

Budget Picture for Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program Remains Uncertain

The budget picture for the federal government, and the Department of Energy Oak Ridge Environmental Management Program (DOE EM), is an uncertain one. The funding for the rest of FY 2013 and for FY 2014 remain unsettled.

These issues were discussed at the February meeting of the Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) meeting. Alan Stokes, Director of the Planning and Baseline Management Division for the DOE Oak Ridge Office, talked to board members about the situation. “At this time last year we knew what our full appropriation was from Congress for all of FY 2012,” he said. “This year we only have a budget that’s been appropriated through March.

“For FY 2014, we would have known what that budget would be this time last year, but the budget has not been submitted to Congress yet.

“For FY 2015, normally we would have gotten guidance from DOE Headquarters to give us some insight on what that budget might look like by now. We haven’t gotten that yet. But all that doesn’t mean we shouldn’t or haven’t started planning for FY 2015,” he said.

The federal government, including

DOE Oak Ridge EM, is operating under a continuing resolution, which has provided funding for the first half of FY 2013. Stokes pointed out that DOE Oak Ridge EM received \$420 million in FY 2012 and had been planning for a \$421 million appropriation in FY 2013, which was the President’s request submitted to Congress in February 2012. For the first half of 2013, Oak Ridge has received \$198 million, which is \$12 million less than what had been planned for half the year. This has had some impact on work at East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) – specifically work planned for what’s left of the K-25 Building and the K-27 Building.

Stokes explained that the federal

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to the various sites in the January-February period for the fiscal year two years in the future. The sites use the guidance to develop budget requests in the January-March timeframe. During that time stakeholders like ORSSAB, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) provide input to Oak Ridge EM. Using guidance from Headquarters and input from the stakeholders, Oak Ridge EM submits its budget request between the end of March and the middle of May.

After the budget request is submitted it becomes embargoed, and only a few people are privy to what’s going on with deliberations among the sites, DOE Headquarters, and the Office of Management and

Oak Ridge EM Budget		
<small>Dollars in Millions</small>		
Funding Accounts	FY12	FY13
U233 Disposition	37	#
Waste Disposition	81	109
ETTP Safeguard and Security	21	19
ORNL/Y12 Waste Ops/S&M	74	67
Stakeholder Support	6	5
Total Defense Funding	219	200
D&D Fund – ETTP Cleanup	201	221
Total OR Budget	420	421

\$30M included in Waste Disposition

budgeting process is a two-year endeavor. Normally guidance for developing budget requests is sent

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Oak Ridge EM Budget (Continued from page 1)

Budget (OMB). Final budget requests are submitted to OMB in September. Then negotiations take place between OMB and all the other federal agencies until a budget is finally completed in January. The President delivers his budget request to Congress in February.

The immediate question is how much Oak Ridge EM will receive for the balance of FY 2013. Stokes said a worst case scenario is a 5 to 7.5 percent reduction from the FY 2012 appropriation. In anticipation of sequestration he predicted a budget allocation somewhere in the neighborhood of \$394 million. One bit of good news in all this is there still remains about \$50 million in leftover Recovery Act funds that will be used in FY 2013.

Even though many questions linger about how much money will come to Oak Ridge for cleanup work, DOE Oak Ridge EM has set priorities in planning, as Stokes mentioned. The near term priorities (2013–2015) are:

- Complete demolition of the K-25 Building
- Continue direct disposition of uranium-233 from Oak Ridge
- Process and dispose of transuranic waste
- Continue planning for a Y-12 National Security Complex mercury treatment system
- Prepare the K-27 Building for demolition

Because cleanup of the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) is a long-term project, DOE EM also has mid-term and long-term priorities. Mid-term

(2016–2026) priorities include:


- Complete the processing and disposition of remaining uranium-233
- Complete the processing and disposition of transuranic wastes from Oak Ridge
- Complete the closure of ETTP
- Build and operate the Y-12 mercury treatment system
- Begin demolition of old Y-12 mercury use facilities

Stokes said the closure of ETTP during this period will free up a significant amount of funding that can be used in other areas of Oak Ridge cleanup.

The final, long-term (2027–2043) focus of activities in Oak Ridge is the cleanup of Y-12 and Oak Ridge National Lab, he said.

Stokes concluded his presentation to the board by laying out the path forward for the remainder of FY 2013. Some of it is a bit of a waiting game as Oak Ridge anticipates remaining funding for the fiscal year and determines how to use it for maximum benefit. DOE is also waiting to see what the President's FY 2014 budget will be and how that can best be used.

