

Uranium Survey Will Help Navajos

EPA radiation monitoring experts have started work to determine whether the Navajo Indians can safely make use of abandoned buildings at old uranium ore-milling sites on Indian lands.

The Navajos want to use the buildings—most of which are in good condition with plumbing and electrical services intact—for schools and workshops. The hitch is the structures are close to or built on piles of uranium mill “tailings,” a mining waste that looks like fine sand and is slightly radioactive.

Tribal leaders asked EPA, the Atomic Energy Commission, and the Indian Health Service for assistance, and the three agencies are cooperating in a field study by the Las Vegas facility of the Office of Radiation Programs.

A mill site near Mexican Hat, Utah, is being examined first, according to Jon Yeagley of the Region VIII Office, Denver. The monitoring team has spent about 10 days at the site, gathering data on radiation types and levels and assessing possible methods of controlling the hazard. The complete analysis, including an engineering evaluation and a cost estimate, will take several months, Yeagley said, and a report will be given the Navajo Tribal Council in the fall.

3 Regions Involved

There are four abandoned uranium mines on Navajo land in three states, Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. Since each state is in a different Federal Region, EPA radiation representatives from Region VI, Douglas Keefer, and Region IX, James Channell, will take part in the project, as well as health and radiation agencies of the three States. The monitoring team from



Tom Sell, left, and Dan Lambdin use stakes to mark contours of radioactivity blown from tailings pile, at Shiprock, N.M.

NERC-Las Vegas will be headed by Joseph Hans and will include Gregory Eadie, Thomas Horton, Donald Lambdin, Bruce Mann, William Moore, Thomas Sell, Robert Snelling, and Jack Thrall.

Uranium mill tailings were not recognized as a radiation hazard until several years ago, long after many mines had stopped production. In Grand Junction, Colo., tailings were used as fill dirt under houses, schools, and commercial buildings. Colorado has started a multi-million-dollar corrective program—with 3-to-1 Federal aid—using a range of remedial measures, according to types of radiation found in individual buildings. In some cases, the tailings have to be dug out and replaced.

In Salt Lake City last year a

private developer wanted to build an auto race track on a 100-acre site containing 1.7 million tons of tailings. The Office of Radiation Programs recommended to the State of Utah that no structures be built on the tailings pile and warned that occupancy of buildings within half a mile might be hazardous.

However, the tailings occupy land of great potential value to the expanding city, value which could be realized if a way were found to clean up or seal off the tailings.

General Survey Urged

The kind of study under way at Mexican Hat is essentially what Dr. William D. Rowe, deputy assistant administrator for radiation programs, advocated at a congressional hearing March 12 for about 20 known tailings piles at

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Field Tests Set This Summer On Poisoning of Wildlife

The first comprehensive field studies of the effects of rodent poisoning on desirable wildlife will be sponsored this year by EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs.

The studies will be done by the Interior Department's Bureau of Sports Fisheries and Wildlife in the Rocky Mountains, under an interagency agreement with EPA. Richard Tucker is EPA project officer and Ivan Dodson of the Region VIII Office, Denver, will help in overseeing the work, which is expected to take 22 months.

Bureau biologists will use two kinds of compounds—"1080" (sodium monofluorate) and strychnine—both of which are registered for use against rodents such as rats, mice, moles and gophers.

Such poisons are opposed by many environmentalists, who contend that desirable "non-target" animals and birds may be killed by eating the poisoned baits directly or by eating the rodent victims.

EPA's laboratory studies have shown that such unintentional poisoning is possible, but reliable information on the extent of such poisoning under field conditions does not exist. A series of informal

hearings last fall on whether to continue or cancel the registration of these rodenticides yielded little "hard, scientific information," said Tucker.

The Bureau's study will attempt to answer three questions, he said: (1) Can field use of compound 1080 for rodent control kill other wildlife? (2) What are the relative effects of ground or aerial application of the compound? and (3) Can grain baited with strychnine in the customary manner kill desirable wildlife?

Other studies are planned on the field use of cyanide compounds, which are also registered for use against rodent pests.

