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FERNALD CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

FRIDAY MAILING

6/12/98

INCLUDED IN THIS FRIDAY MAILING:

- ❑ Letter from John Applegate to the Ohio Congressional Delegation (Re: Defense Closure Fund)
- ❑ Letter from John Applegate to Jim Owendoff (Re: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
- ❑ Monthly Progress Report Summary -- March 1998
- ❑ Monthly Progress Report Summary -- April 1998
- ❑ Newsclippings

CAB MEETINGS:

- ❑ **OFF-SITE COMMITTEE MEETING**: The Off-Site Committee of the Fernald Citizens Advisory Board will meet on Monday, July 13, 1998, at 6:00 p.m. in the Alpha Building Classroom A.
- ❑ **EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE MEETING**: The next meeting of the Efficiency Committee of the Fernald Citizens Advisory Board will be on Monday, July 13, 1998, at 7:15 p.m. in the Alpha Building Classroom A.
- ❑ **FERNALD CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD**: The Fernald Citizens Advisory Board will meet on Wednesday, July 15, 1998. Time and location are to be announced.

OTHER MEETINGS:

- ❑ **MONTHLY PROGRESS BRIEFING**: The July Monthly Progress Briefing will be held on Tuesday, July 14, 1998, at 6:00 p.m. in the Alpha Building, 10845 Hamilton-Cleves Highway.

QUESTIONS:

Please call John at [redacted] or Doug at [redacted] with questions or concerns.
You may also fax or e-mail us at:

John Fax: 281-3331 E-Mail: *john.applegate@law.uc.edu*
Doug [redacted]

FERNALD CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Senator John Glenn
US Senate
503 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510-3501

Senator DeWine
US Senate
140 Russell Senate Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. Portman
US House of Representatives
238 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Boehner
US House of Representatives
1101 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Glenn, Senator DeWine, Representative Portman, Representative Boehner:

The Fernald Citizens Advisory Board asks that the US Congress clarify the intentions of the US Congress in designating three Department of Energy facilities (including the Fernald Environmental Management Project) as "closure projects." At the time this designation was made, the FCAB had high hopes that this would greatly facilitate the completion of the Fernald site. However, DOE's Closure Fund Management Plan and subsequent actions have convinced us we are still dealing with business as usual.

This year, Fernald had to undergo the traditional DOE budgeting process for FY2000. This process is extremely time-intensive, diverts large amount of site resources from remediation activities, and <u>always</u> results in frustrating discussions about how Fernald will not receive the money it requires to reach closure. The FY2000 process was no exception. In fact, the initial result of this process was to cut the Fernald budget by tens of millions of dollars, eliminating any chance of achieving closure by 2006. The explanation we were given was that DOE expected other sites in the Ohio Field Office to be made Closure Account sites by 2000, and there were insufficient funds to fully fund all projects. The solution was to fully fund all other sites in the Ohio Field Office to support their milestone achievements leaving just one site (Fernald) to miss

A United States Department of Energy Site-Specific Advisory Board
Post Office Box 544 Ross, Ohio 45061 513.648.6478

its milestones. While we believe Fernald will ultimately receive full funding, this budget exercise has left us unsettled and rather confused about the value of having been placed on the Closure Account list. We hope that this is not what Congress had in mind.

We request your assistance in clarifying this situation and avoiding costly and confusing budgeting exercises in the future. We have a number of questions:

1. Is it the intent of the Closure Fund to provide those sites a steady source of funding so that they can achieve closure by 2006? If so, how is this to be achieved?
2. Is it the intent of Congress that Closure Fund sites still go through the normal appropriations process, thereby allowing DOE and OMB to reduce the funding request below that necessary to achieve closure?
3. If DOE expands the list of closure sites without having sufficient resources to achieve closure for each of them by 2006, does that not defeat the purpose of the closure account?
4. Is it the intent of Congress to have DOE aggressively streamline its operations at Closure Fund Sites to focus on environmental remediation and eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy? (The FCAB has been pushing DOE to this end for years, please see the attached letters.)

We appreciation your attention to these issues and we hope you join us in working with DOE to aggressively pursue remediation of the Fernald Site.

