

document those environmental issues which have been tentatively identified for analysis. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive or to imply any predetermination of impacts. Following is a preliminary list of issues that may require analysis in the NPR-1 Supplemental EIS.

In addition to seeking comments from the public on this preliminary list of potential impacts, DOE is also soliciting comments on how environmental compliance activities conducted by a private owner of Elk Hills may differ from compliance activities conducted at the site by the Federal government, as described in the 1993 Supplemental EIS and other documents related to environmental compliance, such as the 1995 Biological Opinion issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

1. *Air Quality*: Release of air pollutants from the Reserve would probably occur at about the same levels as projected in the 1993 Supplemental EIS under Alternative 1, although it is possible that some increases could also occur. Implementation of Alternative 2 could result in the continued release of gaseous and particulate residuals from the Reserve, and possibly increase the level of releases.

2. *Impacts to Wildlife*: Operation under either of the alternatives would continue to produce some potentially adverse impacts to some wildlife inhabiting the Reserve. Of particular concern would be the continued or expanded disturbance of habitat, and other related interactions, involving the six Federal- and state-listed endangered species known to exist on the NPR-1 site (the San Joaquin kit fox, giant kangaroo rat, blunt-nosed leopard lizard, Tipton kangaroo rat, Hoover's woolly-star, and San Joaquin antelope squirrel).

3. *Socioeconomic Effects*: Sale of NPR-1 to a private owner could result in a combination of positive and negative impacts in the local area, depending on possible changes in state and local taxation of the new privately-owned Reserve lands and related revenues, and in the alteration of existing Federal purchasing and contracting practices by a private sector owner. It is possible that overall staffing levels at Elk Hills will be lower under a private owner than they are with Federal ownership and operation. Hence, adoption of Alternative 2 by DOE could potentially have adverse impacts in a number of Kern County communities, due to direct loss of jobs by NPR-1 workers, indirect economic impacts on businesses supported in

whole or in part by Federal operation of the Reserve, and by community loss of other revenues. Continued Federal ownership under Alternative 1 could maintain socioeconomic benefits for the area through the interaction of the substantial employment, subcontracting, and supply requirements of the Reserve with the local economy and residents.

4. *Water Resources*: Some concern exists regarding the potential for additional impacts to groundwater resources near the Reserve as a result of continued and possibly expanded reinjection of wastewater and disposal of other production wastes onsite. This concern is associated with Alternatives 1 and 2.

5. *Cumulative Impacts*: NEPA requires that the EIS evaluate the potential cumulative effects of the various alternatives in relation to the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future development (of any kind), both on- and offsite. Cumulative impacts will be evaluated within the Supplemental EIS for all important issues, e.g., air quality, wildlife species, and socioeconomic conditions in nearby areas.

#### Scoping

The above preliminary lists of major environmental issues and reasonable alternatives are not meant to be exhaustive or final. For instance, even though some potential environmental impact areas, such as cultural resources, land use, and recreation, are not specified above as major issues, they will be evaluated as part of the NEPA analysis and will be discussed in the Supplemental EIS. DOE identified the reasonable alternatives and environmental issues listed above based on its experience with the major issues that have been raised in previous NEPA compliance activities for Elk Hills. DOE considers the scoping process to be open and dynamic in the sense that alternatives other than those given above may warrant examination, and new issues may be identified and evaluated. Interested parties are invited to participate in the scoping process both to refine the preliminary alternatives and environmental issues to be analyzed in depth, and to eliminate from detailed study those alternatives and environmental issues that are not significant or pertinent.

The scoping process will involve all interested agencies (Federal, state, county, and local), groups, and members of the public. Comments are invited on both the alternatives and the issues to be considered in the Supplemental EIS. A public scoping meeting will be held at the location, date, and time indicated

above. This scoping meeting will be informal and conducted as a discussion between attendees and DOE. The DOE presiding officer will establish only those procedures needed to ensure that everyone who wishes to speak has a chance to do so and that all issues and comments raised are clearly understood by DOE. Depending upon the number of persons wishing to speak, DOE may allow longer times for representatives of organizations. Consequently, persons wishing to speak on behalf of an organization should identify that organization in their request to speak. Persons who have not submitted a request to speak in advance may register to speak at the scoping meeting. However, advance requests to speak are encouraged. Both oral and written comments will be considered and will be given equal weight by DOE.

