less than 1,000 years—given that all four of the states with operating disposal facilities have value evaluated longer than 1,000 years—would be a reduction in safety."





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### DOE'S EFFORTS TO SHIP U-233 TO NEVADA

Attendees at the summit also heard from the director of Nevada's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Leo Drozdoff, on the DOE's controversial efforts to ship a portion of its uranium-233 inventory from Oak Ridge National Laboratory to the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) for disposal. In response to concerns from Nevada officials, the DOE established a working group with state officials to discuss the plans for the material, known as the Consolidated Edison Uranium Solidification Project (CEUSP) material. The working group, Drozdoff said, could lead to a permanent process that would provide an additional layer of review by political and policy staff for other controversial waste slated for the NNSS. "What we are endeavoring to do is not to replace anything-from a technical standpoint things work well-but we are trying to build more of a robust policy arm," he said. "That policy arm would be able to collectively work with the local governments,

work with the citizenry at large."

Given historical tensions and communication issues with the DOE, Drozdoff said, the effort could help repair relationships and provide a path forward for the future of disposal at the NNSS. "This working group will be a culmination," he said. "We are not here to say you can't bring waste here. What we are looking for is a more complete discussion about why: Why is it that it should come here? What is unique about it? Why isn't it appropriate for on-site or commercial disposal? If we figure out a way to have a process to go through that evaluation, we will be OK."

The group will be led by Brad Crowell, the DOE's acting assistant secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, and by Michon Martin, general counsel for Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval. Heading the panel with political, rather than technical, experts reflects the nature of the debate in recent months. "It would be great if you [could] take politics out of the equation, but you can't," Drozdoff said. "Instead of being upset about that, let's just own it. Let's make the process a bit more broad and inclusive." So far, the working group "has yet to be fleshed out," Drozdoff said, adding that the complete membership and a schedule for moving forward are still unclear.

Frank Marcinowski, the DOE's deputy assistant secretary for Waste Management, emphasized that the group is just starting its work. "We are in the process of having those discussions with the state, and we look forward to continue having those discussions to see if we can move forward on this. But right now we are still in the early stages," he said.

Drozdoff said that the working group will be an opportunity to develop a way to improve communications about waste under consideration for disposal in Nevada. "It's bigger than the CEUSP material," he said. "I don't think it's every waste stream ... but we have a pretty good sense of what is a unique waste stream, and perhaps this is one we should spend a little more time on." The working group would encompass a number of different "stovepipes," Drozdoff said, including transportation, disposal, and waste review. "What this work-

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ing group is endeavoring to do is at a senior level and at a policy level to make sure that these stovepipes report to something, that there is sort of a catch-all umbrella that public policy will be factored into and be informed by the various technical arms," he said.

Drozdoff acknowledged that both sides must work on improving communications. "The state has to figure out a way to not assume the worst in every situation, whether it's issues clouded by [the] Yucca [Mountain waste repository] or the mission of EM. The state has to get to the point where it is more comfortable where it does not assume the worst every time," he said. But likewise, DOE's "structured" approach to waste disposal doesn't always sit well with local officials and citizens, he added. "They don't like being talked to. They don't like the script. They don't like 'here's the project, here's this, here's our authority to do it.' What they are looking for, part of the solution is that they are looking for a meaningful discussion," Drozdoff said. "Sometimes they feel like they want to be heard.'

### COULD DOE TANK WASTE GO TO WIPP?

At another panel session, DOE officials and nuclear experts said that the DOE could potentially save billions of dollars by disposing of some of its tank waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexmaterial that could be disposed of at WIPP were put in place because of concerns of the potential for poor performance of that facility," said Per Peterson, a professor at the University of California at Berkeley and a former member of the Obama administration's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. "Now

DOE officials and nuclear experts said that the DOE could potentially save billions of dollars by disposing of some of its tank waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant instead of at Yucca Mountain or another high-level waste repository.

ico instead of at Yucca Mountain or another high-level waste repository. But first, legal and regulatory changes would have to occur, as WIPP is currently limited to accepting only defense-related transuranic (TRU) waste. "The original constraints on we have a lot of operating experience with both the transportation and disposal, and many of the earlier concerns that were voiced have proved to not be correct. It's quite logical that given this base of experience, one could go back and evaluate the long-

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term mission of the facility."

Tank waste is considered HLW because of how it was created, even if it meets other criteria for disposal at WIPP. Classifying DOE waste by the risk it poses rather than by its source could take pressure off the DOE in a number of areas, including leaking tanks at the Hanford Site and the need for additional storage at the Savannah River Site (SRS) for vitrified waste.

"Part of the conversation has to be what costs can you avoid and still be protected," said Tank Waste and Nuclear Material's Rhoderick. For example, sending waste from some of the Hanford tanks that meet WIPP criteria could shave a year off the operating time of the Waste Treatment Plant, which is under construction at the site. "Opening up WIPP would give us opportunities to have some cost avoidance within the EM system," he said. "Right now, we have 2,300 canisters that have been produced down at Savannah River that when you put them through the criteria, they meet the current WIPP [Waste Acceptance Criteria], but they can't go there because they are high-level waste."

Talk of opening up WIPP to other forms of waste has gained traction in recent years following both the shutdown of the planned Yucca Mountain repository and increased budget pressures on the DOE's cleanup program. Examining those possibilities has been largely supported by officials from southeastern New Mexico, where WIPP is located, as part of their effort to maintain jobs in the area after the DOE wraps up TRU waste missions in the next few years. The concept has also been supported by communities at other sites eager to remove waste. Last year, SRS's Citizens Advisory Board released several recommendations urging the DOE to take a look at disposing of the site's vitrified tank waste canisters at WIPP. And in another step, the DOE announced that it is seeking to send to WIPP more than 3 million gallons of sludge waste in up to 20 tanks at the Hanford Site.

As waste continues to be vitrified at SRS, the option to send the canisters to WIPP could avoid the need to construct additional storage for tank waste canisters. "The [vitrification] facility has been working for 17 years, and we are about halfway through producing our canisters," said Bert Crapse, of the DOE's Savannah River Operations Office. "A lot of that could be disposed of at WIPP." Contractor estimates put the up-front cost for such a new storage building at \$138 million, with a lifecycle cost of up to \$180 million. The DOE is also considering building an open-air dry storage facility for the canisters instead, similar to those used at nuclear power plants, which would cut costs somewhat but is still expected to run \$80 million to \$100 million, Crapse said.

Meanwhile, Hanford tank waste faces "very serious challenges," Peterson said. "It has proven so difficult to move waste out of those tanks and get it vitrified into forms that can be stored. We now have a number of tanks that are leaking at the site, and this poses real challenges for how to manage that waste," he said. "One of the technical options that has emerged is the option of taking at least some fraction of the tank waste, and removing it from the tanks and drying it and packaging it in containers that would be compatible with disposal in a salt repository." Such a move would "reduce the burden on vitrification facilities at Hanford and the cost in the longer term." And, he added, "If initial efforts go well, the necessary legal changes could be made to support having a larger fraction disposed of in this way."

Vitrification was chosen as the option for tank waste because the characteristics of an ultimate repository were uncertain at the time, officials noted. But the properties of salt, which is generally elastic and selfsealing, make vitrification unnecessary. "It is important to note that if you have the option to place these materials into a salt repository like WIPP, then there would be no logic to putting in additional barriers in terms of the waste form," Peterson said, adding, "If the technical path were put in place where a salt repository does become the disposal path for these materials, then you could save an enormous amount of money and time in terms of processing."

This report was prepared by the editorial staff of ExchangeMonitor Publications. For additional information, contact Mike Nartker, editor-in-chief, at <u>nartker@exchangemonitor.com</u>.

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A report from the 25th Annual Weapons Complex Monitor Waste Management & Cleanup Decisionmakers' Forum, held October 21–24, 2013, in Jacksonville, Fla.

# The DOE, State Regulators, and Small Businesses—and Budgets

he Department of Energy's efforts to continue to push forward with cleanup activities at its various sites while operating in a tough budgetary environment was one of the main topics of discussion at the 25th Annual Weapons Complex Monitor Waste Management & Cleanup Decisionmakers' Forum, held October 21-24, 2013, at the Omni Amelia Island Plantation in Jacksonville, Fla. More than 300 representatives from the DOE, the contracting industry, and state and local governments attended the event, which took place shortly after the federal government's 16-day shutdown ended. While the shutdown led to furloughs at the Savannah River Site (SRS), the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, and Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), much of the DOE's cleanup program was able to continue operating using carryover funding. "We really dodged a bullet. We did have some impacts at Savannah River, some small impacts at Paducah, and then subcontractors at Los Alamos," said Colin Jones, chief of staff for the DOE's Office of Environmental Management (EM). "If the shutdown had gone on for another few days or a week, we'd have been looking at potentially 8,000 to 10,000 furloughs at Oak Ridge, Rich-

land, and Idaho. Fortunately, [with] the timing of the deal that was done, we were able to prevent those shut-downs."

The government shutdown may have set back a key mission at LANL that aims to ship 3,706 m<sup>3</sup> of aboveground transuranic waste off-site for disposal by June 2014. LANL had been ahead of schedule on the shipments at the end of fiscal year 2013, having shipped 2,745 m<sup>3</sup> since the campaign started, compared to the goal of 2,600 m<sup>3</sup>. "That work was stopped for two weeks; it will be restarted this week," Jones said. "We did have some contingency in the schedule there, but we'll have to see whether that schedule contingency has been eaten up and whether we'll be able to meet the June 2014 deadline for removing all that waste out there."

In separate remarks at the meeting, Jack Surash, EM's deputy assistant secretary for Acquisition & Project Management, praised EM, the various DOE site offices, and contractors for their efforts in managing the impacts of the shutdown. "I really want to congratulate everybody on how well the entire team performed over the last couple of weeks during the tremendous uncertainty caused by the lapse of the fiscal year 2014 appropriations," Surash told the gathered industry officials. "I saw a great integration in terms of budget, human capital, project and contract management, nuclear safety, programmatic, and those sorts of things. I saw this not only at headquarters, but at the site level. And this was led by the capable hands of [EM Senior Advisor] Dave Huizenga."

### EM'S RELATIONS WITH STATE REGULATORS

Another topic of discussion was EM's relationships with state regulators in the tough financial climate, with issues of increased pushback from state regulators in South Carolina and Washington on potential missed milestones for high-level waste cleanup and the current budget situation at the DOE, according to Jones. While EM enjoyed ample funding in recent years thanks largely to the Recovery Act, the DOE's cleanup program is now facing a more constrained budgetary environment that has led to a sharp proposed cut in funding next year for SRS's tank waste cleanup and concerns regarding the Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP), Jones said. "For the first time

in a long time, we are having to make some really, really hard choices about what we can, can't do," he said. "I get the frustration of you having a facility that is operational and not being able to fully utilize that, but is that better than having no facility at all? These are the types of questions we have to ask ourselves as we try and manage the budget from a complexwide perspective."