Oak Ridge EM is planning a public

workshop this spring on budget development, and it will evaluate input from ORSSAB, EPA, and the state in formulating its FY 2015 request. 

The Oak Ridge EM path for creating its FY 2015 budget request includes opportunity for public involvement

- Evaluate FY 2013 funding for the full year
- Evaluate the FY 2014 President's budget
- Conduct a public workshop on budget development
- Receive recommendations from ORSSAB on the FY 2015 budget
- Evaluate prioritization input from EPA, TDEC, and ORSSAB
- Submit FY 2015 budget request to EM Headquarters

Uncertainty in DOE Cleanup Budget Will Require Coordination to Manage Negative Effects on Progress

By David Martin, ORSSAB Chair



As this issue of the *Advocate* goes to press, there is great uncertainty on what the looming federal budget cuts will

be and what effect they will have on funding for the DOE's EM program at the ORR.

We can be confident that budget cuts are coming. It is going to take a coordinated effort on the part of the DOE Oak Ridge EM, regulators and stakeholders to minimize the impact on current and future remediation projects and on the men and women who carry out this work.

Right now DOE EM is operating on a temporary six month budget. This budget covers just the first half of FY 2013 and is based on half of the FY 2012 budget. By the time this edition of the *Advocate* hits your inbox, we should at least know how changes in the federal budget affect Oak Ridge EM for the second half of 2013. This still leaves the 2014 budget in question.

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At this point it is pure speculation as to what the DOE EM budget will be for 2014. Probably when it is set, it will be near the FY 2012 level. For years the Oak Ridge EM, local governments, and citizens groups have fought for funding adequate to eliminate health and environmental threats in and around Oak Ridge and to ensure that the missions of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Y-12 National Security Complex are not impeded. Recently, the ORSSAB considered several recommendations related to the EM budget.

When further budget cuts come, missed milestones can have grave consequences. As long as contaminated areas of the ORR are susceptible to accidental releases, the program's credibility with the community and regulators is at risk. Putting off demolishing contaminated facilities means EM monies that could be used for cleanup must instead be spent on surveillance and maintenance. Over time these expenses, along with inflation, can substantially increase total cleanup costs.

To lessen the detrimental effects from possible budget cuts, DOE Oak Ridge EM has been working with DOE Headquarters, the state and the EPA to make sure what money is available will be used to best take care of EM's immediate needs. Looking to technology for help, the DOE is using a sophisticated computer program to assist with planning. The Dynamic Planning Model uses a comprehensive database of project work schedules and cost estimates to predict total cost schedules for alternate sequencing and funding scenarios.

As DOE looks at its options to respond to budget constraints, it will be asking for input from the community. One way you can help is to join with ORSSAB as we move forward. As DOE EM's main conduit for public outreach, ORSSAB is given updates and detailed reports at our monthly meetings. You can apply for appointment to the Board, but you do not have to be a member to have

your views heard. All meetings are open to the public. Our meetings are also delayed broadcast on YouTube (www.youtube.com/user/ORSSAB) and on area cable access channels. You can also become a member of one of the ORSSAB standing committees:

Environmental Management, Board Finance & Process, Public Outreach, and Stewardship. For more information, contact us at (865) 241-4583 or 241-4584, or see our website at www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab. 

Reservation Update

New EM Facility Treats Groundwater at ETTP

DOE Oak Ridge EM is operating a new facility that reduces the amount of contaminants entering Mitchell Branch, a stream at ETTP.

The Chromium Water Treatment System converts harmful chromium-6 found in groundwater into chromium-3, which is a safer form of the

and the state of Tennessee. EM took a series of actions to collect and treat the contaminated groundwater. Initially, the existing Central Neutralization Facility served as the treatment facility. However, construction of Chromium Water Treatment System allowed the EM program to shut down the older facility, a move that provided significant cost savings. The new facility allows EM to avoid equipment repairs associated with the older facility, and it reduces annual operating costs by \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million.

Currently, the new system uses two wells that pull water from the ground at a rate of 6 gallons per minute. As water is extracted from the ground, the system uses a steel-wool process that effectively strips unwanted material from the water and converts chromium-6 into chromium-3. The conversion process takes



The new Chromium Water Treatment System at ETTP converts chromium-6, which enters Mitchell Branch through groundwater, into chromium-3, a safer form of the element.

about 17 minutes from the time water is extracted until it is treated and released using a 4-mile pipeline to the Clinch River. To date, more than 1.6 million gallons of groundwater have been diverted from Mitchell Branch and successfully treated, enabling Mitchell Branch's water quality to meet regulatory standards. EM plans to install additional upgrades that will increase the system's reliability.

