WSSRAP

UPDATE

Public Hearing Held On Final Cleanup

On December 16, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Energy held a hearing to obtain public participation and community input into the draft Proposed Plan for treatment and final disposal of waste at the Weldon Spring site.

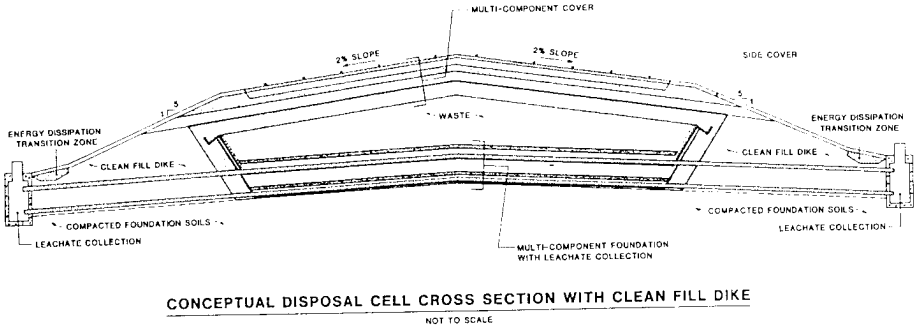
The public hearing, which is required under Superfund Law and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), was held in St. Charles. A staffed exhibition of WSSRAP cleanup technologies and developments was open to the public throughout the afternoon and evening until the meeting's adjournment.

Dan Wall, Remedial Project Manager, Superfund Branch Region Seven, outlined EPA's role in the Project and told the approximately 170 people in the audience that his organization supported the Proposed Plan.

DOE Project Manager Stephen H. McCracken reviewed interim cleanup activities already accomplished and discussed subsequent activities under the Plan.

Mr. McCracken said the Proposed Plan is based on a framework established by the EPA. It involves three possible decisions, which are:

1. No Action, an alternative that is not being considered as it would not protect human health and the environment.



A typical disposal facility, like the one shown above, could be used to permanently dispose of the waste from the Weldon Spring Site. The faciltiy is designed and constructed to isolate waste materials from the environment.

2. Removal, treatment and off-site disposal would involve transporting some 1.3-million cubic yards of contaminated material to waste storage in the state of Utah or Washington.

3. Removal, treatment and on-site disposal is the proposed alternative. It includes:
   - o Constructing an engineered disposal facility.
   - o Treating the most highly contaminated components of the site wastes. Treatment would consist of stabilizing and solidifying materials using a cement-fly ash mixture.
   - o Shredding and composting contaminated vegetation with placement of residues in the disposal facility.
   - o Volume reducing metal debris and pulverizing concrete and rock. Some metal would be recycled.
   - o Expanding the existing environmental program to assess the effects of waste cleanup on groundwater.
   - o Maintaining institutional controls to prevent any intrusion into the disposal facility.
   - o Long term environmental monitoring.

Approximately 20 members of Local 660 of the Laborers Union, including their business manager, attended and a number of them spoke requesting employment of more local workers by the various subcontractors.

In response, Mr. McCracken said contracts are awarded on a competitive bid basis, as required by federal law. "I would like to see local people do the work also, but

Local officials, concerned citizens and news reporters attended a Risk Assessment Workshop in June. Stephen H. McCracken, DOE Project Manager, served as moderator for the workshop.

Speakers made presentations on how and why a risk assessment is conducted and explained the information included in the draft Baseline Assessment prepared for the Weldon Spring Site.

Site Hosts Risk Assessment Workshop

Public Hearing-Continued

I cannot bend the federal rules to that," he said.

As a follow-up to the meeting, it was determined that at least 80-percent of the craft people that work on the project have local addresses.

Documents contributing to the decision process are now available in the St. Charles County libraries, the Francis Howell High School Library and at the WSSRAP Public Reading Room. They are: the Remedial Investigation, the Baseline Assessment, the Feasibility Study and the Proposed Plan. The entire document package, encompassing some 2,000 pages, is referred to as the FS-EIS (Feasibility Study-Environmental Impact Statement).