Some of the information obtained may possibly be applied to the problem of controlling predators, larger carnivorous animals like the coyote, wolf, and bobcat, for which these poisons and poisoned bait cannot legally be used.

However, EPA has given permission for limited tests of a cyanide spring-gun device to control coyotes on certain private lands in Texas. Evidence of the effect of this device on other wildlife will be studied carefully before any further relaxation of the ban on predator poisoning.

Lighting, Heating, Cooling Policies Will Save Energy at EPA Facilities

New measures to save energy at EPA installations were announced recently by Deputy Assistant Administrator Howard M. Messner. They have been put into effect at Agency buildings in Washington and are recommended for all regional offices, research centers, and field laboratories using Government-owned or -leased space.

The guidelines reduce lighting and heating levels and raise cooling levels as follows:

Lighting—no more than 50 foot-candles at work stations, 30 foot-candles in work areas, and 10 foot-candles in nonworking areas; elimination of all exterior and off-

hour lighting except that necessary for safety and security.

Cooling—not lower than 80 to 82 degrees during working hours.

Heating—thermostats set to maintain 65 to 68 degrees during working hours and 55 degrees at other times. Window draperies and blinds should be opened to augment heating on sunny days and closed to cut heat losses on cloudy days and at night. Portable and threshold heaters are banned.

Employee unions having exclusive recognition should be consulted before local managers put these rules into effect, Messner said.



Elbert C. Tabor

Scientist at RTP Wins Gold Medal

Elbert C. Tabor, assistant director and senior technical advisor at the Quality Assurance and Environmental Monitoring Laboratory, NERC-Research Triangle Park, was recently awarded an EPA Gold Medal for distinguished service and for scientific contributions to air quality monitoring.

A 27-year veteran in the Federal service, Tabor has been called the "father of air pollution monitoring." He was the first chief of the National Air Sampling Network when it was established in 1954 in one of EPA's predecessor agencies. Under his general direction a nationwide network of air sampling stations was developed. These have grown in size and sophistication over the last two decades and now provide most of the background data for decisions by Federal, State, and local governments concerning air pollution control.

The medal was presented by Dr. Jack Thompson, NERC deputy director, at a dinner in Tabor's honor, in Raleigh. Tabor has held several offices in the Air Pollution Control Association and written many technical papers in this field. He is a member of the American Chemical Society and the Society of Applied Spectroscopy.

Air, Water Programs Are Separated

EPA's air and water programs have been separated under a reorganization announced April 10 by Administrator Russell E. Train.

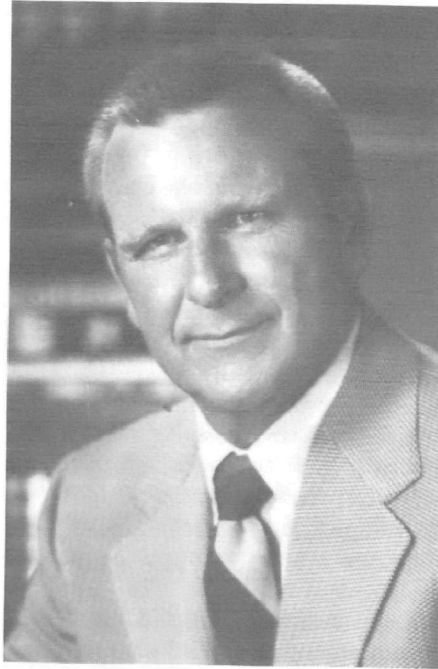
Under the new alignment—which Train said in January he was planning to make—there are two offices, each headed by an assistant administrator: the Office of Water and Hazardous Materials and the Office of Air and Waste Management.

The former includes Water Planning and Standards, Water Program Operations, Pesticides, and Toxic Substances. The latter includes Air Quality Planning and Standards, Mobile Source Pollution, Noise Abatement and Control, Radiation Programs, and Solid Waste Management Programs.

The names of the nine program offices have not been changed, and each is still headed by its deputy assistant administrator.

Train appointed James L. Agee, regional administrator for Region X, Seattle, as acting assistant administrator for water and hazardous materials and Roger Strelow as acting assistant administrator for air and waste management.

