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ADVOCATE

Melton Valley Cleanup Status and Strategy

The Department of Energy's (DOE's) Oak Ridge Office will soon make the Remedial Action Report available for review, documenting

trenches, tanks, landfills, and impoundments. The area also contained a number of pipelines and inactive, contaminated facilities.



Aerial view of completed work at SWSA 6 in Melton Valley.

In September 2000, the Melton Valley Interim Record of Decision (ROD), which legally defines the remedial actions to be taken, was signed by the Federal Facility Agreement parties—DOE, EPA, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). While the remediation tasks called for under the interim ROD were achieved under DOE's Accelerated Closure Plan, there are still some areas that await remediation.

But first, a review of what has been accomplished.

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the significant amount of remediation project work that has been performed in Melton Valley at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. This remediation work was a huge undertaking that remediated 219 release sites over the course of six years at a cost of about \$360 million. "It could have cost as much as \$1.6 billion had all the waste been removed and shipped off site," said Ralph Skinner, project manager for the DOE Environmental Management (EM) program.

For many years, a significant portion of Melton Valley, an area of about 1,000 acres near Oak Ridge National Laboratory, was used as a disposal site, and not only from work done here. From 1955 to 1963, the solid waste areas were designated by the Atomic Energy Commission as the Southern Regional Burial Ground. Melton Valley was a major disposal site for wastes from more than 50 off-site installations, research institutions, and other isotope users. Wastes were disposed of in

Remedial actions included construction and capping of collection and diversion trenches at shallow land burial sites and liquid waste seepage pits; excavation of transuranic (TRU) waste trenches; removal of contaminated sediments from waste ponds; grouting and abandonment of hundreds of wells; excavation and disposal of contaminated soil and equipment; and in situ treatment of two liquid waste seepage trenches.

A project on such a scale presented DOE and the prime cleanup contractor, Bechtel Jacobs, Co., with a multitude of challenges.

"While it appears simple, the logistics of hydrologic isolation of the solid waste storage areas (SWSAs) and seepage pits were a huge challenge," said Skinner. DOE's commitment to working safely added to the complexity. To safely accomplish

The Advocate is a publication of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB)—an independent, nonpartisan, volunteer citizens panel providing recommendations and advice to DOE's Environmental Management Program

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Melton Valley Cleanup *continued from page 1*

transportation and handling of thousands of cubic yards of soil and rock, liner material, and equipment was a huge accomplishment. In terms of complexity, the in situ grouting may have been the most complex—mixing the science and the construction.”

Over the course of the project there was a radioactive material spill on Highway 95 during transport to the Environmental Management Program's waste facility and a brief but small flare-up of flammable material during the excavation of the TRU materials. With the exception of these two incidents (neither of which resulted in injuries), the work was done safely and on schedule.

Hydrologic Isolation

The largest piece of the project, covering about 145 acres, was the remediation of three SWSAs, three seepage pits, and a trench that contained liquid low-level waste (LLW). Hydrologic isolation—the capping of the waste management areas and strategic placement of water diversion trenches—was employed to prevent the migration of contaminated water out of these burial areas where waste will remain in place.

In addition to capping, trenching, and re-seeding the burial sites, the project included plugging and abandonment of 800 unneeded wells, development of a 33-acre borrow area to excavate soil for capping, relocation of 1,200 feet of Melton Branch near SWSA 5, demolition of structures in the cap area, and rerouting of power lines.

Trench Grouting and Excavation

While Trench 6 was remediated through hydrologic isolation, Skinner said Trenches 5 and 7 were grouted in place because they contained liquid LLW with extensive contamination.

Other trenches held different wastes. Containers of TRU waste were stored

in several trenches in SWSA 5 North. All TRU waste containers and miscellaneous other wastes have been retrieved and staged for final disposal off site, with the exception of a small amount of TRU material in Trench 13, where work was suspended earlier in the year because of the flame-up incident. An agreement has been reached between DOE and TDEC to safely finish the remaining work at Trench 13 by the end of FY 2009.

Decontamination and Demolition

Several tasks of the Melton Valley cleanup involved decontamination and demolition. These structures included the Homogeneous Reactor Experiment Ancillary Facilities, the Liquid LLW Pumping Stations, the 7841 Equipment Scrap Yard, and the New Hydrofracture Facility. Most of the New Hydrofracture Facility was demolished before the Melton Valley remediation began. The remaining demolition, grouting of below-grade tanks and structures, waste disposal, and site restoration activities were completed in July 2006.