### The State of South Carolina

The state of South Carolina, however, is frustrated because it believes it is bearing the brunt of the budget cuts in the cleanup complex. SRS's tank waste cleanup allocation was cut \$183 million in the DOE's FY 2014 budget request, which would lead to delays in HLW work and numerous missed commitments to the state on tank closure. "We got the biggest reduction in terms of EM budget dollars," said Shelly Wilson, of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC). "Can you make progress based on that budget? The answer is no, I don't believe they can meet all the commitments to risk reduction that they have for South Carolina. I'm aware that the entire nation is struggling with budget. But if you look at the decisions that DOE is making internally within EM, it is still obvious that South Carolina is getting slammed."

SRS has a fully operational liquidwaste system that led to the full closure of two tanks last year, with two more scheduled to be closed in the coming months, Wilson emphasized. "We thought that we had everything lined up in a crystal-clear path for all the dominoes to fall in place right after that, one after the other, in a manner very similar to the closure of the first two [tanks] and the recent two," Wilson said. "We are in a very unique position today from the state perspective. We are not arguing over technical or regulatory issues. The path forward is very clear on how to close the tanks. Most of the documents are already approved, so right now we are aligned, and we have been very cooperative in our approach. That is a very rare thing. All we need to make that happen is the appropriate budget."

The failure to request an adequate budget has changed the state's approach to conversations with the DOE, and in August, SCDHEC sent a letter to the DOE warning of hefty fines if milestones are not met. "We have always been cooperative and in a very partnering mode, and we are seeing that in this particular case with the 2014 budget that has not served us," Wilson said. "We are moving into a mode where we are spelling out our concerns and doing it in as loud a way as possible."

The DOE's decision on SRS liquid waste funding was based mainly on

the overall budget situation, according to Jones. "We, too, take it very seriously, our commitments to managing the liquid waste at the Savannah River Site. Between Savannah River, Hanford, Idaho, [tank waste] is our biggest risk activity, and when you look at the annual budget every year, that's where the majority of our funding goes to," he said. "We've been living in a different financial setting now. In FY '13 we had to deal with sequestration," he added, and took a hit of about \$400 million. He also



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EQ-THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMPANY NATIONWIDE SERVICES • WWW.EQONLINE.COM • 800-592-5489 noted that there are issues dealing with budget caps.

When the DOE comes to renegotiate milestones with South Carolina, the state-in addition to its requests for adequate funding-wants the DOE to propose mitigation strategies. "We're expecting DOE to come with something in hand that's a trade," Wilson said. "In asking for an extension, can they give an alternative treatment or speed it up? As long as DOE is willing to bear some of the burden or risk and some of the commitment, then all of a sudden, our mind-set changes." Such strategies could include increasing the site's interim waste treatment capability, or preparing for the implementation of new waste treatment technologies, such as Next Generation Solvent or the Small Column Ion Exchange.

### The State of Washington

In the state of Washington, the DOE has warned state regulators that a set of WTP milestones contained in a 2010 consent decree is now at "serious risk" of being missed. To renegotiate any milestones with Washington, the DOE must request adequate funding in its budgets, said Jane Hedges, of the Washington State Department of Ecology. "For Washington, we have expressed to DOE many times, they have to ask for the money they need to do cleanup," Hedges said. "If Congress doesn't give them the money, then they have an argument under our [Tri-Party Agreement] and under our consent decree. But they have to ask, and that means that the administration has to ask as well." She added, "There are some trust issues around that. The technical issues are easier for all of us. We can see a technical issue and we can talk about it."

### WHAT FUTURE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES?

The current budgetary environment has also posed challenges for small businesses operating in the DOE marketplace, industry representatives noted. Small business prime contracting for EM peaked at about 12 percent during the infusion of funds provided by the Recovery Act and has since settled to about 7.9 percent last fiscal year. Lower funding levels, however, have also prompted prime contractors to change approaches in subcontracting. "We are seeing some of the effects of a downturn in funding. It makes doing additional work that is not already under contract very difficult, and it will motivate prime contractors to cut costs," Surash said.

Small businesses across the DOE complex have expressed concern as a number of prime contractors have made significant changes to subcontracting strategies. Notably, Hanford cleanup contractor CH2M Hill Plateau Remediation Company decided in January 2013 to largely selfperform work that had previously been subcontracted, and Oak Ridge cleanup contractor URS-CH2M Oak Ridge last year moved to a staff augmentation-based approach from task-oriented subcontracting. "The ability to perceive the value of the small businesses is being diminished business work. "In our case, we lost more than 20 percent of our workforce overnight going through a particular disadvantage. That was an inadvertent consequence not related to our performance, not related to anything other than the way the contract was set up and the needs of the prime."

Surash said that EM is aiming to maintain its small business prime contracting at about 6 to 7 percent but that there is little that EM can do related to subcontracting. "Whether that prime contractor wants to insource that work to become more efficient, there is nothing I can do about it," Surash said. "So all I can do is hold our prime contractors accountable for meeting their subcontracting goals. Some of our prime contractors, as you're aware, we require for X amount to be subcontracted; some we don't."

But Gallagher disagreed. "The role of EM overseeing the primes in their

### "We are a big believer at EM of the value of small businesses. They are not going to be doing all of our work, but we would like to sustain or grow it."

every day; it's not a bright picture for us at this point," said Phil Gallagher, of Babcock Services. He added, "The current state of the primes not renewing small business subcontracts, not encouraging small business subcontracts and self-performing work, and actually absorbing the skills and resources of small businesses into the companies to self-perform more work cripples companies."

Several small businesses noted that they have lost a significant number of employees due to changes in subcontracting from the primes. "The reduced budgets had some inadvertent consequences, such as the internalization of work. Because there was less subcontracting being done, the type of subcontracting mix for certain primes has changed," according to Matt Moeller, chief executive officer of Dade Moeller. He noted that one prime contractor his company worked with had a performance award fee that required it to contract a certain level of disadvantaged small

subcontracting roles isn't being policed very well," he said, and warned that eventually there could be unintended consequences for the DOE. "Even if EM's numbers climb up into the 6 [or] 7 percent [range], that loss at the other side, which is significantly more to begin with, is just going to result in the decline of small business opportunities," he said. "It will actually make it harder for Jack [Surash] because there will be less companies to bid and less skill sets and less resources to go after the work he needs to get contracting. It's spiraling the wrong way at this point." Moeller added that "the number one threat to small businesses" is losing intellectual capital "literally overnight" as a result of prime contractor decisions.

The lack of meaningful subcontract work in the complex may also keep business from developing the experience and project management skills needed to grow, said Steve Moore, president of Wastren Advantage Inc. "We didn't just wake up one day and become a DOE prime contractor," he added. "I would describe the small business environment right now as a mile wide and an inch deep. ... Unless you are able to develop the infrastructure, the experience, and kind of cut your teeth in a variety of different subcontracted areas, it's going to create more challenges for the sustainability."

"At EM we care about small business," Surash emphasized, noting that he is also looking at subcontracting. "We are really interested in the whole deal here. [Small business contracting] is still not that high, quite frankly, compared to other agencies," he said. "If you took all of our prime and subcontract work done by small businesses and add it all together, I think you'd get maybe 20 percent." He noted that the federal government's goal for small business contracting stands at about 23 percent.

And, Surash added, despite the downturn in funding, EM is focused on growing its prime small businesses at each site in the complex. "We are after a sustainable small business program," he stated. "We essentially attempt to set aside every single contract. That's the way we are able to drive small business. . . . Going in, it is 'can we set this aside for small business, can we create opportunities for small business, can we do some oneoffs, can we split a big contract and pull something out?' At the end of the day, we are a big believer at EM of the value of small businesses. They are not going to be doing all of our work, but we would like to sustain or grow it. We are looking for meaty work for them to do."

One way for small businesses to remain competitive is to participate in a mentor-protégé program, said Amar Raval, of TerranearPMC, which has such a partnership with EnergySolutions. "It's great to go down the path of putting this agreement in place, but it takes a big commitment from both sides to make it successful," he said. "We did it to be able to go after the larger and more complex projects. In some cases we were successful, and in others we weren't. That's a dynamic you're going to see. If you want to play in more competitive, complex procurements, there are not too many small businesses that can do it alone."

In the end, small businesses need to provide and not just be seen as a statistic, Moeller emphasized, stating that participation is key. "It can't be dictated. It has to be real. It means that small businesses have to add value. And, what we need in return for that is support to sustain small businesses," Moeller said, stating that sustainability is based on a few concerns. "The major one is intellectual capital. Don't take intellectual capital; let our employees be our employees. And number two, expect more of small businesses. Expect them to have work in other than the DOE marketplace. Expect them to have past performance that shows a competence and depth of resources that is not just minimally adequate but exceptional for whatever that piece of work may be."

This report was prepared by the editorial staff of ExchangeMonitor Publications. For additional information, contact Mike Nartker, editor-in-chief, at <u>nartker@exchangemonitor.com</u>.



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# Communicating Performance Assessment Results

The primary goal of communicating the results of performance assessments prepared to support the closure of waste tanks at the Savannah River Site is to provide a clear understanding of the involved risks.

By Mark Layton

The F-Area tank farms and the H-Area tank farm at the Savannah River Site (SRS) are owned by the U.S. Department of Energy and operated by Savannah River Remediation LLC, the liquid-waste operations contractor at SRS. These tank farms are active radioactive waste storage and treatment facilities consisting of 51 carbon steel waste tanks and ancillary equipment such as transfer lines, evaporators, and pump tanks.

Performance assessments (PA) for each tank farm have been prepared to support the eventual closure of the underground radioactive waste tanks and ancillary equipment. PAs provide the technical bases and results to be used in subsequent documents to demonstrate compliance with the pertinent requirements for final closure of the tank farms.

The tank farms are subject to a number of regulatory requirements. South Carolina regulates tank farm operations through an industrial wastewater permit and through a Federal Facility Agreement approved by the state, the DOE, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Closure documentation will include stateapproved tank farm closure plans and tank-specific closure modules utilizing information from the PAs. For this reason, the state of South Carolina and the EPA must be involved in the PA review process. The residual material remaining after tank cleaning is also subject to reclassification prior to closure via a waste determination pursuant to Section 3116 of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005.

PAs are performance-based, risk-informed analyses of the fate and transport of the F-Area and H-Area residual wastes following final closure of the tank farms. Since the PAs serve as the primary risk assessment tools in evaluating readiness for closure, it is vital that PA conclusions be communicated effectively.

In the course of developing the tank farm PAs, the following lessons learned have emerged regarding the communication of PA results:

• It is important to stress that the primary goal of the PA results is to provide risk understanding, recognizing the magnitude of risk and identifying the conceptual model decisions and critical assumptions that most affect the results.

