

Idaho Completion Project

Bechtel BWXT Idaho, LLC

Excavation begins at Pit 9 demonstration facility

Radioactive Waste Management Complex (RWMC)

Established in 1952, the original mission of the RWMC was solid, low-level radioactive waste disposal. Burial of transuranic waste and hazardous substances from other DOE sites began in 1954 and ceased in 1970. After 1970, transuranic waste was stored on a pad above ground.

Current Mission: Interim storage of transuranic waste; shipment of stored transuranic waste for permanent disposal, and low-level waste disposal.

Subsurface Disposal Area (SDA)

The area at the RWMC that was used for the disposal of low-level and transuranic wastes. Total area of the SDA was 3 acres when it first opened in 1952. The SDA was expanded to 88 acres in 1958. In 1988, the SDA security fence was moved to the outside of a perimeter dike that was built for drainage control, bringing the total area of the SDA to 97 acres. This did not increase the area used for waste disposal.

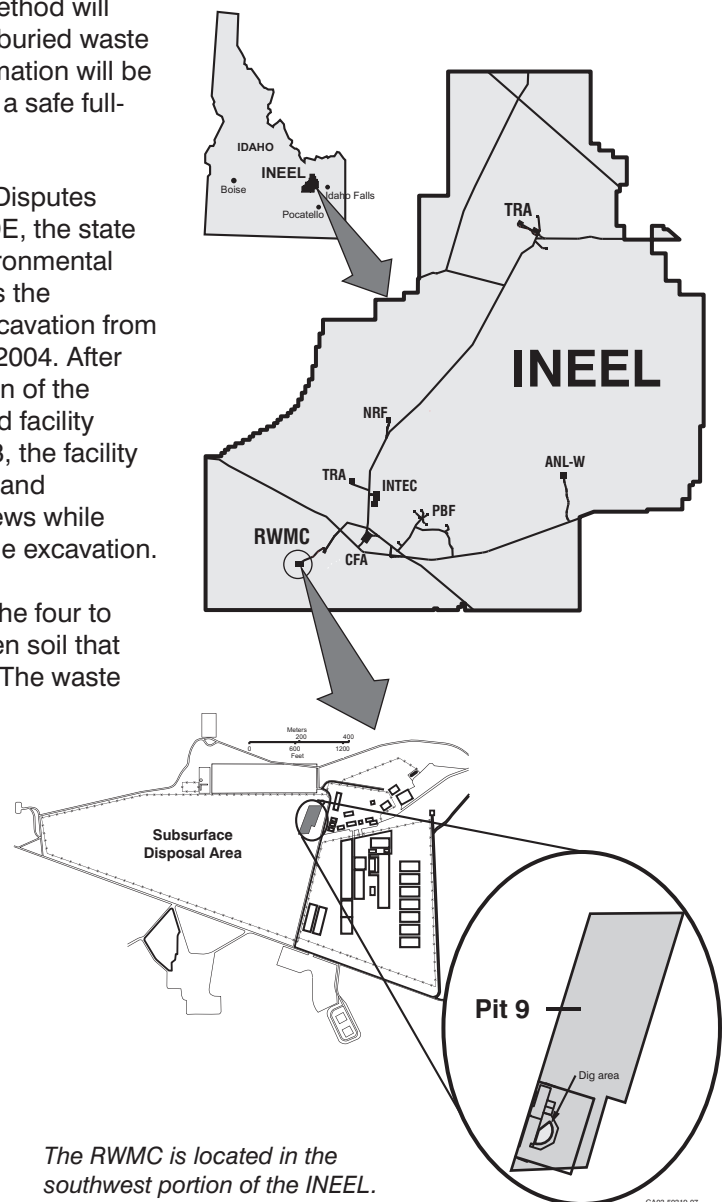
Workers started excavation in Pit 9 using the glovebox excavator method facility on December 12, more than three months ahead of the current regulatory schedule at the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. Pit 9 is located in the **Subsurface Disposal Area** at the INEEL's **Radioactive Waste Management Complex**.

The glovebox excavator method will provide information about buried waste and soil in Pit 9. This information will be used to support design of a safe full-scale remediation system.

An Agreement to Resolve Disputes signed in April 2002 by DOE, the state of Idaho and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency requires the demonstration of waste excavation from Pit 9 to start by March 31, 2004. After completing the construction of the glovebox excavator method facility during the summer of 2003, the facility underwent rigorous safety and operational readiness reviews while workers trained to begin the excavation.

Workers began removing the four to five feet of clean overburden soil that covers the waste material. The waste material and potentially contaminated soil will be removed from the exposed portion of Pit 9. Each load of contaminated soil and debris is placed on one of three transfer carts and scanned to determine the level of contamination before workers sort, sample and repackage the waste material in new barrels.

Waste retrieved during the demonstration project will be characterized for safe, compliant and



The RWMC is located in the southwest portion of the INEEL. This diagram shows the location of Pit 9 within the Subsurface Disposal Area and the dig location within the pit.

GA03-00319-07

Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (FFA/CO) — An agreement under CERCLA law among the DOE, the EPA and the state of Idaho to evaluate potentially contaminated sites at the INEEL, determine if remediation is warranted, and select and perform remediation, if necessary.

temporary onsite storage until disposal in an off-site repository is approved.

All the milestones under the April 2002 Agreement to Resolve Disputes have been accomplished ahead of schedule.

The work at Pit 9 falls under **Waste Area Group 7** of the **Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order**. The Agreement to Resolve Disputes as well as detailed information on Waste Area Group 7 is available in the Administrative Record. The Administrative Record is located at the DOE Reading Room of the INEEL Technical Library in Idaho Falls. Copies can be found at the Albertsons Library at the Boise State University.

Waste Area Group (WAG) – One of the 10 administrative management areas established under the FFA/CO.

Members of the public who have questions or comments about the glovebox excavator method project or other cleanup projects are encouraged to contact the Idaho Completion Project Community Relations office at (208) 526-3183 or by e-mail at campjl@inel.gov.



Workers excavate overburden soil using a backhoe. The backhoe arm is sealed within a retrieval confinement structure.

cleanup.inel.gov

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