The 7841 Scrap Yard had a wide variety of contaminated drums, tanks, and equipment. All of that material has been disposed of at the on-site EM waste management facility near Y-12 or off site at two commercial disposal facilities.

Soils and Sediments

The last big piece of the Melton Valley cleanup was the soils and sediments remediation. Skinner said that all the ponds and pits that held waste have been excavated or grouted and capped. In addition, virtually all the Melton Valley uncapped area was walked over by teams, and all hot spots exceeding cleanup criteria established in the interim ROD were excavated. A final verification survey completed the soils and sediments remediation. The survey and sampling of more than 500 acres

of the watershed confirmed that the area meets remediation levels.

Other Subprojects

Melton Valley cleanup also included several other tasks. More than 100 hydrofracture injection and monitoring wells were plugged and abandoned, and more than 40,000 feet of pipeline that transferred liquid wastes throughout the valley were grouted or plugged and capped. Nine trenches comprising the Engineered Test Facility were remediated through the removal of buried waste and soil.

Remediation of the Intermediate Holding Pond just east of SWSA 4 was one of the early actions completed. In 2002, 24,300 tons of highly contaminated floodplain soil were removed from the pond and disposed of at the EM waste facility.

The High Flux Isotope Reactor Tank and Tanks T-1 and T-2 were emptied and stabilized with grout.

What's Left to Do in Melton Valley?

DOE is currently working to produce the Remedial Action Report to close out the interim ROD for Melton Valley. This document should be available to EPA, TDEC, and the public to review by this spring.

There are also two reactors in the valley that will need to be removed in the near future. The main facilities of the Homogeneous Reactor Experiment and the Molten Salt Reactor Experiment will most likely be addressed under either a separate decision or along with other reactor facilities covered by the Bethel Valley ROD. The defueling of Molten Salt Reactor is being covered under a separate ROD.

Other environmental concerns in the valley still await final decisions once

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Proposed Funding and Budget Targets Fall Short of Oak Ridge EM Program Needs

The DOE Environmental Management (EM) unofficial funding allocation for FY 2007 and the President's FY 2008 budget are hot topics of conversation right now. The conversations may get hotter.

Until recently the entire federal government was operating on a continuing resolution basis. In other words, when the time came for Congress to approve the 2007 budget, legislators couldn't agree on a final figure, so they allowed the government to continue to operate at either the 2006 funding levels or the 2007 House mark until they could settle on a final budget.

That in itself has been a problem for some federal departments that had requested larger budgets for 2007 planned activities or additional funding to initiate new work.

Even before the final 2007 funding will be approved (currently thought to be approximately \$512 million), the President's proposed budget for 2008 was rolled out. For DOE's nationwide EM program in general, and the Oak Ridge EM office in particular, the news isn't good and shows a continued downward slip in funding from the 2006 funding allocation.

The 2008 EM budget complex-wide is \$5.7 billion, down \$173 million from the 2007 request. As a result, Oak Ridge's budget amount currently will be approximately \$428.2 million, which

is about \$100 million less than the 2006 allocation.

DOE-Oak Ridge is currently working with the site regulators (EPA and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation) to evaluate work priorities and possibly renegotiate milestones for cleanup set forth in the Federal Facility Agreement once the funding for 2007 has been finalized by DOE headquarters.

This year the seven Site Specific Advisory Boards across the nation have been specifically offered the opportunity to weigh in on the 2009 budget request debate.

In 2006, the SSABs recommended to DOE Assistant Secretary for EM James Rispoli that they be included in the development of budget requests and the establishment of work priorities at

the various sites. Rispoli's response was to provide site managers with guidance on the involvement of the SSABs in this process. That guidance was issued to site managers in February 2007.

So how will cleanup work in Oak Ridge be affected by the 2007 allocation and 2008 budget?

In February, DOE Federal Facility Agreement Project Manager Dave Adler told members of the ORSSAB EM committee that while no work was stopped on the reservation in the

first months of FY 2007, a number of projects were slowed down.

For 2008, Adler said that in addition to announcing proposed budget targets, DOE also provided a list of priorities for 2008 and beyond. For DOE-Oak Ridge those priorities included safe operations, disposition of uranium-233 at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, disposition of transuranic wastes, decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) of K-25 and K-27 at East Tennessee Technology Park, and planning for remediation startup activities and D&D at Y-12 and Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Adler also said that while D&D of K-25 and K-27 is a priority, D&D of other facilities at East Tennessee Technology Park and the soils remediation work would be delayed. In fact, the completion of remediation and D&D at the site could be pushed out as far as 2012.