"These changes, coupled with the knowledge and leadership which these men bring to their positions," Train said, "will improve our capacity to deal with environmental

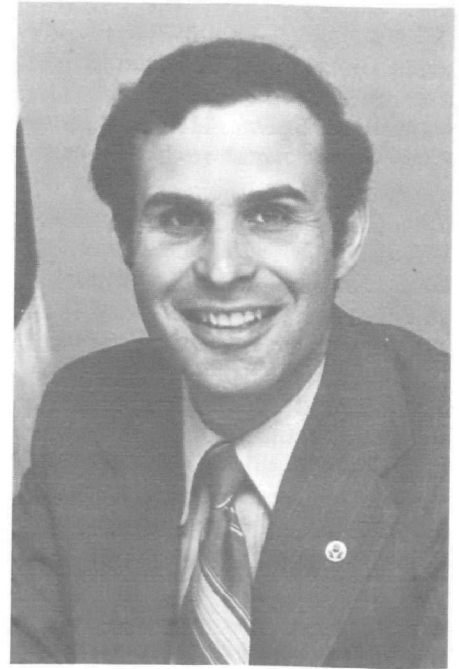


James L. Agee

problems."

Agee has been regional administrator since 1970, and before then had served ten years in EPA's predecessor agencies holding senior staff posts in water pollution control. He is an officer in the Public Health Service and holds a B.S. in sanitary engineering from Oregon State University and an M.S. from Harvard University.

Strelow was executive assistant to Train before being named acting



Roger Strelow

assistant administrator for air and water programs in January. Before joining EPA he had been staff director of the Council on Environmental Quality and an assistant to the secretary and director of the Office of Environmental Affairs in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. He is a graduate of Principia College, Elmhurst, Ill., and earned a law degree at the University of California.

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abandoned uranium mill sites in the West.

Rowe said EPA opposed action now on a bill sponsored by Sen. Frank Moss of Utah to provide Federal aid for the study and cleanup of the Salt Lake City pile. More should be learned about remedial actions and costs, Rowe said, not only for Salt Lake City but also for other sites, so that any legislation would apply to all such sites. An AEC spokesman gave similar testimony.

The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy is expected to approve a two-phase program, proposed by AEC, under which EPA and AEC would:

- Make a preliminary survey of all abandoned tailings piles to define the problems, and
- Follow up with field studies, engineering evaluations, and cost estimates for any remedial action necessary at each pile.

Thereafter, a general bill for joint Federal-State remedial action on all tailings piles may be proposed.

EPA's Largest Computer Is Installed in North Carolina

EPA's largest computer facility started operations last month in Research Triangle Park, N.C. The \$4.8-million Univac 1110 computer system is the largest such facility in the southeastern States.

Dr. Burton Levy, director of administration, said the new unit will accommodate the computing and data storage needs of more than 100 scientists at NERC-RTP and will also serve the Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards and the Office of Administration.

"Environmental research depends upon prompt, accurate processing of data," he said. "As EPA's North Carolina research operations have grown in the past two years, its computer needs have grown correspondingly, exceeding the capacity of its former computer system."

Harold Sauls, director of the Data Processing Division, said the Univac 1110 system will increase the speed and expand the division's data handling capacity more than 12-fold. It will be operated seven days a week

on two or more shifts a day.

The expanded computer operation in North Carolina will provide a larger data capacity for EPA's two air pollution monitoring programs, the National Emissions Data Base (NEDS) and the Storage and Retrieval of Air Quality Data (SARQAD); increased use of mathematical diffusion and prediction modeling studies; additional statistical and correlation capacity for human health effects studies; and increased "memory" capacity for the Air Pollution Technical Information Center's bibliography and abstracts.

The new system will provide faster turn-around service for users, increased terminal plug-in capacity for remote users, and a greater flexibility to accommodate future needs.

It can handle operator instructions in billionths of a second, permitting a multiple programming capacity of millions of instructions per second. It replaces an IBM 360/50 system.

60 From Region II Win Service Pins

Sixty employees at EPA's Region II office in New York were honored recently for government service totaling about a thousand years.

