Background

The Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) is a large, engineered landfill in the center of the Hanford Site for the disposal of low-level radioactive, hazardous and mixed wastes generated from Hanford cleanup activities. ERDF is composed of ten large disposal cells. The liner system inside the cells protects the environment from the contents inside.

Mission

ERDF is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The facility is designed to keep the environment safe by isolating waste and leachate (rain and dust-suppression water in contact with the waste) from the environment.

On average, ERDF receives 14,000 to 15,000 tons of waste each month. ERDF allows cleanup to progress across the 586-square-mile Hanford Site by providing a safe and compliant place to dispose of contaminated items.

Progress

- Approximately 18 million tons of waste have been disposed of at ERDF.
- ERDF drivers who pick up waste and deliver it to the landfill logged more than 29 million miles since the facility began accepting waste.
- ERDF has an excellent safety record with only one lost-time accident since 1996.

Future

ERDF is designed to be expanded as needed, and will vertically expand as it continues to accept Hanford Site waste. Vertical expansion is a safe, cost-effective method to increase ERDF capacity for waste material. It allows ERDF to continue full operations, thus avoiding potential cleanup delays across the Hanford Site. A permanent cap will ultimately cover the entire facility. Meanwhile, a temporary cap is placed over the cells as they are filled.

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Containers are safely filled with waste to be disposed of at ERDF.

ERDF containers are weighed and characterized to track contents of waste.

Workers safely dispose of waste at ERDF.

Efficiency

The on-site landfill keeps Hanford waste on the central plateau of the Hanford Site and away from the Columbia River, major roads and the general public. It avoids costs associated with off-site transportation and disposal. ERDF disposal costs are significantly below those of other disposal facilities, including municipal landfills.

In August 2018