Based on Adler's presentation and the EM budget presentation by DOE-Oak Ridge Assistant Manager for EM Steve McCracken at the board's March 14 meeting, a recommendation on the budget is being drafted by the EM committee. It will be forwarded to the board for consideration for approval at the April 11 ORSSAB meeting. If approved, the recommendation will be included with the 2009 DOE-Oak Ridge EM budget request.



DOE-Oak Ridge Asst. Manager for EM Steve McCracken discusses the budget at the March 14 ORSSAB meeting.

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or email us at osbornepl@oro.doe.gov.

ORSSAB's May 2007 Meeting to be Forum for DOE Five-Year Review Public Meeting

DOE is spending hundreds of millions of dollars in Oak Ridge each year cleaning up environmental contamination left from decades of nuclear enrichment and other activities.

But how do you know it's working?

The answers lie in an annual report and a rigorous review that occurs every five years. The annual report is the Remediation Effectiveness Report (RER), and every five years it is expanded to include the Five-Year Review that's required under the Comprehensive Environmental Restoration, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

"The Five-Year Review is important because it actually reevaluates the protectiveness of the cleanup decisions," said Jason Darby, DOE program manager for developing the RER. "While the annual report evaluates if the remedy is working as planned, the Five-Year Review evaluates whether that chosen remedy is still appropriate under today's conditions."

Because the Five-Year Review is so important, a meeting will be held to go over the results with the public. In November 2006 ORSSAB recommended to DOE that the meeting be held as part of the monthly ORSSAB meeting calendar. DOE agreed and set the meeting for May 9 at the DOE Information Center in Oak Ridge.

"The public meeting is an important part of the Five-Year Review," said Darby. "It's a chance for the public to hear how the remedies are performing, ask questions, and provide DOE with feedback on our cleanup efforts."

YOU ARE INVITED



WHAT: Public meeting on the 2006 Remediation Effectiveness Report/Five-Year Review for the Oak Ridge Reservation

WHERE: DOE Information Center
475 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, 865-241-4780

WHEN: Wednesday, May 9
6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

The "2006 RER/Second Reservation-wide CERCLA Five-Year Review for the U.S. DOE Oak Ridge Reservation" (DOE/OR/01-2289) presents information collected in FY 2005 (October 1, 2004, through September 30, 2005).

"Through the Five-Year Review we have determined

that all of our cleanup efforts to date remain protective of human health and the environment," said Darby. "One highlight of this Five-Year Review is the decreasing concentrations of contaminants in fish in the Clinch River and Watts Bar Reservoir."

This is the second Five-Year Review for the reservation, the first being conducted in 2001. However, this review is more comprehensive than the 2001 document for several reasons. In 2001 EPA's guidance for the review was in draft form, and the process for a multiple site evaluation, especially on the scale of the Oak Ridge Reservation, was not completely defined.

In addition, several key decisions on the reservation were not ready for a full review and were not fully evaluated in the report. For the 2006 review, however, several important off-site

actions have been in the implementation phase for almost 10 years, such as the Lower Watts Bar Reservoir, Clinch River/Poplar Creek, and Lower East Fork Poplar Creek. This report also discusses the progress and effectiveness of two major watershed records of decision (ROD) that were signed in 2000 and 2001: the Phase 1 ROD for Bear Creek Valley and the interim ROD for Melton Valley.

As a result, this 2006 RER/Five-Year Review is an important document. Contained in a 4-inch binder, the report makes for heavy reading. However, to save shelf space it is available on compact disc. Both the written report and the CD are available for review at the DOE Information Center, 475 Oak Ridge Turnpike, 865-241-4780.

Melton Valley

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the effectiveness of the remediation activities taken under this interim ROD are evaluated. These concerns include groundwater, long-lived radioactive constituents, ecological protectiveness, and sediments in White Oak Creek and White Oak Lake Embayment.

Which leads us to the final Melton Valley ROD. The work being performed under the interim ROD is just that—interim. John Owsley, director of TDEC's DOE Oversight Division in Oak Ridge, said the final cleanup of Melton Valley won't be decided for years until there is time to evaluate the effectiveness of the remediation steps under the interim ROD. "The capping and other work should be effective," he said, "but we don't know to what degree. The final remedy will be based on how effective these steps are in slowing down the flow of contamination."

