



Many Voices Working for the Community

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Spencer Gross, 241-4584

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Advisory Board Develops White Paper to Explain Environmental Cleanup Challenges

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) has developed a white paper for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Oak Ridge Environmental Management (EM) Program that outlines the complexities of cleaning up the contamination and hazardous waste on the Oak Ridge Reservation. ORSSAB's Environmental Management Committee drafted the white paper. ORSSAB is a citizen's panel that provides advice and recommendations to DOE on its cleanup operations in Oak Ridge.

While waste management professionals have recognized the complexities and related challenges of waste cleanup on the ORR for many years, they have not been widely publicized. The purpose of the white paper, entitled 'Balancing Environmental Management Challenges with the Complexity of the Oak Ridge Reservation,' is to summarize the issue succinctly for non-professionals and a wider audience beyond the Oak Ridge community.

Some of the main reasons Oak Ridge was chosen as one of the sites for the nationwide Manhattan Project – water supply, topography, nearby population centers for workforce – now present unique challenges for remediation and cleanup when coupled with other factors such as high rainfall and complex geology.

The specific points of the paper include discussions of waste types, disposal methods, remediation technologies, geology, rainfall, hydrology, and nearby dense population centers. The paper concluded that these factors together make the Oak Ridge Reservation the most complex, related to cleanup, of any DOE site.

ORSSAB offered the white paper to DOE to "illustrate the unique technical and environmental challenges that must be taken into consideration during the budgetary discussions establishing funding levels for cleanup activities. In addition, ORSSAB recommends that the white paper be used, as needed, by DOE in its efforts to keep the public fully informed of the cleanup challenges and progress at Oak Ridge. The paper will also help inform the public and educate others about the challenges faced in full-scale remediation of the Reservation."

DOE Oak Ridge said the paper 'provides a concise assessment of the challenges associated with the environmental management mission of Oak Ridge. Concepts captured by the paper align with the rationale being advanced by Oak Ridge Environmental Management representatives for completion of Oak Ridge Reservation cleanup.'

Susan Cange, acting manager, DOE's Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program suggested the paper should be incorporated into ORSSAB's public information tools such as its website.

For the full text of the white paper, visit the board's web site at <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab/Publications/EMChallengesandComplexity.pdf> or call 865-241-4583 or 241-4584.

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