

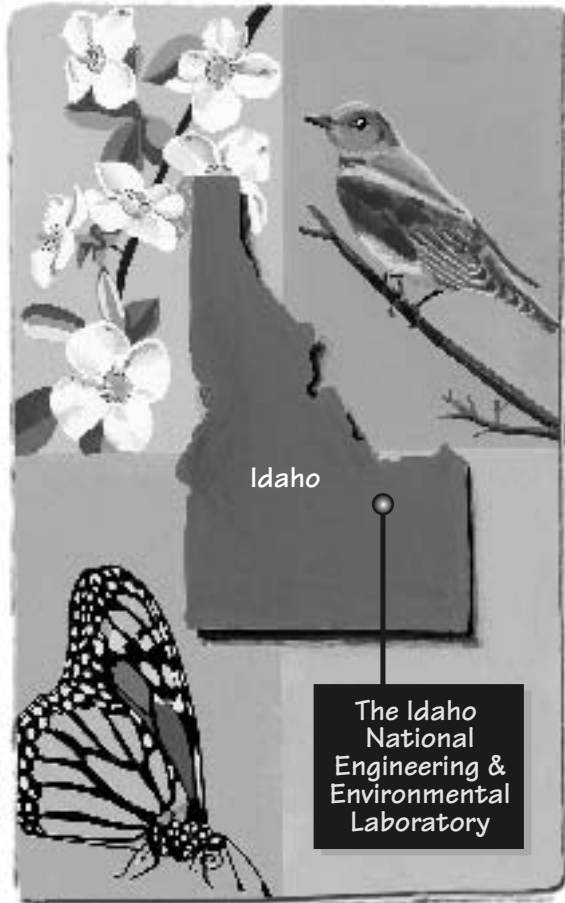
2.0

Background



2.0 Background

The Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) currently manages waste associated with the processing of spent nuclear reactor fuel, including high-level waste (HLW). This waste *is being* managed to *reduce the* risk to human health and the environment. This Environmental Impact Statement (often referred to as the Idaho HLW & FD EIS or simply “this EIS”) describes technologies and methods the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is considering for management of the high-level and related wastes and the disposition of HLW generation, storage, and treatment facilities after their missions are completed. This EIS also *presents* the environmental consequences and regulatory issues surrounding the various management alternatives under consideration. *This* chapter introduces background information on the INEEL and the waste management issues pertinent to this EIS.



2.1 INEEL Overview

2.1.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

INEEL occupies approximately 890 square miles of dry, cool desert in southeastern Idaho. It is located in the Eastern Snake River Plain, southwest of Yellowstone National Park (132 miles); north of Salt Lake City, Utah (234 miles); and east of Boise, Idaho (198 miles). Figure 2-1 shows the INEEL location. Population centers near the site are Idaho Falls and Rexburg to the east, Blackfoot to the southeast, Atomic City to the south, Pocatello and the Fort Hall Indian Reservation to the south-southeast, and Arco and Howe to the west. Prior to 1996, INEEL was known as the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL).

2.1.2 ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

DOE manages INEEL through three DOE operations offices: (1) the Idaho Operations Office (DOE-ID); (2) the Idaho Branch Office of Pittsburgh Naval Reactors, and (3) the Chicago Operations Office. Bechtel *BWXT* Idaho, *LLC* began operating the DOE-ID facilities on October 1, 1999 (previously operated by Lockheed Martin Idaho Technologies Company).

As the principal INEEL Site Manager, DOE-ID is responsible for site services, environmental control and management, and overall safety and emergency planning functions. Thus, DOE-ID is responsible for nuclear materials stabilization, environmental restoration, and waste management activities. The INEEL Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program is under the DOE Headquarters Office of Environmental Management established in November 1989. These environmental restoration and waste management activities are defined and carried out within the regulatory environment described in Section 2.2.5, *Legal Requirements* for High-Level Waste Management, and Chapter 6, Statutes, Regulations, Consultations, and Other Requirements.

The Idaho Branch Office of Pittsburgh Naval Reactors is responsible for implementation of the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program (a joint DOE-Navy program) activities at INEEL. These activities are primarily carried out at the Naval Reactors Facility.

