



Nuclear Waste Program Projects

To carry out our regulatory responsibilities, we employ project teams. Each team includes experts with different capabilities needed to tackle that project's unique challenges. Engineers, hydrologists, chemists, geologists, environmental scientists, and other specialists work together to ensure safe, effective cleanup at Hanford.



Air quality — managing the Hanford Air Operating Permit to protect our air resources.



Environmental restoration — working to protect natural resources around the Hanford Site.



Groundwater — overseeing cleanup of Hanford's contaminated groundwater and working to keep those contaminants out of the Columbia River.



Other mixed waste sites — providing the most economical oversight of other sites in Washington with mixed wastes.



Permits and compliance for waste management — permitting, compliance, and closure of facilities that handle dangerous or mixed waste.



Tank waste monitoring and closure — ensuring safe storage of waste in Hanford's 177 tanks, and eventual closure of those tanks.



Tank waste retrieval, treatment, and disposal — overseeing safe retrieval, tank waste treatment and disposal of tank waste.

What we do:

- ✓ Oversee cleanup: We enforce cleanup laws at Hanford and ensure the U.S. Department of Energy follows environmental regulations and deadlines set in the Tri-Party Agreement.
- ✓ Protect the Columbia River and surrounding environment: We monitor the river for contamination and ensure it remains safe for communities. We are ensuring cleanup is protective of the environment now and into the future.
- ✓ Engage the public: We provide opportunities for public input, including comment periods and community education.
- ✓ Track progress: From underground tank waste to groundwater cleanup, we monitor and report what's been done — and what still needs doing.

Hanford misconceptions:

✗ "Hanford doesn't affect me."

Actually, Hanford's legacy impacts air, water, land, and communities — especially those who live around and downstream of the site or are historically marginalized.

✗ "Hanford is an active nuclear production site."

Plutonium production stopped in the 1980s. The site's mission has been environmental cleanup ever since.

✗ "The government is doing this alone."

The state and federal agencies responsible for Hanford cleanup collaborate with Tribal governments and the public to incorporate input and perspectives into decision-making.

✗ "The river isn't safe."

Monitoring shows the Columbia River currently meets all surface water standards and is safe for drinking and recreation — but ongoing protection is essential.

✗ "This is just a local issue."

Hanford is one of the most complex nuclear cleanup efforts in the country. What happens here is a local, regional, and national priority.