

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Bill Logue, Task Force Facilitator  
Date: January 25, 2022  
Subject: **Summary of December 15, 2021 Meeting**

## Next Meeting

Date & Time: January 26, 2022  
Location: Zoom

## CTF Members and Alternates Attending

Heidi Hartley, John Hood, Bonnie Lawrence, Kathy McGoldrick, Joe Patti, John Pfeffer, Tony Memmo, Pat Townsend, Ray Vaughan, Eric Wohlers. Facilitators: Bill Logue & Loraine Della Porta.

## Agency Participants and Observers

**Department of Energy (DOE):** Bryan Bower, Patrick Hefflinger, Moira Maloney, Audrey Seeley,  
**New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA):** Paul Bembia, Brad Frank, Lee Gordon, Andrea Mellon, Peter Vlad

**CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, LLC (CHBWV):** Joe Pillittere, John Rendall, Kelly Wooley

**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation:** Pat Concannon, Ken Martin, Lynn Winterberger

**New York State Department of Health:** Cynthia Costello

**US Environmental Protection Agency:** Conrad Sherman

**Erie County Department of Environment and Planning:** Joanna Panasiewicz, P. Josh Wilson

**Neptune & Company:** Sean McCandless

**Observers:** Wayne Barber, Anna Carr, Rick Miller, Charlotte Salmon, Kelsey Shank, Judith Talbot

## Introductions, Announcement, Administrative Business

Bill Logue welcomed all present and reviewed the meeting agenda and materials<sup>1</sup>. Bryan Bower informed the CTF that a continuing budget resolution for FY 2022 that will fund the government through mid-February. Activities at the site continue without interruption.

## CHBWV Project Update

Kelly Wooley of CHBWV presented a project update.

**Safety.** Mr. Wooley reviewed safety information. The total recordable Case Rate is 1.06 and Days Away Restricted or Transferred at 0.35.

**COVID-19 Controls.** Mr. Wooley reiterated Executive Order 14042 regarding COVID-19 and the associated workplace safety guidance of September 24. On October 5th CHBWV implemented a

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<sup>1</sup> Each is listed at the end of this summary and may be found at [www.westvalleyctf.org](http://www.westvalleyctf.org)

policy and substantially implemented the mandate in the Executive Order for vaccinations with a vaccination rate of over 90% onsite.

**Main Plant Deactivation.** All deactivation and grouting activities have been completed in the General Purpose Cell (GPC), GPC Crane Room and Crane Room Extension. Chemical Process Cell decontamination activities are complete. Decontamination scabbling of the Product Purification Cell (PPC) continues with 798 ft<sup>2</sup> completed. Weekly radiological surveys are conducted and fixatives applied to decontaminated areas. In the Vent Wash Room significant progress continued with completion of 14 of 28 cuts of vent duct with a diamond wire saw and 6 of 19 sections of duct removed. The Acid Recovery Cell/Off-Gas Aisle (OGA) curtain containment is installed.

**Demolition of Ancillary Support Structures.** The demolition of the Load-In/Load-Out Facility was started on November 9 and the skin has been removed down to the primary support structure. This is the last facility scheduled for demolition before the Main Plant demolition.

**Main Plant Processing Building (MPPB) Demolition Preparation.** The water management system operators are ensuring standard operating procedures are in place and training the plant operations group on how to operate that facility. This should be a fully operating facility in January. The 10-Plex Office Complex showers and changing rooms are in the final stages of completion. Insulation and heat tracing on water lines are installed. A high efficiency air vent is being stalled as required by code. After the asbestos showers are installed the facility will be ready in January. The new roll up door is installed in the Drum Cell and a new concrete floor is being poured. The facility should be ready in 1-1 ½ months. During MPPB demolition empty intermodal containers will be stored in the Drum Cell and prepared to receive demolition debris.

**Balance of Site Facilities and Infrastructure.** Spoils and debris from the installation of the Permeable Treatment Wall continue to be shipped. As of November 30, 270 intermodals of soil spoils and 93 intermodals of debris have been filled and characterized. 363 have been shipped by rail to Energy Solutions and 231 intermodals have been prepared to receive wastes. CHBWW is working with DOE to prepare a new bid to replace degraded legacy waste containers. CHBWW is partnering with DOE to develop plans for Tank waste sampling and characterization. A bid was awarded to re-route Lagoons 4 and 5 to allow Lagoon 3 to be taken out of service.

A CTF member inquired about a railcar derailment on the rail line. Another member clarified this was a propane car with a wheel that fell off and not related to the site.

## State-Licensed Disposal Area - North Slope Update

Andrea Mellon provided an update on the North Slope of the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA). In October of 2021 NYSERDA completed the installation of a geomembrane cover on the Hardstand and subsurface barrier wall to prevent water infiltration into the SDA. A future update will provide information on Trench 14 water levels.

Ms. Mellon presented photos of the SDA area and North Slope and indicated where soil cracks (fractures) were observed in the slope in 2019. At that time inspection activities were increased, additional markers were placed and more frequent topographic surveys begun. A

soil investigation was recommended to determine the interface between soils pushed over the slope during trench construction in the 1960s and 1970s and the underlying undisturbed clay layer. Samples will be collected from depths of 3 to 50 feet to characterize soils. The results will be used to inform potential mitigation measures going forward. Investigation results will be presented at a future meeting.

Additional fracturing and slumping was observed in October and November 2021. Inspections were increased to daily and surveys to weekly. There has been no movement at the top of the slope. Environmental monitoring has increased with weekly groundwater testing and gamma walkover surveys.

