



Items of Interest

If you're interested in cleanup progress at the INL Site...
the following articles may be of interest to you.



INL Site Environmental Management
CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

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The INL CAB will meet again
on Wednesday, April 9, in
Idaho Falls at the
Hilton Garden Inn
[View Agenda](#)



Presentations from the last
INL CAB Meeting
[View
Presentations](#)

From the Board Chair

On behalf of the members of the Idaho National Laboratory Site Environmental Management Citizens Advisory Board I want to thank you for your interest in site activities. The Citizens Advisory Board, or CAB, as it is often called is an important part of the Department of Energy's goal of ensuring that the citizens affected by the INL activities have an opportunity to be informed and to provide input to the Department as it makes decisions related to the environmental clean-up of the site. This board, like others at Department sites across the

country, is chartered by an act of Congress, and enjoys the support of both local and DOE Headquarters management.

The Board meets four times a year. Our meetings are open to the public and we always afford other citizens an opportunity to provide input to us and to DOE. Our meeting schedule is available on our website (<http://inlcab.energy.gov/pages/meetings.php>). These meetings provide an opportunity to be updated on current site activities as well as on future plans. Based on what we hear at these meetings, the Board often provides formal recommendations to DOE.

In future newsletters we will provide you information on site activities, current issues, and background information. We will also provide information on Board activities.

Board members serve terms of two years and may serve up to three consecutive terms. Each year we go through a recruiting process to select new members. If you are possibly interested in a rewarding volunteer service opportunity please watch for our recruiting announcements in your local paper and on our website. One of our goals is for the board to be representative of the general public. We value diversity of opinion, experience, culture, and gender. We recruit across the state so we can provide geographic diversity.

Thank you for your interest, and I hope you find this newsletter useful. If you have comments, please provide them to us. Contact information the CAB's Support Staff is located at the bottom of the newsletter.

WIPP and the Cleanup at the Idaho National Laboratory

What is TRU waste and what is the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) doing with it?

Operations at the INL and 21 other Department of Energy sites generated transuranic wastes, commonly referred to as TRU waste. "Transuranic waste is defined by DOE as 'waste contaminated with alpha-emitting radionuclides of an atomic number greater than 92' (that is, uranium; hence the term transuranic)."

TRU wastes are classified as either Contact-Handled TRU (CH-TRU) Waste or Remote-Handled Transuranic Waste or RH-TRU Waste. RH-TRU Waste is different from Contact-Handled TRU Waste because the radiation fields from RH-TRU Waste are "high" and therefore require special shielding and remote handling. Processing this type of TRU waste is more expensive and technically challenging.

Both of these types of TRU wastes are "legacy" wastes "generated from World War II-era conventional weapons testing, government-owned research and defense reactors, spent nuclear fuel reprocessing, laboratory research, and defense missions" from both the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program and the Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy. (sources: www.energy.gov/em/idaho-national-laboratory and pgs. 22-23, *The Nuclear Waste Primer*)

More specifically in terms of TRU waste, "legacy" means any TRU waste that was generated and in storage in the Idaho National Laboratory prior to 1995. The 1995 date is significant because it is the cut-off date related to the legally binding Idaho Settlement Agreement between the U. S. Department of Energy and the State of Idaho for the removal of "legacy" wastes. This legal settlement requires that all of the Remote-Handled TRU Waste and Contact-Handled TRU Waste identified in the Idaho Settlement Agreement will be shipped out of Idaho by December 31, 2018. (source: "Idaho Settlement Agreement Remote Handled Transuranic Waste (RH-TRU)" presentation to the Citizens Advisory Board, June 12, 2013)

Since 1995, has additional TRU waste been generated?

Yes, there is TRU waste still being generated by the ongoing research missions at the INL. TRU waste generated after 1995 is considered “newly generated” and not specifically subject to the removal date requirements included in the Idaho Settlement Agreement.

How is the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) connected to the removal of radioactive materials from INL?

All of the TRU waste shipped from Idaho has gone to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). Besides the “legacy” waste covered by the Settlement Agreement, the Department of Energy has shipped a significant amount of “newly generated” TRU waste to WIPP.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) is America’s only deep geologic repository site for the defense-generated TRU waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons. The site opened in 1999 in New Mexico, 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad. When received at WIPP, the waste is reviewed for strict compliance requirements and, if those are met, placed in salt formations 2,150 feet below the surface. The ancient salt formations are estimated to be 250-million years old. (source: WIPP Information, www.wipp.energy.gov)

How have recent events at WIPP impacted waste removal at INL?

According to the “WIPP Underground Fire Accident Investigation Summary,” a fire on February 5, 2014 started in a salt hauler vehicle being used underground. The fire resulted in the evacuation of workers from the facility and the release of some radioactive particles. The facility will not receive new shipments until it is again operational. (source: “WIPP Underground Fire Accident Investigation Summary” public presentation, March 2014)

The TRU waste at Idaho already certified and packaged for shipment is currently being held at INL awaiting resumption of WIPP operations. Meanwhile, Idaho waste managers “are actively working on options to improve our storage capabilities, including identifying additional storage space in existing storage facilities...” (source: “WIPP Update,” memo to the INL staff)

INFORMATION LINKS:

www.energy.gov/em/idaho-national-laboratory
www.wipp.energy.gov

Future INL Land Use

Future land use of the INL site has generated tremendous interest and questions from the CAB. Following the Feb. 12, 2014 meeting, Nolan Jensen, DOE-ID Federal Project Director, provided the following summary of future land use scenarios.

DOE is the custodian of the INL Site and is responsible for protecting human health and the environment. DOE can relinquish that commitment only through following strict rules for transferring responsibility to another entity or agency. DOE has long-term missions for the INL Site, and does not expect to return INL land to the public domain in the future.

Under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), DOE, EPA, and the State base cleanup decisions on future land-use assumptions:

- Residential Scenario
 - Most rigorous and expensive approach,
 - Cleanup to a minimum depth of 10 feet to allow construction of a home with a basement
 - Often referred to as “unrestricted land use”
 - In general, would allow the land to eventually be free-released (i.e., no government controls or monitoring would be required); however, land-use restrictions below 10 feet (e.g., well drilling) may be necessary even where future residential use may be allowable.
- Industrial Scenario
 - Less restrictive and expensive
 - Cleanup to a depth of 4 feet, the expected maximum depth for worker exposures
 - Often called “restricted land use;” however, other types of land-use restrictions currently apply on the INL Site (e.g., grazing is an allowed restricted land use)
 - Restricted use areas are available to support ongoing and future missions
 - Would require government controls, monitoring, and inspections, and 5-year reviews in perpetuity.

Many areas on the INL Site are under institutional controls (e.g., restrictions). Parts of the INL Site (e.g., portions of the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center [INTEC] and the Radioactive Waste Management Complex [RWMC]) are designated in the applicable Records of Decision as “restricted use” because it is technically impracticable (e.g., deep contamination and near-surface tanks and pipes) to remediate them completely. Rather than expend disproportionate resources on areas that can never be completely remediated, and where there is no expectation of future residential use, DOE, EPA, and the State based cleanup decisions for these areas on the less restrictive industrial scenario.

As cleanup progresses, additional areas with similarly impracticable characteristics may be identified. DOE, with the State’s support, is seeking to apply industrial (restricted use) cleanup standards at these areas. DOE will maintain control of all restricted use areas as long as necessary to protect human health and the environment. Both EPA and the State would provide oversight.

Contact Information for the CAB

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