

~~RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR FULL CLEANUP OF THE WEST VALLEY NUCLEAR SITE~~

In 2013 at the West Valley nuclear site there have been ongoing physical maintenance activities to avert disastrous releases, planning for moving the high level waste from the big building to an outdoor pad by the road, new radioactive contamination found –not yet fully evaluated, and studies needing close public scrutiny.

→ **Physical site maintenance activities fighting erosion** —important efforts by NY to prevent constant erosion from reaching buried waste and releasing radioactivity into waters that run through Cattaraugus Creek to Lake Erie.



2 Burial Grounds on the “south plateau” at West Valley with Erdman Brook to the north and Frank’s Creek to the east. These waterways drain toward the north and northeast into Buttermilk Creek then Cattaraugus Creek and Lake Erie. Active remediation work must be done continually now, and as long as there is radioactive waste in the ground, to reduce erosion toward the trenches and burial holes. The trenches are fully New York’s liability. *Photo from NYSERDA Presentation on Frank’s Creek Mitigation Project October 23, 2013 Citizens Task Force Meeting*
http://www.westvalleyctf.org/2013_Materials/10/2013-10-23_NYSERDA_FranksCreek_Presentation.pdf



“Knick Point” on Frank’s Creek to the east of the northern trenches (1-7 above) of the NYS-licensed burial ground. A “knick point” is a location where there is a sharp change in slope such as a waterfall, which changes erosion patterns and rates upstream and downstream and even to the sides. Sidcutting toward the radioactive waste trenches is a serious concern. There are at least 14 pounds of plutonium buried in the trenches.

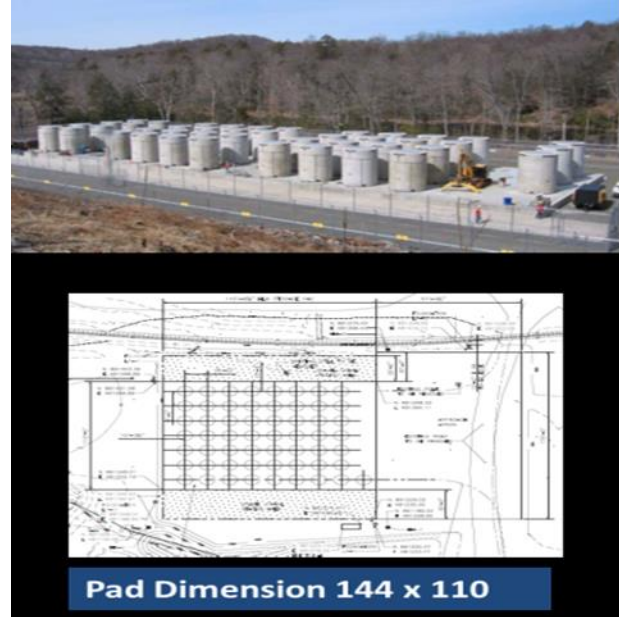
Photo from NYSERDA Presentation on Frank’s Creek Mitigation Project October 23, 2013 CTF Meeting
http://www.westvalleyctf.org/2013_Materials/10/2013-10-23_NYSERDA_FranksCreek_Presentation.pdf

→**Physical site work** includes demolishing buildings and planning for moving the extremely high level radioactive glass logs now stored in the thickly shielded reprocessing building to a storage pad out front. It will be a major feat to move the intensely radioactive high level waste “logs” from inside the old reprocessing building outside onto a 50-year storage pad, taking over 2 years according to the Department of Energy (DOE). This must be done to get to the source of the strontium plume migrating from the site. The storage pad has been poured and casks are being constructed.

Unexpected radioactive contamination was found in a new place at the site in September 2013--under the storage pad being built to hold the high level waste logs. Radioactivity was detected about 8 feet deep in 2 spots in the sidewall in the northeastern part of the excavation. Rather than confirming the type and amount of radioactivity to reveal or rule out potential underground migration, a plastic sheet was placed on the soil wall before proceeding to backfill and pour the concrete pad. As of mid December, there are still no lab results. DOE says it's not their job to figure it out or take care of it. New York doesn't want to slow the “progress” moving the high level waste.

The schematic of storage casks gives the idea of how the containers will look- but there will be more of them—56 most with 5 “logs” each. The NAC-STC canisters are transport casks that have not been NRC-certified yet to hold the West Valley high level waste. Outer concrete storage casks will not be certified by NRC. More on the casks and photo credit:

http://www.westvalleyctf.org/2013_Materials/09/2013-09-25_CHBWW_Canister_Relocation_Update.pdf



→**Monitoring:** Public calls for **Real Time air monitoring** during demolition have been refused so far. We continue to press for this especially for the upcoming destruction of the reprocessing building once the high level waste is moved out. **Real Time water monitoring** downstream is important for all water-users.

→**Government-funded Phase 1 Studies are underway on erosion, exhumation and engineered barriers**—important because these will determine if the site gets fully cleaned up in the long run. Some of the studies were put on hold for much of the year because questions arose about how to deal with the “uncertainties” in future predictions about the site. The Study Teams were mainly chosen by the Department of Energy and NYSERDA and are not permitted to have private conversations with members of the public regarding the studies...only in DOE supervised settings. Public concerns have been expressed about the focus of the studies...geared primarily to enable DOE and NYSERDA to come to agreement without consideration of public calls for full cleanup. We continue to call for the addition of Dr. David Carpenter, director of the Institute for Health & Environment at UAlbany to the West Valley Science Panel (ISP).

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