



## The Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians:

1st in a series of conversations with Leon Bear

*Every now and then, we'll hear a question like, "How do people who are suppose to be 'into' Mother Earth justify this project?"*

That's right, the first thing that most Indian people are concerned with is the environment. We do have a specific relationship with the environment, with the animals and plants involved. Our own people are involved in the environment. So, in order not to harm these particular aspects of Mother Nature, we have to look at all the facts before we go into any kind of project. And we looked at the facts of this project. We went to Europe, where there are a number of facilities like this one, to determine if the storage and transportation could be dealt with safely. The first thing that impressed me about the European tour was not one conversation or presentation was based on fear. What we heard and saw was based on technology and scientific fact.

*What would you say to people in Tooele and Grantsville who might be afraid of this project?*

The first thing I would say is that in order for them to not be afraid, they should try to gather as many facts as they can on this project. Contact Private Fuel Storage and have them send literature on actual storage facilities or transporting the spent fuel. They'll see that transportation has been dealt with safely for years, that canisters are already being stored at different utility company sites in a safe manner.

*So you feel that there's no danger?*

Scientifically, I don't feel there's a danger. The fear comes from other avenues, like the atomic testing down in Nevada and the cancer and different diseases that came from the radioactivity down there. But this is nothing like atomic testing. This is an inert material; it's not going anywhere. It's shielded from the environment; the facility

will be monitored 24 hours a day. We don't have any fear of this at all.

*What kind of benefits will the Skull Valley Band realize from this project?*

There are a number of benefits that come along with the PFS project. Providing better health care for our people is one. Housing would be another. There's a whole host of things we would like to provide our members with, but we just don't have the money. A lot of the money from this project would go into education. We do provide a certain amount for our young people to advance their education-- college, technical college or any other kind of vocational training. We provide a certain amount for that, but it's not enough. This project would be a source of revenue for our tribal government to provide these benefits.

*What's your personal feeling regarding the Skull Valley Band and PFS?*

My people are my number one concern today. I was elected to this position to help provide these things to our Band so that we can survive in today's world. We need economic development to survive. I think that from the time the treaty was signed up to this point, we've sacrificed enough, and it's time for us to move ahead into the future and become part of the mainstream. This project will help us do that. Many of our people no longer live on the reservation, and we think the PFS project could also help change that. This is very important. They would like to come back, but they have to have a good reason. A good job close to your home is an excellent reason for returning.

*Will the PFS project benefit anyone but the Skull Valley Band?*

A lot of things will happen around here once this project comes to Skull Valley. There will be jobs and employment benefits, and not just for members of the Band. There will be infrastructure improvements, such as upgrading roads and utilities. Local vendors from Tooele and Grantsville will be providing supplies and services for this project, so the local economy will go up once this thing comes.

*Leon Bear is Chief of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians and Chairman of The Band's Executive Committee, an elected position.*

## Pre-Hearing Conference Held in Salt Lake City

The three-member Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, which was appointed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to oversee the hearings related to the PFS facility license, visited Salt Lake City and Tooele County in late January.

Following a tour of the Skull Valley site and other parts of Tooele County, the board held three days of meetings with PFS and representatives of the groups that have requested to participate in hearings that will be held about two years from now.

Since PFS submitted its license application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission last summer, five organizations, including the state of Utah, have sent petitions to the NRC requesting to participate. Petitioners submitted a list of "contentions," or issues they wish to raise at the hearing. At the January meeting, the petitioners and PFS presented to the Board arguments on which contentions meet the legal standards outlined in federal regulations. On April 22 the Board ruled on which contentions will be admitted and which of the petitioners will be allowed to participate.

The contentions cover many issues -- from the NRC's legal authority to license such a facility, to the adequacy of the environmental and safety analyses in the PFS application, to the financial capability of PFS to fulfill the provisions of the license.

Why is the hearing such a long time from now? Between now and then, the NRC staff must complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and a Safety Evaluation Report (SER). Since the information they will develop is directly related to some of the contentions, the hearing most likely will not be scheduled until these documents are nearly completed about two years from now.

**Contact Private Fuel Storage:  
P.O. Box 1405  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-1405  
Toll Free: 1-888-701-8585**

