

ECA Update: January 6, 2015



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Fusing the Manhattan Project into a national park

ScienceLine

January 2, 2015

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Los Alamos, Oak Ridge and Hanford were the names of the best-kept secrets of World War II -- and they may soon be the sites of the newest national park. They make up the major locations of the Manhattan Project, the nation-spanning scientific mission to develop a nuclear weapon before Nazi Germany that lasted from 1942 to 1946. It was a true success story with a dramatic conclusion: The atomic bombs developed across the three sites were used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan to devastating effect. While today all three locations still boast active research labs, their wartime role is mostly forgotten.

The Atomic Heritage Foundation, the National Parks Service and the U.S. Department of Energy hope to change that. The foundation, a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C.,

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has worked to preserve and promote the memory of the Manhattan Project since 2002. Establishing key Manhattan Project locations as a multi-site national park has been one of its major goals. Twelve years later, it's one within reach: On Dec. 19th, 2014, President Obama signed the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. Included within this act is the authorization to establish a new Manhattan Project National Park.

"It's been a long journey," said Robert S. Norris, senior fellow for nuclear policy at the Federation of American Scientists and a board member of the AHF.

The proposed national park would create a way to tell the story of the Manhattan Project across the three key places involved in the atomic bomb's creation: Los Alamos, New Mexico; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; and Hanford, Washington. "They showed that you could use uranium to get plutonium at Oak Ridge, that they could do it on a large scale at Hanford, and then they put it all together at Los Alamos," said David Keim, director of communications at Oak Ridge National Lab.

While all three have historical exhibits, they're site-specific. "The Park Service would basically pull the full story of the Manhattan Project together," said Heather McClenahan, executive director of the Los Alamos Historical Society. "There is no place that does that."

The National Park Service would establish visitor centers at each site, providing a hub of information about the Manhattan Project on a national scale. Each site would then have specific exhibitions highlighting their unique history within the larger historical context.

This isn't the first time the park proposal has been up for a vote. It was defeated in the House in 2012, largely due to opposition from former Democratic Representative Dennis Kucinich of Ohio. He argued "the effects of the bomb were nothing to celebrate or glorify." The history of the Manhattan Project is rife with controversy, and there is still no clear consensus on whether the decision to use the atomic bomb on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, causing almost 200,000 civilian casualties, was morally justified.

According to McClenahan, Kucinich's concerns are unfounded. "Government agencies trust the National Park Service to do a fair job covering history," she said, citing Manzanar National Historic Site, which memorializes Japanese internment camps, as an

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example. "Those things aren't glorified. They're looking at history, not burying our heads in the sand."

Exhibits at Los Alamos National Laboratory already discuss the ambiguous morality of the decision to use the bomb and how to move forward in the post-atomic world, McClenahan continued. The park would expand on these exhibits rather than try to whitewash them. "There's a huge story about what happened when the bombs were dropped on Japan, and the debate that went on over the control of nuclear weapons after. [That story goes] beyond our scope, and we're anxious to get the Park Service to help us tell it."

No matter how contentious its legacy, the Manhattan Project signaled a major turning point in scientific research. "Prior to World War II, the drivers of science were German," said Lee Riedinger, a professor of physics affiliated with Oak Ridge National Lab. "All of that changed after World War II."

The postwar period saw the rise of large national laboratories funded by the government. According to Keim, the Department of Energy became the largest funder of physical science in the United States directly because of the Manhattan Project. It set the trend for future research by showing just how successful well-financed, large-scale research efforts could be, especially when they brought scientists from around the world together to collaborate on them.

The Manhattan Project also brought about the nuclear age and all its associated controversies. Nuclear power continues to be an environmental issue, as both a source of clean energy and a major contamination threat, while the nuances of nuclear proliferation continue to play an active role in international relations. Both Los Alamos and Oak Ridge are still functioning national labs that continue to play a role in these nuclear issues: The Y-12 National Security Complex located at Oak Ridge is chiefly responsible for maintaining and ultimately disassembling the national stockpile of nuclear weapons. Hanford, on the other hand, demonstrates the dangers and difficulties of nuclear waste clean-up. Active parts of the labs will be off-limits to visitors, although McClenahan hopes that tours of Los Alamos National Lab will be made available to the public as special events.

