

Vitrification demolition, waste disposition completed at WVDP

By reporter@springvillejournal.com | on April 01, 2019

Max Borsuk

WEST VALLEY – Work at the West Valley Demonstration Project continues to move forward, with crews recently completing another accomplishment in its decommissioning. CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, LLC crews at the WVDP completed the disposition of waste from the vitrification building and the installation of a weather protective cover to signify the end of physical work with the vitrification building.



Workers at the West Valley Demonstration Project pull and smooth out the polyethylene weather protective cover over the vitrification facility concrete slab.

The vitrification building, which was used to solidify radioactive liquid high-level waste stored at the WVDP from 1966 to 1972, started being demolished on September 11, 2017 and was completed on September 20, 2018. After demolition, a weather protective cover was recently installed to preclude water infiltration into the below-grade portion of the facility.

Disposition of demolition waste from the vitrification facility was completed last month after 416 intermodal containers and 42 specialty containers were shipped offsite. Completing the vitrification facility represented the largest and most complex demolition of a radioactively contaminated facility to date at the site, according to CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley, and allows workers to move forward with remaining work as they prepare for the next phase.

“It feels great. All the planning and the team involved taking something that needed to be cleaned up is now gone,” CHBWV Communications Manager Joseph Pillittere said. “We are really changing the footprint of the site, not to mention reducing the legacy risks that were there and allows the continuation of the cleanup toward final closure of the site.”

Completing work at the vitrification facility and doing the work safely has been a priority for CHBWV crews. Pillittere is grateful for the hard work the crews at the WVDP have completed so far and the safety precautions taken on a daily basis.



A crew prepares a waste container for vitrification facility demolition debris.

“Think about what we had to do with the changing weather, changing conditions and what they were working with. With industrial and radiological hazards, they were able to do that safety and compliantly in terms of taking that building down while protecting workers, the public and the environment all at the same time,” Pillittere said. “That’s a huge accomplishment for the team.”

Demolition of the vitrification facility helps CHBWV crews move closer to the completion of its two remaining milestones. Milestone three, which included the demolition of the vitrification building, still consists of the demolition of the main plant process building and its support buildings. Plans to demolish the main plant is back on schedule for CH2M HILL BWXT West Valley crews, along with four main plant support buildings left to be demolished.

Milestone four consists of the disposition of remaining site facilities, completing site operations, maintenance and utilities at the site. CHBWV workers have demolished and restored the areas for 28 of 47 facilities, with additional demolition to be completed this year.

“[CHBWV crews] are very methodical in their approach, they are very deliberate and it shows through their safe planning and teamwork,” Pillittere said.

Upcoming work at the WVDP includes preparations for the demolition of the low-level wastewater treatment – O2 pad, additional deactivation work within the main plant and preparations for work on the waste tank farm and old liquid pretreatment system.