• Conceptual models should be communicated that describe reality using simplified, mathematical approaches, along with their roles in arriving at the PA results.

• When presenting PA results, evaluations should typically focus on a single baseline (or base case) to provide a foundation for discussion.

• PA results should be supplemented by other studies (alternate configurations, uncertainty analyses, and sensitiv-
ity analyses) to provide a breadth of modeling for the base case. The suite of information offered by the various modeling cases and studies provides confidence that the overall risk is understood, along with the underlying parameters and conditions that contribute to risk.

Used to assess the long-term fate and transport of residual contamination in the environment, PAs provide the DOE with reasonable assurance that the operational closure of the SRS tank farms (waste tanks and ancillary equipment) will meet defined performance objectives for the protection of human health and the environment into the future.

PAs are intended to estimate consequences of facility closure over time, both chemically and radiologically, and are typically most focused on determining "peak dose" or "peak concentration" (i.e., the worst results over a oneyear period) throughout an extended period of evaluation. PAs reflect the uncertainty that is inherent in conceptual modeling and also identify key parameters for which the models have the greatest sensitivity (i.e., the key parameters of greatest importance).

#### PRESENTING PA RESULTS

When communicating PA results, it is important to stress that the primary goal of the PA is to provide risk understanding. PAs provide information regarding relative magnitudes of risks and need to clearly articulate the expected risks under the most probable and defensible conditions. PAs should build confidence that projected doses are reasonably likely to be within a given standard of comparison.

PAs quantify the general magnitudes of risks involved and identify the conceptual model decisions and critical assumptions that have the most impact on results but are not typically constructed to calculate precise dose results. PA results are not meant to be a precise prediction of actual doses to real people or an assessment of worst-case scenarios. What is most important for the PA results is to provide perspective on the significance of various features captured in the conceptual model and to demonstrate an understanding of the system.

In order to best communicate results, PAs require a breadth of modeling that recognizes that there is no single "right" approach to assessing the long-term fate and transport of residual contamination. Attacking the problem on multiple fronts is one way to address modeling uncertainty. PAs should concentrate on defining a most probable and defensible modeling case (i.e., the baseline modeling scenario, or base case), but should also supplement the base case with a full toolbox of additional models and studies. It isn't helpful to pretend that the base case results are absolute and infallible—the uncertainty surrounding conceptual modeling and time-sensitive inputs requires that PA results be presented within their underlying context.

#### THE ROLE OF THE BASE CASE

A PA utilizes conceptual models that are reasonable simplifications of the closure systems being evaluated. It is not important that the model capture all design features of the closure system, but it is important that it capture features that have an impact on results. The base case provides the foundation for understanding PA results. The consideration of results requires common ground for discussing risk (base case) and uncertainty. Ensuring that there is a single modeling case with well-understood design elements allows for the discussion of results from a common framework. It is also important to note that while the base case captures the best knowledge available, it will still allow for the introduction of new knowledge.

PA results are often used for comparison with regulatory standards or performance objectives. Establishing the base case as the most probable and defensible modeling case provides justification for its use as a "comparison" case. Initial modeling and research efforts should be geared toward maximizing understanding of the base case, thus providing confidence that the system performance is well understood. The base case captures system behavior in such a way that differences from expected behavior are understood and justified.

Once a base case is established, the most effective way to communicate PA results is to display underlying facets of the base case in multiple graphic and tabular formats. For example, running a base case model can produce a single peak radiological dose result over time (i.e., the peak all-pathways dose to a member of the public), as shown in Fig. 1, but that single dose curve does not convey the spatial complexity involved when determining peak doses. Figure 2 shows that the location of the peak dose changes over time with respect to the modeling sectors.







Fig. 2. Base case peak dose over time by sector.



Fig. 3. Model evaluation sectors.



Fig. 4. Base case individual radionuclide contributors to Sector A peak dose.



Fig. 5. Base case individual source contributors to Sector A peak dose.



*Fig. 6. Base case water ingestion contribution to peak doses.* 

The various sectors, shown in Fig. 3, allow variability in peak concentration for different areas of the H-Area tank farm to be more easily evaluated. Figure 4 shows that the radionuclides contributing to the peak dose also change over time, and Fig. 5 illustrates which inventory sources contribute to the peak dose over time. Finally, to help in understanding how the makeup of the dose scenario (e.g., water ingestion versus vegetable ingestion) affects the total dose, Fig. 6 shows how the water ingestion dose contribution to the peak dose changes over time.

It is important to convey and clearly explain the radiological and inventory complexity involved when determining peak doses, since many of the modeling inputs and barriers to release are dependent on timing, location, source term, radionuclide contributions, or dose pathways. These figures provide a better understanding of the model and where the system may be sensitive to different assumptions.

#### Additional Modeling to Support the Base Case

With a base case established as a foundation for assessment, additional modeling should be performed in support of the base case. These additional studies serve different purposes and can be useful in communicating different ideas. Alternate configurations can be modeled to show the impact of specific modeling choices. These alternate configurations would use the base case as a starting point but would demonstrate how changes to the base case influence results. For example, the base case could be modified to show what would happen if a closure cap were not put in place (Fig. 7). This analysis can then be used to facilitate discussion of the role of the closure cap and its impact on modeling results.

In addition to alternate configuration evaluation, sensitivity studies can also provide insights relative to the base case. Sensitivity studies should focus on areas of importance, initially informed by an understanding of the base case, with additional understanding building iteratively through the performance of multiple sensitivity studies. One area that needs to be emphasized as part of the sensitivity analyses is the performance of design elements that serve as barriers to release, such as waste tank steel liners and waste tank concrete basemats. Barrier analyses validate the base case model construction with regard to whether the base case captures those design features that can have a significant impact on results. For example, Fig. 8 shows a sensitivity analysis where the base case was modified to show the impact on peak dose if the cementitious materials that are used degrade at different rates (both faster and slower).

Sensitivity studies should also investigate the importance of critical modeling inputs and assumptions. For example, Fig. 9 shows a sensitivity analysis where the base case was modified to show the impact on peak dose if soil retardation properties are varied. The sensitivity analysis in Fig. 9 compares base case (normal) soil behavior to modeling where the soil is less effective by degrees (onehalf and one-quarter) in retarding the movement of radionuclides through soil after release from the waste tanks.

Understanding of the PA results is further improved through uncertainty analyses. Uncertainty is inherent in simplified numeric models that attempt to replicate engineered or natural systems. Supplementing the base case deterministic model with probabilistic models provides a vehicle to explicitly quantify parameter uncertainty in order to bound the range of possible dose outcomes.

The probabilistic model can be run multiple times to develop results to support the probabilistic analyses. The modeling runs use the Monte Carlo method to sample uncertain parameters. Each modeling run performs multiple realizations, where each realization represents a unique possible future outcome. The Monte Carlo method samples values from each of the uncertain parameters during each realization. Collectively, the multiple runs and realizations cover a probabilistic range for each parameter. The results of the independent realizations are assembled into probability distributions of possible outcomes, which provide insight into the base case model. Figure 10 is a statistical time history showing peak dose variability for a set of 1,000 base case realizations.

In addition to graphic statistical analysis, the uncertainty analysis can be used to investigate which probabilistic modeling realizations most affect the overall results. The results with the highest dose consequences can be reviewed to identify which combination of parameters, when they occur concurrently, produces dose results that are significantly higher than others. Parameters of interest are identified that have the greatest potential to influence the results. For example, a review of the peak realizations revealed that technetium-99 inventory variability was a modeling parameter that often showed up in the peak realizations. This investigation of realizations of interest provides another source of knowledge about the assumptions that most affect the conceptual model.

#### **BETTER UNDERSTANDING**

As noted earlier, the primary goal of the PA results is to provide a better understanding of the risks associated with the fate and transport of contaminants following the final closure of SRS's F-Area and H-Area tank farms. To achieve this goal, the PA should provide results that concentrate on the relative magnitude of risk while identifying the conceptual model decisions/critical assumptions that most affect these results. Having a single baseline or comparison modeling case (i.e., base case) as a foundation for discussion makes achieving the desired understanding of risk easier. The PA base case results should be supplemented by other studies (alternate configuration, uncertainty analyses, and sensitivity analyses) that provide a width and breadth of modeling to supplement the base case. The suite of information offered by the range of modeling studies ties together to show which decisions/critical assumptions have the most impact on the results, providing confidence that the overall risk and the underlying contributors to risk are understood.

Mark Layton is a principal engineer with Savannah River Remediation LLC. This article is based on a paper presented at Waste Management 2013, held February 24–28, 2013, in Phoenix, Ariz. Copyright WM Symposia Inc.



Fig. 7. No closure cap case peak dose over time by sector.



Fig. 8. impact of cementitious material degradation timing on peak dose.



Fig. 9. Impact of soil Kd variability on peak dose.



Fig. 10. Statistical time history of base case doses.

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### Studies, Transport, and Treatment Concept for Boilers from the Berkeley Nuclear Power Plant

In the first project of its kind in the United Kingdom, Studsvik was contracted to transport five decommissioned boilers from the Berkeley nuclear plant site to Studsvik's waste treatment facilities in Sweden for metal treatment and recycling.

By Bo Wirendal, David Saul, Joe Robinson and Gavin Davidson

mong the first generation of nuclear reactors in the United Kingdom, the Berkeley nuclear power station had two natural uranium-fueled Magnox reactors (Fig. 1 illustrates the Magnox reactor principle). Both units at Berkeley came into service in 1962 and continued operation until Reactor 2 was shutdown in October 1988, followed by Reactor 1 in March 1989.

Each reactor had eight boilers (heat exchangers) located in housing structures external to the reactor building and connected by gas ducts aboveground (inlet duct) and belowground (outlet duct).

Berkeley was the first commercial nuclear power station in the United Kingdom to undergo decommissioning, and so far, this has included the removal of all fuel from the site in 1992, and the demolition of structures such as the turbine hall in 1995 and cooling ponds in 2001. The current stage of decommissioning is to prepare the site for long-term care and maintenance.

Each boiler comprises a 28.6-mm-thick, mild steel pressure vessel, 5.33 m in diameter and 21.34 m in length, with domed ends. Each vessel was held by a support skirt assembly. Inside the pressure vessel is a square section duct that runs the full length of the boiler pressure vessel and was connected to the upper and lower gas ducts via inlet cone and outlet cone assemblies. This square section duct houses the boiler tube banks, which are positioned horizontally.

Between the square section duct and boiler pressure vessel is an interspace that enabled access to the vessel and the tube banks. This was achieved by means of hinged doors on the internal duct and access penetrations on the outside of the pressure vessel. Vertical access ladders and hinged trap doors enabled personnel to climb the length of the pressure vessel.

