

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE
SHALLOW LAND DISPOSAL AREA
PARKS TOWNSHIP, PENNSYLVANIA SITE

The BWX Technologies (BWXT) is the current owner of the Shallow Land Disposal Area (SLDA) located in Parks Township, in Armstrong County, PA, approximately 37 kilometers (23 miles) east-northeast of Pittsburgh. The site encompasses approximately 16 hectares (40 acres) and consists of 10 trenches that were used to dispose of wastes, scrap, and trash from a nearby fuel fabrication facility. Principal contaminants at the site are natural, enriched, and depleted uranium, and lesser quantities of americium, plutonium, and thorium. This site has been the subject of significant public and Congressional interest for many years.

BWXT holds an active license (SNM-2001) for this site. BWXT, by its license condition, is required to submit a decommissioning plan for the SLDA on or before December 6, 2000. In the past, the licensee indicated that it intended to request license termination, with restrictions on future site use, after stabilizing the wastes in-place, and initiated efforts to comply with the requirements in 10 CFR 20.1403(d).

In mid-2000, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff was informed that efforts were underway to include the SLDA in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE's) Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). In a letter dated May 25, 2000, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Deputy Assistant Secretary for Site Closure, Mr. James Fiore, stated to Major General Hans Van Winkle, Director of Civil Works, USACE, that DOE did not object to the SLDA being included in the USACE's FUSRAP program because material disposed of in the SLDA was generated during nuclear fuel production and research as part of the United States' early atomic energy program.

On August 23, 2000, Mr. Larry Davis, President of BWXT, discussed delaying obtaining input from affected parties pursuant to 10 CFR 20.1403, until Congress finalized the FY2001 Energy and Water Development Appropriation legislation and the President signed the bill.

The Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill for the Fiscal Year 2001 (FY 2001) includes an appropriation in the amount of \$5 million for the USACE to determine and initiate the appropriate response actions, under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, for the FUSRAP-related waste at the SLDA site.

In September and November, 2000, staff discussed placing the SLDA in the FUSRAP program with BWXT, as well as the timing impact of the appropriation on the December 6, 2000, decommissioning plan submission due date. After conferring with the NRC staff on November 14, 2000, BWXT requested a 180-day extension of the decommissioning plan submission date, to determine the impact that placing the site in the FUSRAP program will have on the decommissioning of the site. During this time, NRC staff will work to resolve policy issues associated with the Congressional appropriation.