

New York State Department of Health Environmental Radiation Program Environmental Radiation Surveillance Site

WEST VALLEY DEMONSTRATION PROJECT SITE (WVDP/DOE, FORMERLY NUCLEAR FUEL SERVICES) - ASHFORD, CATTARAUGUS COUNTY

The West Valley Demonstration Project site is located about 35 miles south of Buffalo. The spent nuclear fuel reprocessing facilities were constructed and operated by a private company called Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc. (NFS). The 3300-acre site is now owned by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) on behalf of New York State. The major facilities at this site are located within a central area of approximately 200 acres. They include the reprocessing plant, a spent fuel storage facility, liquid high-level radioactive waste underground storage tanks, a low-level liquid radioactive waste treatment plant and lagoons, and a five-acre disposal area for solid, high-level waste generated by the reprocessing operations. Until 1972, NFS operated the fuel reprocessing plant. This facility is now managed by the US Department of Energy (DOE), or its contractors, such as the Washington Group International and its West Valley Nuclear Services Company subsidiary, as directed by Congress in the West Valley Demonstration Project Act of 1980. In February of 1982, NFS transferred possession of the reprocessing facilities to the DOE. DOE developed and implemented a pilot project, known as the West Valley Demonstration Project, to investigate methods to encapsulate high-level radioactive wastes for permanent, off-site disposal. The demonstration project completed solidification and encapsulation (vitrification) of the high-level liquid waste in 2001. Vitrified waste is currently stored on site in the former reprocessing plant. The buildings, equipment and related materials contaminated as a result of NFS' nuclear fuel reprocessing activities will also be decontaminated as part of the demonstration project. Additional information can be found at <http://www.wv.doe.gov/>

A 15-acre commercial disposal area (the "State-Licensed Disposal Area," or SDA) regulated by New York State agencies, under delegation of authority from the NRC, accepted low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) from operations at NFS facilities and from off-site facilities. Responsibilities for maintenance of the SDA under state regulation were transferred from NFS to NYSERDA in 1983. Additional information is available at http://www.nyserda.org/programs/West_Valley/default.asp

Figure 2.2-10 shows the location of the site and some nearby sampling locations.

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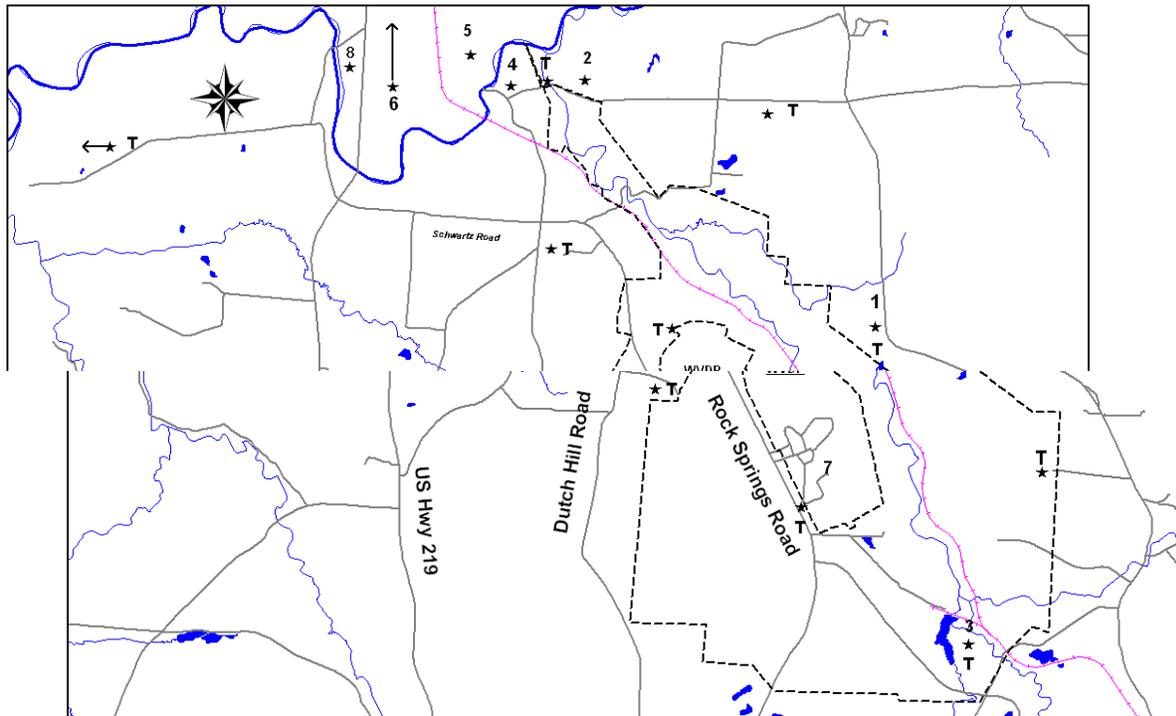


Figure 2.2-10. West Valley Demonstration Project Sampling Sites.