

Springville meeting Sunday on Preparing for West Valley cleanup scoping sessions

- By Rick Miller, County Reporter

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SPRINGVILLE — Three environmental groups will conduct a meeting Sunday to help people prepare for state “scoping sessions” later this month on future cleanup at the West Valley Demonstration Project site.

The Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, the Sierra Club and Wyoming, Erie and Cattaraugus Communities Act on the Pipeline (WECAP) will host the session 5 to 7 p.m. in the Carol Mongerson Theater at the Springville Center for the Arts, 37 N. Buffalo St.

The U.S. Department of Energy and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority will conduct “scoping sessions” March 19, 20 and 21 in West Valley, Buffalo and on the Cattaraugus Territory of the Seneca Nation.

The upcoming scoping sessions draw interested persons and agencies to comment on what they think the future cleanup at the town of Ashford site in Cattaraugus County should include.

Joanne Hameister, president of the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes, said the scoping sessions are preparation for a supplemental environmental impact statement on the Phase 2 cleanup at West Valley.

The site was home of the first and only commercial spent nuclear fuel reprocessing plant and operated from 1966-72 when it closed for environmental retrofitting. Nuclear Fuel Services never reopened the plant, leaving it as it was. The West Valley Demonstration Project of 1980 set about to clean up the site that sits near Buttermilk and Cattaraugus creeks that empty into Lake Erie.

Sunday night's program will include experts who will explain what has gone on at the site, what's going on now and what should happen in the future.

The groups will present the program again Thursday from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Crane Library, 633 Elmwood Ave., Buffalo.

The Sierra Club, for example, supports the full cleanup of the West Valley sites including huge underground tanks that contain radioactive sludge, state and federal low-level radioactive burial grounds and removal of 56 concrete containers with radioactive waste solidified in glass from the site.

To speak at the DOE scoping sessions, individuals must register. There is a five minute limit for comments. To register, contact DOE document manager, Martin Krentz at (716) 942- 4007 or email martin.krentz@emcbc.doe.gov.

The first DOE scoping session will be held March 19 from 6 to 9:30 p.m. at the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company, Firemen's Memorial Hall and Training Center, 9091 Route 240, West Valley.

The next two sessions are:

March 20, from 6 to 9:30 p.m. at Erie Community College, City Campus, Post Office Building, 121 Ellicott St., Buffalo, in the Minnie Gillette Auditorium.

March 21, from 6 to 9:30 p.m. in the Seneca Nation of Indians Cattaraugus Council Chambers, 12837 Route 438, Irving.

Environmental groups are also encouraging people to make written comments on the scope for the SEIS before the April 23, deadline.

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