



*Many Voices Working for the Community*

# Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Advisory Board Asks DOE, Regulators to Discuss Watershed Concept**

**Oak Ridge, Tenn. - February 19, 2001** - The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board has asked the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to explain why they appear to be backpedaling on the watershed cleanup approach to cleaning up contaminated areas of the Oak Ridge Reservation.

In comments the Board submitted to DOE on its recently released proposed plan for interim control actions in Upper East Fork Poplar Creek (UEFPC), the board rebuffed all three agencies for a “breakdown of the watershed approach that has been applied successfully to Bear Creek Valley, Melton Valley, and soon to Bethel Valley but appears to have met a roadblock with regard to UEFPC and the East Tennessee Technology Park.”

According to the board’s statement, the watershed approach permits consistent cleanup goals and standards for entire watersheds, optimizes remediation efforts and cleanup resources, and facilitates a coordinated technical approach and field implementation.

The board requested that each of the three agencies “provide their specific reasons for not taking the watershed approach at UEFPC or the East Tennessee Technology Park” at a public meeting, the transcript of which the board asks be included in the project’s administrative record.

In addition to their concern with the limited scope of the proposed work, the board also took issue with the UEFPC plan for its lack of commitment to long-term stewardship of contaminated sites—an issue the group has been working on, both locally and nationally, for several years. Limiting the scope of the proposed plan could greatly complicate DOE’s ability to define the long-term stewardship requirements for UEFPC.

The board’s comments state that “Oak Ridge stakeholders cannot accept any decision that leaves waste material or residual contamination in place unless we can be assured that reliable measures are available to ensure that the remedy will remain protective of human health and the environment for as long as the waste material or residual contamination remains a threat.”

“Reliable long-term funding must be available because competent sustainable stewardship is impossible without financial support,” the comments continue. “To that end, stewardship costs must be factored into the analysis and selection of remedial actions. It is difficult to believe that DOE can so completely ignore the elements of stewardship developed in partnership with representatives of the community.”

In an effort to help DOE and the regulators make the UEFPC proposed plan and other documents more “stewardship friendly,” the board included specific language it would like to see in all future proposed plans and records of decision. Complete text of the board’s 11-page comment letter is available at its web site: <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov/em/ssab>.

The three agencies will hold a meeting on the UEFPC proposed plan dealing with mercury abatement at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 22, at the Jacobs Technical Center, 125 Broadway, in Oak Ridge.

The Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board is an independent citizens’ panel chartered in 1995 under the Federal Advisory Committee Act to advise DOE on environmental cleanup issues at its Oak Ridge Reservation. The Board is composed of up to 20 members, chosen to reflect the diversity of gender, race, occupation, and interests of persons living near the Oak Ridge Reservation.

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