

**Minutes of Quarterly Meeting #10**  
Decommissioning Community Workgroup  
Tuesday, January 15, 2002  
St. Stephen's AME Church  
Sandusky, Ohio

The meeting began at 7:30 PM. The following were present: Workgroup members Janet and Mark Bohne, Rick Graham, Ethel Roldan, Ralph Roshong, Bob Speers and Bill Walker. The following NASA staff were present: Tim Polich; Keith Peecook; Sally Harrington; Peter Kolb; Mike Blotzer, Manny Dominguez and Kevin Coleman. Also present were Wes Watson from the US Army Corps of Engineers; John Heggie from Montgomery Watson Harza; Jim Polaczynski, Marv Smith and Debbie Demaline from Indyne, Inc.; Virginia Dawson, Mark Bowles and Bob Arrighi from History Enterprises Inc. and Susan Santos and Michael Morgan from FOCUS GROUP. Four members of the public were also in attendance (two of them NASA retirees) as well as Bob Finkelstein from the Sandusky Register.

The meeting began with welcoming comments from Rev. Thomas Darden, pastor of St. Stephen's and a former Workgroup member. Tim Polich then welcomed the Workgroup on behalf of NASA and introduced members of the Decommissioning Team. Susan Santos followed by asking Workgroup members if they had any questions or revisions regarding the minutes from the October meeting. There were no questions, and the Workgroup approved the meeting minutes.

Safety Presentation

John Heggie of MWH gave the Safety Presentation on critical lifts, dealing with the cranes being used on the Decommissioning Project. He said a critical lift pertains to situations where a crane is to lift more than 75% of its capacity [Example: a crane with a 5-ton (10,000 lbs.) capacity lifting more than 7,500 lbs.]. He also mentioned a number of other critical lift concerns, including whether a failed lift could cause serious environmental concerns, whether the load is a one of a kind item, whether a failed lift can cause serious mission schedule problems and whether the item to be lifted is a high-dollar item.

John explained that each leg of the crane must be able to lift a certain amount of weight, considering both the weight of the load and the angle at which it is suspended. He went on to say that environmental concerns regarding a critical lift are determined by a site assessment while also considering factors such as waterways, public areas and the container of the item to be lifted. He also mentioned a number of health and safety concerns including whether the path will go over people or near overhead electrical wires, weather conditions and the age and condition of both the lifting equipment and the load. He noted what can happen when a critical lift goes wrong. The Decommissioning Project will involve several critical lifts. John explained that a number of steps are required to address critical lifts:

- Additional planning, over and above a normal lift, including detailed sketches of the load, load path and area
- Identification of key players, additional training and sometimes, a dry run
- Inspection, load testing and certification of all rigging and materials involved
- Completion and review of a Job Safety Analysis

Manny Dominguez, Chief of Safety at the NASA Glenn Research Center, stressed NASA's experience in critical lifts and the importance of the Job Safety Analysis. Workgroup member Bill Walker asked if the analysis were required by NASA or OSHA. John said it was a

combination of both, and Keith Peecook pointed out that although NASA and USACE have different critical lift standards “we use the most restrictive standard.”

### Decommissioning Update

Tim Polich followed with an update on the Decommissioning Plan. He noted that in November, NASA submitted to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) changes to Revision 2 of the Decommissioning Plan and, in December, submitted a No Significant Hazards Analysis. Based on a discussion he had with the NRC in mid-December, Tim expects approval of the Decommissioning Plan by the end of February.

Tim also spoke about a NASA internal review of the Decommissioning Project and efforts to ensure that all project teams are “on the same page.” These efforts included the IRR (Internal Readiness Review, formerly known as the Non Advocates Review), which was held in October. In the IRR, a group of NASA and outside professionals – who, Tim said, “have no vested interest in seeing the project go forward” – heard a presentation from the Decommissioning Team and reviewed its plans, programs and procedures for the project. In December, the group held a debriefing. Tim reported that the IRR gave the Decommissioning Team “approval to move forward into the execution phase” of the project. Manny Dominguez pointed out that an IRR is standard for any major NASA project, not just for the decommissioning.

Tim also talked about the Partnering Sessions, which were held in early December with “a significant number of folks – 60 or so ... (working) on-site or directly supporting the site.” The purpose of the Partnering Sessions was to get all the team members together to discuss effective communication, planning, goal setting and information sharing. He added that, during the first two workdays in January, the Decommissioning Team went over “lessons learned from Pre-decommissioning” and also responded to feedback received during Partnering that workers “wanted people to see the big picture of the Decommissioning Project.”

