

**Meeting of the Decommissioning Project Community Workgroup (#34)
Tuesday, June 24, 2008
Huron Public Library, Huron, OH**

The meeting began at 7 p.m. The following Workgroup members were present: Barbara Berg, Anne Hinton, Rick Myosky, Ralph Roshong, Bob Speers and Lois TerVeen. Representing NASA were Decommissioning Program Manager Keith Peecook, Senior Project Engineer Pete Kolb and NASA Glenn Public Affairs Specialist Sally Harrington. Also present Susan Santos and Michael Morgan of FOCUS GROUP. Attendees included six members of the public, including NASA retirees Jack Crooks and Jim Martz and former NASA hydrogeological consultants Bob and Ruth Haag.

Keith Peecook provided some opening remarks and introductions to members of the Decommissioning Team. Susan Santos asked for, and received, acceptance of the February Workgroup meeting minutes, and reviewed the June agenda.

Project Update

Keith began the Project Update by discussing ongoing decontamination work in Reactor Facility buildings and structures. He noted that decontamination was being conducted in the Hot Retention Area, which was used as a large holding tank for water awaiting discharge when the reactor was operational, and that an 80,000-pound lead door there would be decontaminated and made available for recycling. He also pointed out that successful decontamination in the Primary Pump House had enabled NASA to leave on site 11 million pounds of concrete that otherwise would have been sent (to the Energy Solutions licensed disposal facility in Utah) as low-level radioactive waste (LLRW). He added that he hoped to take Workgroup members on a Reactor Facility tour in the spring of 2009 (the last Workgroup tour took place in the fall of 2004).

Keith then reported on decontamination and asbestos work in the quadrants and canals of the Containment Vessel - and the removal of some lead anchors and metal struts from the walls of the structure. He mentioned that asbestos abatement is taking place in the quadrants and canals because the Reactor Facility's builders had used a fiberglass wallpaper and epoxy paint to keep contamination out of the concrete. Unfortunately, the mastic used to apply the fiberglass covering contained asbestos, which needed to be carefully removed. He pointed out that there are about 46,000 square feet of concrete in the floors and walls of the quadrants and canals that are being cleaned and surveyed. In order to decontaminate the walls, workers have mounted a floor shaver to the walls and then used hand tools such as the sponge jet blaster. He also showed the latter tool being used to remove spot contamination from the Primary Pump House.

Bio-shield Removal

Keith went on to discuss the removal of the bio-shield, a concrete and steel structure that had once provided an extra layer of protection for workers when the reactor was operational. He noted that the structure was eight feet thick on the side that faced the quadrants and two feet thick the side facing the canal - and that parts of the bio-shield had become activated due to their exposure to the reactor, especially the eight-foot -high

thermal column that had once been used to reduce the activity and heat of the neutrons that had passed through the reactor. He said workers from former radiological contractor MOTA Corp. had removed the thermal column while leaving behind tons of clean concrete that can be used as fill when the project is complete. Keith showed slides of the thermal column removal, noting that holes had been drilled into the concrete in order to stage a powerful diamond wire saw to cut through the concrete. He pointed out that the saw could cut “through eight feet of concrete in two hours.” Keith also said the remote controlled Brokk, a track-mounted piece of equipment that has an arm which can be fitted with a variety of tools, was used to reduce the concrete of the bio-shield to rubble.

Embedded and Buried Piping

Keith reported that pipe cleanup contractor BSI had demobilized. He noted that last year, BSI cleaned 19,600 feet of embedded piping (pipes encased in concrete at least three feet below ground), and that nearly 7,200 feet of this pipe had been grouted - filled with a cement-like substance to stabilize it. He also noted that a few hundred feet of buried piping (which is not encased in concrete or as deep in the ground) had also been cleaned. He explained that because this piping is not shielded by concrete (as is embedded piping) it had to be cleaned to a higher standard.

Characterization & Final Status Survey

Keith reported on characterization activity within PRBF buildings and grounds, noting that NASA employed a Geoprobe - a two-pronged deep drilling device - to conduct sampling near PRBF building foundations. There were 43 locations where this work took place this past winter, with the Geoprobe going down as far as 25 feet to bedrock. Another area sampled in this fashion was the site of the old sewage treatment plant, with 20 locations drilled near Taylor Road. All samples are under laboratory analysis and were found to be at or below background levels.

