WELCOME to the Near-Field Environment (NFE) Group of the OCRWM Lead Laboratory for Repository Systems. On Tuesday, October 3 an all hands meeting was held in Las Vegas to present some Lead Lab kickoff information to Las Vegas-based employees. This e-mail summarizes that general information, primarily for the benefit of non-Las Vegas-based personnel, and provides some kickoff information regarding the NFE Group. In the next week or two I hope to be able to visit in person with all of the non-Las Vegas personnel.

Our mandate as a part of the Lead Lab organization is to produce a credible (i.e., technically competent) and defensible (i.e., compliant with 10 CFR 63 and traceable) License Application on or before June 30, 2008 (i.e., on schedule). This translates to a NFE scope of work that consists of (a) producing AMRs, (b) interfacing with and providing feeds to TSPA, and (c) supporting SAR Section development. The priorities, as emphasized by OCRWM Director Ward Sproat during his visit to SNL on September 21-22, are as follows:

Schedule – If we do not meet the June 30 deadline, "we are all out of a job". Therefore, the short term focus for NFE is on the AMR schedules. All AMRs that feed TSPA must meet the following milestone dates:

December 15, 2006 – Form and Function to TSPA. This coincides with completion of the draft revision of the AMR (check copy).

March 29, 2007 – Preliminary DTN to TSPA. This coincides with completion of the checking phase of the AMR.

May 31, 2007 – Final DTN to TSPA. This coincides with completion and approval of the AMR.

Any slips in schedule will be recovered by cutting scope. There is no allowance for not meeting schedule.

Regulatory Compliance – All of our AMRs will be traceable. Given a choice between a complex, state-of-the-art technical approach that is difficult to validate and/or defend and a simple approach that can be validated and defended with greater traceability. The simpler approach is preferred.

"There may be holes in our workscope, but there cannot be holes in our QA"

Technical Competency – The technical basis will be consistent with the Annual Work Plans (AWPs) as supported by the TWPs. No work, not already identified in TWPs, is necessary. Our mandate is to produce competent, defensible, and traceable work, not unnecessarily complex state-of-the-art analyses. Where greater complexity causes schedule slips, scope will be cut and/or alternative approaches will be considered.

Where greater complexity becomes necessary (i.e., if NRC thinks there are holes in our workscope), it can be introduced during License Defense.

Attached is an organizational chart for NFE. This organization is responsible for 20 Work Packages (i.e., about 20 AMRs), several TSPA feeds, and 3 SAR Sections. This org chart shows all personnel expected to contribute, at various locations, some full-time, some part-time. Those of you currently working on AMRs know who you are, others, who may not be contributing to an NFE AMR right now, will be contacted in the next few days to discuss your role (e.g., assistant author, checker, etc.).

My responsibility, as NFE Manager, is to ensure that the 3 priorities – schedule, defensibility, credibility – in that order, are satisfied. I will get involved in a technical sense only enough to be able to balance those priorities. Given the past successes of the NFE workforce, my main objective is simply to not ruin a good thing.

Detailed technical direction, integration, and decisions about necessary work scope will be provided by the two Technical Leads, Pat Brady (Chemistry) and Ernie Hardin (Thermal Hydrology). The technical areas in parentheses are just for general guidance, there will be several areas/AMRs where they overlap.

Administrative Support (listed as TBD on the org chart) will be provided by Arlene Nery and Patti Weigand.

ACTION ITEMS FOR EACH OF YOU

- Take Annual GET Training (through BSC) by October 31. This training introduces 8 new Lead Lab science procedures (SCI-PRO-xxx).
- Read the 8 SCI-PRO procedures (available on CDIS). They are not significantly changed from the previous BSC procedures.
- Use Lotus Notes for e-mail communication wherever possible. This helps to satisfy LSN requirements. If you must use a different system, you must cc "Lead_Lab@notes.ymp.gov.

That's all for now. Looking forward to working with you all

Geoff Freeze