Very truly yours,

John S. Applegate
Chair

Cc:
Jack Craig, FEMP
Leah Dever, Ohio Field Office
OEPA Administrator
USEPA Region 5 Administrator

FERNALD CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Mr. Jim Owendoff
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
US Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20585

Dear Mr. Owendoff:

The Fernald Citizens Advisory Board is writing to voice our strong opposition to any proposals that would transfer management of the Fernald Environmental Management Project to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Fernald project is beginning to make real progress toward total remediation and is still on track to achieve closure by 2006. DOE, its regulators, its stakeholders, and the US Congress have all affirmed the importance of and commitment to this closure. The transfer of site management at any point in the remediation of Fernald will effectively guarantee that remediation goals will not be met by 2006. Transferring management to the Corps of Engineers or any other agency will result in an unavoidable transition period that would cause a minimum one to two year delay. In addition, the strong relationships that DOE has forged at Fernald with the regulators and stakeholders would be undermined and the institutional knowledge so critical to remediation would be largely lost. The result would be moving Fernald out of the Closure Account, missing regulatory milestones, increased community frustration, and a more expensive remediation.

Instead, DOE and Congress need to provide Fernald with stable funding, DOE headquarters needs to be more responsive to the needs of the site as outlined in the Closure Fund Management Plan, and all parities need to work together to implement the decisions that we all have worked so hard to make.

The Fernald Citizens Advisory Board remains committed to working with DOE to achieve closure at Fernald. Please do not hesitate to call on us for any reason.

Very truly yours,

John S. Applegate
Chair

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Cc:
Federico Pena, DOE Secretary
Elizabeth Moler
Leah Dever, Ohio Field Office
Jack Craig, FEMP
Ohio Delegation
OEPA Administrator
USEPA Region 5 Administrator

FERNALD CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARY

MARCH 1998

OPERABLE UNIT 1 --- WASTE PITS REMEDIAL ACTION PROJECT

Major Work Activities - March 1998

- Completed construction of Locomotive Maintenance Facility.
- Submitted International Technology (IT) Corporation's Remedial Design package to regulatory agencies.

OPERABLE UNIT 2 --- ON-SITE DISPOSAL FACILITY (OSDF)

Major Work Activities - March 1998

- OSDF
  - Completed construction of OSDF Material Transfer Area and initiated construction of Decontamination Facility.
  - Began placement of 2-foot soil layer of select impacted material in Cell 1.
  - Prepared consent package for OSDF Phase II/Southern Waste Units excavation contract for submittal to DOE for review and approval to award.
- Leachate Conveyance System
  - Resumed efforts to complete Leachate Conveyance System construction punch list items, which have been delayed by weather conditions.

OPERABLE UNIT 3 --- FACILITIES CLOSURE & DEMOLITION PROJECT

Major Work Activities - March 1998

- Safe Shutdown
  - Completed isolation of all utilities in Plant
  - Performed biohazard cleanup and holdup material removal from selected area in Plant 2/3.
  - Performed underground excavations on fire protection, treated waterline and domestic waterline for Tank Farm.
- Decontamination and Dismantlement (D&D)
  - Completed removal of all accessible transite material in Boiler Plant/Water Plant.
  - Completed demolition of Coal Shaker structure and associated equipment.
  - Submitted Implementation Plan for combined complexes to regulatory agencies for Maintenance/Tank Farm Complex.
  - Submitted Implementation Plan to regulatory agencies for Sewage Treatment Plant Complex.

OPERABLE UNIT 4 --- SILOS PROJECT

Major Work Activities - March 1998

- Conducted pre-proposal meeting with interested potential contractors on Silos 1 and 2 Proof of Principle Testing Request for Proposal (RFP).
- Made Scope of Work, Evaluation Criteria and summary of Technical Requirements Document for Accelerated Waste Retrieval Project available for stakeholder review.
- Completed revision of Silo 3 Draft RFP to incorporate off-site treatment.
- Completed mock-up testing of Silo 3 Small Scale Waste Retrieval at Silo 4 and initiation of relocation of equipment to Silo 3.

OPERABLE UNIT 5

Major Work Activities - March 1998

- **Soils Characterization and Excavation Project**
  - Completed minor checklist items associated with demobilization of Paddys Run Embankment Stabilization Project Phase II.
  - Initiated additional Waste Acceptance Criteria attainment sampling of West Soil Stockpile in Area 1, Phase I (OSDF Cell 1 Footprint and Nearby Areas).
- **Aquifer Restoration and Waste Water Project**
  - Completed all major construction activities on Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWWT) Facility Expansion and initiated Integrated Construction Acceptance Testing (CAT) and System Operability Testing (SOT).
  - Completed off-property pipeline installation for South Plume Optimization Project.
  - Completed construction and performed CAT and SOT on new Sewage Treatment Plant.
  - Submitted the following documents to regulatory agencies: March 1998 Integrated Environmental Monitoring Plan Quarterly Report, Draft Final South Field Extraction System/South Plume Optimization Start-Up Monitoring Plan, and Restoration Area Verification Sampling Report.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Major Work Activities - March 1998