In 2007, EM survey teams began recording traces of chromium-6 in Mitchell Branch that exceeded water quality standards established by EPA

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Reservation Update *(Continued from page 3)*

Alexander Inn Leased to Loudon County Firm

As part of a memorandum of agreement for historic interpretation of the K-25 Building, DOE Oak Ridge put up \$500,000 to purchase and begin stabilizing the Alexander Inn as partial compensation for the demolition of the K-25 North Tower. Located near Oak

restored property will not only better serve the community by contributing higher local property taxes, but it will also retain its legacy as one of the most significant privately-owned buildings in Oak Ridge,” stated alliance officials in a recent news release. “Unfortunately, until the transaction is complete, the Alexander Inn’s future remains undetermined.”



The Alexander Inn awaits new life as an assisted living facility.

Ridge’s Jackson Square, the Alexander Inn was called the Guest House during World War II. Many Manhattan Project VIPs stayed there during the time Oak Ridge was working to enrich uranium for the first atomic bomb.

In January, the Oak Ridge Industrial Development Board approved a 10-year lease agreement with Family Pride Corp., of Loudon County. Family Pride plans to restore the inn as an assisted living facility. The industrial board will hold title to the inn, while Oak Ridge and Anderson County will receive about \$4,000 annually in property taxes.

Family Pride says work should begin in March or April and is expected to cost about \$4.8 million.

Even though an agreement has been made to renovate the inn, it still made the East Tennessee Preservation Alliance recent list of the area’s endangered structures. The organization said it has been working closely with Family Pride. “The

Y-12 Mercury Work Wraps Up

Five mercury projects at the Y-12 National Security Complex that were funded with Recovery Act money were completed in February, according to the Oak Ridge EM contractor URS/CH2M Oak Ridge (UCOR).

The projects included planning for a new water treatment system for Outfall 200 at the Y-12

National Security Complex, sampling and treatabilities studies for water and soils in the West End Mercury Area of the complex, and disposal of five mercury-contaminated tanks, which were cut up and disposed at the Nevada National Security Site.

The projects marks the start of a broad effort by DOE to ramp up efforts to address long-standing mercury contamination issues at the complex. The state and EPA have been pressing DOE in recent months to do more about the problem even though the budget situation these days is tight.


Recovery Act funding for the work was set at just over \$10 million, but UCOR performed all tasks for \$9.5 million.

Groundwater Workshop Held

The first of a series of Oak Ridge Groundwater Strategy Workshops was held January 29. The purpose was to start developing an interagency strategic approach to identify, manage, and

pursue any potential onsite and offsite groundwater public health threats and to protect and restore groundwater resources to beneficial use.

Participants included personnel from EM, UCOR, Restoration Services, TDEC, and EPA. Significant progress was made toward a common understanding of the geology and hydrology of the area and location of the contaminants of concern in the groundwater.

Several months ago, ORSSAB’s EM Committee began working with a researcher with the U.S. Geological Survey to help the committee understand how groundwater flows on the reservation and thereby determine if contamination is making its way into groundwater and where the contamination may be going. The researcher also serves as the committee’s liaison to the Groundwater Strategy Workshops. 

Snapshot in History

April - June, 1942

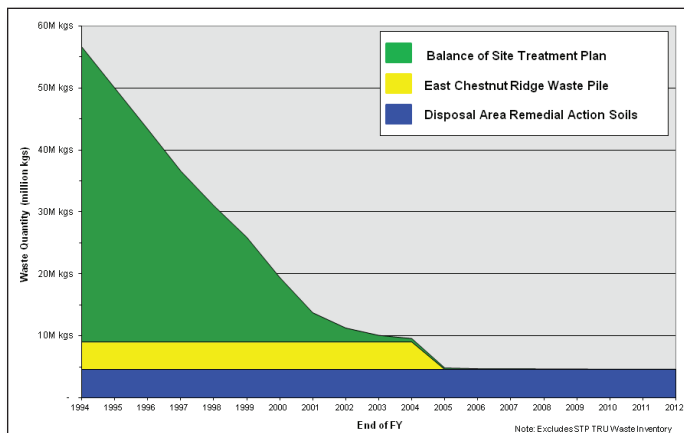
With no clear front-runner among the isotope separation and uranium-235 production processes being evaluated to produce fissionable material for a bomb, the S-1 Executive Committee recommends that the project move to the pilot plant and full production planning stage for all four processes under consideration - building one or two piles (e.g., reactors) to produce plutonium and constructing electromagnetic, centrifuge, and gaseous diffusion plants to produce uranium-235.