### Pre-decommissioning Update

Keith Peecook gave a presentation on pre-decommissioning work that has taken place since the October Workgroup meeting. He noted that “the bulk of the effort has been going after loose equipment” in the Reactor Facility and making a list of all the equipment in the quadrants and canals. He said the NASA team had also performed what is termed a Part 61 Characterization, which involved using hand-held Geiger counters to take direct radiation readings on each piece of loose equipment that is to be shipped for processing and disposal, and also taking physical “swipe” samples on loose contamination (which can be compared to dust on the surface of an item) and drilling for fixed contamination. The samples are being sent to a certified, off-site laboratory for analysis. The purpose of the Part 61 Characterization is to determine the type and level of radiation for each item, which determines what kind of packaging to use, as well as shipping requirements. Keith noted that the samples take a month to analyze, adding that for material that was not exposed to a high amount of neutron radiation, this level of sampling and analysis is enough.

For equipment located “closer to the reactor core,” the team will perform an Activation Analysis. This analysis looks at the specific metals that make up the components of the equipment and, based on how irradiated they became during the reactor’s operation, tells what the expected composition of the metal is today. Then, a complex computer analysis takes into account the configuration of the reactor core, the power history of the reactor, and the composition of all the materials involved.

Keith also talked about current Pre-decommissioning work, which includes packaging loose equipment in the Reactor Facility's canals into B-25 boxes (the same type used in last summer's Pre-decommissioning shipment). Some segmentation (cutting for volume reduction) of this loose equipment may be necessary. This work will extend into February, and the B-25 boxes will be securely stored inside the Reactor Facility until shipment for reprocessing and disposal.

#### Next Steps on Pre-decommissioning

Keith said that the team will take a physical sample of material from inside the reactor in order to "anchor" the Activation Analysis. The team will also determine if the reactor components appear as they are expected to look and what their physical condition is. In addition, the team will determine direct radiation levels in the reactor. Keith mentioned that Duke Engineering has hired a subcontractor (Wachs Technical Services) to remove the reactor tank this summer and "cut it up," (a process known as segmentation) pending NRC approval of the Decommissioning Plan.

Keith said there will be a considerable amount of planning that will precede entry into the reactor tank – work which can be done under the terms of NASA's current license with the NRC – including a safety review, ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Allowable – referring to radiation exposure) review and a critical lift review. When the entry takes place, the crew will turn off a "dry nitrogen purge," remove three 20-ton shrapnel shields in the reactor and remove the reactor tank heads. Using a 30-foot pole, the crew will take a "snip" sample from inside the reactor tank and insert a video camera and radiation detection equipment into the tank. Afterwards the shields will then be replaced and the hatch to the reactor tank closed. Keith said the NRC will be present during the reactor tank entry.

Keith also briefly described the work to occur in the year ahead, once the Decommissioning Plan has been approved, which will include removal of the "reactor internals" (equipment and components within the reactor vessel) and segmentation of the vessel. Keith said there were several reasons for removing the reactor internals as the first step in decommissioning. First, it will remove the major remaining source of contamination. Second, this material will be sent to the Chem Nuclear Licensed Waste Disposal Facility in Barnwell, South Carolina, where "the clock is running," as Barnwell will eventually stop accepting waste. By "going after the reactor stuff first," NASA will ensure that there is adequate time and space for disposal of waste from the Decommissioning Project.

Workgroup member Ethel Roldan asked about reactor security at both Plum Brook and the Davis Besse Facility. Keith noted that "we're on an elevated level" of security at Plum Brook and reiterated that there has been no radioactive fuel at Plum Brook since 1973. He pointed out that the level of radiation at the NASA facility is very low, "just residual radiation on concrete or steel pipes" in the Reactor Facility. Tim noted that NASA is still following NRC security procedures and mentioned a situation last fall in which a plane flew over Plum Brook Station in defiance of a no-fly zone. The result, said Tim, was a helicopter escort for the plane within a few minutes of its being spotted.

Workgroup member Mark Bohne said he was concerned that security requirements could leave Workgroup members trying to "manage the project from afar." He suggested that if last October's cancelled reactor tour were to be rescheduled, it would be advantageous to have had as much security clearance work as possible be done in advance. Keith said he would like to see the tour rescheduled and agreed to "get a jump on" any security paper work that might need to be done ahead of a tour. Tim noted that there had been a change in NRC security procedures in early

January that could make rescheduling more feasible, but he wanted to talk with the NRC first, before any further discussion of a tour or security clearance.

