



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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## **ALE Cleanup Marks First Reduction in Hanford's Cleanup Footprint**

*Recovery Act Funding Aids Completion of Rattlesnake Mountain Cleanup*

RICHLAND, WASH. – The Department of Energy (DOE) has reduced the cleanup footprint on the Hanford Site by 115 square miles after work was completed recently on the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve (ALE) and Rattlesnake Mountain.

DOE's prime contractor for Central Plateau cleanup, CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M HILL), recently demolished 24 excess structures and removed 362 debris sites on the reserve. One active structure remains on the ALE at the former Nike missile site, which the Pacific Northwest Site Office uses to conduct seismic research, and is not part of the cleanup footprint.

DOE's contractor used \$4 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to perform the cleanup work on ALE, which began in December 2009.

"The completion of demolition and debris cleanup on ALE is a major milestone in reducing the Hanford Site cleanup footprint," said Matt McCormick, Manager of DOE's Richland Operations Office. "The removal of these structures and debris sites is important in preserving and enhancing the Hanford Reach."

DOE plans to reduce the active cleanup footprint at Hanford to less than 75 square miles by 2015 (a 90 percent reduction in Hanford's cleanup footprint).

The ALE reserve was closed to public access in the early 1940s, which preserved its native shrub-steppe ecosystem in a quality and quantity not found elsewhere in the Columbia Basin. In

addition, the area – on the eastern flank of Rattlesnake Mountain – has great historical and cultural significance to area Tribal Nations.

In the 1950s, the U.S. Army maintained anti-aircraft defense installations on the reserve. After those were deactivated in the early 1960s, research and communications facilities were established on the summit (Upper ALE) and lower elevations (Lower ALE) of the mountain.

Rattlesnake Mountain, also known as “Laliik” or “land above the water” by Native Americans, is a windswept 3,527-foot ridge overlooking the Hanford Site. The Eastern slope is under the federal protection of the ALE, a unit of the Hanford Reach National Monument, managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and owned by DOE.

“Cleanup of ALE has been logistically challenging because of its distant location from existing worker staging areas,” said Kurt Kehler, CH2M HILL Decommissioning and Demolition project vice president. “Workers endured varied weather conditions and difficult terrain, and ensured that numerous cultural resources were cared for during this ecologically sensitive cleanup.”

CH2M HILL worked closely with the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to identify culturally and ecologically sensitive areas. Local tribal representatives were brought in for oversight to ensure sensitive areas were carefully protected.

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