Gerald M. Hansler, regional administrator, presented pins and certificates to ten employees having 30 or more years of service; 19 having 20 years or more, and 31 having served for 10 years.

The award for the longest individual service—34 years—went to Julian Grossman, grants administrator, who began in 1940 as an accountant at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. By 1966 he had risen to civilian-in-charge of the largest data processing system in New York City. That year Grossman transferred to the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration, one of EPA's predecessor agencies.

The awards ceremony was the first in the New York Regional Office, accounting for the large number of recipients.

Similar presentations are scheduled for Region II field offices at Edison, N.J.; Rochester, N.Y., and San Juan, P.R. Employees at these installations will get awards representing 980 years of service.

Toastmasters Seek Members

About 24 men and women at EPA's Washington headquarters meet every Tuesday noon to give, and listen to, short speeches.

They constitute a new chapter of the Toastmasters' Club, whose purpose is to improve its members' public speaking abilities. At each session in conference room 3805, two or three persons give formal talks lasting 5 to 7 minutes. Each speech is evaluated by another member, and the evaluators are also evaluated.

"It's a lot of fun for a very little investment of time and effort," says John Settle, one of the organizers, "and most of us have become better speakers already." The club is looking for about a dozen additional members. Interested persons should call Settle (ext. 58108) or Nina Dougherty (ext. 64567).



Alvin L. Alm, assistant administrator for planning and management, cuts the ribbon on the Agency's big new computer system at Research Triangle Park, while Harold Sauls, director, Data Processing Division, lends a hand.

Group Weighs Vinyl Chloride Peril

A 21-member task force representing many components of EPA has been named to assess the possible danger—to human health and to the environment—of vinyl chloride, a gas sometimes used as the pressurized propellant for pesticides, and of a widely used plastic made from the gas.

Administrator Russell E. Train suspended from further sale all pesticides containing vinyl chloride for use in enclosed areas and ordered their recall from stores and distributors.

Vinyl chloride, a synthetic organic compound containing carbon, hydrogen, and chlorine, is suspected as being a causative factor in the deaths of 12 plastics plant workers from a rare form of liver cancer. The gas is used to produce polyvinyl chloride, a common plastic material. In aerosol cans the gas has always been regarded as an inert ingredient, a carrier for the pesticide.

Although the toxicity, if any, of vinyl chloride in ambient air is not

known, Train said, "the link between the gas and the cancer is suspected strongly enough to make it prudent public policy to ban further use of these products."

Glenn E. Schweitzer, director of the Office of Toxic Substances, heads the task force, which will review all available data on toxicity, measure levels of vinyl chloride in air and water near plastics plants, and investigate the ecological effects and the impact of various methods of disposal.

The task force has met with various environmental and consumer groups and with other interested Federal agencies: the Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare; Labor; Commerce; the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Council on Environmental Quality.

The group plans to finish its work and report by the end of June, Schweitzer said. Preliminary measurements of vinyl chloride levels in air and water in the vicinity of the B.F. Goodrich plastics plant in

Louisville, Ky., have already been made by EPA experts in Region IV, under George Moein, hazardous materials control officer.

Task force members include Leslye Arsht, Public Affairs, Nancy Beach, Toxic Substances; David Becker, Water Programs Operations; J. Wesley Clayton Jr. and Henry Enos, Research and Development; Joel Jacknow, Planning and Management; Bryan LaPlante, Office of Legislation; Pope Lawrence, Federal Activities; George Marienthal, Regional Liaison; George Moein, Region IV, Kansas City; William Musser and John Nardella, Water Planning and Standards; Vaun Newill, Office of the Administrator; Lester Otte, Solid Waste Management; Will Reid, Enforcement; John Ritch, Pesticides; Richard Rhoden and Frank Scaringelli, Air Quality Planning and Standards; Oscar Ramirez, Region VI, Dallas; and William Upholt, Hazardous Materials Control.

Women Urged to Combat Discrimination

For employers to hold women back in status or pay because they are women is not only inhuman and wasteful, it's illegal, James Robinson, senior budget examiner in the Office of Management and Budget, told a recent conference in Dallas on "Today's Challenges for Women in Government."

