



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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F Reactor Area Cleanup Complete

RICHLAND, Wash. – U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) contractors have cleaned up the F Reactor Area, the first reactor area at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state to be fully remediated.

While six of Hanford's nine plutonium production reactors have been sealed up, or cocooned, the F Reactor Area is the first to have all of its associated buildings and waste sites cleaned up in addition to having its reactor sealed up.

"The cleanup of the F Reactor Area shows the tremendous progress workers are making along Hanford's River Corridor," said Dave Huizenga, Senior Advisor for the DOE Office of Environmental Management. "The River Corridor is the complex's largest environmental cleanup closure project. The F Area cleanup has substantially reduced risk to the Columbia River."

F Area is home to F Reactor, the third of Hanford's nine plutonium production reactors built to produce plutonium for the nation's defense program during both World War II and the Cold War. The reactor operated from 1945 to 1965 and was placed in interim safe storage in 2003.

Cleanup contractors combined to demolish 112 facilities, clean up 88 waste sites and in so doing removed 1.5 million tons of contaminated material during cleanup operations on the two square mile F Area. The cleanup was completed under interim Records of Decision for the area.

The majority of the waste was transported to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility in central Hanford for permanent disposal.

Several of the waste sites were large burial grounds containing contaminated soil and debris. Workers also found anomalies, including bottles, drums, high-pressure cylinders, spent nuclear fuel, and high-dose irradiated items. Some of the anomalies required special methods to sample and characterize the material, which called for additional hazard controls to ensure worker safety.

DOE's current River Corridor contractor, Washington Closure Hanford, began working in F Area in September 2005 and completed the first phase of remediation in December 2008, by

cleaning up 35 waste sites totaling more than 400,000 tons of waste material. During the final evaluation and confirmatory investigation process to check for any remaining waste sites, 20 additional sites were identified.

In 2010, Washington Closure began cleaning up the remaining sites using funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The waste sites included sodium dichromate pipeline, buried riverbank effluent pipeline, pipeline cradle debris, and septic lines. The project team transported nearly 240,000 tons of waste material to ERDF. In addition, workers removed about 200 gallons of sodium dichromate from pipelines, preventing potential leaks and groundwater contamination.

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