

CH2M-WG Idaho, LLC.

**News Media Contact:
Joseph Campbell, 208-360-0142**

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CWI begins exhuming waste from Pit 9

Cleanup crews with CH2M-WG Idaho (CWI), the main cleanup contractor at the Department of Energy's Idaho Site, began digging into Pit 9 recently as part of a campaign that is expected to exhume 500 cubic meters of radioactive and hazardous waste during the next 18 months.

Crews are digging up plutonium and uranium-contaminated filters, plutonium-contaminated sludges, organic solvent sludges and oxidized (depleted) uranium and will be shipping the waste for permanent disposal outside of Idaho. The waste was generated during nuclear weapons production at the Rocky Flats Plant near Denver, Colorado, and was buried in Pit 9 from 1967 to 1969.

In 2004, waste was removed from Pit 9 as part of the Glovebox Excavator Method demonstration project. During that demonstration, crews were able to visually identify the exhumed waste and target specific waste forms that may threaten the underlying Snake River Plain Aquifer. That targeted waste retrieval approach became the basis for a 2008 Record of Decision – signed by DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality -- to ship 7,485 cubic meters of targeted waste for offsite disposal from a combined area of 5.69 acres within the Radioactive Waste Management Complex's (RWMC) Subsurface Disposal Area (SDA).

The Pit 9 project is the fifth large-scale waste exhumation effort at the RWMC since 2005. Additional wastes have already been removed and packaged from portions of Pit 4, Pit 5, and Pit 6, totaling 4,300 cubic meters from an area totaling 1.89 acres.

“It's a pleasure to resume retrieving waste from Pit 9 and fulfilling DOE's commitment to the people of Idaho to remove the targeted buried wastes there and continue to protect the Snake River Plain Aquifer,” said Jim Cooper, acting Deputy Manager of DOE's Idaho Cleanup Project.

The overall buried waste project will cost approximately \$1.3 billion and is expected to continue until approximately 2025, followed by construction of the moisture-inhibiting cap over the entire SDA, which will be completed in approximately 2028.

CH2M-WG Idaho, LLC, (CWI) directs the Idaho Cleanup Project, the safe, environmental cleanup of DOE's Idaho National Laboratory site, located 45 miles west of Idaho Falls. The 7-year, \$2.9 billion project, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management, focuses on early risk reduction and protection of the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

For more information visit the Idaho Cleanup Project on the Web at <https://idahocleanupproject.com>

Note to editors: For a detailed history of the Pit 9 Project, go to <http://www.id.energy.gov/NEWS/PressReleases/PR101130.pdf>

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By Brad Bugger