Recent Recommendations & Comments

Complete recommendation text can be found on the ORSSAB web site at www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab/recc.htm.

Reaffirmation of DOE Secretarial Policy to Provide Stewardship at Ongoing Mission Sites with Residual Contamination

In 1998 the board recommended that DOE establish a national policy for commitment to long-term stewardship. In late December 2000, the Deputy Secretary of Energy issued a memorandum stating that site landlords would be responsible for long-term stewardship when cleanup work is completed at a site.

Since a number of remediation projects have been completed on the Oak Ridge Reservation and elsewhere around the nation, the ORSSAB Stewardship Committee felt DOE should reaffirm its commitment to long-term stewardship at sites with ongoing missions that contain residual contamination, such as Y-12 National Security Complex and Oak Ridge National Lab.

At its March 14 meeting the board approved the Stewardship Committee's recommendation that DOE assign

a headquarters liaison within the Environmental Management program who would be responsible for oversight and resource assistance both pre- and post-remediation.

Recommendation on the Draft Legacy Management Strategic Plan

In December 2003, DOE created the Office of Legacy Management (LM), which is responsible for managing sites where DOE's missions have been completed and the sites have been cleaned up and closed.

LM monitors those sites to ensure the future protection of human health and the environment and is responsible for managing the records of the sites and making those records accessible for future data needs. A draft LM strategic plan was issued in October 2006 that identified LM's responsibilities for managing those sites.

In reviewing the draft plan, the ORSSAB Stewardship Committee realized that the plan said nothing about long-term stewardship at sites with ongoing missions, such as Oak Ridge National Laboratory and Y-12, which have areas that have been remediated but have waste left in place.

At its March 14 meeting the board approved a recommendation from the Stewardship Committee that stated the strategic plan had no guidance for ongoing mission sites with residual contamination. The recommendation said that LM should state clearly that if it had no responsibility for ongoing mission sites it should identify who does have responsibility for them.

Snapshots in Oak Ridge Cleanup History

10 years ago...

The board adopted its "Vision, Critical Success Factors, and Principals," which were developed to provide long-term goals for the DOE-Oak Ridge Office EM program. The board stated that it is engaged with the state and federal governments on behalf of the public to find mutually acceptable solutions to common problems.

5 years ago...

In October 2001, DOE notified TDEC that it was removing mixed transuranic waste requirements, including milestones, from the Oak Ridge Reservation Site Treatment Plan, stating the requirements were not needed to dispose transuranic waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. In March 2002, the board recommended restoring the milestones to the plan. The board also recommended milestones for remote-handled transuranic waste be extended until permits at the Pilot Plant were approved.

DOE said it could not act on the recommendations until all aspects of the plan had been worked out with New Mexico.

Rizzo Appointed to Board



Louis Rizzo has been appointed to ORSSAB to replace Steve Douglas, who left the board in August. Louis is a retired educator and

training program coordinator who lives in Knoxville. His most recent position was as Director of the New England

Program in Gardner, Mass., where he planned, organized, and directed a federally funded employment and training program for low-income seniors.

He worked in Florida for many years in service programs for seniors, children, and persons with epilepsy, and he was a supervising principal for an elementary school district for 13 years. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from Boston College and a Master of Education degree from the University of Massachusetts.

Reservation Update

Efforts Made To Preserve the Memory of K-25

A portion of a congressional appropriation of \$500,000 is being used to determine the best way to preserve part of the enormous K-25 building site for posterity. In December 2006, contracts were awarded to two Nashville firms that have already been working on ideas to preserve and restore part of the site.

DOE has agreed to leave the base of the U-shaped K-25 building intact while its potential as a tourist attraction is studied. While the 'legs' of the enormous U-shaped building will be demolished, the hope is to indicate the footprint of where the building stood and preserve the north tower—the base of the U. The department is also trying to have the 43-acre site of the K-25 building, located at East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP), designated as a National Historic Landmark.

Preliminary results of the Nashville firms' evaluations, done by Access Museum Services and architectural firm Tuck-Hinton, were released in March. Access Museum Services, a company that helps new museums get off the ground, estimates that at least 200,000 people a year would visit the building site where uranium was enriched to build the world's first atom bomb.