The Manhattan Project National Park would be the thread that ties all three sites together, providing a stronger national context and enabling larger topics such as the morality of the bomb, the long-lasting impact of the Manhattan Project on American science research and the nuances of living in the nuclear age to be

discussed. Now that it's been authorized, securing a source of funding is the next step towards this new national park.

Y-12, Pantex receive six NNSA Sustainability Awards in 2014

Oak Ridge Today

January 2, 2015

[LINK](#)

The National Nuclear Security Administration has awarded six 2014 Sustainability Awards for innovation and excellence to the Pantex Plant and the Y-12 National Security Complex, both operated and managed by Consolidated Nuclear Security LLC, or CNS, a press release said.

"The awards recognize exemplary individual and team performance in advancing sustainability objectives through innovative and effective programs and projects that increase energy, water and fleet efficiency, and reduce greenhouse gases, pollution, and waste," the release said.

"I am very proud of the CNS employees that were recognized by NNSA for the 2014 Sustainability Awards," said CNS President Jim Haynes. "Our teams were acknowledged for excellence in environmental management, renewable energy, waste reduction, and pollution prevention, innovation, and communications, all important to our stewardship roles at Pantex and Y-12. We aim to be leaders in all we do for our nation's security, and are proud to be recognized for leadership in sustainability."

This year, NNSA selected five "Best in Class" and 10 "Environmental Stewardship" awards out of a total of 24 nominations submitted in 12 award categories. The release said the following Pantex and Y-12 efforts were recognized:

Best in Class Awards

- **Exceptional Service/Sustainability Champion:** Y-12's Clarence Hill Cultivates the Seeds of Change (Y-12). The exceptional service/sustainability champion demonstrates a history of exemplary performance in leading implementation of sustainable practices while reflecting a comprehensive approach to energy and environmental management through innovative strategies, practices, and outreach.
- **Renewable Energy:** Pantex Renewable Energy Project (Pantex).

This award category and selected project recognizes outstanding achievements in planning, design, and constructing renewable energy to replace or lower conventional energy consumption. This award recognizes the Pantex Plant for the renewable energy wind farm project.

- **Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention: Pantex Exceeding Waste Reduction Goals (Pantex).** This award category and selected nomination recognizes innovative and effective waste-reduction programs that exceeded performance targets in the Pantex Plants Site's Sustainability Plan.

Environmental Stewardship Awards

- **Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention: Y-12 Unneeded Materials and Chemicals Program (Y-12).** This award category and selected nomination recognizes innovative and effective waste-reduction programs that exceed performance targets in Y-12's Site Sustainability Plan.
- **Innovation and Holistic Approach: Y-12 Sweeping it Clean (Y-12).** This award category recognizes innovative methods and cross-disciplinary research at the site level to support sustainability goal attainment that includes innovative ideas to tackle broad-based sustainability issues.
- **SustainABLE Communications: WhY-12 Must Communicate (Y-12).** This award category recognizes successful and innovative communications and marketing strategies that promote sustainability goals, successes, and best practices with a focus on effective and unique outreach programs that engage stakeholders and discuss the benefits of sustainability.

DOE Oak Ridge environmental management employees retire

Oak Ridge Today

January 5, 2015

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Eddie Holden

Two U. S. Department of Energy Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management (OREM) employees retired last month after a combined 34 years of federal service.

Eddie Holden, a traffic management specialist for the Facilities

Operations Division at OREM, retired on December 31 with 10 years of federal service.

Holden oversaw transportation activities for the agency, leading the effort to maintain compliance and keep hazardous materials off public roads and was responsible for the Haul Road Transportation Program, a press release said. He played a critical role in the development of DOE's Radio Frequency Identification Transportation System, used for paperless shipments and electronic tracking of vehicles, which cuts costs and improves security.

Holden is a graduate of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, and holds a bachelor's degree in transportation/logistics. He and his wife Carol live in Farragut and have four grandchildren. In retirement, Holden looks forward to fishing, playing golf, traveling, and spending time with his grandchildren, the press release said.

Richard Frounfelker

Richard Frounfelker, an engineer with OREM, retired on December 27 following 24 years of federal service.

Frounfelker, a resident of Oak Ridge, joined DOE after working 10 years as a consultant, where he evaluated the design and operation of more than 40 different technologies for disposal of waste in the United States and Europe.

