SRS Citizen's Advisory Board

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Strategic & Long Term Issues Committee

Meeting Summary

February 25, 2002
Partridge Inn
Augusta, GA

The Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Strategic and Long Term Issues (S&LTI) Committee and the Stewardship Subcommittee held a joint meeting on Monday, February 25, at the Partridge Inn, Augusta, GA. Topics included a Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP) overview of Department of Energy (DOE)-Environmental Management (EM) Stewardship, input on the DOE-Headquarters (HQ) Long Term Stewardship Strategic Plan, discussion on the budget schedule, a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) update and public comment. Those in attendance were:

CAB Members	Stakeholders	DOE/Contractors
Mel Galin*	Bob Rolland	Jim Buice, DOE
David Adcock*	Ernie Chaput	Steve Baker, DOE
Bill Vogele*	Lee Poe	Drew Grainger, DOE
Jerry Devitt*	Chuck Powers, CRESP	de'Lisa Bratcher, DOE
Carolyne Williams*	Melanie Holland, CRESP	Chuck Borup, DOE
Nancy Ann Ciehanski		Jim Moore, WSRC
Jean Sulc		
Marty Stringer		
Wade Waters		
Murray Riley		

*Members of the S&LTI Committee
Note: J. G. Long, a member of the S&LTI Committee, was unable to attend.

Welcome and Introduction

Mel Galin welcomed those in attendance and asked them to introduce themselves. He stated that P. K. Smith was not able to attend the meeting due to work commitments. The agenda for the evening was reviewed. Because a computer projector had to be borrowed, the agenda was modified to allow CRESP to proceed immediately in a reduced time of about 40 minutes versus 60.

After the CRESP presentation summarized below, Mr. Galin recommended that everyone get a copy of the document, *A Review of the Environmental Management Program*, dated February 4, 2002, before the meeting on February 26, 2002. Mr. Moore was requested to have copies before the meeting the next day.

CRESP Long Term Stewardship Review

Dr. Powers, CRESP, stated that DOE is currently struggling with long term stewardship (LTS). How should LTS be handled and how to relate the problem to risk?

There are three ways to handle hazards: (1) Make it go away, (2) Tie it up so it can't harm, and (3) Tie it up until it goes away. There is not enough known about most chemicals as to how long they will be around. But radionuclides have clearly known half-lives. The goal is to block the hazards from getting to the receptor. Many different organizations are working on the problem.

Dr. Powers gave a brief chronological review of cleanup and stewardship at DOE. The previous concept was to separate cleanup and LTS. There is a current effort to integrate the two. Dr. Powers reviewed the differences and distinctiveness of LTS at the various sites around the complex.

At SRS the stewardship challenge is linked to its focus on evolution of technology from muck and truck to chemical plants, to natural processes.

To effectively link risk, stewardship and regulation, change from the traditional statutory regulatory approaches themselves are needed, especially those regulations actually controlled by DOE. The changes are various. Changes in the way regulations relate or are implemented together. Regulations need to be fashioned for the unique problems at DOE sites. The continuing challenge is to bring multiple types of risk evaluation to bear on the sequence and alternatives used in decisions on remediation and long-term protection.

An effective basis for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and DOE to agree on source risk evaluation is through an alternate set of leaching protocols and procedure. This process would allow for believable containment of the hazard. Additionally, research has played a role in SRS's new focus on characterizing entire areas rather than characterizing individual spots on the site; SRS's Integrated Operable Unit (IOU) database is currently transforming large site remediation. An example at SRS would be Steel Creek. The database is set in Geographic Information Systems format.

A major challenge is to devise effective institutional controls. EPA currently requires reviews every five years though 30 years. Developing the metrics for forecasting LTS is an interdisciplinary challenge.

The SRS Fish Fact Sheet is an example of going from conflict to consensus. The public and the regulators over a period of time came to agreement. It clearly demonstrated how risk communications should be a part of cost-effective, long-term protection and risk management.

The major challenge will come in (a) achieving systems-like efficiencies while building in flexibility and finding much simpler solutions, (b) strategically providing for protective overlapping without building-in unnecessary redundancy, and relying on effective public communication of residual risk without sacrificing post 9/11/01 safeguards and security.

Input on the Department of Energy (DOE)-Headquarters (HQ) Long Term Stewardship (LTS) Strategic Plan

Jim Moore, WSRC, reported in P. K. Smith's absence. The public comments from SRS were sent to DOE-HQ for input to the LTS Strategic Plan. It was decided that since the comments were sent to DOE-HQ on November 29 and the draft Strategic Plan was distributed on December 7, that the SRS public comments were probably not incorporated into this draft. The next draft was to be distributed on February 28. It was decided that when the next draft is distributed, public comments would be requested and a Stewardship Subcommittee will be scheduled a week or two before the public comments are due. The meeting would be used to consolidate all the public comments and forward them to DOE-HQ.

Discussion on Budget Schedule

Jim Buice, DOE, stated that this presentation was in response to the CAB recommendation 149 that requested input to the SRS budget process. The CAB requested that a schedule for annual stakeholder

involvement in the budget process be submitted not later than April 19, 2002. Mr. Buice reviewed a draft schedule with topics and dates. He requested that the S&LTI Committee review the draft and supply input, perhaps at the next meeting, so that it would be available by April 19 as requested by the CAB.