A complete transcript of the public scoping meeting will be retained by DOE and made available for inspection during business hours, Monday through Friday, at the Department of Energy Freedom of Information Reading Room, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20585, and at the Department of Energy Oakland Operations Office, 1301 Clay Street, Oakland, CA 94612-5208. Additional copies of the public scoping meeting transcripts will also be made available during normal business hours at the following locations:

Beale Memorial Library—Main Branch,  
1315 Truxtun Avenue, Bakersfield,  
California

Taft Branch—Kern County Library, 27  
Emmons Park Drive, Taft, California

A notice of locations where documents will be available will be published in the Federal Register at the time of announcement of the availability of the Draft Supplemental EIS. In addition, copies of the public scoping meeting transcripts will be made available for purchase.

Those interested parties who do not wish to submit comments or suggestions at this time, but who would like to receive a copy of the Draft Supplemental EIS, should notify Anthony J. Como at the address given in the address section of this notice.

Dated at Washington, DC, this 13th day of March, 1996, for the United States Department of Energy.

Peter N. Brush,

*Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Environment, Safety and Health.*

[FR Doc. 96-6837 Filed 3-20-96; 8:45 am]

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**Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Completion of the West Valley Demonstration Project and Closure or Long-Term Management of Facilities at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center**

**AGENCY:** United States Department of Energy.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability and notice of wetlands involvement.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) announce the availability for public review and comment of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Completion of the West Valley Demonstration Project (Project) and Closure or Long-Term Management of Facilities at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center (Center). DOE also gives public notice that the alternatives analyzed in the EIS include proposed actions that would occur in wetlands. The EIS evaluates alternatives for integrated sitewide actions to complete DOE decontamination and decommissioning activities and provide for NYSERDA's closure or long-term management of facilities at the Center. This joint EIS supports the selection of the site management strategy and will assist NYSERDA and DOE in making decisions for future site closure or management activities. DOE and NYSERDA will identify the selected site management strategy in a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Record of Decision and in State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Findings, respectively. If necessary, additional NEPA or SEQRA documents will be prepared for DOE and NYSERDA actions not specifically addressed in this document.

**DATES:** The comment period on the Draft EIS will continue until September 22, 1996. Comments postmarked after that date will be considered to the extent practicable. Public meetings will be held at the locations and dates listed in the supplementary information section of this notice.

**ADDRESSES:** Requests for information about, and copies of, the Draft EIS should be directed to the Community Relations Department of the West Valley Demonstration Project, P.O. Box 191, West Valley, NY 14171-0191, or by calling (800) 633-5280 or (716) 942-2152.

Written comments on the Draft EIS should be mailed to the following address:

Draft EIS, Community Relations Dept./MS-A, West Valley Demonstration

Project, P.O. Box 191, West Valley, New York 14171. Fax: (716) 942-4703, Internet: <http://freenet.buffalo.edu/wvdp/eisform.htm>

For general information on the DOE NEPA process, call (800) 472-2756 to leave a message, or contact:

Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585-0119, (202) 586-4600

For general information on the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) process, call (518) 457-2224 to leave a message or contact:

Jack Nasca, Regulatory Services, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 50 Wolf Road, Room 538, Albany, NY 12233-1750

Availability of the Draft EIS: Copies of the Draft EIS have been distributed to federal, state, tribal and local officials, as well as agencies, organizations and individuals who may be interested or affected. Copies of the Draft EIS are also available for public review at the locations listed at the end of this Notice.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**Background**

On December 27, 1988, DOE issued a Notice of Intent (53 FR 53052) to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement for Completion of the West Valley Demonstration Project and Closure or Long-Term Management of Facilities at the Western New York Nuclear Service Center. The Notice of Intent stated that the EIS would evaluate alternatives for completing the Project and closure or long-term management of facilities at the Center which is located near Buffalo, New York. The public comment period on the Notice of Intent extended from December 27, 1988 to February 23, 1989, with two public scoping meetings.

DOE issued an Implementation Plan in March 1995 that recorded the results of the scoping process.