The firm puts an estimated \$13.3 million price tag on converting the north tower of K-25 into a visitors center.

Additional studies and discussions with DOE and the public are being planned before a decision is made on how to go forward with preservation efforts.

Studies Funded for Nuclear Recycling Plant and Research Facilities

DOE has awarded almost \$900,000 to conduct a study to determine the feasibility of building a spent nuclear

fuel recycling plant and fuel recycling research center near Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Similar grants have been awarded to 10 other sites around the country.

The complex would consist of a nuclear recycling center that would process spent nuclear fuel, a recycling reactor that would burn long-lived radioactive elements in spent fuel and generate electricity in the process, and a research facility that would develop recycling processes for highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel.

At a February meeting in Oak Ridge to get public input on the proposal, a number of people voiced support for building the facility. But opposing voices cited the loss of thousands of acres of land to build the facilities and not utilizing existing 'brownfield' sites such as ETTP when cleanup work is complete there.

Waste Processor Fined for Illegal Dumping

Nuclear waste processor Duratek was fined \$300,000 late last year for dumping contaminated waste water into Bear Creek in 2002.

At the time of the incident Duratek was holding contaminated water in ponds for processing. As a result of heavy rainfall the ponds were about to overflow. Rather than drawing the water into another reservoir for treatment, about 350,000 gallons were dumped directly into Bear Creek.

Fortunately, little contamination of Bear Creek occurred because the heavy rainfall diluted the water.

Company to Build 'Green' Fuel Cells at ETTP

Using technology developed at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, a company called Worldwide Energy plans to build

hydrogen fuel cells to produce electricity, with only water as a byproduct.

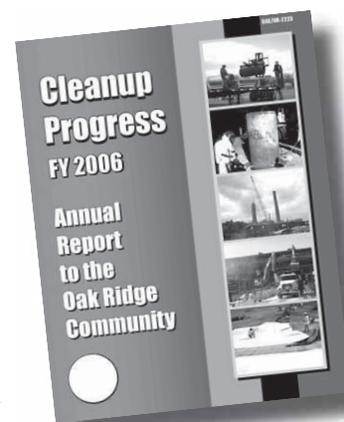
The facility will be built in Building K-1036 at ETTP, with the first cell to be produced in early 2008.

DOE Incinerator Good to Go for Another Three Years

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation has approved a burn plan for the Toxic Substances Control Act Incinerator that allows it to consume more than 10 million pounds of wastes over the next three years. Much of it will come from off site, mostly from Ohio.

The incinerator is the only operating incinerator in the DOE complex that is capable of burning both solid and liquid radioactive and hazardous wastes. The incinerator was originally scheduled for closure in 2003 but has continued to operate to facilitate cleanup operations at other sites across the country.

"Cleanup Progress" Report Now Available



DOE's "Cleanup Progress: Annual Report to the Oak Ridge Community" offers an overview of what occurred during 2006

regarding environmental cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation. Copies are available at the DOE Information Center, 475 Oak Ridge Turnpike, 865-241-4780. The report is also available on the web at www.bechteljacobs.com/pdf/CleanProg2006.pdf.

A Man on a Mission...Norman Mulvenon

Norman Mulvenon is the most active member of ORSSAB. In addition to serving as the vice chair of the board, he actively participates on all committees.

He has served as chair of the Stewardship and Public Outreach committees. He makes almost daily appearances at the ORSSAB offices and spends who-knows-how-many hours reviewing material related to environmental management.

As if that wasn't enough, he chairs the Citizens Advisory Panel of the Local Oversight Committee and is a member of the League of Women Voters.

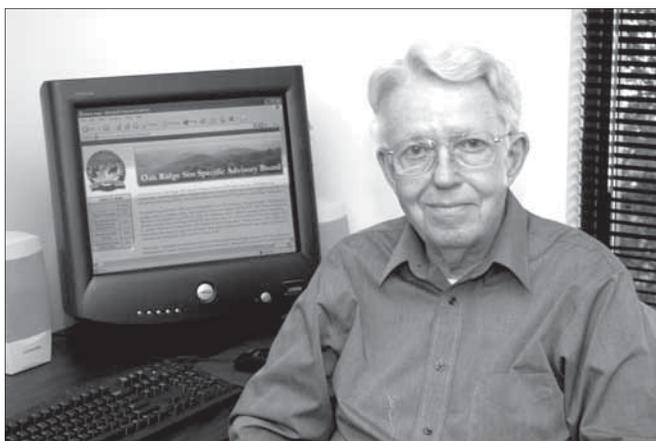
So what drives his dedication to seeing the Oak Ridge Reservation cleaned up after decades of outdated waste management practices? "My scientific mind and my moral indignity are tantalized by the idea of taking care of problems from the past," he says. "I accept the fact that people in the past did the best they could with what they understood. They didn't maliciously damage the reservation, but now that we know what's been done we need to fix it.

