Collaborating With SRS Helps Hanford Prepare to Treat Tank Waste

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Experts in tank waste treatment systems from Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) and Savannah River Remediation (SRR) recently met to exchange lessons learned.

RICHLAND, Wash. – As Hanford prepares for tank waste treatment, the site collaborated with EM's Savannah River Site (SRS) for lessons on transitioning to waste treatment operations.

"Exchanging information and lessons between contractors across the Department of Energy complex is important for each site's remediation work and a win-win for everyone," said Pete Hill, system planning manager with SRS liquid waste contractor Savannah River Remediation (SRR). "Both SRR and Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS) are working toward the goal of reducing the risk of high-level waste in our respective states. SRR's system planning team was pleased to share operational planning knowledge as WRPS begins supporting the Hanford treatment process."

Rebecca Sams, team manager for mission integration analysis at Hanford tank farms contractor WRPS, coordinated with counterparts at SRS to gather information from

experts operating a tank waste treatment facility. Sams said her team was eager to review the practices SRS employees employ in support of treatment operations.

“It was valuable to learn about their processes and contributions to the pace of operations,” Sams said. “The exchange helped reaffirm some of our decisions while providing some insight into the effective use of team resources for the organizational integration needed to support treatment operations.”

SRR operates a radioactive waste vitrification plant, called the **Defense Waste Processing Facility**, which has produced more than 4,000 canisters of vitrified waste. Hanford’s **Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant** is scheduled to begin treating waste within three years, and Hanford is preparing for the transition to round-the-clock operations.

Elizha West, enhanced modeling and tool development lead for WRPS, said, “It was really interesting to learn more about the differences and similarities of the two programs — how our groups approach planning based on the tools we use.”

Processes used in plutonium production at Hanford resulted in a wider array of chemicals in the waste stream than at Savannah River. Hanford also deals with 177 tanks and 56 million gallons of waste, compared to Savannah River’s 43 tanks and 35 million gallons.

“The exchange helped me see that it’s important to determine what things we should be focusing on,” said John Fleming, manager of the WRPS software development and maintenance group for mission integration analysis.