Copies of an illustrated Informational Bulletin that summarizes the FS-EIS are available at the libraries and the WSSRAP Community Relations Department.

On the evening of June 30, the WSSRAP conducted a workshop on risk assessment for interested members of the community and special interest groups.

Risk assessment is a key component of the WSSRAP cleanup process, and the workshop presented information on what risk means for a contaminated site and why and how risks are estimated.

Held at the St. Peters Holiday Inn, the workshop featured presentations by U.S. Department of Energy Weldon Spring Site Project Manager, Steve McCracken, and representatives from Argonne National Laboratories.

Mr. McCracken says that the workshop, as well as two others held earlier, was designed to provide information on the project to help people understand the recently published documents that discuss the final cleanup of the site's radioactive and chemical wastes. The two earlier workshops discussed geology of the site (February, 1991) and waste treatment technologies (August, 1991).

In her presentation that evening, Dr. Margaret MacDonell, Argonne National Laboratory Project Manager, explained that not only does the risk assessment calculate the risk for the existing conditions, but also for projected cleanup activities.

"For example," says Dr. MacDonell, "we look at releases that might occur during the cleanup period. Then, those results are used to determine what kinds of engineering measures, like emission control systems, may be needed to ensure that the health of people nearby and of the workers is not affected by the cleanup."

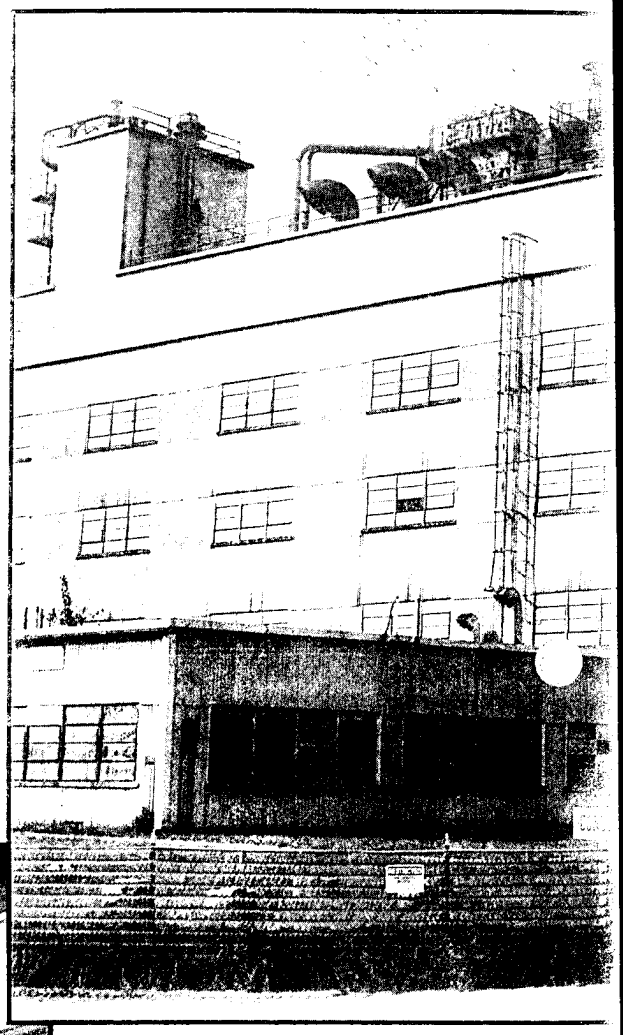
Results of the analyses indicated that the risks from cleanup activities for people off-site would be well below the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's limits.

