



FUSRAP Fact Sheet

St. Louis Sites

January 1990

DOE evaluating three sites in St. Louis area

The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for cleaning up residual radioactive contamination at several locations in the St. Louis area as part of DOE's Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). The objectives of FUSRAP are to identify sites that were used by the government or its contractors in the early years of the nation's atomic energy programs and ensure that those sites meet current environmental standards. FUSRAP presently includes 31 sites in 13 states.

This fact sheet gives a brief history of the St. Louis sites and describes the process that will be used by DOE, in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Missouri, to identify and carry out the appropriate cleanup measures.

BACKGROUND

During World War II, uranium was processed at a chemical plant operated by Mallinckrodt in downtown St. Louis. Residues from that processing and from the cleanup of buildings at the plant were stored at a 21-acre parcel of land that was owned by the Atomic Energy Commission on McDonnell Boulevard just north of the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport.

In 1966, some of the residues were purchased by a private firm for their commercial value and trucked to a site on Latty Avenue, about a half-mile north of the airport site. The residues were then sent by rail to a plant in Colorado for processing. The City of St. Louis acquired the property from the Atomic Energy Commission, a predecessor agency to DOE, in 1973.

DOE has also identified more than 60 "haul route" properties in the general area

Summary

- DOE is responsible for cleanup of residual radioactivity at the St. Louis Downtown Site, the St. Louis Airport Site and the Latty Avenue properties
- Given the type of radioactive contamination and the current use of the site there is no foreseeable hazard.
- DOE is developing an agreement with EPA, in conjunction with the State of Missouri, to outline the environmental review process, set roles and responsibilities, and establish a schedule
- While the environmental review is in process, DOE plans to conduct interim action on selected properties to prevent further spread of contamination

north of the airport that may be contaminated as a result of hauling materials from the airport site to Latty Avenue.

As a result of these activities, there are three FUSRAP sites in the Greater St. Louis area which contain levels of radioactivity above current standards and, therefore, require some type of remedial action. They are (1) the St. Louis Downtown Site (SLDS); (2) the St. Louis Airport Site (SLAPS) and its contaminated vicinity properties, and (3) the Latty Avenue Properties.

There are two other similar sites in the St. Louis area that are not part of FUSRAP. One is the Weldon Spring site in St. Charles County, which is being managed by a separate DOE program. The other is the West Lake Landfill in St. Louis County, where residues from the Latty Avenue facility were disposed of by a commercial firm. The West Lake Landfill has been proposed by EPA for inclusion on the National Priorities List (Superfund). The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is presently responsible for regulating the contamination at the landfill.

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

Several different laws provide DOE with authority and responsibility for remedial action at these sites. The basic authority for the Downtown and SLAPS properties comes from the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. The conference report accompanying the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act of 1984 provided DOE authority for the Latty Avenue Properties. Public Law 98-360, passed in 1985, directed DOE to reacquire the airport property from the City of St. Louis and develop it as a disposal site, in a manner acceptable to the City. This legislation does not mean that the site will automatically become a disposal cell upon transfer of the land to DOE. Selection of a disposal site will not be made until completion of a full environmental review, including review of alternative disposal sites. Selection of a preferred site will be based upon site suitability and all applicable laws.

In October of 1989, EPA placed the airport site and the Latty Avenue Properties on the National Priorities List (Superfund). This Superfund listing will mean that cleanup can proceed under Superfund authority, that certain time schedules must be met, and that EPA and the State of Missouri will have a greater role in oversight of DOE activities.

WORK TO DATE

In the past several years DOE has accomplished a great deal of work at the St. Louis sites. This has consisted primarily of characterization (sampling and analysis to determine the nature and extent of contamination). Characterization has been completed at SLAPS, the Hazelwood Interim Storage Site (HISS) and at the St. Louis Downtown Site. Recently completed work focused on Coldwater Creek and about 70 "haul route" properties. Work on Coldwater Creek, a portion of which was funded by the Corps of Engineers, involved collection and analysis of soil samples from the creek between Pershall Road and Old Halls Ferry Road, a distance of almost 7 miles. Contamination, at low levels, was found at some sampling locations. Work along the haul routes indicated some contamination on road shoulders and adjacent properties. In general, where contamination was found the levels were low and at shallow depths (less than 1 foot). While the characterization is essentially complete, some additional investigation in the creek and along the haul routes will be needed.

In addition to characterization, DOE has performed some interim cleanup activity to prevent the spread of contamination or remove contamination from the route of utility construction. Contamination from the Latty Avenue Properties and from the Latty Avenue right-of-way has been cleaned. This material is in interim storage at the HISS on Latty Avenue. DOE also repaired erosion along the west end of the airport site and installed a gabion wall to prevent further erosion of soil into Coldwater Creek. (Gabions are rock-filled wire baskets used to control erosion.)

DOE conducts environmental monitoring around the airport site and HISS, testing the air, groundwater, surface water, and direct radiation on a quarterly basis. Annual site environmental monitoring reports are published and made available to the public.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

With the placement of sites on Superfund DOE began discussions that will lead to an agreement with EPA, with input from the

State of Missouri. This agreement will outline the environmental review process to be used in making a decision on the ultimate disposition of radioactive materials from the St. Louis sites. The agreement will list responsibilities of the various parties and set out a schedule for accomplishing the work.

The environmental review process will comply with all applicable laws and regulations. The two primary laws involved are the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), as amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). The environmental documentation accomplished under NEPA is called an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Documentation done under CERCLA/SARA is called a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS). DOE will combine these two processes and produce a joint RI/FS-EIS.

The goal of this process is to reach a "Record of Decision" describing the cleanup to be done. The process starts with scoping and planning, which includes an opportunity for the public to comment on alternatives that should be considered in the study. A range of alternatives including offsite disposal and onsite disposal will be evaluated.

After scoping and planning have been completed, a remedial investigation will be conducted, followed by a remedial investigation report. A feasibility study will be conducted to evaluate various alternatives, and a proposed plan will be issued for public review and comment. DOE will then issue a Record of Decision, which will include responses to comments received from the public. After a Record of Decision has been reached, DOE will design and implement the cleanup.

In the interim, while this review process is being conducted, DOE is planning to clean up some of the residential and commercial properties in order to prevent further spread of the contamination. The contaminated material from this cleanup would be placed with other material already in storage at HISS.

SUMMARY

The low levels of residual radioactivity identified by FUSRAP pose no significant health hazards given current land use activities. This conclusion is supported by results from extensive characterization activity and an ongoing environmental monitoring program at the SLAPS and HISS sites.

A great deal of work has been accomplished by DOE to identify the extent of residual radioactive contamination in the Greater St. Louis area. DOE is committed to fully evaluating alternatives for cleaning up these sites, in cooperation with EPA, the State of Missouri, and local officials. During this process, there will be numerous opportunities for public participation. While this environmental review process is being conducted, DOE is planning interim action to prevent further spread of contamination.

In the meantime, DOE has established an Administrative Record containing the body of information upon which decisions about the cleanup will be based. The record is available for review, during normal business hours, in the Government Information Section at the St. Louis Public Library, 1301 Olive Street, St. Louis, MO 63103, and at the St. Louis County Library, Prairie Commons Branch, 915 Utz Lane, Hazelwood, MO 63042.

For more information or to be included on the mailing list for updates about the site; call or write:

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