

For Immediate Release

Date: April 22, 2019



Media Contacts: Erik Simpson, (208) 390-9464

INL Site Moves Major Step Closer to Completing Waste Exhumation Project

IDAHO FALLS, Idaho – Crews recently finished exhuming radioactive and hazardous waste from a combined area of 5 acres at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex at the Department of Energy’s Idaho National Laboratory Site.

The workers, with cleanup contractor Fluor Idaho, will now focus on removing the last 0.69 acres of targeted waste from the Cold War landfill.

“With each buried waste exhumation project — eight to date — our crews have applied their waste management experience, as well as additional worker protection measures, to become even more efficient,” said Fluor Idaho Manager Jason Chapple.

After exhuming the waste, the workers repackage and ship it to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico for permanent disposal.

The waste was generated during nuclear weapons production at the former Rocky Flats Plant near Denver and was buried at the INL Site from 1954 to 1970.

The most recent buried waste exhumation campaign took place in a 1.72-acre enclosure over two pits — the first areas used to dispose of the Rocky Flats waste beginning in the early 1950s. Using specially modified heavy equipment, crews took out radioactively contaminated filters and molds, solidified sludge containing radioactive and hazardous constituents and a reactive uranium material called “roaster oxides.”

Once the waste is removed from the final 0.69-acre area in the year ahead, the entire landfill will be covered with several feet of native gravel and soil as part of a cap to span more than 130 acres. The goal is to prevent the migration of precipitation through the remaining waste toward the underlying Snake River Plain Aquifer.

Since 2005, crews have been digging up targeted transuranic and hazardous waste from specific areas of the RWMC’s 97-acre Subsurface Disposal Area in compliance with agreements between the DOE, the State of Idaho and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Fluor Idaho, LLC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Fluor Corporation with subcontractor partners CH2M, North Wind Inc., Portage, and Waste Control Specialists. Fluor Idaho manages the Idaho Cleanup Project Core contract at the Department of Energy’s Idaho National Laboratory Site located 45 miles west of Idaho Falls. The 5-year, \$1.4 billion project, funded through the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Environmental Management, focuses on early risk reduction and protection of the Snake River Plain Aquifer.

For more information visit the Idaho Cleanup Project on the Web at <https://fluor-idaho.com>

Photo Caption

Crews have completed targeted waste exhumation at the Accelerated Retrieval Project VIII facility at DOE's Idaho National Laboratory Site. Just 0.69 acres of buried Cold War weapons waste at the site's Subsurface Disposal Area remains to be exhumed under a 2008 record of decision between the DOE, the State of Idaho, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.