Building Dismantlement At Th

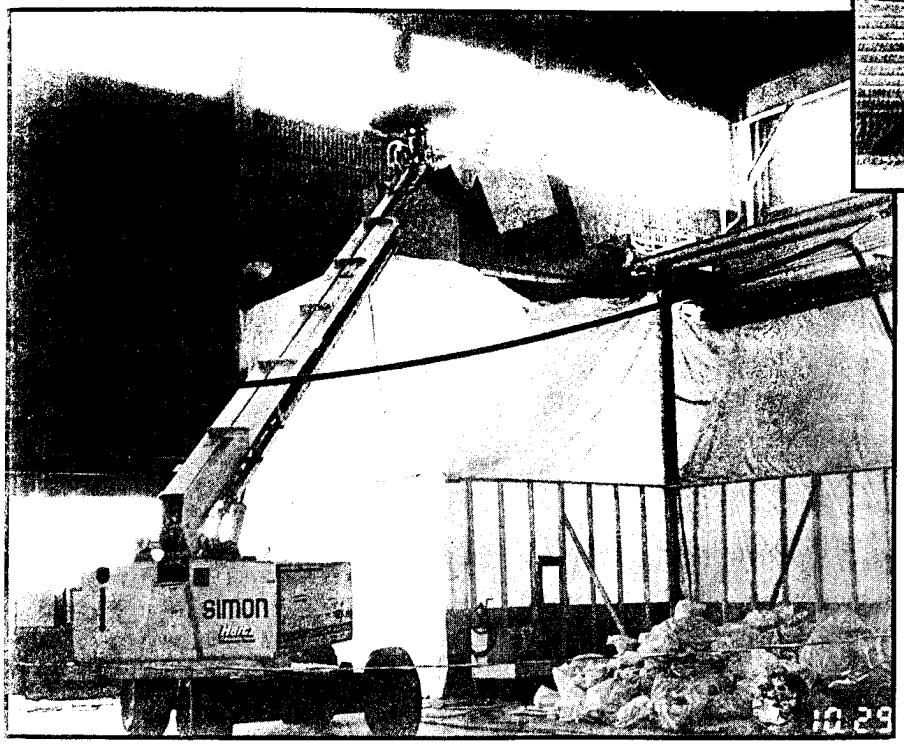
On May 24, 1991, the DOE, with concurrence of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, approved the plan to decontaminate and dismantle 30 structures at the Weldon Spring Chemical Plant site.

Subsequently, work has begun to decontaminate and dismantle these structures.

The decontamination consists of removing loose contaminated materials from the structures by vacuuming and wiping horizontal surfaces where dust has accumulated. Asbestos containing materials are removed and placed in containers for temporary on-site storage. This project is expected to take several years.