Keith said he was “thrilled” to report that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) had formally approved the NASA Final Status Survey (FSS) plan in March. He noted that subcontractor SAIC has been conducting FSS field work, since last September, starting in the Reactor Office and Lab Building since then completing work there and in the ATS Building, Service Equipment Building, Cold Pipe Tunnel and Sub-pile Room. Keith noted that the FSS is “our finished product” and that teams from the NRC and its independent contractor - the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Engineering (ORISE) had visited PRBF “to do interviewing and instrument swinging.” He pointed out that ORISE had given NASA “a clean bill of health” after reviewing NASA’s FSS procedures, adding that “it was great to get that validation.” Keith also said NASA had grouted the Sub-pile Room (the area below the former location of the reactor) and that “we will backfill the areas above.”

Off-site Contamination

Keith stated that NASA had sent to federal, state and county regulators a report on the results of the extensive sampling program conducted along Plum Brook from late 2005 to early this year. He thanked hydrogeologists Bob and Ruth Haag for their work and pointed out that none of the more than 2,000 sediment samples taken posed any health

concern. He added that the sampling results had also been sent to the office of Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, who he noted had held a public meeting on the issue in January 2006

Keith reported that at the NRC's recommendation, NASA has been developing new DCGL's for areas adjacent to Plum Brook. He said NASA had been examining levels for cesium, strontium and cobalt in soil, noting that it was hard to detect strontium with some field instruments. He also explained that NASA had used what are termed "Res Rad" computer modeling and pointed out that at the Reactor Facility site, the overall exposure dose could be no more than 25 millirem per year above normal background radiation. He noted that on-site exposure pathways include soil, water and grazing animals that might be on site.

Keith pointed out that the existing DCGL's do not reflect exposure conditions along Plum Brook and said NASA was developing "site specific DCGLs," based on land uses for brookside residents, Plum Brook Country Club workers and local gardeners, as well as for children playing along Plum Brook. He said NASA is still developing a dose model for children which would include a child "eating Plum Brook dirt or pollywogs." He also said that a DCGL of 95.4 would result in an annual dose that would not exceed 15 millirem per year above background - an even stricter standard that that employed on site.

Susan Santos said that "All along, NASA has had a commitment off-site to a dose of (no more than) 25 millirem per year," adding that the off-site model will result in "higher picocuries but a lower level for as cleanup standard - 15 milirem as opposed to 25." Keith then discussed the ALARA (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) principles for radiation exposure, to which NASA has adhered throughout the Decommissioning Project. He noted that the highest levels of cesium had been found "near the bus barn" owned by the Perkins Local School District, near the Plum Brook Station main gate, adding, I see just a shovel and bucket as the only necessary cleanup action." Susan added that the new cleanup level would remain "consistent with not having any public health concerns and not affecting the ecosystem."

Waste Disposal

Keith briefly addressed the waste shipments that had taken place this year, noting that NASA had shipped more than a million pounds of LLRW to Energy Solutions this spring. Most of this was waste packaged since 2005. Keith showed slides of a variety of LLRW materials including lead shot (from Hot Cell window insulation), glass and waste drums (most containing concrete dust from decontamination work). He also noted that in January, NASA had shipped the cadmium-containing control rods to the U.S. Department of Energy's Nevada Test Site (NTS, located an hour south of Las Vegas) for permanent disposal. Keith said the disposal rates for mixed waste at NTS were "way below commercial rates" and he hoped that either NTS would accept more mixed waste from decommissioning. But he noted that the Government Economy Act of 1923 says the federal government cannot compete with commercial waste facilities.

Decontamination & Waste Disposal (a.k.a. Follow-on) Contract

Keith reported that California based Clauss Construction has submitted the successful proposal for the new Decontamination & Waste Disposal Contract (a.k.a. the Follow-on Contract). He noted that the award had been based on the strength of the proposal but that bidders MOTA Corp. and EHK had both filed protests, holding up the award. He said the EHK protest was based on the company's belief that Clauss is not a certified small business, while MOTA lodged a similar protest and also protests based on how the proposals were evaluated. He said the Government Accountability Office (GAO) would investigate the protests and explained that companies "self-certify" their status with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). If a company is subsequently found to have falsely filed as a small business, there are strict penalties imposed. Keith estimated that it might be until September before the protests are adjudicated and the contract awarded.