A CTF member referred to a 500-year-old log discovered at a knickpoint in Erdman Brook where soils were neither bulldozed or tilled and asked about whether the peat found in the SDA could be dated. Ms. Mellon stated that they were surprised at how young the log was and that carbon dating the peat could be looked into. In response to another question, Ms. Mellon noted that the trench closest to the North Slope has less than a foot of leachate in it and the trench liquids have been slowly going down over time.

## Erie County Climate Action Plan Process & Overview

P. Josh Wilson, Sustainability Director of the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning (DEP), provided an overview of the County's Climate Action Plan and the associated process. DEP has been working on climate change since 2017 when the federal government pulled out of Paris Accord and the County took up the goals of Paris Accord. This helped focus leaders on the issue and NYSERDA provided funding for planning.

The first step was a climate vulnerability assessment. The assessment explored hazards by looking at ways the community could be impacted and prioritizing the most significant hazards. Then the sensitivity to the hazards was analyzed and the County's capacity to adjust to or mitigate the hazards was considered leading to a final assessment of the overall vulnerability. The top hazards to address based on frequency and duration, jurisdiction and impact are temperature, precipitation/wind and biological threats (vector born and invasive species).

Mr. Wilson showed graphics and maps supporting this – for example the sensitivity of urban core areas to heat and the impact on elders/those with health risks and infrastructure. Funding has recently been awarded to prepare a heat emergency plan for the county.

Mr. Wilson then discussed the approach for an Equity Centered Community Climate Action Plan (CCAP), which will address how to mitigate and adapt to climate impacts. A diverse stakeholder task force was convened and meets monthly. Templates were drafted and work groups established. Work groups include: climate justice; commercial energy conservation and renewable energy - supply, distribution, and buildings; transportation; consumption and waste reduction; climate resiliency; nature-based solutions; housing and neighborhood resiliency; economic and workforce development; agriculture and food systems; and communicating progress. The plan is coming together. He stressed the need for community involvement and discussed ways to become involved at a variety of levels and time commitments.

During discussion, CTF members expressed appreciation for the presentation and observed that

there did not appear to be a direct linkage to the site and for involvement of the group in the plan but they would reflect on the issue more and see if the site might be recognized as a hazard. The CTF will consult with its representatives from Ashford and the Seneca Nation about potential involvement. Some members expressed individual interest in being climate ambassadors for the plan. Mr. Wilson stated that there was training and existing presentations available for this purpose and that communities were often more receptive to hearing from local people as trusted brokers rather than County staff. Ms. Lawrence expressed interest in having input and lived experience incorporated into the process.

Joanna Panasiewicz, Erie County Watershed Coordinator, noted that the Erie Watershed Protection Alliance was on phase 3 of a watershed management plan and that she could provide an update if desired. A stream walk of the Cattaraugus Creek watershed will be conducted, including portions of Buttermilk Creek. If members are interested there are opportunities to participate as part of the watershed committee.

In response to questions about the inclusion about brownfield sites, Mr. Wilson noted that by necessity the plan was at a high level and a next step was to identify issues to focus on. CTF alternate and Erie County representative John Hood noted that two active remediation sites were including climate vulnerability as part of the remediation planning process and that the issue was regularly raised in public meetings.

## CTF Discussion

Ray Vaughan noted he would be sending a revised draft of his proposal for how the CTF might seek assistance and prepare for the release of the Probabilistic Performance Assessment (PPA) and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). His hope is that this will help the group focus future comments. A member noted the amount and breadth of work in the draft proposal and inquired about whether the release of the PPA and DSEIS might make much of that unnecessary. Mr. Vaughan noted the importance for the group to set forth concerns and hoped that through presentations at CTF and/or Quarterly Public Meetings some issues could be narrowed and areas of agreement and disagreement articulated. He further suggested the possibility of changing the format of some meetings to reduce presentations and increase time for discussion.

Mr. Bembia stated that the issues raised around difference in the 1996 and 2010 EIS's were the reason for addressing uncertainty through the PPA. He cautioned that if the CTF seeks independent advice and expertise that the agencies would have to be cautious about how they interact with the group on this so as not to be in a position of influencing comments on the DSEIS. Mr. Gordon stated that more communication will be forthcoming as Neptune restarts the work on the PPA. He anticipates there will be discussion on erosion, climate change and how different lines of evidence will be accounted for and uncertainty characterized.

A work group will be convened to discuss and refine the proposal and lead a discussion with the full CTF. Anna Carr, Water Program Manager for the Seneca Nation, expressed an interest in participating in the work group.

## Observer Questions and Comments

In response to a question Ms. Mellon noted that the rain over the summer may have increased downslope movement of saturated soils.

A member of the press asked for a copy of Mr. Vaughan's proposal. The group agreed to share it at a later date after it has been more thoroughly reviewed and revised.

## Follow Up

<b>Description</b>	<b>Generated by; Date</b>
Convene Work Group	Ray Vaughan, Bill Logue; TBD

## Meeting Documents Available on the CTF Website

<b>Description</b>	<b>Generated by; Date</b>
Meeting Agenda	Logue; 12/15/21
CHBWV Project Update	CHBWV; 12/15/21
SDA North Slope Update	NYSERDA; 12/15/21
Erie County Climate Action Plan Overview and Process	Erie County DEP 12/15/21
News Clippings Since the Last Meeting	NYSERDA; 12/15/21