



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

# Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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## *Monthly Meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board*

### **Approved February 14, 2024 Meeting Minutes**

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) held its full board monthly meeting virtually via Zoom and in person at 1 Science.gov Way on Wednesday, February 14, 2024 at 6 p.m. Copies of referenced meeting materials are attached to these minutes. A video of the meeting was made and is available on the board's YouTube site at [www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB/videos).

#### **Members Present**

Kris Bartholomew  
Mary Butler  
Harold Conner, Jr.  
Paul Dill  
Rosario Gonzalez  
Amy Jones

Noah Keebler  
Harriett McCurdy  
Christine Michaels  
Charles Moore  
Tonya Shannon  
Michael Sharpe

#### **Members Absent**

Atilio Anzellotti  
Candace Atkinson  
Raiyan Bhuiyan  
Mike Mark

Thomas McCormick  
Rachel Stewart  
Tom Tuck

<sup>1</sup>Third consecutive absence

#### **Liaisons, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, and Alternates Present**

Erik Olds, OREM Deputy Manager  
Melyssa Noe, ORSSAB Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO), OREM  
Roger Petrie, ORSSAB Alternate DDFO, OREM  
Dennis Mayton, OREM  
Kristof Czartoryski, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC)  
Samantha Urquhart-Foster, EPA

### **Others Present**

Leah Alexander, OREM  
Brian Begley, EPA  
Emily Day, UCOR  
Sierra Generette, UCOR  
Shelley Kimel, ORSSAB Staff

Sara McManamy-Johnson, ORSSAB Staff  
Jamie Meuwissen, DOE  
Abby Newberry, OREM  
John Sayer, EPA

One member of the public was present.

### **Liaison Comments**

**Ms. Noe** – Ms. Noe introduced new board member Charles Moore and noted she would be introducing additional new members next month. Next, Ms. Noe introduced OREM’s new deputy manager Erik Olds.

**Mr. Olds** – Mr. Olds told members that Laura Wilkerson will serve as Oak Ridge’s chief engineer or Environmental Management (EM). Next, he gave members an overview of recent OREM activities and accomplishments. He said DOE headquarters (HQ) recently released its annual list of priorities for the EM complex for 2024 and Oak Ridge had three items on the list. The first item is processing 35 canisters of uranium 233 (U-233) as part of the U-233 disposition project, a high priority at HQ. The second item is completing soil remediation at East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP), which wraps up a major chapter of cleanup and allows focus to shift to groundwater. The third item is beginning demolition of the Alpha-2 facility at Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12), which marks EM’s first demolition of a former enrichment facility at Y-12. Additionally, Mr. Olds said Isotek is in the second phase of their processing activity there, and they're getting into the material that actually has higher radiological doses.

Next, Mr. Olds said DOE recently partnered with a private company called Zeno Power in a partnership that also involved the Department of Defense. Through this partnership, Zeno is taking radiological material to create power sources for specific environments, including space and deep-sea applications. Through that partnership, DOE was able to transfer an old radioisotope thermoelectric generator (RTG) as opposed to storing it onsite.

Mr. Olds then told members OREM recently completed transfer of the 365-acre parcel known as the former powerhouse area, marking the largest land transfer to date at ETTP.

**Mr. Petrie** – Mr. Petrie said the RTG transferred to Zeno Power represented a significant inventory of radioactive material that is no longer in Oak Ridge, and it illustrates the benefits of such partnerships. Ms. McCurdy asked how Zeno Power knew the RTG was there and unwanted. Mr. Petrie said three individuals from the company noticed it during a tour in Oak Ridge and identified a way to repurpose it.

**Mr. Czartoryski** – No comments.

**Ms. Urquhart-Foster** – Staff read chat comments submitted by Ms. Urquhart-Foster, who said EPA is pleased with the major accomplishments at the Oak Ridge Reservation and is looking forward to celebrating the completion of soil remediation at ETTP in the near future. She said EPA Region Four is in the process of submitting the DOE Oak Ridge Reservation’s ETTP for a national EPA award for Clean Energy Reuse, Climate Change Adaptation, and Building Environmental Infrastructure, a Green

Economy and Green Jobs.