President Roosevelt approves the recommendation to proceed and, mindful of the need for security, makes the Army, specifically the Corps of Engineers, responsible for plant construction. The Office of Scientific Research and Development continues to direct nuclear research.

Pockets of Legacy Waste on Oak Ridge Reservation Still Need Attention

Over the last 10 years a lot of cleanup work has been completed on the ORR at ETTP, Oak Ridge National Lab, and Y-12 National Security Complex. There have been big projects like the Melton Valley remediation, and several hundred facilities at ETTP, the lab, and Y-12 have been demolished. But there are a number of smaller projects that will require attention eventually.

DOE's Joy Sager and Dave Adler talked to ORSSAB and its EM Committee about these wastes. Sager addressed the full board at its November meeting, saying there is "a diverse collection of legacy materials on the ORR. Some of it is to be disposed, but some of it is considered non-waste that may have potential for reuse."



The ORR Site Treatment Plan inventory shows a steady decline in wastes regulated by the state and EPA that are under negotiated disposition schedules.

At one time waste around the reservation was stored prior to disposal. That material, more than 1.25 million cubic yards of mixed radiological and hazardous waste, was disposed between 1994 and 2005. Sager said that currently there is no new 'bow wave' of waste being placed in storage since waste generators now dispose of waste as it is produced. She said another example of legacy waste was the more than 7,000 cylinders of uranium hexafluoride from operations at ETTP that were shipped to Ohio for disposal several years ago.

But there are still some things scattered around. At ETTP there are 40 large transformers that contain PCBs. There are also several hundred containers of low-level waste and several tons of nickel that might have possibilities for reuse.

Sager said non-waste material at ETTP includes a number of sodium shields, some of which are 11 feet in diameter. The shields were used many years ago in tests at ORNL's Tower Shielding Reactor. In 2004 there was an attempt to extract the sodium from the shields, but something went wrong that resulted in a fire. After the incident, the shields were put in storage under surveillance and will remain there until a decision is made about what to do with them.

The largest amount of legacy waste in storage is transuranic waste in several facilities near the Transuranic Waste Processing Center. The waste is being processed for eventual shipment to New Mexico. Shipments were halted in 2011, but are scheduled to resume in 2014.

The Shielded Transfer Tanks present a particular challenge. These shipping casks were used to transport radioactive material to Oak Ridge by rail from Idaho National Laboratory and DOE's Hanford site in Washington state. Adler told the EM Committee that the tanks contain material with a high curie count, and they would be a challenge to dispose of because of their size and the fact that they can't be broken down. The tanks are stored under a shed in Melton Valley.

Waste stored on the 7822-K Pad at ORNL present challenges as well.

Waste is in containers that will have to be repackaged for shipment and disposal offsite. This includes casks containing cesium that was unexpectedly discovered during cleanup of the K-770 area at ETTP. The contents of all the casks are of a higher activity than can be disposed in Oak Ridge.




Old sodium shields at ETTP and ORNL.

Adler told the EM Committee that an option for onsite disposal is to structure the waste acceptance criteria for a proposed waste disposal facility in Oak Ridge to accept the 7822-K casks.

Another large amount of waste in storage is the Disposal Area Reme-



Shielded transfer tanks are stored under a shed in Melton Valley near ORNL.

dial Action Soils. From the 1940s to the 1970s, trenches were dug in Bear Creek Valley near Y-12 to dump waste. When the trenches were full they were covered and additional liquid waste was injected to fill in spaces. But that just caused a bigger problem of an oily field around the trenches. All of that was dug up and removed to a large swimming pool-like structure that is covered for protection from the elements. 

K-25 North Tower on the Ground at Last

Only a few sections remain of what was the largest building under one roof at the time it was built. On January 23 the last parts of the North Tower of the K-25 Building at ETTP crashed to the ground. All that's left of the huge U-shaped structure are six units that made up the south end of the east wing.



Those units are contaminated with technetium-99, and when DOE's cleanup contractor UCOR finishes foaming operations of the piping and process equipment, most of the remaining contents of the building will be removed and disposed and the rest of the building will be demolished. That's expected to happen in 2014.