## Did You Know...?

- ⌘ One small uranium pellet, about a half-inch long and the width of a pencil, provides the energy equivalent to:
  - 1,780 pounds of coal.
  - 149 gallons of oil.
  - 17,000 cubic feet of natural gas.
- ≠ About 22 percent of the nation's electricity is generated in nuclear power plants. Coal-fired plants generate most of the remainder of our electricity.
- ⊕ On July 17, 1955 Arco, Idaho, with a population of 1,000, became the first U.S. town to be powered by nuclear energy.
- ⌘ Radiation and radioactive materials benefit all of us.
  - They treat cancer patients.
  - They are used to test new forms of medicine.
  - They are used to help in research for a broad range of diseases.
  - They are used in agricultural research for insect control.
  - They are used to power NASA space satellites.
  - They are used to power U.S. Navy submarines and surface ships.
- ◇ Nuclear power plants generate pollution-free electricity, and there are no "greenhouse gases."
- ⌘ Transportation casks used to ship spent nuclear fuel rods have been designed and tested to survive virtually any kind of accident or disaster. For example:
  - The casks have been loaded onto trucks that were made to crash into a 700-ton concrete and earth wall at speeds of 60 and 80 miles per hour.
  - Strapped to a tractor-trailer, a 120-ton locomotive traveling at 80 miles per hour broad-sided the rig.
  - The casks were dropped 2,000 feet onto hard ground.
  - They have been burned in a 1,475 degree Fahrenheit fire of jet fuel for an hour and a half.
  - And, they have been submersed in 50 feet of water.And, after all that, the casks survived without any damage that would have caused any radiation leakage!
- ⊗ Natural radiation is all around us, from the sunshine, to rocks, soil, potassium in our food and water supplies, television sets, building materials, diagnostic x-rays, radon in the air...and many, many other sources. But, like many other things, such as fire or toxic chemicals, for instance, radioactivity requires caution and controls.

## Licensing Process Moves Ahead...But Slowly

The Atomic Safety and Licensing Board (ASLB), an independent panel of three judges with expertise in nuclear regulation who will preside over the public hearings related to the PFS license application, issued an order on April 22 establishing who will have standing to participate in the hearings and which contentions met the legal requirements and can be presented at the hearing.

Although the hearing itself is about two years away, the ASLB ruling is a significant milestone in the long and rigorous process. Out of about 96 contentions, or issues, presented to the ASLB at the pre-hearing conference in January, the judges admitted about 38 contentions that they found to meet the legal requirements.

"The judges issued a very thorough report of more than 180 pages outlining their reasons for ruling as they did. We are pleased they ruled on what issues can be heard, and now we can proceed with the process," said Scott Northard, PFS project manager.

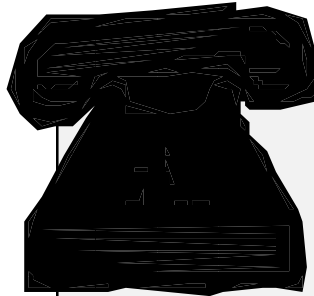
Participants in the hearing will include the state of Utah; the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians; the Confederated Tribe of the Goshute Reservation (located on the Nevada border); Ohnga Gaudadeh Devia, representing a small minority of

the Skull Valley Band who oppose the project; and ranching companies, Skull Valley Co., and Castle Rock Land and Livestock. The ASLB denied standing for David Pete, Chief of the Confederated Tribe of the Goshute Reservation, Ensign Ranches of Utah, and a group of independent scientists known as Scientists for Secure Waste Storage. These groups have the right to appeal the decision.

While the process may seem mysterious or confusing, PFS is always available to answer questions and help the public understand the process.

PFS Chairman John Parkyn recently met with the NRC staff in Washington, DC to ask their cooperation in keeping the process moving as efficiently as possible. He told them, "We're not asking for any shortcuts in the licensing process, but we want to be sure there are no unnecessary delays that could affect our timetable, our business and our customers."

The NRC is also preparing to begin an independent environmental impact study. The agency is expected to announce a public meeting in the Salt Lake area in early June to gather input to help define the scope of the study. The environmental study is expected to take about two years to complete.



## Community Comment Line Lets Your Voice Be Heard

Keep those calls coming. The PFS Toll Free Community Comment Line is for you to voice your concerns or ask questions about the proposed spent nuclear fuel storage project on the Skull Valley Reservation.

The toll-free line will take voice-mail messages. You can leave comments anonymously, but leave a phone number or address if you have a question you want answered.

You can also find information about the PFS project on the

Internet. Look for us at [www.privatefuelstorage.com](http://www.privatefuelstorage.com).

The website will be continuously updated and allows those who visit the site to learn more details of the project and nuclear energy.

Please, contact us and let us know what you think. You can reach PFS through several methods:

Our toll-free Community Comment Line: **1-888-701-8585**, our website: [www.privatefuelstorage.com](http://www.privatefuelstorage.com), or by e-mail: [smartin@ns3.burgoyne.com](mailto:smartin@ns3.burgoyne.com).

**Contact us today! Let us know how you feel!**

# People are Asking...

*Here is a sampling of some of the kinds of questions and concerns being expressed by the general public.*

**Q.** *What will the storage facility in Skull Valley look like?*

**A.** It will look much like this dry cask storage area at Northern States Power Company's Prairie Island Nuclear Generating Plant near Red Wing, Minnesota. What you see here are large concrete and steel casks that contain sealed canisters made of thick steel. Inside the canisters are storage racks that hold used fuel assemblies. Fully loaded, each cask weighs about 122 tons.



