



NWRPO UPDATE

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EWDP SCOPE ENLARGED TO INCLUDE ATC WELLS

The NWRPO and DOE have agreed to modify the scope of work of Nye County's Early Warning Drilling Program (EWDP) to include work to install additional wells for an Alluvial Tracer Complex (ATC) program.

Due to interest by both parties in obtaining flow and transport data for the alluvial/volcanics interface downgradient of Yucca Mountain the ATC complex will be developed at the NC-EWDP-19D location just west

of the southwestern corner of the Nevada Test Site. In addition to well 19D at that site, completed to a depth of 1,438', well 19P has been completed to a depth of 500'. Well 19P will be a piezometer well in the ATC program.

The ATC will be installed and tested in two phases. Phase I work will be completed in federal FY 2000 and will consist of hydraulic testing in well 19D, with a subsequent single well injection

and pump-back test. This data will be added to the Nye County regional hydrology modeling program. The DOE will also use the data in their Saturated Zone Process Model Reports (PMR).

Phase II will be installed in FY 2001. These wells, M1, M2, and M3, along with an injection well, I1, will be completed and tested. Work should be completed in late FY 2001.

NYE COUNTY DRILLING PROGRAM MAKING GOOD PROGRESS; NO GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

As part of the Nye County Department of Natural Resources & Federal Facilities Early Warning Drilling Program (EWDP), Nye County is currently drilling at well locations in Amargosa Valley south of the proposed site of the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository. Nye County has completed drilling at ten shallow well sites (in general, wells less than 1000 feet deep) and is currently working to complete deep wells (wells greater than 1000 feet deep) at five drill site locations.

Progress has been quite good since beginning Phase II of the EWDP project in November of last year. In fact, Nye County has had three

drill rigs operating at once during this fiscal year's drilling activities.

Water samples are collected and analyzed during the drilling process when first water is encountered in the borehole. These water samples are analyzed for constituents contained in groundwater in the area, including radioactivity, which may be found in sediment-laden water due to naturally occurring radioactive compounds in the surrounding rock formations.

At the well 4PA location, near Lathrop Wells, such radioactive compounds were found, above safe drinking water standards, in a silty water sample collected dur-

ing drilling. This was an unfiltered sediment laden sample. It is believed that the radioactivity found was located in the sediment portion of the sample. Subsequent analysis of filtered samples from the same well did not contain radioactive compounds above drinking water standards. Further analyses are ongoing and future developments will be reported in a subsequent newsletter. **However, results to date clearly indicate that there is no radioactive contamination in the groundwater in the vicinity of well 4PA.**

*State Board
Views
Growth Projects
in Pahrump
Valley*

*Filings Represent
Largest Block of
Unappropriated
Groundwater left in
Southern Nevada*

*Geologic Maps
Will Assist with
Required Ground-
water Planning;
Part of On-going
Mapping Program*

NEVADA STATE ADVISORY BOARD FOR WATER PLANNING VISITS PAHRUMP

On February 24th, the Nevada State Advisory Board for Water Planning visited Pahrump for a meeting and tour. After opening remarks by Commissioner Copass, Tim Hafen and other community members addressed the board.

A presentation on the Nye County water planning effort was given by NWRPO consultant Tom Buqo.

The Board then toured the southern part of the commu-



nity to see the developments at Mountain Falls and Terrible's Lakeside Casino and RV Park.

Because of its explosive growth, water supply and water quality planning issues are being discussed in the Pahrump Valley. The State Water Planning Advisory Board met in Pahrump at the request of Nye County officials.

NYE COUNTY FILES TEN WATER RIGHT APPLICATIONS

On February 22nd, Nye County filed ten water right applications for a total of 34,250 acre feet of groundwater from the basins north of Highway 95 (Crater Flat, Jackass Flats, Rock Valley, Mercury Valley, and Frenchman Flat).

These water rights represent the largest block of un-

appropriated groundwater remaining in southern Nevada. Nye County filed on the water to provide future water supplies to areas where they will be needed and to protect the resource from speculators.

It is expected that the water right applications will be protested by one or more federal

agencies and that a final ruling by the Nevada State Engineer on the County's applications may be years away.

Most of the basins are within the Nevada Test Site boundaries.