As part of the decommissioning program, all boilers were de-lagged and disconnected from the inlet and outlet gas ducts. The upper gas ducts were removed and sizereduced, and blanking plates were fitted to the gas duct apertures at the top and the bottom of the boiler pressure vessel. The water-side headers and recirculation penetrations were cut and blanked on the outside of the boiler pressure vessel.

In 1997, the boilers were lifted from their support skirts, transferred to a horizontal position, and placed around each reactor building (Fig. 2). The boilers were positioned in pairs, with each placed on two support saddles.

The total weight of each boiler is approximately 311 metric tons (t). This was recorded from the crane's weighing device used during the lowering of the boiler from its vertical position. The estimated makeup of the boiler weight is as follows:



Fig. 1. Schematic of a Magnox reactor showing the reactor and boiler.



Fig. 2. Unit 1 at the Berkeley nuclear power station in safe storage condition, with the boilers shown stored horizontally next to the reactor building. (Photo: Magnox Ltd./www.magnoxsites.com)

Pressure vessel: 91 t. Support beams and associated steelwork: 30 t. Tube boxes: 33 t. High-pressure superheater tubes: 16 t. Low-pressure superheater tubes: 13 t. Evaporator and economizer tubes: 100 t. *Total:* 283 t. The remainder of the 311 t comprises ladders, other pipework, and various other items.

Following the lowering operations, boiler No. 10 was size-reduced in a purpose-built temporary containment structure and the steel sections were decontaminated. All of the 15 remaining boilers remained in place, subject to ongoing maintenance and inspection. Recirculating carbon dioxide gas was used to transfer heat from the reactors to the boilers via the upper gas ducts. The gas cascaded down through the boilers and was returned to the reactor via the lower gas ducts. As a result, the internal surfaces of the boilers, boiler tubes, steelwork, and vessel internals, were exposed to hot radioactive gas carrying particulate and are therefore contaminated. As tritium was present in the recirculating gas during operation, diffusion into the steelwork is known to have occurred.

The steelwork is not irradiated, and the radionuclide fingerprint identifies that the main radionuclides are tritium, carbon-14, and cobalt-60. Total activity for all 15 boilers was estimated to be 532 GBq (an average of 35.5 GBq per boiler).

The total weight of the boilers is estimated to be 4,670 t, which gives a total specific activity of 114 MBq/t, therefore classifying them as low-level radioactive waste under the U.K. system of radioactive waste classification.

Measurements taken within the pressure vessel during 1997 identified the following radiological information:

Dose rate: 50 µSv beta/gamma; 20 µSv gamma.

Contamination: 500 counts per second beta by RM6/ BP4 probe.

No significant alpha contamination.

No evidence of contamination had been found within the water side of the boiler or in the steam pipework, and the internals of the boiler tubes were thought to be free of surface contamination.

#### **RADIOLOGICAL CHARACTERIZATION**

To allow Magnox Ltd. to produce decommissioning strategies, a program of characterization work was carried out on the boilers and other Magnox boilers from the late 1980s onward. In 1987, gamma spectrometry measurements and swabs were taken primarily from boiler No. 7 at Berkeley, with additional measurements from four other boilers. The gamma spectrometry readings

It was noted in one report that while the boiler shell represents approximately one-third of the total mass of the boiler, the internal surface of the shell accounts for only 3 percent of the total radioactive inventory, based on the assumption that all internal shell surfaces are contaminated to the same extent.

from within the boilers identified Co-60 as the dominant gamma-emitting nuclide. Counting with the use of highresolution gamma spectrometry and subsequent analysis of the swab samples was carried out to determine the lowenergy gamma- and non-gamma-emitting nuclides as ra-

tios to the Co-60. A small number of radionuclides were inferred from the decay chains of those nuclides already identified through sampling and analysis. It was noted in the analysis report that the tritium inventory may be underestimated, as tritium is known to diffuse into the boiler steel itself, as well as being present as loose contamination. In light of this, in the mid-1990s, as part of the dismantling and decontamination of boiler No. 10, steel samples were taken, and actual levels of tritium within the steel were determined using liquid scintillation counting methods. Interestingly, it was noted in one report that while the boiler shell represents approximately one-third of the total mass of the boiler, the internal surface of the shell accounts for only 3 percent of the total radioactive inventory, based on the assumption that all internal shell surfaces are contaminated to the same extent. Through the collation of the sample and analysis information, the fingerprint and the expected inventory of a boiler were generated by Magnox.

Following the dismantling of boiler No. 10, Magnox carried out continuous health physics monitoring of the boilers. In support of the procurement for the supplier to remove, transport, and treat the boilers, it was necessary to produce a waste characterization form detailing the physical, chemical, and radiological inventory of the boilers. In conjunction with the Magnox Support Office, the Berkeley site collated all the available information, including retrieving archived information relating to disposals from the dismantled boiler. In the extensive characterization work carried out by Magnox, nearly 20 years was detailed in six reports held by the Berkeley site. This information was summarized and the radiological inventory was decay-corrected to bring it up to date.

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE BERKELEY BOILERS PROJECT

The Berkeley boilers project was initiated by Magnox during 2011 and started as a Magnox graduate student

> project. The second-year graduates were asked to look at options for the removal, transport, and treatment of the boilers. As part of this project, the U.K. Low Level Waste Repository (LLWR) was engaged to provide advice on what options existed in the supply chain.

> The graduate students initially suggested that the preferred option was to cut the boilers into three sections, each weighing approximately 100 t, for transport off-site for treatment. As a result of the engagement with the supply chain through LLWR, however, the option of transporting the boilers whole was identified. For many reasons, this was deemed to be more favorable, not the least because it min-

imized the risk associated with on-site working, and construction of bespoke (custom-made) cutting containments. In order to underpin the credibility of transporting the boilers whole, transport studies were commissioned through LLWR's Waste Services Contract.

#### **TRANSPORT AND TREATMENT OPTIONS STUDY**

Studsvik was one of two companies selected to carry out a feasibility study, and Studsvik selected Abnormal Load Engineering (ALE), a specialist heavy transport company, to support them.

Studsvik and ALE evaluated a variety of options for lifting and transporting the boilers to Sweden. As part of this evaluation, stakeholders, including regulators, local authorities, and local port councils, were contacted to ensure that any selected option was credible.

In line with U.K. Highways Agency requirements, a key consideration was to minimize road transport, and this was possible by transporting the boilers to Sharpness, the nearest port. Sharpness, however, has access constraints due to a lock gate arrangement, which restricts the size of vessel that can be used.

One of the underlying principles adopted by Studsvik and ALE was to minimize lifting boiler operations. Therefore, a strategy utilizing roll-on/roll-off vessels was adopted. Such vessels capable of accessing Sharpness were limited to carrying two boilers, and in order to optimize transport to Sweden, the decision was made that pairs of

A strategy utilizing roll-on/roll-off vessels was adopted. Such vessels capable of accessing Sharpness were limited to carrying two boilers, and in order to optimize transport to Sweden, the decision was made that pairs of boilers would be transported from Sharpness along the Severn Estuary to the larger port at Avonmouth, where they could be transferred to a larger seagoing vessel.

boilers would be transported from Sharpness along the Severn Estuary to the larger port at Avonmouth, where they could be transferred to a larger seagoing vessel. This allowed for five boilers to be shipped to the Studsvik facility in one voyage. A roll-on/roll-off vessel previously used by Studsvik for similar European projects was selected, and a special-purpose barge previously used by ALE was selected for the inland waterway leg of the journey.

#### **BEST AVAILABLE TECHNIQUE**

A Best Practicable Environmental Options (BPEO) study into the options for the boilers was first conducted in 2001. At that time there was no off-site treatment route that was deemed viable to allow the boilers to be transported from the site and treated. Previous on-site experience—in 1995, when one of the boilers was size-reduced and was treated *in situ*—had limited success, and it was not seen as a viable, cost-effective option for the remaining 15 boilers. The outcome of this BPEO was that onsite storage until final site clearance was the preferred option.

When the graduate students started to investigate the possible options, it became clear that the 2001 BPEO was out of date and that there had been significant changes to the industry and supply chain capability, many having occurred fairly recently. The main changes were related to national policy: the U.K. government's policy for solid LLW (2007); the national LLW strategy (2010); and the strategic BPEO for metallic LLW (2006; revisited in 2011). In support of the changes, a number of routes had opened up through the LLWR's Waste Services Contract, which removes the requirement for individual sites to establish their own commercial routes by providing competitive frameworks for accessing services, such as metallic waste treatment and incineration services.

The team of graduate students produced an options paper, which demonstrated that there were a number of credible options available. Following engagement with LLWR and the suppliers on the Metallic Waste Treatment

> Framework, under the Waste Services Contract, it was identified that the boilers could be removed and transported off-site for treatment. In order to underpin this option, a transport study was conducted that detailed the transport route and any enabling works that would be required to make the option viable. The beauty of this solution was that the changes identified were minimal in scope and cost, and could be undertaken quickly.

> Magnox used the transport studies as the basis of a reassessment of the original 2001 BPEO for the boilers. A panel of experts was convened to assess what the best available technique should be, utilizing Magnox's approved procedures. A screening process was carried out initially to identify alternative waste management options that could be applied. This al-

lowed the waste management end-point to be moved that is, LLW to "out of scope," the equivalent of "free-release"—or a significant volume waste reduction. With the screening process and reasoned argument assessment, various options were considered, including size-reduction on-site, disposal of the whole boilers at a dedicated facility, or off-site treatment. It was concluded that the best available technique was recycling of the boilers, transported whole and treated off-site.

A competitive tendering exercise was carried out by Magnox via the LLWR Metals Treatment Framework and Studsvik was awarded an initial contract for the transport and treatment of five boilers.

#### **PROJECT DETAILS**

Upon its selection, Studsvik began to work collaboratively with Magnox, LLWR, and ALE to develop the project program and joint project risk register. The project officially commenced on November 4, 2011, and essentially comprised four stages: design and characterization, site enabling works, lifting and transportation, and treatment.

The contract to deliver five boilers to the Studsvik metal treatment facility in Sweden was let on a very tight timeline, and a series of key stakeholder deliverables needed to be met in order to obtain approval to ship. A project team was formed from all parties involved in the project: Magnox, LLWR, Studsvik, and ALE. The project benefited from having very clear goals and strong support from all parties to achieve these goals.

There were two key elements that helped the project meet the tight schedule. One was the use of an interactive documentation review process that required the key project documents to be issued for review. After this initial review, a face-to-face meeting was convened with all the reviewers present, and all comments were discussed, agreed to, or discarded, with the document ready for formal issue before the reviewers left the room. This significantly reduced the documentation approval cycle and limited the amount of rework needed, as changes were discussed and made interactively.

The other key element was a very strong communication process, where all parties were actively involved in the decision-making processes. This was achieved through the use of an active and dynamic communications process that included weekly progress meetings, weekly program management, the use of a contract management portal, and Microsoft "Live Meeting" software.

