



SRS Citizens Advisory Board

Strategic & Long Term Issues Committee

Meeting Summary

August 22, 2000
USC-Aiken
Aiken, SC

The Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Strategic and Long Term Issues (S<I) Committee met on Tuesday, August 22, 2:00 p.m. at USC-Aiken. The purpose of the meeting was to review Recommendation 120 and 121 status, receive program reviews on the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory (SREL) and the United States Forest Service (USFS), receive the Risk Management Working Group Team A final report, discuss the Vadose Zone Science and Technology Solutions and hear public input. Those in attendance were:

CAB Members

Mel Galin*
Carolyn Williams*
P.K. Smith*
Maria Reichmanis
Sallie Connah
Lane Parker
Lola Richardson
Kathryn May
Jean Sulc
Ken Goad
Tom Costikyan

Stakeholders

Russ Messick
Lee Poe
Rick McLeod
Sam Boher
Lynn Waishwell, CRES

DOE/Contractors

Tom Treger, DOE
de'Lisa Bratcher, DOE
Jim Wright, DOE
Becky Craft, DOE
Virginia Kay, DOE
Paul Bertsch, SREL
Robert Crais, USFS
Tom French, WSRC
Jim Moore, WSRC

* S<I Members present

Note: Bill Adams and Bill Vogeles are S<I members who were unable to attend.

Mel Galin, S<I Committee Chair welcomed those in attendance and asked them to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda.

Recommendation 120 and 121:

Mel Galin stated that responses from the Department of Energy (DOE) had been received for both recommendations. The current status of the recommendations was pending. Mr. Galin requested the committee move the recommendations from pending to open.

Definitions of open and pending are:

Pending – The recommendation has been approved by the Board, submitted to the responsible Agency(s) however, the response(s) has not yet been reviewed and agreed to by the Committee.

Open – Response(s) has been reviewed and agreed to by the Committee, but the action(s) is not complete.

The recommendations were requesting funding for projects the site was currently deferring. It was pointed out during discussions that deferring projects may save dollars today, but in the long run, they will cost more. It was urged that DOE take a long look at total funding before they deferred these projects.

With no negative response from the committee, the recommendations were moved from pending to open.

Savannah River Ecology Lab (SREL) Program Review:

Dr. Paul Bertsch, Director of the SREL, gave an overview of the SREL program. He stated that next year would be the 50th anniversary of SREL. The SREL was founded in 1951 by Dr. E. P. Odum and is operated by the University of Georgia. The mission of the SREL is to provide an independent evaluation of the ecological effects of Savannah River Site (SRS) operations through a program of ecological research, education, and outreach.

SREL is operated under a five-year agreement with the primary funding source being DOE and the University of Georgia. Additional funding is received from other contracts and grants.

Dr. Bertsch gave a brief explanation of each of the programs within SREL. The SREL programs are Environmental Outreach, Education and Ecological Research. The Ecological Research program is organized into four research groups: Advanced Analytical Center for Environmental Sciences (AACES), Ecological Stewardship, Ecotoxicology, Remediation, and Risk Assessment (ETRRA) and Radioecology.

Challenges for SREL are to maintain program quality and work with stakeholders while budgets are being cut. The budget cuts are resulting in loss of critical expertise. The SREL continues to look at new ways to meet the challenge and remain independent such as entering into collaborative arrangements with other organizations, developing alternative approaches, aggressively pursuing external grants and contracts and continuing to demonstrate to other SRS organizations the value of a research approach to solving site problems.

Dr. Bertsch's presentation generated many questions from the public. He stated that if there were additional questions or further information was desired, they could e-mail him at the following address: bertsch@srel.edu

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Program Review:

Bob Crais, USFS, showed a video that reviewed all the USFS programs. The USFS came to the SRS in March 1952. They started with around 25 people and have been up to 87. As many as 100 research people have been on site over a years time.

The mission of the USFS is to sustain the health and productivity of the natural resources in support of the missions of DOE at SRS. Current programs are wildlife botany and fisheries; fire management; research; engineering; soil, water, and air; education, community outreach and training; and planning, geographic information system, and administrative services. The video expounded on the above programs.

The video generated a lot of discussion from the public. For further questions or information, Mr. Crais' e-mail address is as follows: robert.crais@srs.gov

Risk Management Working Group Team A Final Report:

Lee Poe, a member of Team A, stated that the working group was formed in March 1998. The group was subdivided into four work areas. Team A was to review how risks are defined and used at SRS. Jennifer Hughes served as team lead. Todd Crawford, Jerry Devitt, Lee Poe and Lynn McGrath were the public members of the team.

The team defined risk as probability multiplied by adverse consequence. The team reviewed 13 different risk processes used at SRS. A risk matrix was developed to trace elements of the risk analysis for team reference. Understandable and explainable differences were found in the various risk analyses.

Team A recommended the following:

- No recommendation on changing SRS use.
- CAB needs to understand differences exist in use of terms and verify definitions and use of terms as part of presentations to ensure appropriate understanding.
- The CAB should be aware of the different synonyms used for risk, probability and consequence.

Mr. Poe stated that Team A plans no further work.

Mr. Galin requested that Mr. Poe give the presentation on Team A to the full CAB at the September meeting. Mr. Poe said he would be delighted to do so.

Vadose Zone Science and Technology Solutions:

Jim Wright, DOE, started out by explaining the definition of vadose zone. A vadose zone is the area between the surface of the ground to the groundwater.

Mr. Wright stated that SRS has the lead for the Subsurface Contaminants Focus Area (SCFA). This is one of five focus areas developed by the Office of Science and Technology (EM-50). The SCFA is the national technology program responsible for providing environmental stewards with technical solutions to their subsurface contamination problems.

The extent of the subsurface problem in the DOE complex is about 40 million cubic meters of contaminated soil, 1.7 trillion gallons of contaminated groundwater and long term stewardship at approximately 109 sites. In order to solve such a large problem, it was necessary to form an integrated approach utilizing all users in the process. In an effort to find solutions, SCFA and the Savannah River Technology Center (SRTC) were challenged to construct the state-of-the-knowledge book on technology solutions to the vadose zone problem. Mr. Wright introduced Tom French, SRTC, to talk about the book.

Tom French stated that in order to capture the current state of the knowledge of the vadose zone, the DOE decided to assemble a comprehensive reference book. A steering committee was assembled to plan and guide the effort. A series of three workshops was used to provide the basis for the book. Over 100 case studies are included in the book. The case studies present examples of actual technology implementations that illustrate the state of the knowledge. The book itself is approximately 1500 pages and is in two volumes. It was published in July 2000. Chapter 10 identifies the current knowledge gap. Mr. French gave a brief summary of the eight knowledge gaps that were identified. He stated work in the future would be focused on these gaps.

During the discussion period, Mr. French stated that anyone wanting a copy of the book or the abbreviated version should contact Mr. Wright, Jim Moore or himself.

Other:

Mr. Galin stated that another subject that needed to be discussed was stewardship. He stated that after the national stewardship meeting in October and after obtaining agreement with the CAB, he would like to form a working group to concentrate on long-term stewardship. He is interested in including anyone interested.

Public Comment:

Mr. Galin asked if there was any other public comment. Sam Booher stated that he would like to have a

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) report presented to the committee. Mr. Galin stated that such a report would be given at the October meeting.

With no other comments, Mr. Galin adjourned the meeting.

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