USGS COMPLETES GEOLOGIC MAPPING PROJECT

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) recently completed a special mapping project for the NWRPO and have produced a report entitled "Geologic Map of the Mound Spring Quadrangle, Nye and Clark Counties, Nevada and Inyo County, California." The geologic map is at a scale of 1"=2,000'.

The map and report on the Mound Spring quadrangle covers much of the southern

part of Pahrump Valley.

This map will be of use in flood control planning and water resource planning, especially for identifying areas that are susceptible to subsidence. Additionally, the report will help hydrologists determine if the Pahrump and Amargosa Valleys are hydrologically connected.

A similar map and report covering the Northern part of

the Pahrump Valley was recently released by the Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology. That report is entitled "Geologic Map of the Pahrump Quadrangle, Nevada." These two mapping projects are part of an ongoing effort to complete geologic mapping in southern Nye County.

DOE & NRC SAY NUCLEAR MATERIALS SAFEGUARDS ARE ADEQUATE

Last year, the State of Nevada filed a petition with the U.S. Nuclear Regular Commission (NRC) requesting rulemaking regarding current regulations governing safeguards for shipments of spent nuclear fuel against sabotage and terrorism. The State made a number of contentions about the inadequacy of current regulations and practices to protect the public from the adverse effects of terrorism or sabotage against nuclear fuel shipments.

The DOE responded to the State's allegations by concluding that the State failed to make a compelling case for revising existing regulations and urged the NRC to expeditiously dispose of the State's petition. "We encourage the NRC to re-affirm the adequacy of current regulations that protect public health and safety, and dispel

any unwarranted doubt created by filing this petition regarding NRC's desire or ability to ensure that public health and safety are at all times of paramount importance," the DOE stated.

Of importance to Nye County, the State urged that routes be designated to minimize shipments through highly populated areas. Current regulations require the use of interstate highways, beltways, and bypasses when possible to minimize travel through populated areas. If the State's petition were to be granted, longer routes would be selected traversing rural areas instead of the shorter Las Vegas Valley interstate and beltway system.

The State also urged changes to require armed escorts at all times, not just for high population density areas, and real-time aircraft

surveillance.

Further, the State urged:

- a higher level of security for fuel shipments similar to that required for strategic special nuclear material (SSNM);
- a re-look at the adequacy of current physical protection regulations in regard to terrorism and sabotage;
- a study of the radiologic consequences of an act of terrorism or sabotage;
- a study on the advantages of shipping waste by dedicated transportation, from the standpoint of physical security.

The NRC responded to the State's petition by saying current safeguards are adequate and that no changes are planned.

State's Request to Avoid Populated Areas Would Have Added Additional Risk to Rural Counties

NYE COUNTY COMMISSION SIGNS INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH LAS VEGAS OFFICE ON BLM VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Nye County entered into an agreement with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Vegas District Office to participate in the "Volunteer Program" as a way to expedite applications for a variety of realty, temporary uses, and other actions. The agreement allows a designated Nye County representative to work in the Las Vegas BLM office processing Nye County applications, such as the legislative conveyance of about 800 acres of public land in Amargosa Valley.



Once the agreement has been signed by the BLM, the Nye County representative will be trained in BLM proce-

dures and regulations, provided a work space, telephone and computer privileges at the Las Vegas BLM office, and will work several hours per week at the BLM office.

Participation in the Volunteer Program with the BLM will enable Nye County to ensure that all permits are in place in a timely manner for the County's Early Warning Drilling Program (EWDP).

Agreement Will Assure That Drilling Right-of-Ways Are Ready When Needed

*Nevada Test Site
in Nye County
Slated as Regional
Disposal Site for
Government Waste*

DOE ISSUES RECORD OF DECISION ON LOW AND MIXED LOW-LEVEL WASTE DISPOSAL

During February, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) published its decision in the Federal Register to operate two regional disposal sites for low-level (LLW) and mixed low-level (MLLW) radioactive waste. The Record of Decision (ROD) identified the Nevada Test Site and the Hanford Reservation (Washington state) as the sites that will take waste generated from the cleanup of the nation's nuclear weapons manufacturing complex.