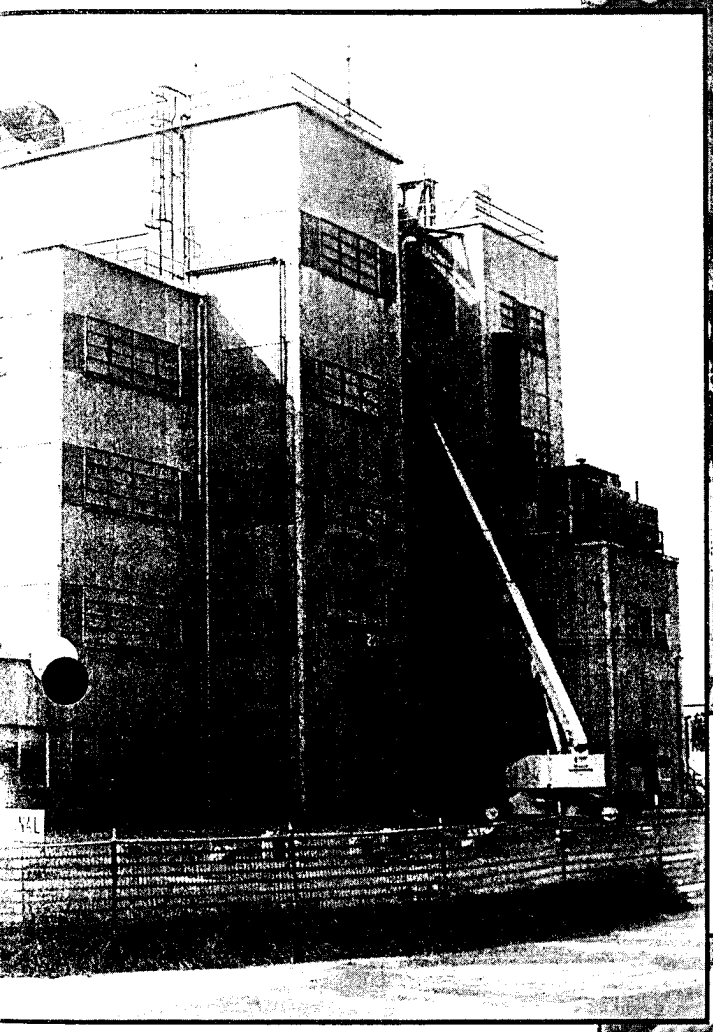


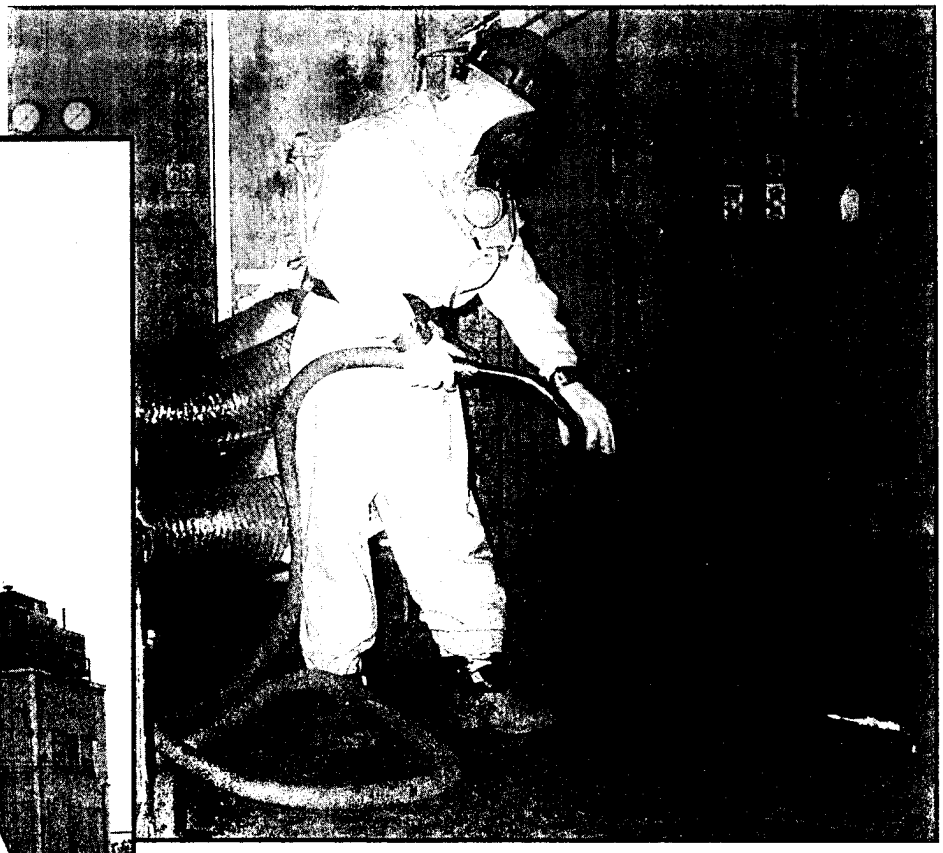
(Right) During the plant operation, Building 301 was the metals production plant in which uranium flouride compound was converted to uranium metal. Workmen on the lift are covering windows.