#### **DESIGN AND CHARACTERIZATION**

A number of interrelated activities were carried out in parallel to achieve the project milestones.

Existing design information was reviewed, and this was further informed through nondestructive examination of boilers and saddles by visual, ultrasonic, and magnetic particle inspection.

Assessment of the boiler structure under all transport loadings was undertaken using finite element analysis in line with the requirements of applicable regulations [1, 2, 3].

The assessment also considered the support saddle design and an optimum number of saddles was identified to ensure load security during all modes of on-site and offsite movement.

Radiological surveys were carried out to confirm dose rate and external contamination levels. Because of the specifics of the Berkeley boilers, any beta measurements recorded also contained a contribution from the emission of gamma radiation from inside the boilers. Therefore, a specific monitoring technique was established to determine the fixed beta contamination on the external surface of the boilers.

As such, a beta reading was taken, as normal, with the probe unshielded and at approximately 2 mm from the surface of the boiler. This reading represented the fixed beta contamination and the effect of the gamma radiation from the internal surfaces. The measurement was then repeated with the probe in the same location, but with a 1-mm-thick piece of steel shielding the probe. The shield removed all contributions from the surface beta contamination, but had little effect on the reading due to internal gamma radiation.

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The differences between these two readings were then, therefore, representative of the external fixed beta contamination. The results were recorded and calculated to infer the becquerels per cm<sup>2</sup> (Bq/cm<sup>2</sup>) and were compared against the transport limit of 0.4 Bq/cm<sup>2</sup> for alpha contamination and 4 Bq/cm<sup>2</sup> for beta/gamma contamination for external surfaces [1, 2]. The data collected confirmed that there was no external fixed contamination.

Also, during the radiological surveys, each boiler was swabbed to determine whether any loose contamination was detectable on

the external surface of the boilers. A total of 345 swabs, each taken over a surface area of 300 cm<sup>2</sup>, were removed from each of the five boilers and were assessed to see if there was any loose contamination detectable. None of the swabs measured above a background level, and there was no evidence of loose contamination on the external surface of the boilers. This was as expected for the items stored externally for 14 years.

Beta/gamma surface dose rate measurements were collected in order to confirm worker and public doses and for use in confirming compliance with the transport regulations [1, 2]. The dose measurements collected were also used to undertake further confirmatory assessments of the radioactive content of the boilers. Computer modeling was undertaken to assess the potential radioactivity based on the dose rates measured at 1 m and in contact with the boilers. This modeling was performed using proprietary

Table 1
Highest and Average Dose Rates Measured at 1 Meter

Boiler Number	Highest Dose (µSv/h)	Average Dose (µSv/h)
9	1.5	0.9
11	2.2	1.3
12	3.1	2.0
13	1.9	1.3
14	1.7	1.0

MicroShield software.

Dose rate measurements were taken at a distance of 1 m from the boiler using an Exploranium GR-135 sodium iodide detector. Table 1 summarizes the dose rates measured for each of the boilers.

Some small sections of the boilers recorded elevated contact dose rate measurements. These were very small collimated emissions that significantly reduced at a short distance. The dose rates measured ranged from 8  $\mu$ Sv/h to 31.5  $\mu$ Sv/h.

On completion of the dose rate surveys of the five boilers, a number of activity assessments were carried out using the MicroShield software to model the Co-60 emissions from the boilers. The models were developed to provide further confirmation to the accuracy of the Magnox radioactivity assessment.

These models were based on two different scenarios:



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Table 2	
Comparison of Total Activity Data Per Boile	er (GBq)
	Total Activity per Boiler (GBq)
Magnox Activity Assessment	35.5
Based on Internal Surface Contamination Models	45.9
Based on Internal Homogenous Volume Contamination Models	72.2

• Scenario One modeled the emissions associated with internal surface contamination.

• Scenario Two modeled the emissions associated with contamination spread homogenously throughout the internal volume of the boilers.

Models were also developed to account for the activity associated with the "hot-spot" emissions, identified above.

Table 2 shows the total activities calculated from the MicroShield modeling. The results showed very good agreement between the modeling data and the Magnox data provided for the boilers.

An essential output from the work carried out was the preparation of a transport categorization report. This document collectively reported all engineering and radiological works and provided a safety case-type document for the categorization of the boilers as an SCO-I package (SCO = surface-contaminated object).

Throughout the work, regulators from the United Kingdom and Sweden were consulted and all necessary approvals were obtained. This included obtaining transfrontier shipment approval for transport between the United Kingdom and Sweden, and Highways Agency special approval for abnormal load transport by road in the United Kingdom. A number of other stakeholders were engaged to ensure that all local and international requirements were met.

As there were a number of discrete transport movements utilizing dif-

ferent organizations, individual radiological protection programs were produced together with an overarching command and control strategy to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities for radiation protection during transport.

#### SITE ENABLING WORKS

A number of on-site activities were carried out to prepare the boilers and support saddles for transport. This included the removal of miscellaneous steelwork and thermocouple attachments, plus modification to the existing support saddles to enable the load to be secured.

Civil works were undertaken to prepare the ground onsite and adjacent to the site in order to enable movement and temporary storage of the large loads. In some areas this included plate-bearing tests and subsequent modifications to ensure ground stability.

During this stage of the work, the Office for Nuclear Regulation Radioactive Materials Transport Team organized in-



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Fig. 3. The boilers, traveling by flatbed truck through the town of Berkeley, from the plant to the port of Sharpness. (Photo: Magnox Ltd./www.magnoxsites.com)

dependent radiological surveys that confirmed Studsvik and Magnox survey data.

#### LIFTING AND TRANSPORTATION

A number of potential techniques for lifting the boilers had been considered by ALE and Studsvik. An important consideration was loading of underground structures. The final movement of the boilers from site to the barge was carried out by a self-propelled trailer.

Four of the boilers were moved to temporary storage areas on the site and the fifth boiler was transferred directly to a road trailer for off-site transport to Sharpness. Three separate road transports were carried out over a seven-day period, the first involving one boiler, with each of the other transports involving two boilers (Fig. 3).

On arrival at Sharpness, the boilers were transferred to a special-purpose barge for shipment to the larger port at Avonmouth, where they were off-loaded and transferred to a dedicated storage area. Additional temporary security arrangements were imple-



Fig. 4. Five of the Berkeley boilers, transferred to a seagoing ship and ready for transport to Studsvik's facility in Sweden. (Photo: ALE)

mented by Studsvik and ALE for the in-transit storage period prior to loading to the seagoing vessel (Fig. 4). Careful coordination of transport activities was essential to maintaining the 14-day in-transit period specified by U.K. regulators.

All of the boilers were removed from the Berkeley site by March 22, 2012, nine days ahead of the project milestone. The boilers arrived at the Studsvik site in Sweden on April 6, 2012.

Prior radiological risk assessments had been produced for all stages of the transport, and these were monitored through the daily issuance of electronic personal dosimeters managed by Studsvik health physics personnel, who accompanied the boilers through each stage of their journey. The maximum individual dose recorded for any transport operation was 22  $\mu$ Sv, which was consistent with background radiation over the period. Collective dose for all transport-related activities was 292  $\mu$ Sv, which was significantly lower than the predicted 5,458  $\mu$ Sv.

#### TREATMENT

On arrival at the Studsvik site in Sweden, all boilers were subject to radiological surveys. Four of the boilers were transferred to an internal storage facility and one was transferred directly to the treatment facility.

Treatment of the first boiler started in April 2012 and an initial controlled breakthrough of the boiler shell was carried out to identify radiological conditions and enable collection of any residual materials.

During the segmentation of the first boiler, it was important to learn where and how the different parts of the boiler were located and to segment it appropriately for the subsequent steps in the process of surface decontamination and, thereafter, melting. In order to achieve clearance of the material (ingots) after melting, it was necessary to decontaminate it before melting, a process cent is secondary waste in the form of cutting residue, dust from the ventilation systems, blasting residue, and slag from the melting process.

Each boiler represents approximately 650 m<sup>3</sup> and 311 t upon arrival at Studsvik for waste treatment. Studsvik will return less than 12 m<sup>3</sup> of secondary waste to LLWR from each treated boiler for disposal. In terms of weight, the secondary waste is less than 20 t from each boiler treated.

Through optimization and high-density packing of the secondary waste, the number of 200-liter drums created was less than that estimated during the feasibility study stage. This means that the number of half-height ISO (HHISO) containers has been reduced from a predicted 3 to 1.5 of packaged secondary waste from each boiler.

All secondary waste will be returned from Sweden to the United Kingdom for disposal at LLWR. Studsvik will retain ownership of the radiologically cleared ingots in Sweden, which are supplied for remelting for the production of new steel products.

#### RADIOLOGICAL ISSUES AND DOSE RATES DURING WASTE TREATMENT

The following dose rates were measured during the treatment of boiler No. 11:

Average of  $3.0 \,\mu$ Sv/h inside the boiler shell.

Average of 10  $\mu$ Sv/h within the tube banks.

Hot spots within the tube banks of up to  $30 \,\mu$ Sv/h.

The collective dose from the treatment of this boiler resulted in 7.57 person-mSv. Figure 5 shows the collective dose during the treatment period of boiler No. 11, which was the first boiler treated.

During the treatment of the boilers, there have been no issues relating to the working environment based on dose rates or contamination from the boilers. All work has been performed in accordance with standard facility procedures for the treatment of radioactive metal at Studsvik.

that was carried out by blasting the material with steel shots.

During melting of the material, representative samples were taken from the molten metal. These samples were then sent to the Studsvik radiometry laboratory for measurement and evaluation. Based on the lab's results, a decision could be made as to whether the ingots could receive radiological clearance.

Based on that procedure, including both decontamination and melting, over 96 percent of the incoming weight of each boiler can be released from regulatory control after treatment. The remaining 3 to 4 per-



Fig. 5. Collective dose, in person millisieverts, for treatment of boiler No. 11. The yellow line is the goal for the collective dose, the blue line is the expected prognosis, and the red line is the actual dose.

#### SUCCESSES OF THE PROJECT

Based on the success of the Berkeley boilers project and the experience gained from the treatment of the boilers, the following conclusions can be drawn:

• The project demonstrated that large components from a Magnox gas circuit can be safely transported, size-reduced, and effectively decontaminated, enabling valuable metal to be recycled. To date, recycling of up to 96 percent of the steel has been achieved.

• All the secondary waste generated by the project to date is suitable for disposal at the U.K.'s LLW Repository.

• No secondary waste has been classified as intermediate-level waste, although initial characterization showed this to be a project risk, based on the carbon-14 content.

• The estimated volume of secondary waste was decreased even further, with only 1.5 HHISO container per boiler instead of the calculated 3.