- **Neutralization/Precipitation/Deactivation/Stabilization Project**
  - Total of 760 drums treated in project as of 3/27/98.
- **Nuclear Materials Disposition Operations**
  - Shipped eight samples of various uranium-containing compounds off site for analysis in support of contract for sale of low enriched uranium materials.
- **T-Hopper Repackaging System**
  - Made "lessons learned" modifications to optimize system operability early in March; restarted project March 23, 1998, and repackaged material in three T-Hoppers by March 27, 1998.
- **Organic Treatment Project**
  - Received 28 responses to Commerce Business Daily announcement for potential subcontractors to treat tri-mixed wastes; these are wastes contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in addition to containing both low level radiological components and organic contaminants regulated by Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT SUMMARY

APRIL 1998

OPERABLE UNIT 1 --- WASTE PITS REMEDIAL ACTION PROJECT
Major Work Activities - April 1998

- Completed Locomotive Maintenance Building utilities installation.
- Initiated construction of rail and access road lighting.
- Awarded contract for procurement of 50 gondola cars.
- Submitted Draft Transportation and Disposal Plan to the Agencies.

OPERABLE UNIT 2 --- ON-SITE DISPOSAL FACILITY (OSDF)
Major Work Activities - April 1998

- OSDF
  - Completed placement of 2-foot layer of select impacted material in Cell 1 using East Soil Stockpile material.
  - Submitted Consent Package for OSDF Phase II/Southern Waste Units excavation contract to DOE for review and approval; subcontract expected in early May.
  - Began construction of OSDF access control and laboratory trailers.

- Leachate Conveyance System
  - Performed routine maintenance.

OPERABLE UNIT 3 --- FACILITIES CLOSURE & DEMOLITION PROJECT
Major Work Activities - April 1998

- Safe Shutdown
  - Completed holdup material removal from selected areas in Plant 2/3.
  - Completed control point setup in Plant 6.
  - Completed excavations on underground utility lines to Boiler Plant.
  - Completed excavation of Cooling Water Line to old Cooling Tower.
  - Completed utility isolations and tie-ins to steam and chlorine lines in Boiler Plant.

- Decontamination and Dismantlement (D&D)
  - Completed demolition of East and West precipitator breeching and support steel.
  - Completed transite removal in Boiler Plant/Water Plant.
  - Completed demolition of Boiler Plant South Bay structural steel and removed equipment.
  - Began asbestos abatement and transite removal at old Cooling Tower.
  - Completed removal of asbestos-containing material from Plant 9.
  - Completed railroad track removal for Recycling Supplemental Environmental Project.

OPERABLE UNIT 4 --- SILOS PROJECT
Major Work Activities - April 1998

- Held public workshop on Accelerated Waste Retrieval Project Request for Proposal (RFP) began addressing comments from stakeholders and independent consultants.

- Initiated evaluation of Silos 1 and 2 Proof of Principle Testing RFP proposals.
- Submitted revised Silo 3 Draft RFP to DOE for review.
- Prepared Silo 3 Draft Remedial Design Work Plan and submitted it to DOE for review.

OPERABLE UNIT 5

Major Work Activities - April 1998

- **Soils Characterization and Excavation Project**
  - Completed field implementation of Area 2 Phase I (Southern Waste Units) Site Preparation package.
  - Completed sampling for Above-Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC)/Firing Range sampling in Area 2 Phase I and additional WAC sampling of West Soil Stockpile in Area 1 Phase 1 (OSDF Cell 1 Footprint and nearby areas).
  - Published solicitation in Commerce Business Daily for potential sources sought to perform lead-contaminated soil treatability work in former Trap Range Area.
  - Initiated Phase I wetland mitigation design.
  - Submitted Draft Final Sitewide Excavation Plant to Agencies.
  - Held meeting with Natural Resources Trustees on April 16, 1998; trustees proposed possible settlement of State of Ohio lawsuit against DOE for natural resource damages.

- **Aquifer Restoration and Waste Water Project**
  - Completed Standard Startup Review (SSR) on Advanced Wastewater Treatment (AWWT) Facility Expansion and initiated operations on April 30, 1998.
  - Completed construction of new Sewage Treatment Plant.
  - Submitted Draft Final Startup Monitoring Plan for South Field Extraction System and South Plum Optimization Groundwater Restoration modules.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Major Work Activities - April 1998

- **Neutralization/Precipitation/Deactivation/Stabilization Project**
  - Moved selected drummed and boxed waste to Plant 6 in preparation for treatment under extended contract; 760 drums treated in project to date.

- **Waste Shipping**
  - Continued corrective action implementation and path forward evaluation result from Type B Investigation Report on Leaking White Metal Boxes and associated Corrective Action Plan; plan remains in review at DOE-Headquarters.