The conference, chaired by Diana Dutton, assistant regional counsel for EPA's Region VI, was the second national meeting to be sponsored by the Federal Executive Board's Women's Program. The Dallas-Fort Worth FEB was host for more than 100 women and men executives from Federal, State, and local governments.

Arthur W. Busch, EPA regional administrator and chairman of the Southwest Federal Regional Council, greeted the conferees at the opening of the three-day meeting.

Robinson, a keynote speaker, said "occupational segregation,"—not

allowing women to work in certain jobs because of their sex—is still a real roadblock for women, although it is generally illegal. But he said women are not making full use of existing rules against sexual discrimination.

"To bring about change," he advised, "women should know and utilize the system, counteract unfriendly acts and opinions, and learn to marshal the facts and statistics on each disputed case."

The greatest impact of the women's movement will be to improve the human condition, he said.

Several projects involving EPA regional leaders were reported at the conference. For example, Cincinnati FEB women had put on a Career Day program for 200 managers, heads of agencies and personnel departments under the title, "It's Your Move." Delores Platt, women's

program coordinator for NERC-Cincinnati, was an activist in this program, and Charlie K. Swift, director of EPA's Woman's Programs Division in Washington, was a speaker.

The Federal agencies in Region VI reported on six one-day conferences for GS-1 through GS-7 employees. More than 800 persons were involved in "How to Move Up" counseling sessions.

The Denver FEB Women's Program held career counseling sessions for 340 GS-8 and below employees, sessions which lasted three days and were conducted by a management institute under contract.

Other EPA representatives at the Dallas meeting included Ruth Sasaki, Region V, Chicago; Pat Allbright, Region VI, Dallas; and Kate Stahl, Women's Programs Division, Washington.

'Coughing' Fish May Spot Pollution

Polluted water makes some fish "cough" in much the same way polluted air makes people cough, according to EPA's National Water Quality Laboratory at Duluth, Minn. These fish coughs may some day be used to monitor water quality in lakes and streams.

Robert A. Drummond, aquatic biologist in charge, said the fish-coughing study was begun more than two years ago as part of the laboratory's basic investigation of how pollutants affect freshwater fish.

Clearing the Gills

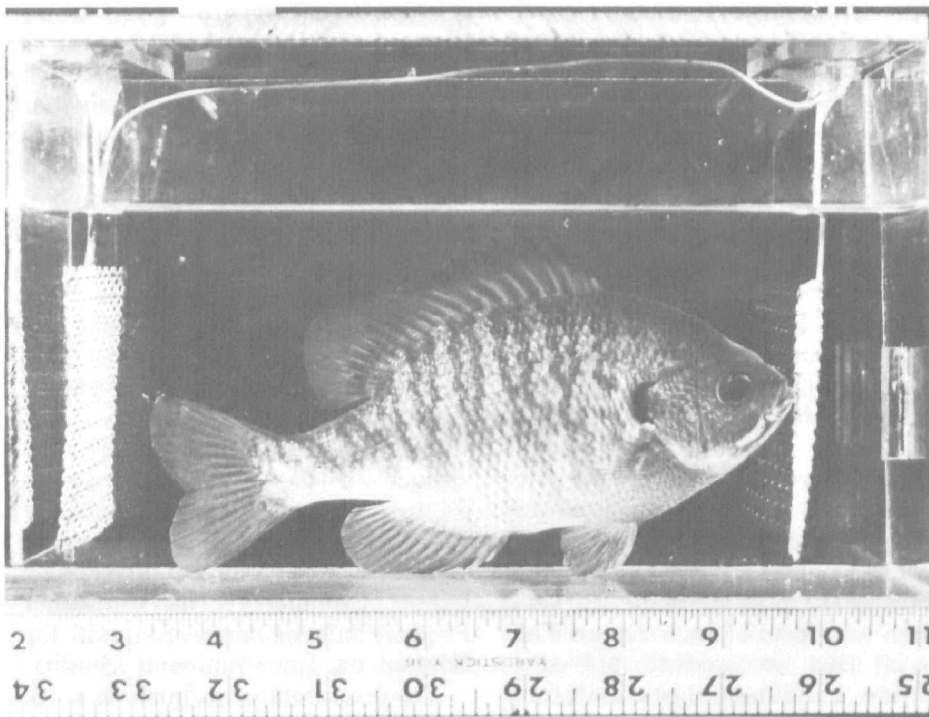
When a fish coughs, it clears its gills of debris in a manner analogous to a person's coughing to clear his throat. But the Duluth scientists do not measure the gill clearing sound, if any. They detect minute electrical signals generated by the gill muscles and record them on apparatus similar to a lie detector or an electrocardiogram.