• The volume saved is 638 m<sup>3</sup> per boiler.

• The project resulted in a lower-than-estimated dose to personnel.

• The project was the first of its kind in the United Kingdom and was successfully executed within a very short timescale. This was achieved through close teamwork among all parties—client, stakeholders, regulators, and contractors—as well as early and continuous engagement with all stakeholders.

• This project demonstrated that large items can be moved whole for treatment, which significantly reduces project timescales. Previously in the United Kingdom, the shipment of large radioactive items was seen as difficult and unachievable. This project shows that large items can be safely moved whole, and delivery is quicker than if cutting work is conducted on-site. The project also demonstrates that having a focused team working in alignment with clear goals can deliver complex projects in tight timescales, safely and on budget.

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Bo Wirendal is a product manager at Studsvik Nuclear AB, and David Saul, Joe Robinson, and Gavin Davidson are with Studsvik UK Ltd. This article is based on a paper presented at Waste Management 2013 Conference, held February 24–28, 2013, in Phoenix, Ariz. Copyright WM Symposia Inc.

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Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) announced on January 2 that it has acquired S.M. Stoller Corporation for an undisclosed sum. A privately held company that performs work in 29 states from 18 offices nationwide, Stoller provides nuclear, environmental, and technical consulting and engineering services to the Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and the private sector. According to HII, Stoller will be a wholly owned subsidiary of HII and will operate under the company's Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) division. NNS is the nation's sole designer, builder, and refueler of nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and one of only two shipyards capable of designing and building nuclear-powered submarines. Matt Mulherin, HII corporate vice president and NNS president, said that the strategic acquisition positions NNS for expanded growth within the DOE, environmental management, and commercial nuclear services markets.

In October, NFT, an engineering, automation, and precision metal fabrication company serving the nuclear, aerospace, and industrial markets, announced that it has acquired the TRUPACT maintenance business from URS Corporation's Engineered Products Division (EPD) in Carlsbad, N.M. NFT will be responsible for maintaining, testing, and certifying a fleet of approximately 100 specialized waste management containers for Nuclear Waste Partnership, the Department of Energy's managing contractor for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad. The containers-known as TRUPACTs, HALFPACTs, and RH72-Bs, based on size and capacity-are used to transport nuclear waste to WIPP.

As part of the acquisition, NFT

said that it will take over a 40,000square-foot operating facility in Carlsbad, along with much of the existing equipment, significantly expanding the company's manufacturing capabilities.

Custom manufacturers Precision Custom Components (PCC) and DC Fabricators (DCF) jointly announced in November that they have formed Precision Components Group (PCG), a private holding company that now owns both companies in their entirety. The two companies will continue to operate independently, said PCG President and Chief Executive Officer Gary Butler, who will have operational and financial responsibilities for both companies. The corporate restructuring resulting from the formation of PCG, however, will enable the companies to leverage the operational and financial strengths of one another, Butler added.

Based in York, Pa., PCC is a manufacturer of custom-fabricated heavy pressure vessels, reactors, casks, and heavy-walled components for nuclear, commercial, and government applications. DCF, located in Florence, N.J., is involved in the design, technology, and manufacturing of steam condensers and heat exchangers for government and commercial heat transfer applications.

**PaR Systems**, an engineering and manufacturing company based in Minnesota, announced in December that it has acquired the major assets of Atlanta, Ga.-based **CAMotion** and **CAMotion Cranes**, which provide material handling equipment using Cartesian robotic technology for pick-and-place systems, palletizing and depalletizing machines, and advanced crane motion controls. According to PaR Systems, the acquisition will bring a suite of products and leading-edge technologies that will add to the existing material handling and crane technologies used by the company's hazardous environment, industrial, aerospace, and marine businesses.

#### **Business changes**

Perma-Fix Environmental Services announced that its 1-for-5 reverse stock split became effective on October 15. Under the reverse split, the number of outstanding shares of the company's common stock decreased by a factor of five, while the respective exercise prices of the options increased by a factor of five. According to the company, the resulting combination of and reduction in the number of shares of Perma-Fix's outstanding common stock occurred automatically without any action on the part of the company's stockholders and without regard to the date that certificates of outstanding shares of (pre-reverse split) common stock were physically surrendered for certificates of new (post-reverse split) common stock. The authorized number of shares of the company's common stock does not change as a result of the reverse stock split, and the new common stock was given a new CUSIP number, 714157203, according to Perma-Fix.

Sweden-based **Studsvik** announced on November 18 that it is creating a new, customer-oriented organization. According to Studsvik, the change is intended to increase the company's commercial focus, understanding of customer needs, clarify responsibilities, and enable profitable growth in selected service and prod-

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uct offerings. The new organization has been in place since January 1, and is divided into three business areas: Waste Treatment, which will focus on the management and treatment of radioactive waste, with main markets in Europe and the United States; Consultancy Services, which will provide qualified consulting services in areas such as radiological protection, waste, engineering, and decommissioning at nuclear facilities worldwide; and Operating Efficiency, which will focus on issues of fuel and reactor operations, with a global market.

In the new organization, Studsvik Group's management consists of Mats Fridolfsson, president of Waste Treatment; Stefan Berbner, president of Consultancy Services; Michael Mononen, chief executive officer and acting president of Operating Efficiency; Pål Jarness, chief financial officer; and Sam Usher, senior vice president of Business Development.

Holtec International announced that as of January 1, its Corporate Center, located in Marlton, N.J., has a new address. The original street name, Lincoln Drive West, has been changed to Holtec Drive in honor of the company. According to Holtec, Evesham Township, of which Marlton is a part, extended the recognition to Holtec for its long-term commitment to investing in the welfare of the local community and for its technology contributions to the energy industry. The company's new mailing address is Holtec International, One Holtec Dr., Marlton, NJ 08053-3421.

#### **Used nuclear fuel**

Areva TN announced in November that it has been awarded a \$12-

million contract by the Nebraska Public Power District's Cooper nuclear power plant to supply dry shielded canisters for the storage of used nuclear fuel. Areva TN said that its North Carolina–based subsidiary, Columbia Hi Tech, will manufacture the NUHOMS 61BTH canisters, which are scheduled to be delivered before the end of 2015. In addition, the company is currently constructing the Cooper plant's horizontal storage module that will store the NUHOMS canisters at the plant's independent spent fuel storage installation.

Earlier, in October, Areva TN said that it was awarded a multimillion-dollar contract to supply 46 NUHOMS dry cask storage systems to an unnamed U.S. nuclear utility for the management of its used nuclear fuel.

Holtec International announced in October that it has been awarded a contract by Svensk Kärnbränslehantering AB (SKB) to replace the company's existing fleet of transport casks with Holtec's HI-STAR 80 casks for the shipment of used nuclear fuel and core components from Sweden's Oskarshamn, Forsmark, and Ringhals nuclear power plants to SKB's central interim storage facility (CLAB). According to Holtec, the contract entails the design of the transport packages, licensing in the United States and Sweden, and fabrication at Holtec's facility in Pittsburgh, Pa., as well as training, testing, support services, and maintenance of the license for the next 30 years.

In addition to the casks, Holtec will design more than 30 pieces of ancillary equipment for the project and will fabricate and supply over 100 pieces of ancillary equipment, including lifting devices designed to Swedish nuclear safety standards and replacement components for the CLAB facility to accommodate the HI-STAR 80 cask. The casks will transport 12 pressurized water reactor (Ringhals) or 32 boiling water reactor (Oskarshamn and Forsmark) high-burnup fuel assemblies (above 45 gigawatt-days per metric ton uranium).

#### Utilities

Areva announced in November that it has been awarded a contract to provide STP Nuclear Operating Company with four of its Vega through-air radar spent fuel pool level instrumentation systems. STPNOC operates two boiling water reactors at the South Texas Project site near Palacios, Texas. According to Areva, the Vega system meets the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's new requirements for spent fuel pool level monitoring, as outlined in the agency's task force recommendations on post-Fukushima safety upgrades at U.S. nuclear power plants.

The Babcock & Wilcox Company announced in November that its subsidiary, Babcock & Wilcox Nuclear Energy, has been selected to provide inspection and repair services for an unnamed U.S. nuclear power plant that contains two B&W replacement recirculating steam generators. According to the company, B&W is providing recirculating steam generator primary and secondary inspection and repair services, which includes inspection of the steam generator tubing, inspection of the secondary side of the steam generator tubing, sludge lancing, enhanced sludge removal and

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analysis, and tube plugging and stabilizing. Work under the contract began in October and is scheduled to run through October 2021.

#### Spain

Westinghouse Electric Company received two separate contracts last fall from Spain's ENRESA (Empresa Nacional de Residuos Radiactivos) for nuclear waste management services. In September, Westinghouse announced that it received a contract to segment the reactor vessel head (RVH) and reactor vessel (RV) at the José Cabrera nuclear power station (also known as Zorita) in Almonacid de Zorita, 43 miles east of Madrid, Spain. According to Westinghouse, the contract covers the dismantling and segmentation of the RVH and RV, including the up-front engineering studies. It also includes the design of the RVH/RV detachment, manipulation, and lifting to the spent fuel pool, where mechanical cutting of the components will take place. Westinghouse will be the lead contractor for the project, and MONLAIN and VSL will be the main subcontractors. The project began in June 2013 and is expected to take approximately two years to complete.

In addition, Westinghouse an-

nounced in October that it has received a multimillion-dollar contract from ENRESA to provide the main engineering services for the centralized high-level radioactive waste and spent fuel interim storage facility (Almacén Temporal Centralizado, or ATC) in Spain. According to Westinghouse, the company will be working with TRSA S.A. and GHESA S.A., the major partners in Empresarios Agrupados A.I.E, an international provider of engineering and consulting services based in Madrid. The consortium will be responsible for the main engineering of the project, including revising the generic design and developing the detailed en-



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#### **United Kingdom**

The United Kingdom's Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) announced in October that it is extending its contract with Nuclear Management Partners, a consortium of URS, AMEC, and Areva, for a second five-year period. The first five-year period of the 17-year contract for managing the cleanup of the Sellafield nuclear site in the United Kingdom comes to an end in March 2014. As the parent body organization for Sellafield Ltd., Nuclear Management Partners manages and operates the Sellafield site on behalf of the NDA, a government authority. The scope of the work includes reprocessing and waste storage facilities and the former nuclear power stations Calder Hall and Windscale, as well as the engineering design center

at Risley. The value of the contract was not disclosed, but according to the NDA, the planned site expenditure for 2013-2014 is £1.76 million (about \$2.8 billion).

"Sellafield is by far the most complex and challenging site in our portfolio, and we are determined to drive improved performance at the site," said John Clarke, chief executive officer of the NDA. "We have reviewed progress under the contract to date and concluded that the right decision is to extend the contract to give [Nuclear Management Partners] further time to bring about the improvements in capability and performance at the site that we and they are looking for."