- **T-Hopper Repackaging System**
  - Moved to two-shift operations on April 13, 1998; total of 22 T-Hoppers repackaged as of April 29, 1998.

- **Organic Treatment Project**
  - Evaluated responses to Commerce Business Daily announcement; prepared Request for Proposal and began internal review process.

- **DOE Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for Activities Involving Enriched Restricted Materials Requiring Nuclear Criticality Safety Controls**
  - ORR began on April 14, 1998, and was completed April 20, 1998, with preliminary results indicating four pre-start findings; satisfactory completion of pre-starts and DOE-Fernald concurrence is required before DOE-Ohio Field Office will grant approval to restart operation.

June 9, 1998
Associated Press
"Fernald Shipments Postponed"
By: John Nolan

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Fernald shipments postponed

Nevada site must first OK leak safeguards

By John Nolan
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI

Hauling of radioactive waste from the contaminated Fernald facility to the U.S. Department of Energy's Nevada test site won't resume until late this summer, the department said Monday.

Department officials had said in April that they hoped to adopt new safeguards and resume the shipments by truck as early as this month. They were suspended after a shipment leaked Dec. 15 near Kingman, Ariz.

Any changes must be approved by officials at the Nevada test site, who are not scheduled to visit Fernald until July, and then by their bosses in Washington, D.C., said Gary Stegner, a spokesman at the department's Fernald office.

Neighbors of the Fernald site have been told the shipments probably will not resume until late August or early September, said Lisa Crawford, president of Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety and Health.

"It dismays us. But at the same time, they made some really bad mistakes," said Crawford, who is also a member of a DOE-funded citizens advisory board at Fernald.

"If we're going to ship low-level waste, we need to do it really carefully. It needs to be packaged properly and it needs to be managed properly," she said.

Nevada politicians also have demanded that the Energy Department take precautions and correct problems before resuming the shipments.

The shipments include construction rubble, uranium materials from reprocessing operations dating when Fernald ceased production in 1989 and radioactive material from filtered waste water. Small volumes of waste have been sent to other, commercially operated disposal sites.

FRESH members say they are concerned that if the Nevada test site won't accept the wastes, it could be stuck at Fernald until alternatives are found. Some of Fernald's wastes are to be buried on site, but the bulk is to be disposed of elsewhere.

The backed-up waste shipments at the site have not caused problems so far, Fernald officials say. Through the end of March, Fernald had been scheduled to ship out 161,000 cubic feet of waste. But only 12,000 cubic feet have been shipped so far.

In a Feb. 6 report, the Energy Department blamed faulty containers and inadequate supervision for the December leak.

Separately, Fluor Daniel Fernald, the principal cleanup contractor at the site, on Monday awarded more than $4 million in contracts to four companies that will test ways to treat radioactive waste stored in two silos at Fernald.

In the tests, the companies will employ four approved treatment technologies on surrogate waste similar to that at Fernald.

Results of the tests will be forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for review.

About 6,800 metric tons of low-level waste are stored in the two silos.

(Reporter Nicholas G. Jonson contributed to this story.)

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June 9, 1998
The Cincinnati Enquirer
Front Page
"Tests Ready for 2nd Try at Fernald"
By: Rachel Melcer

Tests ready for 2nd try at Fernald

4 companies get contracts for experiments

BY RACHEL MELCER
The Cincinnati Enquirer

Nearly 18 months after a treatment facility meltdown stymied their attempts to clean up the most-hazardous waste at the former Fernald uranium processing plant, Fluor Daniel Fernald officials on Monday handed off the project to someone else.

Four different companies, to be exact.

At a combined price of $4.2 million, their scientists will spend the next 48 weeks testing new technologies designed to stabilize 6,800 cubic meters of lead-contaminated, radioactive muck now in two crumbling silos at the Fernald facility in northwest Hamilton County.

Contracts were awarded Monday to Toledo-based EnVitco, for $2 million; Collegeville, Pa.-based Vortec Corp., $1.34 million; Monroeville, Pa.-based Industrial Technologies Corp., $305,000; and Columbia, S.C.-based Chem-Nuclear, $576,000.

But, because of concerns about radioactive contamination, they will not be using the actual Fernald waste.

Instead, they will use a variety of surrogate compounds formulated by scientists at Fluor Daniel Fernald, the cleanup site manager. The materials will contain the same proportions of water, arsenic, lead and other toxins — without any of the radon gas-emitting radium and uranium.

That's because in this case, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are concerned with only one thing: getting the lead out.

Officials already know that the material will eventually wind up in permanent storage at the government-run Nevada Test Site — where handling the nuclear byproducts of the Cold War is standard operating procedure. But the Nevada Test Site will not accept any liquid or chemically hazardous material, according to Dennis Nixon, silos project manager for Fluor Daniel Fernald.