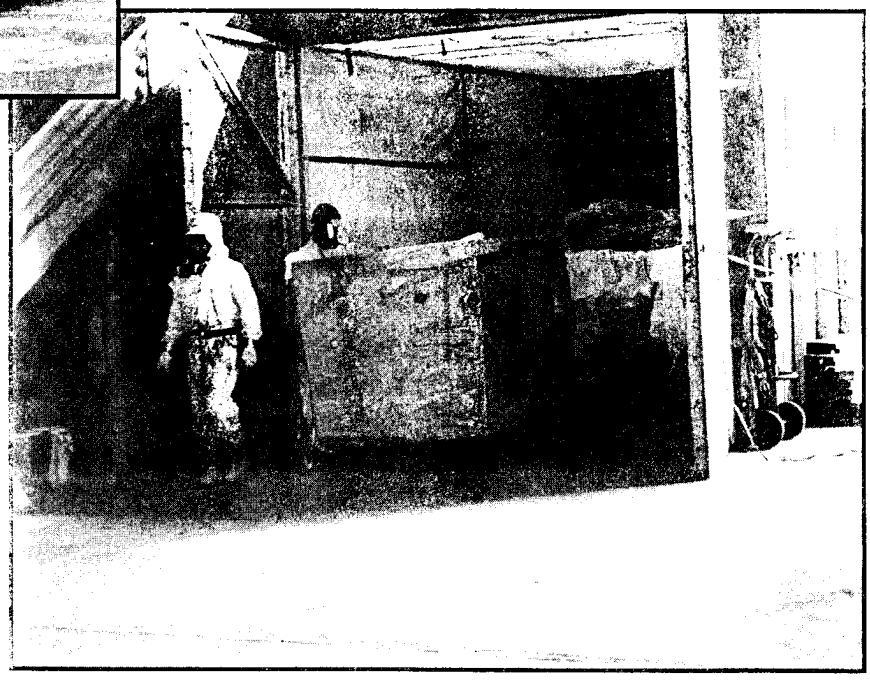
(Left) Prior to removing asbestos, work crews sealed the building to prevent air laden asbestos particles from getting into the atmosphere outside the building. The lift was used to bring sealing materials to the work area.

WSSRAP Involves Housekeeping





(Above) All horizontal areas of the building's interior were vacuumed to remove dust and particles of contaminated material.



(Right) During cleaning, the entire building is maintained under negative air to prevent release of asbestos particles. A load-out facility was constructed to remove process pipe and other materials without impacting the airbalance.

Pipeline To Missouri River Planned for Site Water Treatment Plant

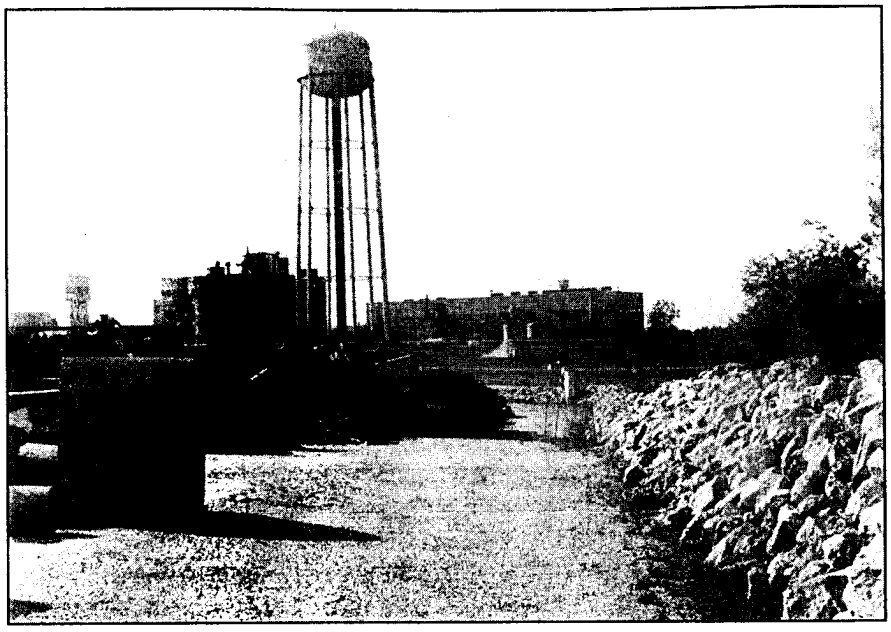
On September 4, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) approved the WSSRAP plans calling for the construction of a pipeline for the Site Water Treatment Plant (SWTP).