#### Canada

The Babcock & Wilcox Company has entered into a teaming agreement with Cavendish Nuclear and Battelle in pursuit of the Government Owned Contractor Operated contract for managing Atomic Energy of Canada's Nuclear Laboratories. According to Babcock & Wilcox, at a November reception held in Petawawa, Ontario, Ken Camplin, vice president of Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group, was joined by Andrew Wettern, business development director for Cavendish Nuclear, and Ron Townsend, executive vice president of Global Laboratory Operations for Battelle, to announce the new partnership and address municipal and community leaders, along with members of the local media.

#### Environmental Management

The Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management announced in November that it has awarded a competitive small business set-aside contract worth up to \$7.9 million to Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe Enterprises of Kinston, Ala., to provide DOE Transportation Tracking and Communications (TRANSCOM) technical support services. The DOE TRANSCOM system monitors and tracks active shipments of defenserelated used nuclear fuel and unclassified radioactive/nonradioactive, hazardous, and transuranic waste to and from DOE facilities. According to the DOE, Ma-Chis will perform all TRANSCOM monitoring and

tracking functions and will manage the TRANSCOM Communication Center located in Carlsbad, N.M. The contract has a one-year performance period and four one-year extension options.

#### Los Alamos National Laboratory

The Department of Energy announced in November that it has awarded a task order worth more than \$2.2 million to **Waste Control Specialists** of Andrews, Texas, to support the Los Alamos National Laboratory's legacy waste project. According to the DOE, the work will include the receipt and disposal of 355 yd<sup>3</sup> of Class C mixed low-level waste generated from cleanup and remediation activities at the lab. The fixed-price task order is based on preestablished rates and has a one-year performance period.

#### Portsmouth

On December 30, the Department of Energy announced it has awarded task orders to Pike Natural Gas of Hillsboro, Ohio, and Sage Energy Trading of Jenks, Okla., for natural gas services at the department's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Piketon, Ohio. The contract for Pike Natural Gas is a firm, fixed unit rate task order that is not to exceed \$5.25 million and has a 10-year performance period. Also a firm, fixed unit rate task order, the Sage Energy Trading contract is not to exceed \$2.5 million and has a one-year performance period. The contracts were awarded through the DOE's Office of Environmental Management.

#### Hanford

The Department of Energy announced on December 16 that it is extending by three years Mission Support Alliance's (MSA) contract for infrastructure and site services at the department's Hanford Site near Richland, Wash. According to the DOE, MSA was awarded in 2009 a cost-plusaward-fee contract valued at approximately \$3 billion for up to 10 years, with a five-year base period. The DOE said that it is exercising the first of two options for extension, which will take the contract through May 2017 for approximately \$736 million. MSA is a limited liability company formed by Lockheed Martin Integrated Technology, Jacobs Engineering Group, and WSI, along with a team of preselected subcontractors.

#### Air monitors

US Nuclear Corporation announced in December that its Overhoff Technology Corporation division has received a series of new purchase orders worth \$860,000 from the Department of Energy's Los Alamos National Laboratory, Atomtec in China, and Radiation Measurement Systems in Canada. According to US Nuclear Corp., the orders are for new and enhanced air monitors and process monitors, including the company's Model 357 Wire Grid HTO, Model Triathalon, and Model TGMS, a multidetector system designed to support the development of molten salt reactors in China.

#### **V** People in the news

Moving Up

**Fumio Sudo**, Tokyo Electric Power Company board member and former president of steelmaker JFE Holding Inc., has been selected as the next Tepco chairman. Sudo will replace **Kazuhiko Shimokobe**, who retires from the position at the end of March.

Donald Cool, a senior advisor in the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs, has been elected to the Main Commission of the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP). In addition, Cool has been appointed chairman of ICRP Committee Four, the standing committee on the application of radiological protection recommendations. An active participant in the ICRP for 29 years and a member of the standing committee since 1993, Cool joined the NRC in 1982 as a health physicist in the Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards' Fuel Cycle Safety Branch.

South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy has named Lee Jong-in chief executive officer of the Korea Radioactive Waste Agency. Lee was formerly chief of the Korea Institute of Nuclear Safety's Radiation Safety Evaluation Department.

Steve Edwards has been named chairman, president, and chief executive officer of Black & Veatch, succeeding Len Rodman, who has retired from the firm after 42 years, 15 of those as CEO. Before being named the company's chief operating officer in April 2013, Edwards was an executive vice president serving as executive director of global engineering, procurement, and construction for Black & Veatch's energy business.

Paula M. Marino has been named senior vice president of engineering and construction services for Southern Company operations. Previously vice president of engineering at the company's Southern Nuclear subsidiary, Marino has held various positions in distribution, transmission, fossil-hydro generation, and nuclear generation since joining Southern Company in 1993.

Southern Nuclear has named Dennis Madison vice president of fleet operations. Madison, who joined Southern Company in 1982, has been site vice president at the Hatch nuclear power plant since 2007. Replacing Madison at Hatch is David Vineyard, who had been plant manager at the site since 2012. Tony Spring has been selected to succeed Vineyard as plant manager at Hatch.

Also at Southern Nuclear, Cheryl Gayheart has been named site vice president at the Farley nuclear power plant, near Dothan, Ala. Prior to joining Southern Nuclear in 2012 as Farley plant manager, Gayheart was fleet operations corporate functional area manager at Exelon corporate. She began her career in 1985 as a staff engineer and supervisor at Exelon's Braidwood nuclear plant in Illinois. Gayheart's successor as plant manager at Farley is **II Hutto**, who previously was the facility's engineering director. He began his career at Farley in 1998 as an engineer in the maintenance department.

Babcock & Wilcox Conversion Services LLC has named **Gary L**. **Scott** to the new position of deputy manager of the DUF<sub>6</sub> Project's conversion plant in Piketon, Ohio. Most recently, Scott was acting plant deputy manager and director of waste management and transportation. He has also served as deputy manager of the Department of Energy's Carlsbad Field Office and was the facility manager of the Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Idaho National Laboratory.

Chris Theobald has joined Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Group as vice president, United Kingdom. Theobald was previously managing director of the nuclear and defense technical services unit at Serco, an international service company. Prior to his work with Serco, Theobald served in a number of operations and business director roles for leading defense and technology companies, including BAE Systems.

Bill Reis has been appointed vice president of public and governmental affairs for Babcock & Wilcox Technical Services Y-12. Reis has worked at the Oak Ridge, Tenn., nuclear security site for 30 years in a variety of positions, and most recently was vice president for environment, safety, and health.

The Institute of Nuclear Power Operations' board of directors recently announced a number of organizational changes. William Webster and Dianne Davenport have been named executive vice presidents of U.S. industry and INPO corporate, respectively, while David Garchow has been appointed vice president of INPO International and regional director of the World Association of Nuclear Operators' Atlanta Center, replacing David Farr, who began an industry reverse loan assignment in January. Other appointments include Clair Goddard, senior vice president of industry self-awareness and continuous improvement; David Igyarto, senior vice president of workforce training, education, and proficiency; James Lynch, vice president of plant performance recovery; Steve Nichols, vice president of plant technical support; Lisa Brattin, vice president of talent and culture; and Kris Straw, chief financial officer and vice president of corporate structure.

Entergy has announced a number of organizational changes. Mike Balduzzi, senior vice president of technical services, retires on February 1 after more than 30 years in the com-

#### People in the news

mercial nuclear industry. Before assuming his current role in 2011, Balduzzi was senior vice president of regional operations for Entergy Nuclear's northeast region. Succeeding Balduzzi is **Donna Jacobs**, site vice president at Waterford-3. Jacobs joined Entergy Nuclear in March 2008 as senior vice president of planning, development, and oversight. **Mike Chisum**, general manager of plant operations at Arkansas Nuclear One, succeeds Jacobs at Waterford-3.

Xcel Energy has named **Kevin Davison** site vice president at the Prairie Island nuclear power plant. Davison joined Xcel in 2010 as the Prairie Island plant manager and has been director of site operations there since November 2011. He succeeds James Lynch, an executive from the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, who returns to that organization after serving as site vice president at Prairie Island since October 2012 (see INPO news on previous page).

Thomas R. White, president of Sargent & Lundy, became the firm's chairman and chief executive officer on January 1, succeeding Alan W. (Bud) Wendorf, who retired at the end of 2013 after a 41-year career in the power industry. White, a licensed professional engineer, joined Sargent & Lundy in 1985 and has been an owner since 2000.

Tom Franch, a senior vice presi-

dent of Areva North America, has been elected chairman of the board of directors of E4 Carolinas, an organization established to promote economic growth in the area of energy in the Carolinas region, for 2014 and 2015. With more than 30 years of energy industry experience, including 13 years with Areva, Franch began the two-year term January 1, replacing inaugural co-chairs **George Baldwin**, of Piedmont Natural Gas, and **Clark Gillespy**, of Duke Energy South Carolina.

Los Alamos National Laboratory recently announced the appointment of two new associate directors: Mary Hockaday, Experimental Physical Sciences Directorate associate direc-



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#### People in the news $\checkmark$

tor, and Cheryl Cabbil, Nuclear and High Hazard Operations associate director. A 30-year veteran of LANL, Hockaday was the deputy associate director for the Weapons Physics Directorate prior to her new appointment and served as LANL's program director in support of the Department of Energy and National Nuclear Security Administration's Science and Inertial Confinement Fusion and High Yield campaigns. Cabbil, who joined LANL in December 2013, was previously with UCOR, the DOE cleanup contractor for the Oak Ridge Reservation, where she was vice president for environment, safety, health, and quality assurance. Before that, Cabbil was senior vice president for United Research Services Safety Management Solutions and deputy laboratory director of research operations and assurance at Savannah River National Laboratory.

Cameco's board of directors has appointed **Catherine A. Gignac** as a member. A resident of Mississauga, Ontario, Gignac has over 30 years of experience in the Canadian mining industry as a geologist, mining equity research analyst, and consultant. She has held positions with several firms, including Merrill Lynch Canada, Wellington West Capital Markets Inc., UBS Investment Bank, RBC Capital Markets, Dundee Capital Markets Inc., and Loewen Ondaatje McCutcheon Limited.

The board of directors at CB&I has approved two executive management appointments: Patrick K. Mullen, as executive vice president and operating group president of engineering, construction, and maintenance, and James Sabin, as executive vice president, global systems. Mullen joined CB&I in 2007 through the company's acquisition of Lummus Global and most recently served as CB&I's executive vice president for corporate development. Sabin joined CB&I in 2013 through the company's acquisition of Shaw and was previously CB&I's senior vice president for global systems.



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lease provide both Home & Organization addresses to ensure delivery.
<sup>1</sup> lease indicate postal mailing preference: O HOME O WORK
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## POSITION

Please indicate one position which most nearly matches your own.

