

# Residents oppose capping dump

**CONCERNED:** *Residents living near the radioactive waste site are concerned a cap won't contain the wastes.*

By Mary Wozniak  
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The majority of residents attending an open house at the site of a radioactive waste dump in Lewiston gave the Department of Energy a clear message Thursday: They don't want a final cap put on the dump.

They want the waste out of there and stored somewhere else.

Tim Henderson, president of Residents Organized for Lewiston-Porter's Environment, put it most succinctly after the informal gathering ended: "LOQW must go."

The acronym stands for Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, the name of a 7,500-acre site that housed a TNT plant at the start of World War II. Eventually, all the land was sold off until only 191 acres remained. The 10-acre dump is on that plot of land, now called the Niagara Falls Storage Site, at 1397 Fletcher Road.

The dump contains 255,000 cubic yards of radioactive waste, most of it from the Manhattan Project, which created the first atomic bomb.

"Now the energy department wants to put a final cap on the site, which it says will adequately contain

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the radioactive material for up to 1,000 years.

But the Environmental Protection Agency objects, and the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the state Health Department agree with the EPA. The EPA says it's OK to keep the lower-level radioactive wastes there, but the containment standards at the site are too low to leave the higher-level radioactive uranium ore residue there, code named K-65 residues.

The K-65 residues make up only about 5 percent of the radioactive material on the site, noted Ronald E. Kirk, site manager, who came to the site from his base in Oak Ridge, Tenn., to answer residents' questions. About 60 people showed up to ask them.

Putting a permanent cap on the site would not preclude getting access to the K-65 residues later, if necessary, he said.

The clay layer beneath the dump, up to 20 feet thick, has some sand strips running through it at points, but they do not meet to form a corridor for waste to leak through, Kirk said. Readings taken from monitoring wells around the dump have shown that no waste is migrating, he said.

Peter Ohanessian, chairman of ROLE, wasn't satisfied with what he heard at the open house. "I don't believe a word that they say," he said. "The DOE doesn't have a great track record."