Workgroup member Ralph Roshong asked what happens if a company files a protest and loses - in terms of bearing the costs. Keith said differences of opinion have to be adjudicated and Ralph pointed out that there should be some kind of penalty imposed to discouraged contractors from filing "wholesale protests." He pointed out that "in arbitration, the losing side pays." Keith observed, "We got some good proposals. If MOTA had won, others would have protested."

Keith explained that MOTA had worked the last few years on what were termed Basic Ordering Agreements, which had expired at the end of May. At this point, he said just 20% of the MOTA workforce currently remained on site. In response to a request made by Ralph at the February Workgroup meeting, Keith said that, to date, NASA has expended \$159.2 million and estimated that the final cost will be around \$218.2 million. The latter figure will include an estimated \$32 million in the Follow-on Contract and \$27 million for FSS work, demolition and site restoration. He noted that the project operates on a cost-plus-fixed-fee basis and that there is a liquidated damages clause, which means that if contractors do not adhere to the agreed upon schedule, "they pay." He added that the Clauss contract calls for 29 months of work and "fits our funding profile." He said the contract calls for all field work to be completed by the end of 2010.

Upcoming Activities

Keith said FSS field work is moving ahead and that subcontractor SAIC is using a company called Innovative Solutions as a vehicle for getting the work done. He said the latter company provides temporary professional help in the form of radiation professionals and other technical workers, including several who had formerly worked for MOTA. He emphasized that SAIC and its temp workers will not perform any tasks under the Follow-on Contract but will work to get as much of the site ready for FSS field work as is possible. Keith remarked that FSS is the project's critical path work and that "a three or four month delay on the Follow-on Contract does not mean a three or four month delay on the project." He also noted that NASA would meet with the NRC later this summer to discuss the new off-site DCGLs.

Community Outreach

Sally Harrington reported that the Open House events (celebrating NASA's 50th anniversary) drew 23,000 over two days at NASA Glenn (Lewis Field) in Cleveland on Saturday, May 17 and Sunday, May 18; and 13,000 at NASA Plum Brook Station (PBS) on Saturday, May 31 and Sunday, June 1. She noted that the events had been especially popular with children and that there had been several activities for kids at the events. Keith asked Workgroup members for feedback on the PBS Open House and although none present at the meeting had attended the Open House, several members said neighbors had gone and had good things to say.

Sally noted that the summer edition of the newsletter had been mailed on June 19 and Workgroup members said they had received it. She also said that the documentary video on the Reactor Facility - "Of Ashes and Atoms" - had been shown on WGTE public television (Toledo) in December and based on this airing, had been nominated for a Lower Great Lakes Region Emmy award in the History and Culture category. She explained that there were five nominees in this category and that each might receive an Emmy. The awards will be presented on Saturday, September 13 at the Marriott Center Grand Ballroom in Cleveland.

Sally also said the Restoration Advisory Board for the former (Plum Brook) Ordnance Works cleanup project (managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) would tour parts of Plum Brook Station on Thursday, June 26. The RAB includes former Workgroup members Janet and Mark Bohne. Finally, Sally announced that there is a public event held at NASA Glenn on the third Saturday of each month, including visits with astronauts. Workgroup member Bob Speers asked about the development of a visitors center at Plum Brook Station (PBS) and Sally responded that it is included in the PBS Master Plan but that the latter covers 20 years and is not in the immediate future. Keith added that if NASA gets the funding, PBS would be reconfigured to include an airstrip, a new main entrance on Scheid Road and a visitors' center. He also reiterated that he'd like to lead a Reactor Facility tour for Workgroup members in spring 2009, perhaps in June.

Next Meeting

The next Workgroup meeting will take place on Wednesday, October 22, at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will take place in the Perkins High School (PHS) cafeteria. There will be a light supper provided to Workgroup members starting at 5:15 and the annual Community Information Session will take place at PHS from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m.