Guiding principles in the budget process included the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) formal policy on budget communications with the public and SRS programmatic cleanup plans drive the request. The draft schedule places focus on the Savannah River (SR) planning, budgeting, and prioritization tools and processes. Flexibility in the schedule needs to be maintained due to the dynamic nature of the planning and budget process. The schedule is driven by DOE-HQ and is highly subject to change. Mr. Buice suggested that stakeholder involvement could be more effective if the majority of the budget presentations were made during the joint committee meetings or the full CAB meetings.

During discussions there were several agenda items that need to be discussed before and during the March 26 combined committee meetings. Mr. Buice and Mel Galin will get together to determine the agenda topics and meeting times.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Update

Drew Grainger, DOE, stated there were five Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) and three Environmental Assessments (EA).

The EISs are as follows:

- SRS High-Level Waste Tank Closure

  The Final EIS is expected to be complete in March 2002

- SRS Salt Disposition Alternatives

  The Record of Decision was published in October 2001.

- Disposition of Scrap Metals Programmatic EIS

  This schedule is uncertain. They are currently evaluating policy alternatives for the disposition of scrap metals that may have radioactive contamination

- Geologic Repository for Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Waste at Yucca Mountain

  The DOE site recommendation and Presidential recommendation was made to Congress in February 2002.

- Amended Records of Decisions (ROD) were made on the following EISs:
  - Interim Management of Nuclear Materials EIS: amended ROD published November 1, 2001 for plutonium stabilization in FB-Line and Americium/Curium stabilization.
  - Interim Management of Nuclear Materials EIS: amended ROD in preparation for stabilization of H-Canyon plutonium solutions.
  - Surplus Plutonium Disposition EIS: amended ROD in preparation for cancellation of the Immobilization program.

The EA's are as follows:

- Removal, Transportation, and Storage of Strontium 90 Thermoelectric Generators

This EA is currently being prepared by DOE/HQ.

- Programmatic EA, Oak Ridge Operations to Implement a Comprehensive Management Program to Store Potentially Re-Usable Uranium Materials

  Draft is expected in June 2002. This EA is to store potentially reusable natural uranium, low enriched uranium, and depleted uranium.

- Natural Resources Management Activities

  The SRS Natural Resources Management Plan is being revised. The draft revised Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) may be prepared and circulated for comment.

Mr. Grainger stated that there was a DOE policy to "Incorporate NEPA values…in DOE documents prepared under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)." There is currently a NEPA Values Impact Assessment (VIA) on the remediation of the TNX-Area Operable Unit. The CERCLA document submittal is expected in March. In addition, an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis is being prepared for closure of the R-Reactor Disassembly Basin. DOE plans to release the EE/CA for a thirty-day public comment period.

There is a potential EIS on a Modern Pit Facility. The advanced Notice of Intent is planned for after Critical Decision 0 in Fiscal Year 2002. The EIS would be prepared by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA).

Public Comment

Mr. Galin asked if there was any public comment.

Ernie Chaput representing the Economic Development Partnership made a statement on their concerns with the FY 2003 budget. He said they would have a press release on the issues. His comments were:

The DOE EM Budget for FY 2002 is unchanged from FY 2003 - $6.9 billion. However, they were not comfortable with the budget for FY 2002 and it is the same with FY 2003. EM is starting with a deficit. $800 million has been pulled out for new initiatives. At SRS there is reduced funding for critical activities. This is wrong. The $800 million is to be used for support to look for new ways of doing business. The fundamental activities should be covered before we do that. This is not happening.

1. DWPF is capable of producing 250 canisters or more. SRS proposes producing only 100 canisters, a 60% reduction. From a risk reduction standpoint, this is a clear case of risk reduction. HLW in underground tanks is the largest adverse impact to the Aiken area.
2. Plutonium Stabilization and Storage. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) 94-01 was under funded in 2001. Last November DOE proposed a new schedule. DNFSB said this is the top safety issue in the Department. This is under funded and will have to be renegotiated.
3. The CAB has been involved with the Foreign Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel. A facility was to be up and running by 2006. There is 0 dollars in the 2003 budget. (Lee Poe added that the CAB has recommended that if melt and dilute is not available, the canyons should remain in an operable condition until we have a solution.) There is no plan.
4. There was a big deal about shipments to Waste Isolated Pilot Plant (WIPP) last year. There is 0 dollars in the budget for shipments to WIPP in 2003.
5. There will be missed commitments in Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Site Treatment Plan. 30 to 35% funding has been taken from Solid Waste and Environmental Remediation. This is $60 million. DOE will not be able to negotiate that much money from the regulators. DOE-HQ should be working with EPA to negotiate change instead of having each site

try to work with DHEC and EPA individually. If this is a federal program, EPA should be on board. This site will be in violation of EPA and DHEC.

6. 40% of the funding has been taken from Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL). The SREL facility will have to be reduced by half. In FY 2002 SREL received $9 million. DOE has reduced their budget to $5 million.

Mr. Chaput stated that the FY 2003 budget is $110 million less than FY 2002 but it is $150 to 200 million less than what is needed. Mr. Chaput suggested this reduction would cause a reduction of 1500 people.

Mr. Chaput suggested that the CAB ask questions at the meeting on February 26.

With no additional public comment, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting handouts may be obtained by calling 1-800-249-8155.