It's taken a little more than four years to reach this point. Demolition began on the southern end of the west wing in December 2008. Vent, purge, drain, and foaming activities had been underway for some time before that. Work was stopped, and new safety procedures were implemented when a worker was seriously injured in 2006.

There was considerable debate about possibly preserving the North Tower, or at least a portion of it. But interested parties finally settled on taking down all of the building and agreed on other arrangements for historic interpretation of what was done at the site.

Total cost to demolish K-25 will be between \$1.1 billion and \$1.5 bil-

lion—more than double the original estimate.

K-25 has been one of many demolition projects at ETTP, although by far the largest single task. Over the last 10 years many support facilities have been razed, as well as process buildings K-29 and K-33. Building K-27 will be next

and perhaps K-31, which was decontaminated and cleaned out several years ago.

Since cleanup operations began at ETTP, 374 facilities have been demolished, 1.77 million cubic yards of waste have

been disposed, and 1,400 of about 2,200 total acres at the site have been cleared for unrestricted use.

ATSDR Focus Group Discusses Public Health Assessment of Y-12 Mercury Releases

In late February, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) convened a focus group at the Oak Ridge Civic Center to review and discuss the most recent version of their *Public Health Assessment for Evaluation of Y-12 Mercury Releases*.

The document identifies the scope of the assessment as “evaluates past (1950–1990) and current (1990–2009) exposure to mercury released from the Y-12 plant to determine whether exposure-

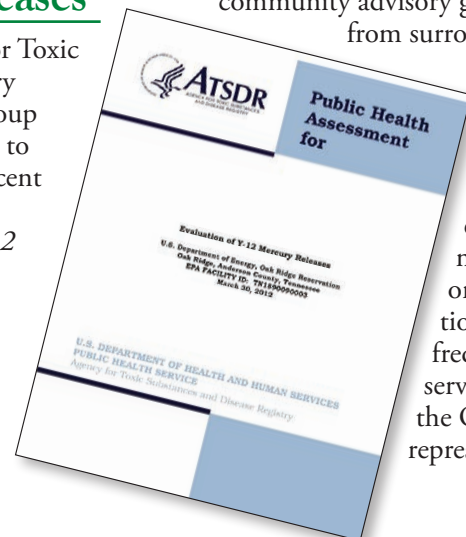
related health effects were possible in off-site residents.” This study considers the concentration of mercury found in samples taken from air, soil, surface water, sediment, and aquatic animals in areas most likely to have been affected by mercury released during the stated periods. The Scarboro and Wolf Valley neighborhoods in Oak Ridge, and areas along the East Fork Poplar Creek floodplain, Poplar Creek, Clinch River, and Watts Bar Reservoir were included in the study.

During the two-hour session, the focus group discussed overall content of the document, whether terminology used in the document was appropriate for the intended audience, whether conclusions and recommendations were clearly stated and easily understood, and whether other desirable information had been omitted. Opinions were solicited on how realistic the recommendations were and how likely those recommendations were to be implemented. More importantly, the group provided comment on whether the document adequately addressed the health concerns of the community at-large.

The 300-plus page document is available to view or download from the ATSDR website at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hac/pha/Y12ORRMercury/Y12ORRMercuryPHA33012.pdf.

The focus group included both laypersons and those with technical backgrounds, and represented the ORSSAB, Oak Ridge City government, community advisory groups

from surrounding counties, and state and federal environmental organizations. Alfreda Cook served as the ORSSAB representative.



David Hemelright's Life Experiences Provide Useful Insight into His Work with the SSAB

Board member Dave Hemelright has had a varied and interesting career that has taken him from one side of the globe to the other and all over the United States.

Dave left his home in Carbondale, Pa., in 1966 and went to Pensacola, Fla., to become a Marine Corps combat helicopter pilot. He spent a little more than a year, from 1968 to 1969, in Vietnam. After his tour he returned to Pensacola to teach the piloting skills he honed in Southeast Asia.

He left the Marine Corps in 1970 and returned to Pennsylvania and served in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard. From there he went to the other side of world as part of Operation Peace Hawk building support facilities for the Royal Saudi airbases on the Arabian Peninsula. He also helped build weather stations in the Sahara Desert for the World Meteorological Organization of the United Nations.

Armed with considerable construction and logistics experience, Dave returned to the U.S. and became the first corporate maintenance manager for the new office supply chain Office Depot. "I started with them in 1988 when they had about a dozen stores. When I left years later they had more than 100 stores."