### **Presentation**

Mr. Bartholomew introduced OREM's Dennis Mayton to present the topic of discussion, Ongoing Efforts to Assure Waste Disposal Capacity.

Mr. Mayton began his presentation by giving members an overview of OREM's current waste disposal facilities, which includes several engineered landfills for disposal of Oak Ridge remediation, demolition, and sanitary waste. He then described DOE's decision-making process for how to dispose of waste and demolition debris for sustainability purposes, which begins by first trying to recycle or reuse materials instead of disposing. If materials cannot be recycled or reused, DOE will determine if they can be disposed of in sanitary waste Oak Ridge landfills, which includes Landfill IV for classified waste, Landfill V for sanitary materials, and Landfill VII for construction/demolition debris. If materials do not meet the criteria for acceptance at one of the sanitary waste landfills, DOE will determine if it meets the criteria for acceptance at Oak Ridge's CERCLA waste facility, the Environmental Management Waste Management Facility (EMWMF), which is used for low-level radiological- and/or chemical-contaminated soil and demolition debris and equipment. He said that facility is about 85 percent full. The Environmental Management Disposal Facility (EMDF) currently under construction will also be a CERCLA waste facility. Waste that does not meet the acceptance criteria for any of the Oak Ridge disposal facilities will be shipped offsite.

Mr. Mayton said the majority of the material, by volume, stays onsite because most of it is material such as concrete, steel, and soil. Less than 10 percent of the material is shipped offsite, and that material represents material with high radiological activity.

Next, Mr. Mayton gave members an overview of the locations for Oak Ridge's onsite disposal facilities. He said OREM uses haul roads, gravel roads between facilities, to keep waste off public highways to reduce risk.

He then discussed the role of onsite disposal in the cleanup efforts. He said onsite disposal availability has been key to the successful cleanup of ETTP, which has opened new opportunities for private industries to move in there.

Mr. Mayton then went into additional detail about EMWMF. He said the approximate total capacity of 2.3 million cubic yards is currently about 85 percent full and is projected to be full in the late 2020s. He said additional waste disposal capacity to be provided by EMDF and by expansions to Oak Ridge's permitted landfills will be needed to allow OREM to continue cleanup efforts at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) and Y-12, which contain more than 200 buildings to be demolished between the two sites.

Next, he described the systems approach to waste disposal that's used to provide multiple layers of protection. This approach includes site selection and characterization, design and construction, site operations, and performance assurance. He then discussed the steps remaining before construction can be completed on EMDF and waste disposal at the facility begins. Lastly, he described OREM's public outreach efforts.

Board members asked the following questions:

- Ms. Butler said she recalled there were going to be four disposal cells in EMDF, but only two would be done at first. She asked if the other two would be held in reserve for future needs or would be needed for current needs.
  - Mr. Mayton said the total capacity would be about 2.2 million cubic yards, and those two cells are included in that total capacity. Of that total capacity, about 25 percent is built in as a contingency if the space is needed in the future.
- Mr. Bartholomew asked if everything for EMDF is contingent on the groundwater model for the site.
  - Mr. Mayton said as an example that if the groundwater model showed the water level was a couple feet higher than expected, the design would change to raise the base of the landfill to maintain 15 feet of separation from the waste, so it wouldn't mean starting over, just redesigning. Mr. Petrie said in that scenario, one challenge would be that raising the base would use a portion of the volume included in the 25 percent contingency discussed earlier. Mr. Mayton said in the majority of the area where the facility will be located, the groundwater levels are already at or below that level.
- Mr. Conner asked how the funding cycle looks for the remainder of the decade.
  - Mr. Mayton said current funding levels support completing EMDF between 2029 and 2030. He said everything is conditional on funding, so if that changed it could impact the schedule. He said there is good support for this project.
- Staff read a question submitted from Mr. Sharpe. He asked if the water level test is to be complete this November and run for two years, would it slow the timeline.
  - Mr. Mayton said, no, that is built into the schedule. He said the monitoring system would be put in place in November and then monitor through two wet seasons, which is considered from December through April. The construction date takes into consideration monitoring through April 2026.
- Ms. Butler said she recalled funds for this project are set aside, so DOE won't need to go back for more, and she asked if that was correct.
  - Mr. Petrie said EMDF and Outfall 200 are capital projects with capital line items in the annual budget requests. Capital line items are funds earmarked specifically for that item. He said EMDF has had tremendous support from headquarters and from Congress as they realize it is needed for the cleanup work.