"I enjoy the work, but I'm looking at it for what we do for the long-term, and stewardship is the most important part of that."

Norman says when he first became involved in the public participation process, the atmosphere was much different than it is now. "It was very adversarial," he says. "DOE didn't want to do anything. But that changed dramatically, even during the first year because Washington directed the DOE site offices to work constructively with the public."

Norman was born in Prescott, Ariz., but as a youngster his family moved to a home on the beach at Santa Monica, Calif. As an elementary school student he spent one year in a non-denominational military academy and three years, from third to fifth grade, in a Catholic military academy.

After graduating from Santa Monica High School in 1956 he attended California State Polytechnic College (now



One of ORSSAB's most active and knowledgeable members is Vice Chair Norman Mulvenon, who retires from the board in July.

University), earning a degree in biological sciences. After a stint in the Army he moved to San Francisco and went to work in the electron microscope lab of the Zoology Department at the University of California-Berkeley.

After about five years at Berkeley he was offered a job selling electron microscopes with Picken Nuclear Corporation in White Plains, N.Y. He eventually applied to work for EG&G Ortec in Oak Ridge, and in 1969, on the day he married, he learned he had gotten the job.

But instead of coming to Oak Ridge, he was assigned as a salesman in Chicago. He finally made it to Oak Ridge in 1972 when he became the in-house sales manager for all of Ortec's products. In 1984 he became

the export sales manager for all of Ortec's worldwide markets, except the U.S. and Canada.

He retired from Ortec in 1994, but in 1996 he had a heart attack that he says "brought a whole new meaning for a lot of things."

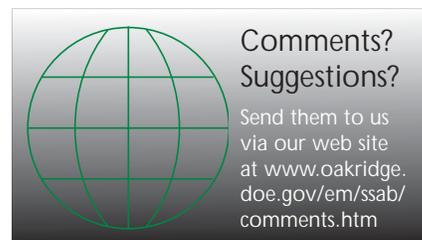
In 1997 he joined the Local Oversight Committee, and that same year he became involved with ORSSAB as a member of the End Use Working Group and later the Stewardship Working Group. He was appointed to the board in January 2002.

"Being a member of the board and the Local Oversight Committee is a useful experience that keeps me young," he says. "I've learned there are many caring people out there, and I enjoy working with them.

"We just need more public participation in things like environmental cleanup. We need active participation and let our opinions be known."

Even though his term on the board ends in July, Norman plans to continue attending board meetings and participating on the various committees.

He and his wife Maryann have three adult children and four grandchildren. In what little spare time he has, Norman pursues photography as a hobby and is a black powder shooting enthusiast.



Board Members Learn and Teach About Cleanup

Right: On March 9, ORSSAB sponsored a day-long workshop on the decommissioning process to give members a better understanding of what it takes to deal with structures like the K-25 building. Seven members attended, plus DOE and state personnel. The workshop was held at the DOE Information Center and led by Larry Boing of Argonne National Laboratory.



Left: Board members Tim Myrick, foreground, Norman Mulvenon, left, and Steve Stow (not shown) spent two class periods at Oak Ridge High School on March 8 educating students about the board and the Oak Ridge cleanup program. Members presented environmental science and ecology students with a series of real-life cleanup challenges at the Oak Ridge Reservation. Breaking out into discussion groups, the students then came up with their own solutions to address the problems.

Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
P.O. Box 2001, MS-7604
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

JOIN US FOR OUR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Board Meetings

- **April 11, 6:00 pm** – Update on the Balance of Reservation Program and the Integrated Facility Disposition Project
- **May 9, 6:00 pm** – 2006 Remediation Effectiveness Report/Five-Year Review

Committee Meetings

- **April 17, 5:30 pm** – Stewardship
- **April 18, 5:30 pm** – Environmental Management
- **May 15, 5:30 pm** – Stewardship
- **May 16, 5:30 pm** – Environmental Management

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