Originally the permit, issued to the site by the MDNR, allowed for discharge of treated water only via a drainage ditch known as the Southeast Drainage.

Normally this ditch is dry, but rainstorms and clean water tests have shown some resuspension of contaminants. Although it is unlikely that the resuspension would be of any health significance, there are sufficient unknowns to conclude that discharge via pipeline to the river is a conservative alternative.

The route for the SWTP pipeline will utilize an existing transportation corridor. Beginning at the SWTP the pipeline will follow the haul road, cross under Highway 94 at the old abandoned rail line and at the Hamburg Quarry dirt road it will cross under the Katy Trail.

Work on the pipeline began in early October and should be complete by Spring.



To reduce erosion of berms surrounding the Materials Staging Area, concrete debris from dismantled structures was used instead of clean rock that would pick up contamination, adding to the waste accumulated.

WSSRAP Waste Minimization Program Provides Solution To Erosion Problem

The solution to an erosion problem at an eight-acre Materials Staging Area (MSA) at the Weldon Spring Site evolved from a waste minimization planning program.

The MSA serves as a temporary storage area for debris from building demolition at the site. Debris is safely stored in this specially engineered pad. In order to allow for as much storage area as possible, the MSA was designed with steep sloping dirt walls, a one-to-one slope (one foot down for each one foot out), and erosion became a problem. The solution called for reinforcing the walls with rip rap (large rock).

At the same time, the Waste Management Department at the WSSRAP was faced with a limited amount of MSA space. It is important to minimize the amount of materials brought on site to support cleanup operations, because it adds to the amount of waste that will have to be disposed later.

The two problems actually became solutions for each other. Instead of ordering fresh rip rap for the MSA, concrete debris from dismantled buildings was used. The concrete was recycled by breaking it into 12-inch pieces and placing it on the slope to reduce the erosion.

Nearly 1,000 cubic yards of concrete was used for the one-foot thick reinforcement. All of the concrete was either already stored in the MSA or slated for temporary storage there.

Laboratory Results Permit Discharge Of Treated Quarry Water

The first batch of water from the Weldon Spring Quarry has been successfully treated and released.

More than 540,000 gallons of treated water was released January 7 into a pipeline that carried it to the Missouri River.

Representatives from Federal, State and local agencies were on hand November 19 to collect the first samples of treated water from the Quarry Water Treatment Plant. Results of those samples, received December 22, indicated that the water was treated better than standards set in a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit issued to the site by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR).

Four agencies in addition to the DOE collected samples, and their independent results also verify that the treated water was better than the standards set by the State and standards that are safe for discharge. Those agencies reporting results were: United States Department of Energy, United States Environmental Protection Agency, MDNR, and the St. Louis and St. Charles Counties Water and Health Departments.

DOE Project Manager Stephen H. McCracken says that in light of the positive testing results from five different sources, he was surprised at the controversy that seemed to surround the release of the first batch of treated water.

"What I suppose this indicates is that our efforts to keep the public informed was not totally successful as it relates to St. Louis," says Mr. McCracken. "We have considered St. Charles County to be the focus of our communications efforts, because there are so few issues that involve St. Louis. Even so, we have tried to keep St. Louisans up to date on the progress of the water treatment plant due to the release into the Missouri River."

"We will continue to keep the public informed of our activities at the WSSRAP," Mr. McCracken says. "Perhaps then we can generate better understanding, which is the only way we know of to reduce concern."