### **Questions from the Public**

- Mr. Luther Gibson asked if DOE must file special waste permits on some of the lots sent to Landfills IV, V, and VII. Mr. Petrie said yes. Mr. Gibson asked to confirm waste disposal capacity amounts of a total of about 4.5 million cubic yards, which Mr. Petrie said was correct and of that amount almost 2 million cubic yards has already been used, and a CERCLA waste baseline of about 3.6 or 3.7 million cubic yards, which Mr. Petrie confirmed was the current estimate.

### **Public Comment**

- Public Comment #1 – Mr. Luther Gibson said the topic of ongoing efforts to assure waste disposal capacity should also address access to offsite waste facilities, as well as develop appropriate technologies and disposal options for difficult to dispose of waste. He cited developments regarding hazardous waste permits in New Mexico for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and their plans for accepting legacy waste at that facility.

### **Board Business/Motions**

- Ms. Jones asked for a motion to approve the agenda.
  - 2.14.24.1 Motion made by Ms. Gonzalez and seconded by Ms. Michaels. Motion passed.
- Ms. Jones asked for a motion to approve meeting minutes.
  - 2.14.24.2 Motion to approve the November 8, 2023, meeting minutes. Motion made by Ms. Butler and seconded by Ms. Michaels. Motion passed.

### **Responses to Recommendations & Alternate DDFO Report**

Ms. Noe said there were no open recommendations. She added that the next EM Chairs meeting is being planned for Portsmouth for Tuesday through Thursday of the first week in May, and members interested in attending should let staff know to set up travel.

### **Committee Reports**

Executive – None.

EM & Stewardship – Ms. Butler said there are no outstanding action items, and the committee's next meeting is scheduled for February 28 to continue discussion on Ongoing Efforts to Assure Waste Disposal Capacity. She asked the topic's issue group members to try to attend the upcoming meeting if at all possible, and she said her understanding is there is no recommendation requested for the topic.

### **Additions to the Agenda & Open Discussion**

Ms. Jones reminded members to bring appropriate identification for the upcoming waste disposal tour.

**Action Items**

None

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

I certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the February 14, 2024 meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board.



Amy Jones, Chair



Harriett McCurdy, Secretary

March 13, 2024

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

AJ/sbm

## Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board Public Comment

Luther Gibson

February 14, 2024

The topic “Ongoing Efforts to Assure Waste Disposal Capacity” should also address access to off-site disposal facilities as well as development of appropriate technologies and disposal options for “Difficult to Dispose of Waste” being stored indefinitely.

Due to time, I will only give an example of the off-site concern.

A recent renewal of the Hazardous Waste Permit issued by the New Mexico Environment Department for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) incorporated a new requirement to define legacy TRU and TRU mixed waste and to develop a Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan. The plain intent is to prioritize legacy wastes from Los Alamos over other generator sites in the DOE Complex. This was among a number of other provisions that were negotiated with parties opposed to renewal of the permit, including a retired New Mexico regulator who wrote the previous WIPP hazardous waste permits. These parties withdrew their opposition when stipulations articulated in a settlement agreement were put into the permit. The stipulated permit conditions were then out of bounds to change by comments from other stakeholders during public involvement opportunity for the final draft.

The new permit requires DOE to submit an annual report summarizing its progress toward siting another repository for TRU waste in a state other than New Mexico and threatens a permit revocation process should Congress increase the storage capacity or expand the types of wastes accepted at WIPP.

There are also other conditions that seem out of line, given New Mexico’s authority is delegated by EPA under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act for only the chemically hazardous component of mixed waste.

Although it is indicated that the Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan will be developed in consultation with the generator/storage sites and stakeholders, this involvement should be approached with an assertion that existing access to WIPP not be changed by this new plan or a new waste definition.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to participating in any local discussion that arises.