Normal gill action is a continuous rhythm, punctuated at regular intervals by a "cough" that sends the recording pen in several rapid swings to form a heavy line on the chart. Such coughing is natural in bluegill, sunfish, fathead minnow, trout, and salmon, Drummond said. "We don't yet know whether all other species cough, but we will try to answer this question in later tests."

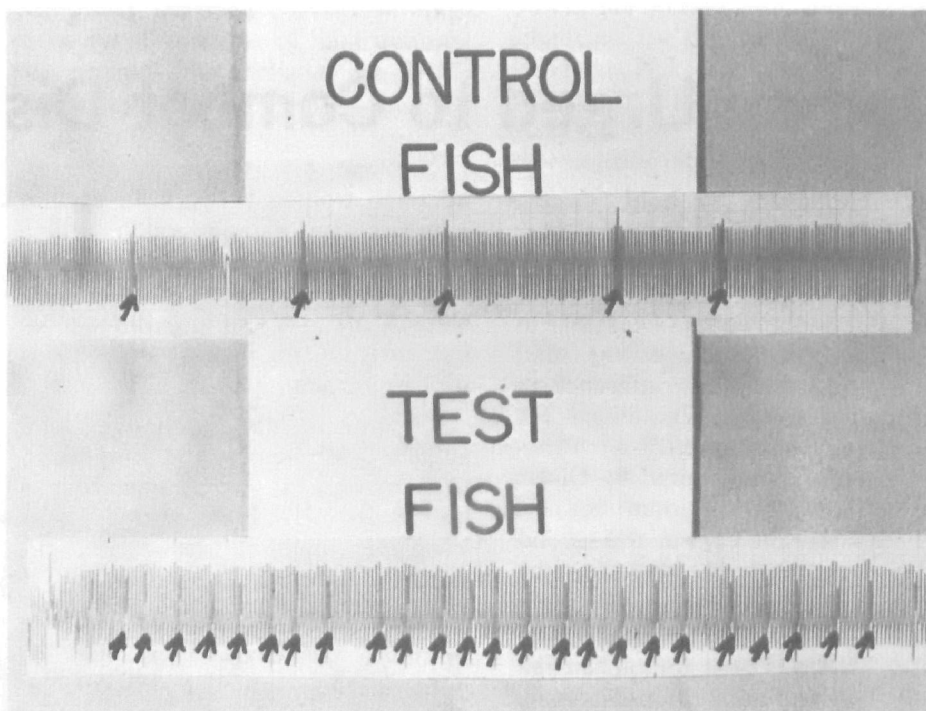
Coughs Rise Sharply

When pollutants are added to the water the number of coughs per minute rises sharply. In tests with copper and mercury, Drummond and his co-workers found the levels that speeded up coughing were about the same as those which other studies had shown to be damaging to fish growth and reproduction.

"We are now looking at the short-term effects of 10 heavy metals and pesticides," said Drummond, "to compare the cough-test results with already determined long-term effects. If the comparisons are close, we feel the cough frequency test may be valid for other chemicals.



Seven-inch bluegill swims placidly in test tank between sensitive electrodes that detect tiny, rhythmic electrical signals from its gill muscles.



Five-minute strip charts record the "coughing" signals (rapid fluctuations that make a thick line) about once a minute for the control fish in clean water and five times as frequently for the test fish in polluted water.

"Ultimately, we may have the beginning of a new method of keeping tabs on wastes entering lakes and streams from sewage

treatment plants and industry. A sudden increase in fish coughs in a given body of water could trigger an alarm."

