

FUSRAP News

FUSRAP budget trimmed; DOE seeks cost-effective cleanups

As part of the national effort by the Administration and Congress to reduce the deficit and streamline government, the Department of Energy recently announced a strategic realignment and downsizing initiative. Congress also is in the midst of the appropriations process for the FY '96 budget year, which begins October 1, 1995.

Attendees of the National Summit in May will recall that DOE officials projected an increasing budget for FUSRAP. At that time our budget planning figures were: FY '95, \$74.1 million; FY '96, \$85.2 million; FY '97, \$129.1 million. As a result of the actions described above, these budget projections are being reduced. The FY '95 reduction is 3.2 percent. For FY '96, based on the recent House actions, our budget would drop by 10.4 percent; final congressional action is expected by the end of September.

For FY '97, the Administration is still formulating its budget proposal that will go to the Congress in January 1996, but at this stage, the DOE request to the Office of Management and Budget will reflect a reduction of 32 percent from the earlier projections.

Despite these reductions, FUSRAP officials expect to have sufficient funds to maintain a vigorous cleanup program, focusing on final actions at a number of small sites and interim actions at the larger sites, such as St. Louis.

"The fiscal realities facing the DOE put an even greater emphasis on our shared tasks of finding protective, cost-effective cleanup approaches at major sites that are acceptable to the affected communities," observed DOE Site Manager David Adler. "Public involvement is an essential ingredient in this process."

St. Louis County resident joins EMAB's FUSRAP committee

The FUSRAP Committee of DOE's Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB) met for the first time in St. Louis earlier this summer. The EMAB was established to serve as a board of advisors to assist DOE Assistant Secretary Thomas Grumbly on various program issues.

The FUSRAP committee of EMAB was formed to allow Mr. Grumbly to give the program appropriate attention as it pursues its nationwide mission. A major goal of the committee, as defined at the National Stakeholders Summit, is to propose a set of general principles for guiding the implementation of DOE's FUSRAP efforts. The principles will promote consistent and cost-effective remedies across FUSRAP projects.

St. Louis' own Sally Price has been named to the FUSRAP Committee. Price also serves on the St. Louis Site Remediation Task Force.

For more information, please contact Jeff Weaver, U.S. Department of Energy EM-5, 1000 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585, (202) 586-4400.

Missouri delegation attends national FUSRAP summit

More than 60 FUSRAP site stakeholders from around the country convened in Washington May 2-3 for the first FUSRAP National Stakeholders Summit. The independently facilitated event consisted of breakout groups and plenary sessions with DOE Environmental Management officials.

Summit participants identified and prioritized values and issues and developed action plans. The major issues were funding, cleanup criteria, risk, remedy selection and community acceptance.

Representing the St. Louis Site were: Rita Bleser, City of St. Louis; Kay Drey, Remediation Task Force (RTF); Jim Dwyer, RTF facilitator; Mayor David Farquharson, Hazelwood and RTF; June Fowler, St. Louis County; Mayor Jean Montgomery, Berkeley and RTF; Sally Price, RTF; Elsa Steward, MDNR and RTF; Conn Roden, County Department of Health and RTF; and Alan Wehmeyer, EPA.

soil treatment

Initial lab tests show promise

In a recent test, researchers were able to remove 99.5 percent of the radioactive materials from a sample of contaminated St. Louis Site soil. The test was one of several being conducted for DOE by the Clemson Technical Center Laboratory in South Carolina to help determine the treatability of soils at the St. Louis site.

The 99.5 percent separation was achieved using chelants (pronounced key'-lants). Chelants are chemical agents that can surround and "grab" radioactive particles and metals so that they can be selectively removed from the rest of the soil. (One chelant, EDTA, is sometimes used by doctors to treat patients who have high levels of lead or other heavy metals in their bloodstream.)

The stakes for treatment are high. The St. Louis Site contains an estimated 800 million cubic yards of contaminated soil, enough to fill Busch Stadium. "The challenge," says DOE site

manager Dave Adler, "is to turn one very large pile of contaminated soil into two piles — a smaller one containing most of the radio-activity and a larger one consisting of clean dirt." Adler stressed that although encouraging, the Clemson tests are preliminary and require further verification.

Another technique studied by the Clemson researchers has shown less promise. Soil separation, in which soil particles are physically separated and sorted by size, appears to leave significant amounts of contamination in all the size fractions.