"The challenge for (treating and shipping) this waste stream is not the radioactive element, it's the hazardous element —

(Please see FERNALD, Page A4)

Shipments delayed

The Fernald-to-Nevada shipment of nuclear waste has been delayed until late summer, when officials hope to have new safeguards in place. A4

June 9, 1998
The Cincinnati Enquirer
Front Page
"Tests Ready for 2nd Try at Fernald"
By: Rachel Melcer

Fernald: Contracts given for testing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

the lead that has the potential to leach out into the environment," he said.

The solution, scientists say, is to change the chemical makeup of the waste. Moisture will be removed, and the lead will be chemically bonded to either glass or concrete.

Fluor Daniel Fernald tried vitrification — turning the material into a glasslike solid — in 1996, but failed when a pilot plant melted and spewed thousands of pounds of waste into an emergency catch basin and onto the floor.

The silo cleanup project was put on hold as officials went back to the drawing board.

Now they are paying outside contractors to test variations of the two different technologies. The one that works will be applied to the Fernald silo waste in an estimated $275 million, eight-year cleanup.

Under EPA-imposed deadlines, the Department of Energy must select a specific technology, open it up to public comment and offer the project up for bids by the end of 2000.

Lisa Crawford, president of Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety and Health, said the hopes of an entire community are riding on the process.

"Silos 1 and 2 are the worst things we have on site, the scariest, the most dangerous ... and I want it in the safest configuration we can put it in, especially since we're going to transport it," she said.

Fernald-area residents can't wait to get the contaminated waste off-site. It is stored in silos that experts say could be swept away by a tornado. And clay liners designed to prevent cancer-causing radon gas from leaking into the atmosphere are beginning to decay.

But, Ms. Crawford says, it's more important to handle the project right than to just do it fast.

"When the melter melted over there, it was hard on all of us because we had really hung our hats on vitrification and it didn't work," she said. "I think this time, we need to make sure we're doing it right. And if it's going to cause delays, so be it."

Despite their earlier gaffe, Fluor Daniel Fernald officials are not ready to give up on vitrification.

The problem with their first attempt, according to Mr. Nixon, was that lead unexpectedly separated from the molten glass mixture and collected at the bottom of a mixing pool — and then burned through the vitrification machine.

"It's a matter of learning lessons. It was an unfortunate setback for vitrification," said Mr. Nixon, who still believes the process can work.

EnVitco and Vortec Corp will try their hand at refining vitrification.

The other option, being explored by Industrial Technologies Corp. and Chem-Nuclear, is chemical stabilization: The silo material will be mixed with concrete and then molded into solid blocks suitable for shipment.

But that yields large, heavy chunks of material that are much more expensive to transport and store. And the process is completed in batches, rather than as a 24-hour operation possible with vitrification.

That's why Fluor Daniel Fernald officials initially ruled it out, Mr. Nixon said. They had thought that vitrification would be cheaper — until they realized how difficult and costly it might be to refine that more complicated technology.

"It was thought at that time that vitrification (yielded) a much better waste form," Mr. Nixon said. "But all things equal, both technologies could do this job."

The proof will come in the subcontractors' reports.

"We are eager to learn the results," said Nina Akgunduz, Department of Energy silos project manager. "This project has been extremely challenging, and we are pleased to start heading down the path that will lead to a final solution."

June 9, 1998
Associated Press
"Waste Shipments Delayed"
By: John Nolan

Waste shipments delayed

BY JOHN NOLAN
The Associated Press

Hauling of radioactive waste from the contaminated Fernald site to the U.S. Department of Energy's Nevada test site won't resume until late this summer, the department said Monday.

Department officials had said in April that they hoped to adopt new safeguards and resume the shipments by truck from the Cincinnati area as early as this month. They were suspended after a shipment leaked Dec. 15 near Kingman, Ariz.

Any changes must be approved by officials at the Nevada test site, who are not scheduled to visit Fernald until July, and then by their bosses in Washington, D.C., said Gary Stegner, a spokesman at the department's Fernald office.

Neighbors of the Fernald site have been told the shipments probably will not resume until late August or early September, said Lisa Crawford, president of Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety and Health.

"It dismays us. But at the same time, they made some really bad mistakes," said Mrs. Crawford, who is also a member of a DOE-funded, citizens advisory board at Fernald.

"If we're going to ship low-level waste, we need to do it really carefully.," she said.

Nevada politicians also have demanded that the Energy Department take precautions and correct problems.