The Center is the site of a former spent nuclear fuel reprocessing facility. NYSERDA holds title to the site on behalf of the people of the State of New York. The site includes the process building and associated facilities, waste storage facilities, two radioactive waste disposal areas, and tanks containing liquid high-level radioactive waste from past reprocessing operations. The West Valley Demonstration Project is a joint federal-state cleanup under which DOE, in cooperation with NYSERDA, will solidify the high-level radioactive waste,

transport the solidified waste for disposal at an appropriate federal repository, dispose of the low-level and transuranic waste produced by the solidification of the high-level waste, and decontaminate and decommission all facilities used in solidifying the high-level waste. In 1982, a Final EIS was issued by DOE concerning long-term management of the liquid high-level wastes. On the basis of that earlier EIS, DOE decided to concentrate, chemically treat, and convert the liquid high-level wastes to a solid terminal waste form suitable for transportation offsite and eventual disposal in a federal geologic repository.

The current EIS evaluates alternatives for integrated sitewide actions to complete DOE decontamination and decommissioning activities and provide for NYSERDA's closure or long-term management of facilities at the Center. This EIS evaluates the treatment, storage, and disposal of high-level, low-level, low-level mixed, hazardous, and industrial waste and contaminated soil. This EIS is being prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA of 1969; with Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021); and with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA). This joint EIS provides environmental information to support the selection of the site management strategy and will assist NYSERDA and DOE in making decisions for future site closure or management activities. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is a cooperating agency in the preparation of this EIS. DOE and NYSERDA will identify the selected site management strategy in a NEPA Record of Decision and in SEQRA Findings, respectively. If necessary, additional NEPA or SEQRA documents will be prepared for DOE and NYSERDA actions not specifically addressed in this document.

**Alternatives Considered**

Five alternatives for Project completion and closure or long-term management of the facilities at the Center are analyzed in this EIS. These five alternatives were identified after considering comments received during the scoping process. The five alternatives are:

Alternative I: Removal and Release to Allow Unrestricted Use. Alternative I is the removal of existing facilities including buried waste so there are minimal remnants of nuclear operations. All waste would be disposed of offsite.

Alternative II: Removal, On-Premises Waste Storage, and Partial Release to Allow Unrestricted Use. Alternative II is the removal of existing facilities including buried waste so there are minimal remnants of nuclear operations, with the exception of on-premises storage of high-level, low-level, and low-level mixed waste. Hazardous and industrial waste would be disposed of offsite.

Alternative III: In-Place Stabilization and On-Premises Low-Level Waste Disposal. Alternative III is the in-place stabilization of contaminated structures and buried waste. Uncontaminated structures would be removed. Low-level waste would be disposed of onsite. All other waste would be disposed of offsite.

Alternative IV: No Action: Monitoring and Maintenance. Alternative IV is the management of the site in its current configuration. There would be long-term monitoring and maintenance. Only hazardous waste would be disposed of offsite.

Alternative V: Discontinue Operations. Alternative V is the discontinuation of operations; the site would be left in its current configuration. No closure actions would be taken. All waste would be left onsite.

Alternative IV (No Action: Monitoring and Maintenance) is required by NEPA and SEQRA regulations to be considered in order to establish a baseline for comparison with the environmental effects of the "action" alternatives. Alternatives II (On-Premises Storage) and V (Discontinue Operations) were evaluated in the EIS in response to comments received during the scoping process. Although Alternative V is not considered a reasonable alternative by either DOE or NYSERDA, it provides an environmental baseline for evaluating impacts. The long-term performance assessment (an analysis of the effects that contaminated facilities would have on human health and the environment over the long term) of Alternative V gives an understanding of the long-term public hazard and contribution of natural processes, such as surface water flow or erosion, to that hazard. Table S-1 in the EIS summarizes the actions for each alternative, including the disposition of newly generated and stored waste. Neither DOE nor NYSERDA has identified a preferred alternative.

The alternatives include proposed actions that would occur in wetlands. Pursuant to 10 CFR Part 1022, the Draft EIS includes an assessment of the potential impacts to wetlands.