EPA Defines the Noise Levels Required for Health, Welfare

Noise levels needed to protect health and welfare were defined last month by the Office of Noise Abatement and Control after almost a year of study in cooperation with many other Federal agencies and scores of expert consultants.

The final technical report defines 70 decibels as the maximum 24-hour exposure level needed to protect humans from hearing loss over a lifetime. (A decibel is a physical measure of sound, and 70 decibels is about equivalent to freeway traffic heard from a distance of 100 feet.)

To prevent annoyance and interference with normal human activity, an 8-hour exposure averaging 55 decibels (light auto traffic 100 feet away) was recommended for outdoors and 45 decibels (a quiet living room) for indoors.

The report, "Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety," will be published soon by the Government Printing Office.

The first rough draft of the document was made almost a year ago by the Air Force Medical

Research Laboratory at Dayton, Ohio, under an interagency agreement. It was reviewed by more than 30 persons representing various scientific and environmental groups and the National Academy of Sciences, and redone at the Dayton laboratory.

Alice Suter edited the final report. Joseph Flanagan, of the Noise Abatement Office, said: "We had inputs from almost everybody, including the Departments of HEW, Commerce, Transportation, and Labor; the National Academy of Sciences; various environmental and professional groups; and more than 40 individual reviewers."

The defined levels are not standards. They are intended—with the mass of technical data and references—to help State and local governments set standards for noise. Such standards would take account of local conditions and problems, the means available for abatement, and judgments concerning costs and benefits.

The report deals only with available scientific evidence of the effects of noise on health and welfare.

Defense Seeks EPA Advice On Disposing of DDT Stocks

The Department of Defense recently sought the advice of EPA on how it can dispose of 100 million pounds of pesticides, mostly DDT.

The military stocks of DDT—banned by EPA for more than two years for all but a few special uses in the United States—are being held by various Defense agencies, which are seeking to dispose of them in a legal and inexpensive way.

Eight EPA officials at the interagency conference gave informal approval of the Defense Department's plan to export the pesticide to foreign nations that need

it for controlling disease-carrying insects. These nations include many African, Middle Eastern, and Asian countries, including Taiwan and the Philippines. The State Department's Agency for International Development (AID) would assist in disposing of the excess DDT stocks, which exist in a score of different formulations.

Harry Trask of the Office of Solid Waste Management Programs, said Defense would follow the procedures for packaging and transport required in the Federal Insecticide,

SHE HELPED GET HER TOWN \$100,500 CHECK

It isn't often that a Federal civil servant—all in the line of duty—gets to help give her home town a check for more than \$100,000.

That thrill came recently to Mary C. Leyland, grants administration chief in EPA's Region II, New York.

Mrs. Leyland's office processed more than \$624 million in reimbursements to local governments in Region II for sewage plant construction work done before 1972. Among them was \$100,500 to Hoosick Falls, a village of about 4,000 people in upstate New York near the Vermont border.

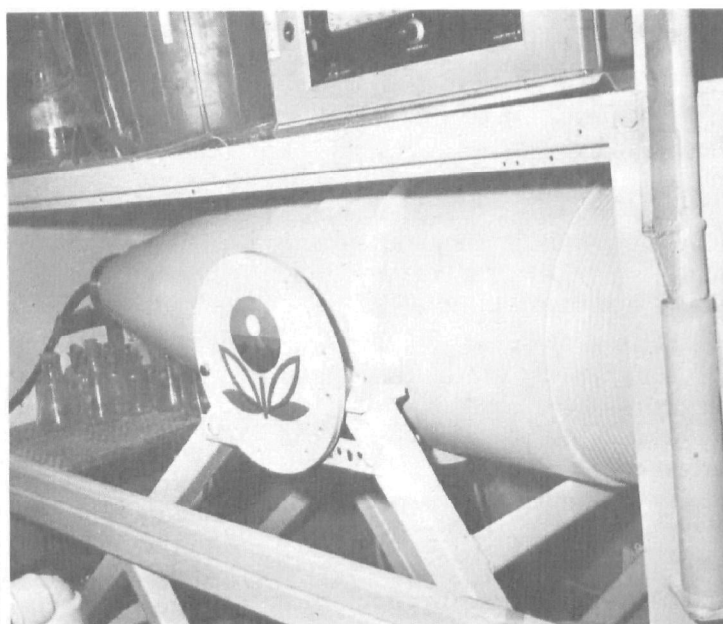
As Mary Cahill, Mrs. Leyland grew up in Hoosick Falls and was a schoolmate of the present mayor, Richard A. Severson, who had corresponded with her over the progress of the village's reimbursement for part of the cost of its sewage plant, pumping station, and interceptor.