Dave took his experience from Office Depot in energy conservation and management and lighting technologies to the Broward County

School system in Florida where he was maintenance supervisor for more than 210 facilities—the largest school district in the country at the time.

Then Dave 'retired' for a time and drove trucks around the country and eventually settled in Lenoir City in Loudon County. But in 2003 he 'unretired' and became facility director for Loudon County Schools. With his work with the schools and as a member of the Loudon County Planning



Dave Hemelright and one of his restored vehicles at his home near Lenoir City.

Commission, he was able to implement energy conservation measures and energy efficient upgrades of about \$4.5 million that paid for themselves over the years.

In recent years Dave has worked as the marketing director for the Alliance Corp., of Glasgow, Ky., a K-12 public school construction manager and general contractor. Within the last few months he has assumed marketing duties with Kaatz, Binkley, Jones, and Morris Architects, which also specializes in K-12 schools.

Dave knew about ORSSAB through his acquaintance with former board member Sondra Sarten. "Her and her husband's company did some work for

me in Loudon County. I saw in the paper that she had left the board, so I made an application.

"Having been involved with environmental cleanup of schools and working with Energy Services Coalition, I thought I'd be a good fit for the board. I didn't realize my transportation background would be an asset in understanding how waste is transported," he said. "You just can't throw stuff on a truck and send it out west.

"I thought I might have a different perspective on things. I'm not a scientist or engineer or geologist, but I have an interest in those things, and I was eager to learn."

Even before he was officially appointed to the board in 2011 he attended several meetings "so there were no real surprises when I came on.

"I have been impressed with how the board members work together," he said. "We come from different backgrounds and locations, but we all work together for a common goal. I don't see the cliques and personal agendas that I've seen in other public bodies."

Dave is currently the vice chair of the board and is a member of the EM and Public Outreach committees. "I think I've been able to contribute to Public

Outreach by helping to get more exposure for the board in Loudon County," he said.

Besides his work with ORSSAB, Dave serves on the board of directors of the Tennessee School Plant Management Association and is a past president. He was named the Tennessee School Plant Manager of the Year in 2008. He has also been on the National School Plant Management Association board.

Dave's hobby of restoring old trucks has led him to involvement in the National Street Rod Association, and he is the Regional Vice President of the American Truck Historical Society. 🍃

DOE Appoints Two New Members to ORSSAB

Robert Craig and Belinda Price were introduced as new members of the board at its March meeting. Craig and Price are filling seats vacated on the board during the past year.

Although the board is now up to the 22 member limit imposed by the ORSSAB bylaws, applications for board membership are accepted at any time to fill vacancies that may become available through mid-term membership departures. Applications can be found on the ORSSAB website at www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab.

Robert, who is an Oak Ridge resident, is retired from MSE Technology Applications, where he served as regional vice presi-



dent until March 2012. He has been involved in investigating, evaluating, and managing environmental issues on the ORR for more than 35 years.

He has Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts degrees in zoology, and a doctorate in ecology from the University of California. He is the secretary of the Y-12 Federal Credit Union Board of Directors and is a member of the Audubon Society, the World Wildlife Fund, and the National Wildlife Federation.

Belinda is a senior hydrogeologist with Alliant Corporation, where she has been employed



since October 2011. She has more than 25 years experience in environmental investigation and environmental remediation as a geologist, hydrogeologist, and task/project manager.

Belinda has a Bachelor of Science degree in geology from the University of Bristol, U.K., and a Master of Science degree in hydrogeology from the University College London, U.K. She is a Professional Geologist in the states of Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and she is a member of the Geological Society of America and the East Tennessee Geological Society. Belinda lives in Knoxville. 



Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

P.O. Box 2001, EM-90
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

ABBREVIATIONS

- DOE — Department of Energy
- EM — Environmental Management
- EPA — Environmental Protection Agency
- ETTP — East Tennessee Technology Park
- ORNL — Oak Ridge National Laboratory
- ORR — Oak Ridge Reservation
- ORSSAB — Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
- UCOR — URS/CH2M Oak Ridge, LLC
- Y-12 — Y-12 National Security Complex

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings are held at the DOE Information Center, 1 Science.Gov Way, Oak Ridge

Board Meeting

April 10, 6:00 p.m.

Committee Meetings

April 16, 5:30 p.m. – Stewardship

April 17, 5:30 p.m. – EM