DOE-Chicago Operations Office is responsible for operations at Argonne National Laboratory - West located at INEEL. That facility was originally a testing ground for breeder reactor technology and includes several inactive reactors, fuel-making and testing facilities, and support facilities. The current Argonne National Laboratory-West mission includes environmental management activities and technology development for treatment of spent nuclear fuel.

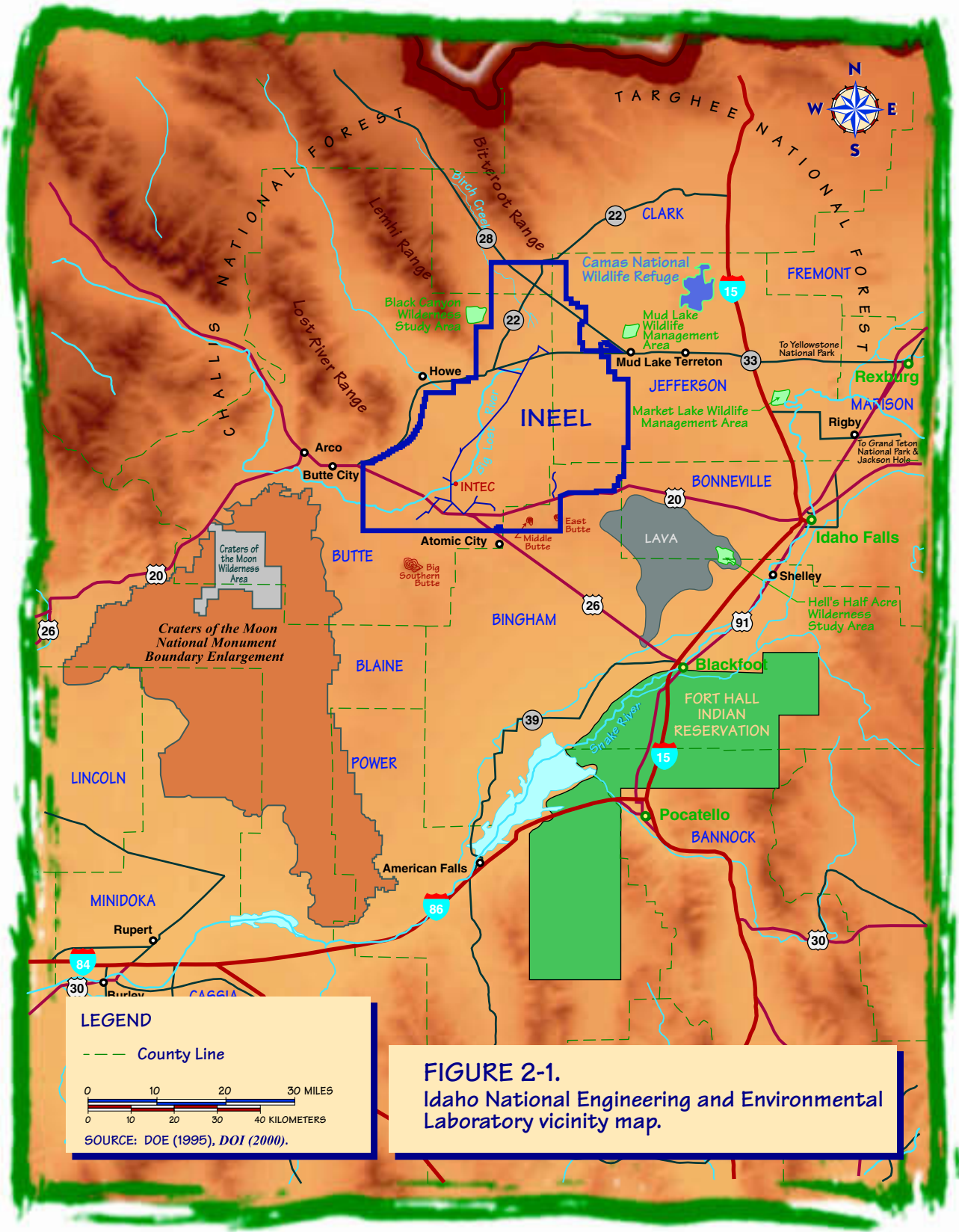


FIGURE 2-1.
Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory vicinity map.

LEGEND

--- County Line

0 10 20 30 MILES
0 10 20 30 40 KILOMETERS

SOURCE: DOE (1995), DOI (2000).