When the funds came through, Don Bliss, acting director of public affairs, had a photo taken of Mrs. Leyland, with Deputy Regional Administrator Eric Outwater signing the check. The Standard-Press, Hoosick Falls weekly newspaper, printed the photo and a story about Mrs. Leyland's happy coincidence.

Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, and that AID would certify the need and willingness of the importing countries. Final procedures were published by EPA in the Federal Register for May 1.

Other EPA people at the conference were Henry Thomas, Hazardous Materials Control; Charles Sell and Pope Lawrence, Federal Activities; William Hoffman, Pesticide Programs; John Neylan, Pesticides Enforcement; and Anson Keller and George Robertson, Office of General Counsel.

Surplus Navy Shell Is Now Lab Apparatus



Battleship's big shell, left, now serves as a deep sea simulation chamber, right, at NERC-Corvallis.

A surplus 16-inch projectile for a Navy battleship's biggest gun has been recruited for peacetime duty at EPA's Northwest Environmental Research Laboratory, Corvallis, Ore.

The surplus projectile, minus its explosives and fuse, was converted to a pressure chamber to help EPA scientists study what happens to sewage sludge dumped into the ocean.

William P. Muellenhoff, an Oregon State University graduate student who has been conducting research for EPA, was responsible for converting the heavy steel shell into the principal component of a system to simulate deep sea

conditions. Last year Moellenhoff lived for a week in an underwater laboratory on the Atlantic Ocean floor near Grand Bahama Island doing studies on sludge dispersal in shallow water.

The deep sea simulator permits Muellenhoff to create in the laboratory the pressures encountered on the ocean bottom, up to 10,000 pounds per square inch, equivalent to a depth of nearly 4,500 feet. Samples of sludge are placed in the casing, the chamber is closed and natural seawater under high pressure is pumped slowly through it. Both temperature and pressure can be controlled and the effects of bacteria and other forms of sea-

bottom life on the decomposition of the sludge can be measured.

The simulator was built "at relatively low cost," Muellenhoff said. "I started with the surplus projectile casing, an air-hydraulic pump from a State surplus facility, two unused aquariums from a storage shelf, and an existing temperature-controlled room in the laboratory." Machining and modifications to the shell and purchase of various items of equipment cost about \$2,000.

Muellenhoff's experiments will continue until this summer, when he will present some of his research results as a doctoral dissertation in civil engineering at Oregon State.

TAPED PROGRAMS EXPLAIN EPA ON RADIO AND TV

Stop, look, and listen for two broadcast media features from the Office of Public Affairs.

On radio, a series of short, taped "spots" are being distributed to about 1,000 commercial stations throughout the country. Conducted by Anne Blair, they feature interviews with Agency experts on a variety of environmental problems. Some last 4 1/2 minutes and others 90 seconds.

Programs distributed so far include Dr. Alvin F. Meyer on

noise pollution, Arsen Darnay on trash and the consumer, Eric Stork on "You and Your Car," and John R. Quarles Jr. on air pollution and public utilities.

Future releases will cover pesticides, low-lead gasoline, and water pollution. All these tapes have been supplied on recycled reels.

The second media feature is a series of videotaped programs for Agency employees. Featured are interviews with EPA officials for

use primarily by Regional Offices and NERCs. They will be seen and heard at employee meetings, open house programs, and similar sessions. The aim is to help explain Agency programs and problems in a face-to-face format.

Already taped are interviews with Administrator Russell Train on the Clean Air Act Amendments, Dr. Stanley M. Greenfield on energy and the environment, and Dr. Alvin Meyer on the noise levels needed to maintain human health.