The shipments include construction rubble, uranium materials from processing operations halted when Fernald ceased production in 1989, and radioactive material from filtered waste water. Small volumes of waste have been sent to other, commercially operated disposal sites.

FRESH members say they are concerned that if the Nevada test site won't accept the wastes, it could be stuck at Fernald until alternatives are found.

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June 5, 1998May 1,
The Harrison Press
Second Front Page
"Touring Fernald"
By: Tina O'Connell

Touring Fernald

Crosby students see remains of Cold War in school's back yard

Three-eyed fish, glowing people, mutant animals, nuclear warheads and bombs exploding were some of the things Crosby Elementary School sixth-graders expected to see when they went to Fernald, Thursday, May 21.

What they did see were lots of buildings, fences, towers, rubble and ordinary people wearing ordinary clothes. What the students didn't expect were flourishing trees and flowers in a pleasant setting.

Fluor Daniel Fernald is Crosby's Partner in Education and during the school year employees take turns visiting the school to give a science lesson.

"We feel that it's very important that students grow up to be science literate," said Fluor Daniel Fernald public relations spokesperson Sue Walpole.

Tie-dying, claymation, rocketry and simple machines are a few of the projects the students have completed with guidance from Fluor Daniel. The culminating activity is a field trip to the clean-up site in May.

The students' first stop was a conference room where the group watched a mandatory safety video and Walpole fielded questions about the site.

"My mom told me there are three-eyed fish here," said Christen Orebaugh.

Walpole assured students that there are no mutant animals present at the site. She said that wildlife and domestic animals are routinely tested for any genetic variations.

Sixth-grader Tim Wright wanted to know if anything had ever started glowing.

Production at the plant stopped in 1989 after 35 years and the only activity there now is clean up of the site, said Walpole.

"All contamination is expected to be contained or removed by 2006," she said. "Basically, we're working ourselves out of a job."

As the group toured the buildings, Walpole explained how different areas of the site are restricted due to varying levels of radiation. She went into detail about the equipment that employees use to guarantee their safety from exposure.

"We wear special suits to protect us when we go to restricted areas," she said. "Underneath the suits, we usually wear all cotton clothes because radon tends to stick to polyester."

She demonstrated equipment used to monitor the radon content of any people or clothing coming out of a restricted area.

"If anything you're wearing or carrying is setting off alarms, we make you leave it behind," said Walpole.

One of the newer innovations on-site is the Advanced Waste Water Treatment Plant. It cleans radiation out of groundwater and injects it back into the Great Miami Aquifer at a rate of 2,900 GPM.

"Contaminated water is the only thing there is off-site," said Walpole. "Everything else is contained here in cells or shipped to nuclear testing grounds in Nevada."

"I wanted to see them do toxic testing," said Kris Rimroth. He also wanted to know is there had ever been any bombs go off at Fernald.

Walpole admitted that there have been bomb threats and took the students to a special emergency operations room where personnel can seal themselves off for 48 hours and be protected.

At the end of the tour, she asked students for input on what should be done with the site after all contamination is removed.

Some of the suggestions were a dude ranch, a park and an interactive museum similar to COSI.

Walpole told students an employee thought it would be a good site for the 2008 Olympics.

Fluor Daniel is investigating the possibility of burying thousands of Native American remains at the site that are currently being stored in museums in Ohio.

