

THE BUFFALO NEWS

 PRINT THIS



Amy H. Witryol of Lewiston wants regulators to allow public comments before a work plan is finalized.

Robert Kirkham/Buffalo News

Energy Dept. to issue report on inquiry into N-waste effects in Lewiston, Porter

By Aaron Besecker

NEWS NIAGARA REPORTER

Updated: December 03, 2009, 11:26 AM /

LEWISTON — The U. S. Department of Energy plans to release a report in March as part of its inquiry into

potential radiological contamination in Lewiston and Porter left over from the country's first nuclear weapons program, an agency representative said Wednesday night.

The department has been reviewing environmental data on portions of land that was formerly part of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works — acreage regulators concluded was clear of environmental concerns in the 1980s, said Christopher J. Clayton of the Department of Energy's Office of Legacy Management.

The land, once used by the Atomic Energy Commission and Manhattan Engineering District for the Manhattan Project, is now owned by the Town of Lewiston, CWM Chemical Services, Modern Corp. and National Grid.

Clayton's remarks came during a public information session held in the Lewiston Senior Center by the Army Corps of Engineers, the agency responsible for the continuing investigation into chemical and radiological contamination on the site.

The 7,500-acre former ordnance works was used for TNT production in the early 1940s. About 1,500 acres of it was transferred to the Manhattan Engineering District.

There are about 1,300 acres of land known as "vicinity properties," broken down into about 25 parcels. The agency is reviewing only six of the 25 parcels.

This review, targeting areas near the Central Drainage Ditch, began after concerns were raised by an area resident, the agency said.

The Niagara Falls Storage Site, which the Central Drainage Ditch runs through and which was part of the land transferred in the 1940s, presently contains a 10-acre storage cell for radioactive waste. The 191-acre parcel remains owned by the Department of Energy.

A volunteer panel of area residents with technical expertise on contamination issues, known as the LOOW Restoration Advisory Board, has concluded that the storage cell may be leaking.

In September, the Department of Energy said that it was conducting a "paper review" of vicinity properties and that no physical work was "planned or intended." The upcoming report could suggest that additional investigation be done by the department itself, or more extensive analysis by the corps, Clayton said Wednesday.

Of particular concern during the information session was a parcel owned by the Town of Lewiston, known as Vicinity Property X. It contains the former wastewater-treatment plant of the ordnance works facility and is located just north of the Niagara Falls Storage Site boundary.

William L. Boeck, chairman of the radiological committee of the

LOOW Restoration Advisory Board, suggested Wednesday night that regulators consider further analysis of an area that included a former railroad line extending from the Niagara Falls Storage Site onto Vicinity Property X.

Historical documents show that radiological waste from a nuclear reactor was handled on the rail line and that typical handling of railroad barrels usually produces a "certain amount of spillage," Boeck said.

The portion of the rail line that sits on the Niagara Falls Storage Site had previously been excavated, but that work stopped at the property boundary with the land owned by the town, he said.

Lewiston Supervisor Fred

M. Newlin II said he hopes the agency considers that area when deciding whether further work is needed.

"We share Dr. Boeck's concern," Newlin told regulators.

Lewiston resident Amy H. Witryol, who has studied the former ordnance works site for several years, asked regulators to allow public comments on any plans before the agency finalizes its work plan.

abesecker@buffnews.com

Reader comments

Rate This
Article

There on this article.

Reader comments are posted immediately and are not edited. Users can help promote good discourse by using the "Inappropriate" links to vote down comments that fall outside of our guidelines. Comments that exceed our moderation threshold are automatically hidden and reviewed by an editor. Comments should be on topic; respectful of other writers; not be libelous, obscene, threatening, abusive, or otherwise offensive; and generally be in good taste. Users who repeatedly violate these guidelines will be banned. Comments containing objectionable words are automatically blocked. Some comments may be re-published in The Buffalo News print edition.



Log into MyBuffalo to post a comment

MyBuffalo user: Password: _____

Log In

[Forgot your password?](#)

What is MyBuffalo?

MyBuffalo is the new social network from Buffalo.com. Your MyBuffalo account lets you comment on and rate stories at buffalonews.com. You can also head over to mybuffalo.com to share your blog posts, stories, photos, and videos with the community. [Join now](#) or [learn more](#).

sort comments:

Showing comments to of (pages total).

Find this article at:

<http://www.buffalonews.com/cityregion/niagaracounty/story/881276.html>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© 2008 The Buffalo News.