#### Invitation to Comment

The public is invited to submit written and oral comments on any or all portions of the Draft EIS. Public information sessions on the Draft EIS will be held in the Western New York area in April 1996, including sessions planned specifically to share EIS information with members of the Seneca Nation of Indians. The dates, times and locations of the public information sessions are as follows:

Tuesday, April 23, 1996, 1:00–9:00 p.m., Seneca Nation Reservation, Irving, NY

Wednesday, April 24, 1996, 1:00–9:00 p.m., McKinley Park Inn, McKinley Parkway, Hamburg, NY

Thursday, April 25, 1996, 1:00–9:00 p.m., Seneca Nation Reservation, Salamanca, NY

Friday, April 26, 1996, 1:00–9:00 p.m., Ashford Office Complex, Route 219, Ashford, NY

These sessions will also be announced through public notices in area newspapers, press releases, Internet notifications and through Seneca Nation advertising media. These sessions will be conducted as "poster presentations" with the DOE, NYSERDA, and EIS contractor personnel available to explain and discuss topics and issues related to the Draft EIS.

In addition, DOE and NYSERDA are planning to hold one public hearing, on August 6, 1996, to receive oral and written comments on the Draft EIS. Further information regarding the EIS will be available by calling (800) 633-5280 (toll free), or, for those who receive a copy of the EIS, by contacting the personnel identified in the Summary of the Draft EIS.

Written comments on the Draft EIS will be accepted until September 22, 1996, at the New York address at West Valley (provided above). DOE and NYSERDA will consider these public comments in preparing the Final EIS.

Persons who wish to speak at the public hearing are asked to register in advance by calling the following toll-free number: (800) 633-5280. Requests to speak that have not been submitted before the hearing will be handled in the order in which they are received. DOE's and NYSERDA's responses to comments received during the public hearing or in writing will be included in the Final EIS.

#### WVDP Public Reading Rooms

The following is a list of public reading rooms where the Draft EIS and supporting technical documents are available:

Central Library, Lafayette Square, Buffalo, NY 14203, Phone: (716) 858-7098  
Concord Hulbert Library, 18 Chapel Street, Springville, NY 14141, Phone: (716) 592-7742

Olean Public Library, 134 North 2nd Street, Olean, NY 14760, Phone: (716) 372-0200  
West Valley Central School Library, West Valley, NY 14171, Phone: (716) 942-3293  
Ashford Office Complex, 9060 Route 219, West Valley, NY 14171 Phone: (716) 942-4555

Issued in Washington, D.C., March 18, 1996.

Stephen Cowan,

*Deputy Assistant Secretary for Waste Management.*

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#### Notice of Floodplain and Wetland Involvement for the Ventron Site, Essex County, Massachusetts

**AGENCY:** Former Sites Restoration Division, Department of Energy (DOE).

**ACTION:** Notice of floodplain and wetland involvement.

**SUMMARY:** DOE proposes to remediate sediment and soil containing elevated levels of uranium-238 from a floodplain and wetland, a floodplain and wetland buffer zone, and from the Massachusetts coastal zone in Essex County, Massachusetts. In accordance with 10 CFR 1022, DOE has prepared a floodplain and wetlands assessment and will perform this proposed action in a manner so as to avoid or minimize potential harm to or within the affected floodplain and wetland resources.

**DATES:** Comments are due to the address below no later than April 5, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS PROPOSED ACTION OR TO COMMENT ON THE ACTION, CONTACT:** Mr. Jim Kopotic, Ventron Site Manager, Former Sites Restoration Division, U.S. Department of Energy, P.O. Box 2001, Oak Ridge, TN 37831-8541, Phone: (423) 576-9441, FAX: (423) 576-0956.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON GENERAL DOE FLOODPLAIN/WETLANDS ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS, CONTACT:** Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Oversight, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Ventron is a privately-owned site that processed natural uranium oxide, salts, and metal between 1942 and 1948 for the Manhattan Engineer District (MED) and later for the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). No enriched or depleted uranium was used at the site. Prior to and subsequent to MED- and AEC-related activities at the site, other radioactive elements including thorium compounds and hazardous chemicals were processed at the Ventron site in work unrelated to MED, AEC, or DOE contracts. DOE has authority at the site for remediation of media containing elevated levels of natural uranium (uranium-238). DOE is remediating the