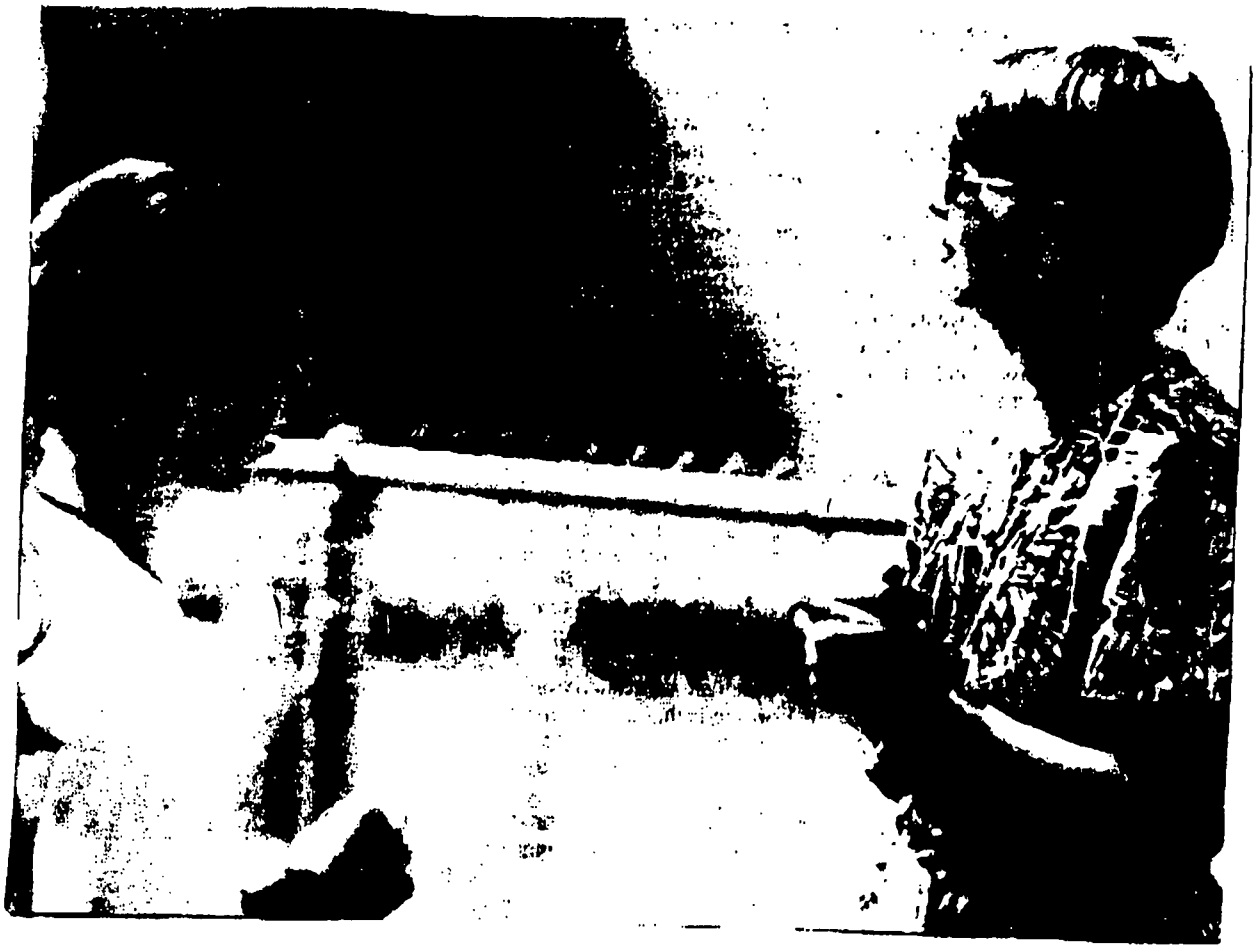
The Fernald Living History Project is being pursued as a reminder of the environmental and societal consequences of nuclear weapons production.

When asked whether it bothered them to live in the backyard of one of the nation's largest man-made disasters, students had mixed reactions.

"My parents have talked about moving," said Wilson Burton. "I have heard that there is a greater chance of getting cancer if you live here. Sometimes it's scary, I try not to think about it."

By
Tina O'Connell

June 5, 1998May 1,
The Harrison Press
Second Front Page
"Touring Fernald"
By: Tina O'Connell



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June 5, 1998May 1,
The Harrison Press
Second Front Page
"Touring Fernald"
By: Tina O'Connell

Top, right: Fluor Daniel Fernald public relations spokesperson Sue Walpole, right, talks to Wilson Barton and a group of Crosby Elementary School sixth-graders. The students are in front of fencing that surrounds the restricted areas at Fernald's former uranium processing site. Above: Crosby Elementary School sixth-grade teacher Ron Manges, background, left, and his class pause in front of Fernald's new wastewater treatment plant. Walpole is explaining how radium is removed from the water which is then re-injected back into the Great Miami Aquifer.

June 10, 1998
Journal-News
Page A6
"Fernald Cleanup Requires Utmost Care"
Opinion Page

IN OUR VIEW

Fernald cleanup requires utmost care

The complications involved in shipping relatively benign nuclear waste from Fernald to Nevada underscore the fact that nothing about this cleanup project is simply a walk in the park.

We need to remind ourselves that this isn't just a matter of tidying up around a contaminated site. Fernald, a former uranium processing plant, is an environmental blight and requires a very careful, focused approach to remediation.

The latest delay was triggered Dec. 15, when a truck carrying a shipment of waste leaked near Kingman, Ariz.

According to the Department of Energy, containers being used by cleanup contractor Fluor Daniel Fernald failed to meet specifications. Two of the seven containers — each larger than a kitchen refrigerator — leaked water that had formed in the nuclear waste residue. Container cracks had developed during handling at Fernald, then opened because of road vibrations on the trip to Nevada.

The leaks had Nevada officials upset because they expected nothing but solid waste — and they are a little bit tired of their state being used as a repository for so much nuclear material in the first place.