The start of this water treatment operation is part of a larger effort to remove bulk waste from the Quarry, and store it in a temporary storage area at the Chemical Plant Site.

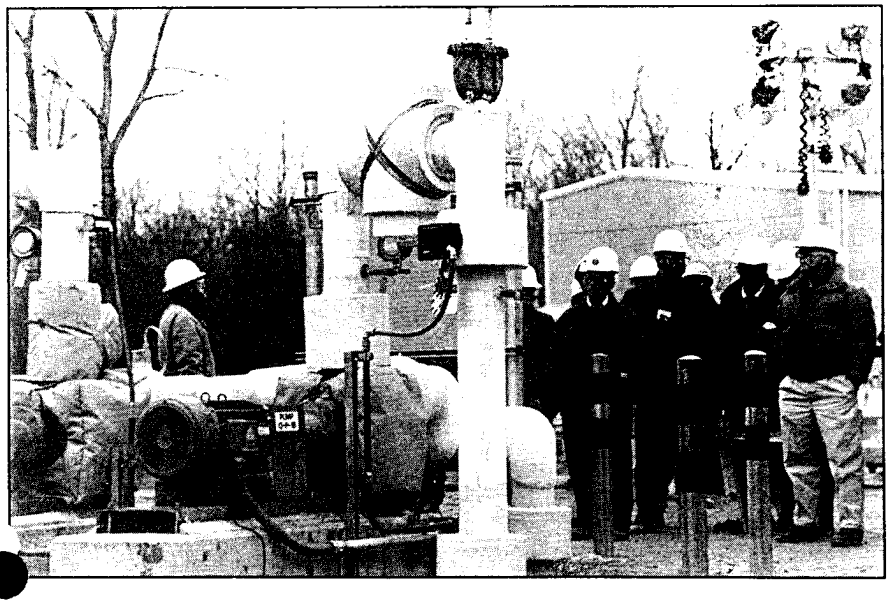
The Quarry, which is four miles south of the Chemical Plant, was used by the U.S. Department of Army and the Atomic Energy Commission for disposal operations during the 1940s, '50s and '60s. This has resulted in groundwater contamination.

Near the Quarry is the St. Charles County wellfield, which provides water to approximately 60,000 western and central St. Charles County residents. The DOE is pursuing the cleanup at the quarry in order to ensure the wellfield remains safe from contaminants.

The water treatment plant is the first step in the environmental response action for the Quarry. Water from the Quarry is pumped to a lined basin. After treatment the water is held in one of two effluent ponds.

Laboratory tests will be conducted on each batch of the treated water to determine that the treated water meets safety standards and limits set by the NPDES permit issued by the MDNR.

Mr. McCracken says the plant uses processes that are well proven.



Officials and site personnel prepare to release the first batch of treated water from the Quarry Water Treatment Plant to the Missouri River

Personnel Changes

KAREN REED

DAVE HIXSON

JACK BUSHMAN

Karen Reed recently joined the WSSRAP staff as an Environmental Scientist for the Department of Energy. Previously Ms. Reed was an Environmental Scientist for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at the Region II office in New York, City, New York.

Dave Hixson has been promoted to Compliance Manager in charge of regulatory compliance, waste management and project compliance. Mr. Hixson has been with the WSSRAP since 1989.

Jack Bushman, has been assigned as Conduct of Operations Manager. Mr. Bushman has worked at the WSSRAP since 1986. Conduct of Operations is a newly created department that ensures an ever-improving level of safety, health, quality of work and efficiency.

The WSSRAP and MK-Ferguson Company were recently honored by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for supporting the professional development of Hispanics and Hispanic Business Enterprises. The award was received by DOE Deputy Project Manager Jerry Van Fossen and Project Management Contractor Project Director James R. Powers at the Annual Federal Executive Board Training Meeting in St. Louis sponsored by the Hispanic Employment Program Council. Michael Zambrana made the presentation.

WSSRAP Update

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