### Historic Preservation

Kevin Coleman, the Records Manager and History Officer at the NASA Glenn Research Center, followed with an overview of the Reactor Historic Preservation Project. He introduced Drs. Virginia Dawson and Mark Bowles (both of History Enterprises, Inc.), historians who are writing a history of the facility. Mark Bowles then gave a presentation in which he described the various elements of the project, which will involve:

- A 400-page scholarly publication
- (2) fact sheets/brochures for general distribution per year
- A 50-page illustrated history that will be distributed to schools, libraries and local historical societies
- Participation in local community outreach programs at least twice a year
- A CD or DVD containing oral histories about the facility, derived from interviews with community leaders and NASA retirees
- An electronic archive of some 200 boxes of documents and photographs from Plum Brook Station

Mark said the history will focus on the Reactor Facility but will also trace Plum Brook Station's history from the days when Plum Brook Station was farm land, through World War II the Cold War, and extend to the actual Decommissioning Project. Workgroup member Bob Speers asked if there would be historical material posted on a website, and Mark confirmed there would be. Jim Polaczynski of Indyne, Inc. then discussed the video that will be produced, which will include interviews with former PBRF workers, a taped visit to the Reactor Facility that the retirees made last September and, he hopes, a nationally known narrator to host the documentary. Jim said NASA hopes to eventually show the video on either the History Channel or the Discovery Channel (or other cable network), or on Nova (Public Broadcasting System), or a local PBS station, and will make copies of the video available to schools and local groups. He also said that a DVD, which will include still photos and time-lapse photography of the Decommissioning Project, will also be produced.

Finally, Marv Smith of Indyne, Inc. described his efforts, which includes documentation (with still photographs) of the Decommissioning Project. He will take "then and now" pictures of the Reactor Facility control room and other locations and will work with NASA retirees to better identify and label archival photos. Mark Bohne asked if it would be possible to photograph the Reactor Facility so that it shows "the low level of degradation after years of operations...so that the NRC can show that nuclear reactors are safe." Tim responded that NASA will document "everything in the removal process and the Final Status Survey." He also referred to his work with the American Nuclear Society, observing, "we're looking at lessons learned from Decommissioning...to construct the next generation of nuclear plants."

### Community Relations

Sally Harrington mentioned several Community Outreach initiatives, noting that the January newsletter was mailed to some 1,300 recipients the week before. Workgroup members said they had received it and commented favorably on the edition. Sally also mentioned that the Decommissioning Website, which had been taken off line after the events of September 11, was

back on-line (although some materials have been redacted or removed). She added that both the Website and the 24-Hour Information Line will be updated. Susan Santos urged Workgroup members to call the Information Line and “give us a sense of what we’re providing...Let us know what should be on the line” and asked for similar comments regarding the newsletter.

Next, Susan briefly discussed upcoming Community Relations activities, noting that when it is feasible, a Reactor Tour for Workgroup members will be arranged. She also noted that there will be a newspaper supplement on the project in the Sandusky Register (most likely in March) and there are plans for a Near Neighbors Reception this spring and another Community Information Session this fall. The next edition of the newsletter will be published in April.

#### Workgroup Membership

Susan noted that with the resignation of Deborah Alex-Saunders last fall, Workgroup membership currently stood at 13. She suggested that it would be good to add two members, with an eye toward increasing both near neighbor and women participation on the Workgroup. She suggested that Chris Gasteier, Perkins High School principal and near neighbor (Cambridge Circle resident) be invited to join, and the Workgroup agreed. She then suggested Jeanette Murphy Henson, a Sandusky resident and a leading administrator in the Sandusky City Schools (who had previously been recommended for membership by the late Barbara Johnson, a former PBRF worker and community leader). Workgroup members agreed with her nomination also. NASA will send a letter to each of the nominees, in the hopes that they will join before the April Workgroup meeting.

#### Next Meeting

The next Workgroup meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 23, at a location to be determined. Susan asked Workgroup members for suggestions on meeting topics.

Janet Bohne suggested more information on the reprocessing that takes place at the Alaron facility in Pennsylvania. Rick Graham asked for more information on other activities taking place at Plum Brook Station, mentioning that in December, people had seen a truck traveling from PBS on US 250, accompanied by a police escort. [This was not related to the Decommissioning but to the test firing of a nose cone on a Boeing rocket at the PBS Space Power Facility]. Susan suggested that if the Decommissioning Team knew of an event scheduled at another Plum Brook Station facility, then news of the test/event should be recorded on the Information Line. She also suggested to Workgroup members that “if you see or hear of something’ (of interest or concern) to call the Information Line and leave a message in the Messages for Decommissioning Team mailbox.

Rick also suggested more discussion on the results of characterization of radiation to date, and letting Workgroup members see the actual data. Keith noted that results to date have been “much less than in the hot cells,” and Tim reiterated that monitoring and sampling have taken place since last spring. The group agreed that characterization and a schedule of Decommissioning Activities will be among the topics for the next meeting.

The Workgroup meeting adjourned at 9:15 PM.