The ROD urged all other

sites within the DOE complex to continue on-site disposal to the extent practicable, however, the Hanford and Nevada sites may now begin accepting new waste streams and waste generators from other DOE sites. The ROD also acknowledges that the decision will impact Nevada and

impacts are identified in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Mitigation measures are described in generic terms, including assistance to local govern-

ments. A formal Mitigation Action Plan is not being prepared because the mitigation is considered "routine."

Nye County is concerned about DOE's LLW shipping and disposal program because of the cumulative effects of LLW and proposed high-level waste (HLW) shipping and disposal program at Yucca Mountain.

*Land Conveyance
in Amargosa
Valley Slated for
Science &
Technology
Industrial Park
and Desert Space
Station Interactive
Museum*

BLM AND NYE COUNTY HOST PUBLIC SCOPING WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS LAND CONVEYANCE ISSUES



On March 1, 2000, the Las Vegas Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Nye County held a Public Scoping Workshop to inform residents and stakeholders of an upcoming public land conveyance at the Lathrop Wells area in the Town of Amargosa Valley. The workshop, which was held at the Longstreet Inn, Amargosa Valley, kicked off at the close of a special meeting of the Nevada Science and Technology Corridor Community Advisory Board. Maps of the affected public lands, project plans, and other relevant

information were available for public review.

Staff from the Las Vegas BLM provided an overview of the Public Law that authorized the conveyance, and summarized the conveyance process and schedule.

Nye County DNR&FF staff were on hand to describe the status of additional work being performed by the county in support of the land conveyance. Biological and cultural resources surveys, and a Preliminary Environmental Assessment will be conducted. Representatives from

the Desert Space Station interactive science center and museum project were also available to answer questions about plans and proposals for the conveyed lands.

The workshop was open to the public from 1:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Several residents and business owners attended to obtain information and provide words of support.

See related story on page 5.

Proposed Homelands Would be Along Nuclear Waste Shipping Route

TIMBISHA SHOSHONE HOMELANDS ACT INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS

A bill creating a homelands complex for the Timbisha Shoshone Tribe was introduced in February 2000 by Senators Inouye (D-HI), Feinstein (D-CA), and Boxer (D-CA). A hearing was held before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in late March.

The bill calls for inclusion of about 2,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land in the homelands complex at Scotty's Junction, Nye County, Nevada.

Nye County has undertaken extensive discussion on this issue with the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and representatives of the Tribe. In addition, Nye County is participating in the environmental impact statement (EIS) being prepared by the DOI.

Of particular interest to Nye County is the cumulative impact on the County of the Tribe's proposed annual use of about 375 acre feet of water at Scotty's Junction. It

is anticipated that the Tribe will agree on a groundwater use cap.

As presently configured, the proposed tribal tract at Scotty's Junction will be adjacent to ongoing low-level radioactive waste shipments along Hwy. 95, and possible future high-level radioactive waste shipments to Yucca Mountain.

Plans for Amargosa Valley Area Viewed

NYE COUNTY PARTICIPATES IN NTSDC ANNUAL BOARD MEETING

Officials from the County's Natural Resources and Federal Facilities Department attended the Nevada Test Site Development Corporation (NTSDC) annual board meeting February 29, 2000 at which the Science and Technology Regional Development Corporation (RDC) presented its vision of future development along Nye County's Nevada Science and Technology Corridor. Mr. Tim Hafen of Pahrump, as Chairman of the RDC, recognized his fellow board members: Buck Wong, Stephen Brock, Tim Carlson, Ed Goehart, Jim Marsh, and Bob Perchetti.

The RDC is currently investigating the potential of developing the Amargosa Valley Science & Technology Park in the Lathrop Wells area of the Town of Amargosa Valley. The park's infrastructure will benefit from an Economic Development Administration (EDA) grant of \$3 million and a BLM land withdrawal of 350 acres at the junction of Hwy 373 and Hwy 95. The possibility of other projects in

Nye County will also be explored, according to Mr. Hafen.

Commissioner Copass of Nye County, who is a member of the NTSDC Board, was also able to participate in an update and discussion of future aerospace plans for the Nevada Test Site (NTS), which included the continuing plans of Kistler Aerospace to use the area adjacent to the Amargosa Valley Science & Technology Park as a launch/recovery site for telecommunications satellites, and the efforts of the NTS and the State of Nevada to secure the NTS as a participant site for Lockheed/

Martin's Venture Star space shuttle program.