Whether treatment will actually save money is a question future tests will help determine. If the removal efficiency of chelants is confirmed and the chemical agents can be recycled effectively, the costs of the various disposal alternatives may be significantly reduced.

Task Force delegation visits Clemson Lab

In May, a delegation from the Remediation Task Force traveled to South Carolina for a firsthand look at how treatability tests for St. Louis soils are being conducted. The Clemson Technical Center Laboratory welcomed RTF representatives Kay Drey, Jim Grant, Tom Binz, Don Wall (EPA), Bob Geller (MDNR), and facilitator Jim Dwyer.

The Clemson Technical Center Laboratory welcomed RTF representatives Kay Drey (Coalition for the Environment), Jim Grant (Mallinckrodt Chemical), Tom Binz (Laclede Gas), Don Wall (EPA Region VII), Bob Geller (Missouri Department of Natural Resources), and facilitator Jim Dwyer.

The tour included several hands-on demonstrations, a review of Clemson's state-of-the-art technology, and an up-to-the-minute briefing on the status of St. Louis soil tests.

Accompanying the group was Dave Adler of the Department of Energy, which sponsored the trip.



Task Force members watch as Kay Drey checks her "pocket dosimeter," which monitors gamma radiation exposure, during a tour of the Clemson Lab. As a precautionary measure, dosimeters are issued to all visitors and workers upon entering the facility.

Residential cleanup complete

Residential property owners along Hazelwood Avenue in Hazelwood and Frost Avenue in Berkeley are resting a little easier now that roadsides fronting their yards are free of radioactive contamination. Although the material posed minimal health risk to the owners or their families, it had created other hardships and prevented them from enjoying the full use of their property.



Property owner Dale Lakenburger admires the new landscaping along Hazelwood Ave.

The cleanup, which began October 18, was complete by the end of December. Ninety containers of contaminated soil were shipped by rail to a licensed disposal facility.

The project generated 1,300 cubic yards of wastes, a smaller volume than originally estimated.

David Adler, DOE site manager, said, "The cleanup went well, and we're as pleased as the owners are to have those properties declared clean and safe for unrestricted future use."

Soil removed from two vicinity commercial properties

DOE cleaned up two commercial vicinity properties in North County.

One property on Latty Avenue was cleaned in two phases. Earlier this spring DOE removed a small amount of mixed wastes after improvements made by the tenant last year produced several piles of oil contaminated dirt, including one with radiation mixed in. The "mixed" pile, located in the rear of the commercial property, was removed by DOE and disposed of in a licensed disposal facility.

In September, DOE excavated additional radioactively contaminated soil from the front of the property along Latty Avenue. That remedial work is complete.

Another commercial vicinity property also was cleaned up in September. Approximately 1,450 cubic yards of soils were loaded onto 20 gondola cars and shipped for disposal.

Downtown site cleanup underway

Cleanup work has begun on a portion of the St. Louis Downtown Site known as Plant 10. FUSRAP and Mallinckrodt Chemical Inc. engineers have worked closely together since early this year to plan the work.



Workers core drill for soil samples at the downtown site.

Plant 10 was known as Plant 4 back in the 1940s and early 1950s when several of the buildings were used in the production of uranium metal for the federal government. Although the buildings involved in the uranium work were decommissioned and demolished, some contamination remained.

DOE, Mallinckrodt and the Remediation Task Force members began discussing a downtown component of an interim cleanup earlier this year. Mallinckrodt identified Plant 10 as a good cleanup target because of its potential value to future plant expansion and to the St. Louis city tax base. DOE's review of the Mallinckrodt proposal confirmed that the scope of the project was within the range of funding available in FY '95.

In order to make the contaminated soil accessible, Mallinckrodt had to first dismantle the existing buildings in Plant 10, none of which were used in uranium processing for DOE predecessor agencies.

Prior to the cleanup, FUSRAP technicians conducted sampling efforts at Plant 10 to more clearly define the areas of contamination. Sampling results showed the maximum depth of the contaminated soil to be some 6 to 8 feet. The waste generated during remediation will be shipped to a licensed disposal facility.

FUSRAP Update is issued periodically to inform St. Louis residents about current activities on the contaminated sites in the St. Louis area that are slated for cleanup under the U.S. Department of Energy's Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). These sites were contaminated during the early days of the nation's atomic energy program.

For more information about the FUSRAP site in St. Louis, call the DOE Public Information Center, 9170 Latty Avenue, Berkeley, MO 63134. Telephone (314) 524-4083.

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