He joined DOE in 1990 to help with the startup of the Toxic Substances Control Act incinerator at the East Tennessee Technology Park, formerly the K-25 site. During his time at DOE, Frounfelker added work scope in the areas of pollution prevention, energy reduction, and sustainability efforts, which led to numerous awards for K-25. The release said Frounfelker also made significant contributions to the reindustrialization effort at K-25.

Frounfelker is a graduate of Tennessee Technological University and holds a bachelor's degree in engineering science. He has two sons and is a member of Kern United Methodist Church.

Wrangling continues over nuke cleanup contract

Post Register

December 30, 2014

[LINK](#)

The U.S. Department of Energy toned down language of a lucrative

radioactive waste cleanup contract at Idaho National Laboratory's desert site after several corporate front-runners warned they might pull out of the bidding process.

The contract, called Idaho Cleanup Project Core or ICP Core, likely will be worth several billion dollars over five years. The winner will be in charge of cleaning up toxic and radioactive contamination and watching over spent nuclear fuel at the INL site, among other duties.

Since October, prospective bidders have pushed back on what they said were excessively strict terms in DOE's initial draft request for bid proposals. Last week, DOE issued a revised version that appeared to take some of those concerns into consideration.

Set to begin in 2016, the ICP Core contract consolidates responsibilities of the two primary nuclear waste contractors now operating at the site: CH2M-WG Idaho, or CWI, and Idaho Treatment Group. Together, the two conglomerations employ roughly 1,700 and have contracts worth close to \$3.5 billion.

Considering those numbers, the winner of the ICP Core contract is poised to play a major role in eastern Idaho's economy for the next five years.

"It is significant," Idaho Falls Mayor Rebecca Casper said Tuesday. "And that's part of the reason why people are paying attention to the (ICP Core) contract and process from the local level all the way to the state and national level."

DOE is requesting additional feedback by Jan. 14 on its latest draft request for proposals before the final version is issued in February.

Casper said she plans to provide some of that feedback. Ideally, the mayor said she'd like to see language in the contract that would require a certain level of community support from a contractor. Such language might require contractor contributions to certain Idaho Falls infrastructure projects, she said, or donations to local charities. The specifics of such a request remain uncertain, however.

DOE, meanwhile, is hoping the changes it made have appeased concerns brought forth by three or four teams of multinational companies who've voiced interest in the contract.

Perhaps most significantly, DOE deleted language stipulating a

hard "performance ceiling." The ceiling would have required a contractor to pay for all cost overruns exceeding \$150 million.

But DOE still is double-checking to make sure everything is good to go with interested teams before releasing the final call for bids.

"Does the draft RFP contain any potential restrictive barriers to competition?" a letter from DOE to the contractors said. "Do barriers exist (DOE imposed or otherwise) that would hinder your firm from participating in this acquisition?"

At least one prominent company, CH2M Hill, has dropped its plans to lead a bid for the new contract, according to the trade publication, Weapons Complex Monitor.

CH2M Hill would have had an incumbent's advantage in the bidding process, considering it already plays a primary role in radioactive cleanup operations at the site, and has for the past decade. Now, it may be looking to join a different team, led by Fluor, as a subcontractor, Weapons Complex Monitor reported.

Bill Badger, a Denver-based spokesman for CH2M Hill, told the Post Register he could not comment on the specifics of his company's "teaming arrangement" regarding the ICP Core contract.

"Definitely, the interest is still there," he said.

Feds deny performance pay to nuke dump operator

KRQE News 13

December 31, 2014

[LINK](#)

ALBUQUERQUE (AP) - The contractor that runs the federal government's underground nuclear waste repository is being denied millions of dollars in performance pay as part of the financial fallout from a radiation leak that forced the closure of the facility.

Federal officials have said it could take years and a half-billion dollars to restart operations at the Waste Isolation Pilot Project Plant near Carlsbad because of the February leak.

The U.S. Energy Department said in documents released Tuesday that it is paying Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC just \$21,576 of the \$8 million of potential performance incentives for the past fiscal year. The partnership manages the plant under a contract that pays

more than \$140 million annually.

The leak occurred when a container packed with radioactive waste from Los Alamos National Laboratory ruptured in an underground storage area and contaminated more than 20 workers.

