



# NEWS

**For Immediate Release  
November 24, 2003**

## **DOE To Hold Public Meeting on Proposed Cleanup Plan for Operable Unit III of the Monticello Mill Tailings Site**

(Grand Junction, Colorado)—The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has developed a Proposed Plan that presents the preferred remedial alternative for Operable Unit III of the Monticello Mill Tailings Site near Monticello, Utah. DOE will host a public meeting to discuss the alternatives presented in the Proposed Plan at 7:00 p.m. on December 9, 2003, at the San Juan County Courthouse, 117 South Main Street, in Monticello.

Operable Unit III encompasses contaminated surface water and ground water at and hydraulically downgradient of the former Monticello millsite. Mill tailings, the sandy by-products of uranium and vanadium ore milling, were transported to downstream areas by water in Montezuma Creek, which flows through the millsite property. In addition, radioactive and nonradioactive contaminants leached from the on-site tailings into the underlying ground water and have migrated beneath adjacent properties.

DOE believes that monitored natural attenuation with institutional controls provides the best balance of tradeoffs among the cleanup alternatives being considered with respect to the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) evaluation criteria. Natural attenuation is the decrease in contaminant concentrations in the ground water over time through the influx of clean water and ground water movement. Ground water samples will be collected and analyzed to track the natural reduction of contaminant concentrations. Institutional controls protect public health and the environment by preventing installation or use of wells in the contaminated ground water.

The public is encouraged to review and comment on the alternatives being considered for Operable Unit III. Written public comments will be accepted on the Proposed Plan during a

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45-day public comment period: December 1, 2003, through January 15, 2004. Comments must be postmarked by January 15, 2004. Comments will also be accepted by email through January 15, 2004. Oral and written comments will also be accepted at the public meeting on December 9. Submit comments to

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Grand Junction, CO 81503  
Email: [Monticello\\_comments@gjo.doe.gov](mailto:Monticello_comments@gjo.doe.gov)  
Telephone: (970) 248-6037

All comments and DOE's response to each comment will be part of the responsiveness summary in the Record of Decision, which is the document that will outline the Operable Unit III cleanup plan. The preferred alternative can change in response to public comments or new information. Members of the Federal Facilities Agreement for the Monticello Mill Tailings Site (DOE, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Utah Department of Environmental Quality) will cooperatively make the final decision for Operable Unit III. It is anticipated that the Record of Decision will be signed by April 2004.

A copy of the Proposed Plan, the Remedial Investigation Addendum/Focused Feasibility Study, and other documents related to Operable Unit III of the Monticello Mill Tailings Site are available for review at the following locations:

Monticello Repository Office  
7031 South Highway 191  
Monticello, UT 84535  
(435) 587-2098

U.S. Department of Energy  
Public Reading Room  
2597 B  $\frac{3}{4}$  Road  
Grand Junction, CO 81503  
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