- O Vice President (12) O President (11) O Health Physicist (41)
- O Chemist (42)
- O Technician (43)
- O Analyst (44)

O 0wner (14)

O Director (13)

- O Consultant (45)
- O Scientist (46)
- O other specialist (49)

O Supervisor (22)

O Superintendent (21) O other official (19)

O Manager (23)

- O Professor (51)
- O Instructor (52)
- O Trainer (53)
- O other educational title (59)

O other managerial title (29)

O Department Head (25) O Chief Engineer (24)

- Reactor Operator or Senior
- Reactor Operations Supervisor (72) Reactor Operator (71)
- O other (69)
- INDUSTRY

O other engineering title (39)

O Mechanical Engineer (33) O Electrical Engineer (32) O Nuclear Engineer (31)

O Chemical Engineer (34)

Please indicate one industry which most nearly matches your own.

- O Supplier (12) O Manufacturer (11) O Construction Company (42)
- O Educational Institution (51)
- O Private Research Lab (21) O Medical Institution (61)
- O Consulting Company (71)
- O Service Company (72)

O National Lab (31)

O Test Lab (22)

- O Utility (81)
- O Government Agency (32)
- O other (69)

O Active Military (33)

O Architect/Engineer Company (41)

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# Dues include free membership in TWO technical divisions

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Note: Professionals under age 36, Young Members Group (YMG) is an automatic addition to the two divisions. Others may join YMG for \$10.00. YMG may not be substituted for the two divisions included with membership.

- Aerospace Nuclear Science Accelerator Applications Mathematics & Computation<sup>1</sup> Materials Science & Technology
- & Technology

Nuclear Criticality Safety

- Biology & Medicine<sup>1</sup> Decommissioning & Nuclear Installations Safety
- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Technical Group

Education, Training &

Environmental Science<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Includes Nuclear Production of Hydrogen working group <sup>1</sup> Includes Computational Medical Physics working group

# TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

and agree that if accepted, I will be governed by the Society's Code of that the record of my training and professional experience is correct, I hereby apply for admission to the American Nuclear Society. I certify long as I remain a member. Ethics (ans.org/about/coe), Bylaws, and Rules (ans.org/about/br) as

## Signature

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### The Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Division

is one of the largest and most active divisions in the ANS. We deal with all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle—mining, enrichment, fuel fabrication, fuel design, reprocessing, storage, geologic repositories, waste processing, waste form testing, advanced fuel cycle evaluations, fissile material management, and national fuel cycle policies.



#### A Professional Division of the American Nuclear Society ANS.org

#### 2014 Awards Nomination Request

#### Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Significant Contribution Award

This award was established in 2014 by the Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Division to recognize individuals or teams for a successful accomplishment that significantly advanced the scientific, engineering, societal, or regulatory aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle and/or the nuclear waste management.

Awards may be given to an individual or collectively to a team for success on a single project, activity, contribution, or sustained initiative related to the nuclear fuel cycle and/or nuclear waste management.

#### Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Lifetime Achievement Award

This award was established in 2014 by the Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Division to recognize individuals who have made major lifetime contributions that significantly advanced the scientific, engineering, societal, or regulatory aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle and/or the nuclear waste management mission.

Nominees need to be living longstanding ANS members at the time of nomination with a minimum of 25 years working in the field.

#### Distinguished Service on behalf of the Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Division

This award was established in 2014 by the Fuel Cycle and Waste Management Division to recognize the outstanding participation in the leadership of the Division or in public outreach activities representing the division.

We would like to recognize outstanding contributions by our members to advancement of the common goals in relation to all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle and we are actively seeking nominations for our three recently created prestigious awards.

Please send nominations to the FCWM chair at **delculgd@ornl.gov** not later than April 1st. The awards will be presented at the ANS National Meeting in Reno, Nevada in June.

For more information and details visit our web page *fcwmd.ans.org* or contact the chair.

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## Meetings of interest **V**

## February

Feb. 16–19 **Public Information Materials Exchange (PIME 2014),** Ljubljana, Slovenia. Organized by the European Nuclear Society in collaboration with Foratom. Contact: Kirsten Epskamp, ENS, phone +32 2 505 30 54; fax +32 2 502 39 02; e-mail pime2014@ euronuclear.org; web <u>www.euronuclear.org/events/</u> <u>pime/pime2014/index.htm</u>.

## March

Mar. 2–6 Waste Management Conference (WM2014), Phoenix, Ariz. Presented by WM Symposia. Contact: WM Symposia, phone 480/557-0263; e-mail onlinereg@wmarizona.org; web www.wmsym.org/.

Mar. 10–11 NCRP 50th Annual Meeting, Bethesda, Md. Sponsored by the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements. Contact: James Cassata, NCRP, phone 301/657-2652; fax 301/907-8768; e-mail cassata@ncrponline.org; web <u>http://civclients.com/ncrp/</u>.

Mar. 24–27 Facility Decommissioning Training Course, Las Vegas, Nev. Sponsored by Argonne National Laboratory. Contact: Larry Boing, ANL, phone 630/252-6729; fax 630/252-7577; e-mail lboing@anl.gov; web www.dd.anl.gov/ddtraining/.

## April

Apr. 8–10 Symposium on Recycling of Metals Arising from Operation and Decommissioning of Nuclear Facilities, Nyköping, Sweden. Organized by Studsvik Nuclear, the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency. Contact: Anders Appelgren, Studsvik, phone +46 0 155 22 12 57; e-mail anders.appelgren@studsvik.se; web <u>www.</u> studsvik.com/en/about-studsvik/news-archive/2013/ sweden/syposium-on-recycling-of-metals-/.

Apr. 8–10 World Nuclear Fuel Cycle 2014, San

Meetings listed in the Calendar section that are not sponsored by the American Nuclear Society do not have the endorsement of ANS, nor does ANS have any financial or legal responsibility for these meetings. Francisco, Calif. Organized by the Nuclear Energy Institute and the World Nuclear Association. Contact: Linda Wells, NEI, phone 202/739-8039; e-mail ljw@ nei.org; web <u>www.wnfc.info/</u>.

Apr. 29–May 1 **51st Annual SRP Conference**, Southport, England. Sponsored by the Society for Radiological Protection. Contact: SRP, phone +44 0 1803 866 743; fax +44 0 8442 724 892; e-mail unity.stuart@srp-uk.org; web <u>www.srp-uk.org/event/18/annual-conference-2014</u>.

## May

May 6–8 Used Fuel Management Conference, St. Petersburg, Fla. Sponsored by the Nuclear Energy Institute. Contact: NEI, phone 202/739-8000; fax 202/ 785-4019; e-mail conferences@nei.org; web <u>www.nei.</u> <u>org/conferences</u>.

May 12–14 7th International Conference on Waste Management and the Environment (Waste Management 2014), Ancona, Italy. Organized by the Wessex Institute of Technology and the Università Politecnica delle Marche. Contact: Genna West, Wessex Institute, phone +44 0 238 029 3223; fax +44 0 238 029 2853; e-mail gwest@wessex.ac.uk; web <u>www.wessex.ac.</u> uk/waste2014.

May 25–29 **CRPA-ACRP Annual Conference,** Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Organized by the Canadian Radiation Protection Association (Association Canadienne de Radioprotection). Contact: CRPA-ACRP, phone 613/253-3779; fax 888/551-0712; e-mail secretariat@ crpa-acrp.ca; web <u>http://crpa-acrp.org/conference/</u>.

## June

June 3–6 2nd International Symposium on Cement-based Materials for Nuclear Wastes (NUWCEM 2014), Avignon, France. Organized by the Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique et aux Énergies Alternatives and the Société Française d'Energie Nucléaire. Contact: Patricia Hamel-Bloch, SFEN, e-mail phamel-bloch@sfen.fr; web <u>www.sfen.fr/nuwcem-2014</u>.

June 15–19 2014 ANS Annual Meeting, Reno, Nev. Sponsored by the American Nuclear Society. Contact: John Grossenbacher, Idaho National Laboratory,

## Meetings of interest

phone 208/526-9021; e-mail john.grossenbacher@ inl.gov; web www.ans.org/meetings/c\_1.

June 15–19 Embedded Topical: Advances in Thermal Hydraulics 2014 (ATH '14), Reno, Nev. Sponsored by the ANS Thermal Hydraulics Division. Contact: Kurshad Muftuoglu, GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, phone 910/338-1467; e-mail kurshad.muftuoglu@ ge.com; web www.ans.org/meetings/c 1.

June 15–19 Embedded Topical: Decommissioning and Remote Systems (D&RS 2014), Reno, Nev. Sponsored by the ANS Robotics & Remote Systems and Decommissioning & Environmental Sciences Divisions. Contact: Thomas Sanders, Savannah River National Laboratory, phone 803/725-8111; e-mail thomas.sanders@srnl.doe.gov; web www.ans.org/meetings/c\_1. June 15–19 Embedded Topical: Nuclear Fuels and Structural Materials for the Next Generation Nuclear Reactors, Reno, Nev. Sponsored by the ANS Fusion Energy and Materials Science & Technology Divisions. Contact: Todd Allen, Idaho National Laboratory, phone 208/526-8096; e-mail todd.allen@inl.gov; or Lance Snead, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, phone 865/288-3116; fax 865/241-3650; e-mail sneadll@ornl. gov; web www.ans.org/meetings/c 1.

June 24–26 **IGD-TP Geodisposal 2014,** Manchester, England. Sponsored by the Implementing Geological Disposal–Technology Platform. Contact: Raymond Kowe, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's Radioactive Waste Management Directorate, e-mail geodisposal2014@ manchester.ac.uk; web <u>www.meeting.co.uk/confercare/</u> <u>geodisposal2014</u>.



## Meetings of interest 🔻

# July

July 20–24 **INMM 55th Annual Meeting,** Atlanta, Ga. Sponsored by the Institute of Nuclear Materials Management. Contact: INMM, phone 847/480-9573; fax 847/480-9282; e-mail inmm@inmm.org; web <u>www.</u> inmm.org.

## And coming up (ANS meetings) . . .

18th Topical Meeting of the Radiation Protection & Shielding Division of ANS (RPSD 2014), Sept. 14–18,

## 2014, Knoxville, Tenn.

2014 American Nuclear Society Winter Meeting and Nuclear Technology Expo, Nov. 9–13, 2014, Disney Resort & Hotel, Anaheim, Calif.

Embedded Topical: 21st Topical Meeting on the Technology of Fusion Energy (TOFE), Nov. 9–13, 2014, Disney Resort & Hotel, Anaheim, Calif.

2015 American Nuclear Society Annual Meeting, June 7–11, 2015, Grand Hyatt San Antonio, San Antonio, Texas.



For more information contact: Earl Beckwith & Associates 301-570-7766 or 800-250-3678 AnsExpo@earlbeckwith.com

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