The performance award for Nuclear Waste Partnership was announced one day after the DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration docked the contractor that runs Los Alamos lab for its failures related to the radiation leak. The lab contractor received \$6.25 million in incentives, just a fraction of the more than \$63 million that was possible for the last fiscal year.

Both contractors and the DOE are also facing \$54 million in penalties levied by the New Mexico Environment Department, and state officials have said more fines are possible as the investigation into the radiation leak continues.

Recovery efforts at the nuclear repository did get a \$104 million boost as part of a federal spending package signed by President Barack Obama in December. That was on top of the original request of \$220 million for operations.

Don Hancock of the watchdog group Southwest Information and Research Center said he's frustrated that operational funding for the plant will continue even as waste disposal there has stopped.

"The contractors are too big and too important to fail," Hancock told the Santa Fe New Mexican. "The Department of Energy is so dependent on the contractors that the contractors always get off without really getting penalties. They're able to underperform and still get rewarded."

Hancock also said he doubts the plant will meet the first two deadlines in its recovery plan - the New Year's Day target for closure of one of the storage bunkers affected by the radiation leak and March recertification of the repository by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Officials at the repository did not immediately respond to requests for comment about the deadlines. However, a DOE spokesman said the performance pay announced for the contractor on Tuesday was preliminary, and the contractor could qualify for more incentive payments.

Pilgrim nuclear plant expands waste storage to concrete casks

The Boston Globe

January 2, 2015

[LINK](#)

Massachusetts's only nuclear power plant said Friday that it would begin packing its spent fuel in super-tough concrete-and-steel containers.

Previously, all of the nuclear reactor fuel rods from the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station in Plymouth were submerged in a deep pool of water, which is running out of space. The new containers, called casks, are designed to hold the nuclear reactor's radioactive materials until the federal government selects a disposal site for nuclear waste.

Lauren Burm, a spokesperson for Pilgrim's owner, Entergy Corp. of New Orleans, said it would take several weeks to move spent fuel rods from the pool to the casks. . "As always, safety is our number one priority," she said.

Cask storage is used at many nuclear plants around the country to deal with excess nuclear reactor waste. The casks, 18 feet tall and 11 feet wide, are designed to withstand a truck bomb or a tornado-borne projectile moving at 360 miles per hour, Burm said.

They are only meant to be a temporary means of storage while the federal government selects a national nuclear repository. Nevada's Yucca Mountain had been designated to receive the waste, but funds to move nuclear material there were cut by Congress in 2011.

Entergy Corp. also owns the Vermont Yankee nuclear plant, which shut down Monday due to high operating costs. The Pilgrim nuclear plant is licensed to continue operating through 2032. It generated 18.1 percent of the state's electricity in October, according to the federal Energy Information Administration.

Carlsbad Field Office Technical Assistance Contract

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is seeking a Contractor to provide expert technical and administrative support services to the DOE's Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) in the areas of: quality assurance, audits and assessments, safety, security, Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) site operations, environmental and regulatory compliance, scientific and international programs, transuranic

(TRU) waste characterization and certification, TRU waste transportation and packaging, general business operations, information technology, and technical support. Audit and assessment activities will include, but are not limited to, review of CBFO's National TRU Program waste generator sites certification programs, WIPP Management and Operation contractor, Sandia National Laboratories, Los Alamos National Laboratory-Carlsbad, TRU waste transportation contractors, the CBFO, and other CBFO program participants.

Status: Draft RFP released December 22, 2014; Comments due by January 16, 2015
For more information, click [here](#).

Idaho Cleanup Project Core Procurement

The U.S. Department of Energy is seeking a contractor to safely accomplish as much of the remaining DOE Office of EM's cleanup mission at the Idaho Site as possible within available funding while meeting regulatory and legal requirements. The contract will apply performance-based contracting approaches and techniques. The Idaho Clean Project Core Contract (ICP-Core) will require the Contractor to perform all work specified in the contract and to determine the specific methods of accomplishing the work. In the performance of this contract, the Contractor shall support and implement actions to achieve the Department's environmental clean-up goals. Contract-specific actions will be established, incentivized, monitored, evaluated, and verified in accordance with the terms and conditions of this contract.

Status: Draft RFP released December 22, 2014; Comments due by January 14, 2015; Final RFP to be issued February 2015
For more information, click [here](#).