
4.4 Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program

Since 1991, citizens living near the Hanford Site have been participating in Hanford Site environmental surveillance activities. Local teachers have been managing and operating three special radiological air sampling stations located in Richland, Basin City, and Franklin County, Washington (see Figure 5.2.1 in Section 5.2). Each station is similar in design and consists of equipment for collecting air samples and monitoring ambient radiation levels. Each station also includes a large, lighted, and covered informational display containing real-time meteorological and radiological information (Figure 4.4.1). All areas of the stations are publicly accessible, and stations have been designed and outfitted to stimulate public interest. Station displays provide the public with general information on station equipment, sample types, and analyses. The station manager's name and phone number are provided for anyone desiring additional information. Brochure boxes containing a variety of free pamphlets and brochures discussing Hanford environmental programs have also been installed on each display panel.

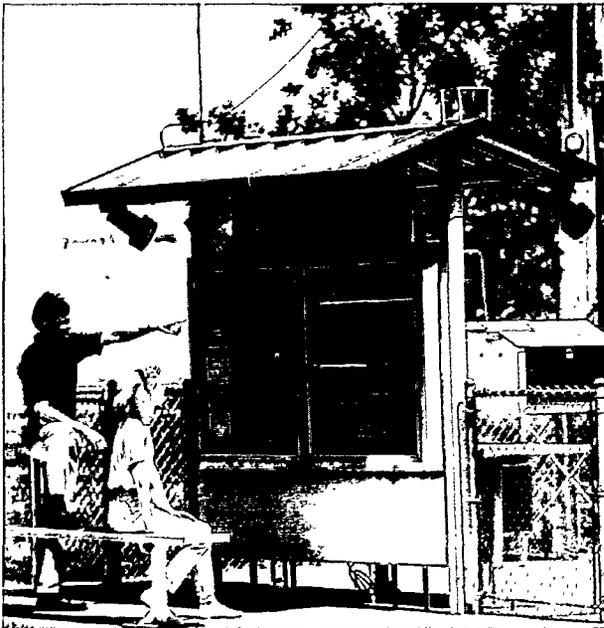


Figure 4.4.1 Community Members Can See Environmental Surveillance in Action at Three Local Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Stations

Two teachers working in schools close to the stations were selected to operate each station. The teachers are responsible for collecting a variety of air samples, preparing the samples and collection records for submission to a radioanalytical laboratory, monitoring the performance of station equipment, performing minor station maintenance, and participating in scheduled training. They also serve as spokespersons for the Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program and function as points-of-contact for local citizens. Surface Environmental Surveillance project staff work closely with the teachers to maintain station equipment and displays and to coordinate sampling and analytical efforts with other Hanford environmental surveillance activities. Analytical results for samples collected at these stations in 1994 are discussed in Section 5.2, "Air Surveillance."

In 1994, an expansion of the Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program was initiated at the request of DOE. A 5-year expansion plan was prepared, and teachers were selected and trained to operate two routine air-monitoring stations in Pasco and Kennewick, Washington (see Figure 5.2.1 in Section 5.2). These two stations differ from the original three citizen-operated stations in that they have not been modified to attract public attention. However, the air sampling station in Pasco was moved a short distance to the campus of Columbia Basin College (a local community college) to be more conveniently located and to benefit students in the school's radiological sciences program.

Also in 1994, construction was started on a fourth special air-monitoring station on the campus of Heritage College in Toppenish, Washington. This station is being built by the college with money from a DOE grant and will be used by both PNL and the college for their individual needs. Most of the equipment at the station will be supplied and maintained by PNL. However, some equipment will be purchased by the school with grant monies and will be used to enhance their fledgling environmental sciences program.

Additionally, public participation in crop sampling continued in 1994. Leafy vegetables were obtained from the Bailie Memorial Youth Ranch in the east Wahluke sampling area and the Country Haven Academy in the Sagemoor sampling area (see Figure 5.3.17 in Section 5.3). Both of these areas are considered to be downwind of the Site and could potentially be impacted by Site emissions. Analytical results for these samples are reported in Section 5.4, "Food and Farm Product Surveillance."

The long-range goal for the expansion of the Community-Operated Environmental Surveillance Program is to select and train enough teachers by 1999 to do most of the offsite sampling for the Surface

Environmental Surveillance Project. Environmental sampling on and around the Hanford Site has been conducted by Site personnel for almost 50 years so this represents a major change in DOE's approach to accomplishing its Sitewide monitoring objectives. However, this kind of program change is commensurate with other changes currently ongoing at all DOE sites and should help to bolster public acceptance of the data and increase public understanding of the reported results. In the near future, if the budget permits, expansion efforts will allow increased citizen involvement in offsite air sampling, some involvement in offsite water sampling, and increased involvement in food and farm product sampling.