Developers and county officials are heartened by this increased economic development activity and hope it bears fruit in the coming months.

Ground breaking is expected at the Amargosa Valley Science & Technology Park later this year.

RDC Members and County Officials at the Amargosa Valley Science & Technology Park



From left to right: Commissioner Red Copass, Buck Wong, George Ormiston, Marilyn Provost, Jim Marsh, Stephen Brock, Rachel Nicholson, and Tim Carlson

NUCLEAR WASTE POLICY AMENDMENTS ACT SENT TO PRESIDENT; VETO PROMISED

On April 11, 2000 the recently-passed Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 2000 was sent to the President. The bill, S-1287, was approved by both houses of Congress. The bill does not include interim storage at Yucca Mountain but does direct the DOE to start receiving high-level nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain in Nye County as early as 2007, three years earlier than presently planned. The bill preserves Nye County's right to receive Payments-Equal-To-Taxes and oversight funding. The bill also directs the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to

transfer certain lands to Nye County.

The bill passed both houses of Congress without garnering a veto-proof margin. The Senate passed the bill on Feb 10th 64-34, 3 votes shy of the 2/3 majority needed to override a veto. The House passed it March 22nd 253-167, 37 votes shy.

The President has repeatedly vowed to veto the bill. The Administration has objected to provisions in the bill that would reduce the role of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in setting radiation exposure standards at

Yucca Mountain. The White House stated on April 11th that the President is unwavering on his intention to veto the bill.

The bill was not sent to the President immediately upon passage. Since the House vote on March 22nd Senate and House leaders have been working to round up the votes necessary to override the threatened veto. On April 11th the bill was finally sent to the President, but there was no indication that the necessary votes to override were in place.

Nye County Department of Natural Resources & Federal Facilities

Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office
1210 E. Basin Road
Suite #6
Pahrump, NV 89048

Phone: 775-727-7727
Fax: 775-727-7919
Email: nyenwrpo@aol.com

Upcoming Meetings

May 1, 2000 – Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board Meeting, 8:30 am at the Bob Ruud Community Center, Pahrump, NV. For additional information contact Karyn Severson at 703-235-4473

May 2 – 3, 2000 – Devil's Hole Workshop, Death Valley, CA. For additional information contact Mike King at 425-787-6728

May 3, 2000 – Nevada Science & Technology Corridor Advisory Board Meeting, 9 am, Beatty Community Center, Beatty, NV. For additional information contact Dan Simmons at 775-727-6456.

May 4, 2000 – NRC Adjudicatory Process public meeting, 7 pm, Terrible's Lakeside Casino, Pahrump. For more information contact Chip Cameron at 301-415-1642.

NYE COUNTY RELEASES SEVEN ECONOMIC- DEMOGRAPHIC REPORTS

The NWRPO has released six reports in the 'Economic-Demographic Reports' series that examine the impacts of several large-scale federal activities happening in Nye County on the economic and demographic fabric of the County. In the past, NWRPO has produced numerous socioeconomic reports to provide solid planning information for the County against which the impacts of Yucca Mountain could be gauged. Nye County is concerned that the government is not considering the cumulative impacts of all federal actions in the County as it plans for Yucca Mountain.

Reports that have been recently released are:

- The DOE Yucca Mountain Project, Current Patterns of Workforce Assignment

and Residency (#1)

- The DOE Yucca Mountain Project, Alternative Patterns of Workforce Assignment and Residency (#2)
- The Nevada Test Site &



Related DOE Activity, Current Patterns of Workforce Assignment and Residency (#3)

- The Nevada Test Site & Related DOE Activity, Alternative Patterns of Workforce Assignment

and Residency (#4)

- The Ponderosa & Pahrump Dairies (#6)
- The Desert Space Station (#7)
- Nellis Air Force Base, Current Patterns of Operation and Procurement (#8)
- Military Retirees, Current Retiree Income and Spending (#9)

The reports are, or shortly will be, available for viewing and downloading at NWRPO's website: www.nyecounty.com. Copies are also available at the NWRPO offices at 1210 E. Basin #6, Pahrump. Call 775-727-7727 for additional information.