While certain containers have long been used to ship nuclear waste, Fluor Daniel Fernald developed different containers and then failed to adequately test them before use. Those are the containers that didn't stand up to the cross-country trip.

Because of the leaks, even more stringent oversight from officials at Fernald, DOE and the Nevada storage site will be in place before the shipments can resume, probably sometime in August or September.

That's as it should be. These waste shipments can't be done in a careless or haphazard fashion.

The fact is that, by volume, 75 percent of the Fernald waste will remain on the property — though that represents only 5 percent of the radioactivity. It makes handling the 25 percent that is going to be shipped out that much more critical.

Lisa Crawford, president of the Fernald Residents for Environmental Safety and Health, was on target when she said, "If we're going to ship low-level waste, we need to do it really carefully. It needs to be packaged properly, and it needs to be managed properly."

When the shipments resume, we trust that these problems will not be repeated.

June 10, 1998
The Cincinnati Enquirer
Page A9
"DOE Understates Amount of Waste"
By: Don Patrick

DOE understates amount of waste

Apparently David Rast, Department of Energy (DOE) environmental engineer, needs a basic math review, plus reference to a good cookbook ["Fernald waste to ride the rails," May 31].

Referring to the uranium content of contaminated waste from Fernald, he states that 1,030 parts per million "is the equivalent of two teaspoonsful of liquid in an Olympic-size swimming pool."

One thousand and thirty parts per million is slightly more than one part in 1,000, or a ratio of two teaspoons to 2,000 teaspoons. Since no less an authority than Betty Crocker tells us that there are 768 teaspoons in a gallon, three gallons would contain 2,304 teaspoons. Thus, 1,030 parts per million is the equivalent of two teaspoonsful of liquid in slightly less than three gallons of water. That seems like a pretty small "Olympic-size swimming pool."

DON PATRICK
Bridgetown

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"Judge Tells Fernald Residents to Wait"
By: John Nolan

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Judge tells Fernald residents to wait

By John Nolan
The Associated Press

CINCINNATI

Neighbors of the former Fernald uranium processing plant asked a federal judge Wednesday to divide up $10.5 million remaining from a 1989 settlement with the government over radioactive pollution.

But U.S. District Judge S. Arthur Spiegel declined to even consider the issue Wednesday, saying he still needs to receive a report from trustees he appointed to oversee the settlement fund. He told Fernald residents he will be able to let them know by late July when he will conduct the hearing.

The money would come from what is left of a $78 million settlement that Fernald residents reached in 1989 with the Fernald operation's owner, the U.S. Department of Energy.

The bulk of the settlement provided for continuing medical monitoring of residents who lived within five miles of Fernald when the agreement was reached. They requested that monitoring to ease their fears about whether radioactive pollution from the 1,050-acre Fernald operation had given them cancer or other diseases. The medical monitoring program is continuing.

The Fernald plant processed uranium for the government's production of nuclear weapons from 1951 until operations ended in 1989 to concentrate on cleaning the site of radioactive contamination. The cleanup is to continue through at least 2005.

About 17,000 residents who claimed that the radioactive pollution caused them emotional distress have received payments out of the settlement fund ranging from $550 to $16,000, their lawyers said. The $10.5 million from the settlement is allocated for nonmedical monitoring purposes. If Spiegel agrees to divide it, the residents could receive about half again as much as they received in their first emotional-distress payments, their lawyers estimate.

The Energy Department opposes the request. Its lawyers are urging the judge to put the $10.5 million into medical monitoring, arguing that was the main goal of the settlement. If the money is not used, it should be returned to the U.S. Treasury, the Energy Department lawyers argued in written filings with the court.

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"Judge Delays Action on Proposal for Distributing Fernald Funds"
By: Ben L. Kaufman

Judge delays action on proposal for distributing Fernald funds

BY BEN L. KAUFMAN
The Cincinnati Enquirer

A proposal to distribute another $10.5 million among Fernald neighbors was put on hold Wednesday by U.S. District Judge S. Arthur Spiegel.

He said he wants to hear from trustees handling the $78 million class-action settlement before scheduling arguments on the proposed payout.

Trustee J. Kermit Smith said comments would be submitted soon. Meanwhile, he reported, there was more than $20 million unspent.

Neighbors' lawyers want most or all of the $10.5 million to be shared among people who received earlier payments for emotional distress.

Government lawyers say there are better uses for the money, or, failing that, it should be returned to taxpayers.

Judge Spiegel will set a hearing date after reading arguments and responses from all sides.

Fernald was a uranium processing plant in northwest Hamilton County. Neighbors sued in 1985 after learning their property might have been contaminated. Thousands received payments for lost property value and emotional distress.

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