**Q.** *Why was Utah chosen as the site for the PFS facility?*

**A.** As a possible means of economic development, the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians studied the issue of spent fuel storage in great depth over the last five years. They traveled around the world, visiting spent fuel storage facilities to assess the benefits and risks associated with such a project. As a result of their study, the Skull Valley Band approached the utility companies with the offer to cooperate in the license application process and to negotiate the lease of a portion of their reservation for the storage site.

Other organizations in Utah, as well as in other states, have approached Private Fuel Storage with proposals to host a centralized, temporary storage facility. However, the Skull Valley location meets all the federal regulatory requirements for an independent spent fuel storage installation, as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations.

Centralized storage in a remote area where the spent fuel can be constantly monitored and protected simply makes good sense. Temporarily staging the fuel at a facility in Utah, which is on the route to the proposed permanent facility at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, also makes good sense.

**Q.** *Once the facility is built, who will run it?*

**A.** Though it will be located on land belonging to the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians through a lease

arrangement, the spent fuel storage facility will be constructed, managed and operated by Private Fuel Storage. The companies comprising the PFS consortium have many years of experience in the management of high-level nuclear waste. Members of the Skull Valley Band, and other local residents who are employed at the PFS facility during construction and operation, will go through rigorous training programs before starting work. And, of course, the entire operation must meet the most stringent of standards and requirements as set forth by the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The NRC also will continually monitor all aspects of the facility's operations -- from safety and security to environmental protections--to make sure that all of these standards and requirements are met.

**Q.** *How can we be assured that your "temporary facility" won't become a permanent storage site?*

**A.** PFS has no desire, nor intent, to create a permanent storage facility for spent nuclear fuel rods on the Skull Valley Reservation, or anywhere else, for that matter. As a matter of fact, the 25-year lease agreement with the Goshute Band provides only for a temporary operation. If a permanent facility elsewhere isn't available at the end of 25 years, the lease may be extended for another 25 years...but that's all. And, the federal government has a clear obligation to take the spent fuel for long-term storage and disposal.

As soon as the permanent facility is completed by the federal government, the fuel rods stored at Skull Valley will be transferred to that location and the temporary site will be decommissioned.

**Q.** *Governor Leavitt has repeatedly said, "If it is so safe, why not leave it where it is?" in referring to the spent nuclear fuel rods. Doesn't he have a good argument?*

**A.** The governor's argument is really a political one, not one based on the actual safety of the transportation and storage of spent nuclear fuel rods.

The fact is, many plants are physically running out of space to store the spent fuel on site and may be forced to shut down prematurely. Other plants, which are already permanently shut down cannot decommission without off-site storage.

Even some of the governor's own technical staff have publicly stated that nuclear waste transportation is "a well-regulated practice, and we've never had any accidents of any consequence."

Scott Northard, PFS Project Manager for the Skull Valley development, has said, "More than 30 years' experience shows we can ship and store used nuclear fuel safely."

**Q.** *For years, we've been hearing about Yucca Mountain and the fact that nuclear waste is supposed to be stored there. What's that all about, and why isn't it operating?*

**A.** Yucca Mountain, in Nevada, is the designated site for a permanent facility for storing spent nuclear fuel and other types of similar materials. It was supposed to be available for use on January 31 of this year, but because of delays in completing the complex scientific studies, the repository is not ready. In fact, it probably won't be ready for use before the year 2010, at the earliest.

In 1982, Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy act, directing the Department of Energy (DOE) to create a permanent storage facility. But, because such a site has not yet been provided, the utilities have had no choice but to store what they can on the limited space they have available to them at their own plants...and that space is running out.

If Yucca Mountain had been completed and commissioned on schedule, there would be no need for PFS to establish the Skull Valley facility.

**Q.** *What do the transportation and storage casks look like?*

**A.** The illustration at right explains how the assemblies are made and what materials are used.

**Q.** *When you talk about “spent nuclear fuel” what is it? Is it a gas, or a liquid of some kind?*

**A.** The spent nuclear fuel that will be stored at the Skull Valley facility is quite simply small ceramic cylindrical pellets, much like the one shown here.



As you can see, we are not talking about anything that is a liquid or gaseous or non-solid form. There is nothing that can leak into the ground, or that can become airborne.

The pellets are placed inside hollow rods about 12 to 15 feet long. The fuel rods containing the ceramic pellets are used in nuclear reactors to produce energy.

**Q.** *Sitting out there in Skull Valley, won't that storage facility of yours be a good target for terrorists or sabotage?*

**A.** The Nuclear Regulatory Commission rules won't allow us to describe the security measures in detail. But there will be tall fences, several security barriers and guards to watch over the storage site.

The rugged design and construction of the shipping canisters and storage casks are such that they can withstand any credible incident.

Then, the enormous weight and size of the casks would inhibit a hijack attempt. Remote locations, impregnable barriers and high levels of security have made nuclear facilities unattractive targets.

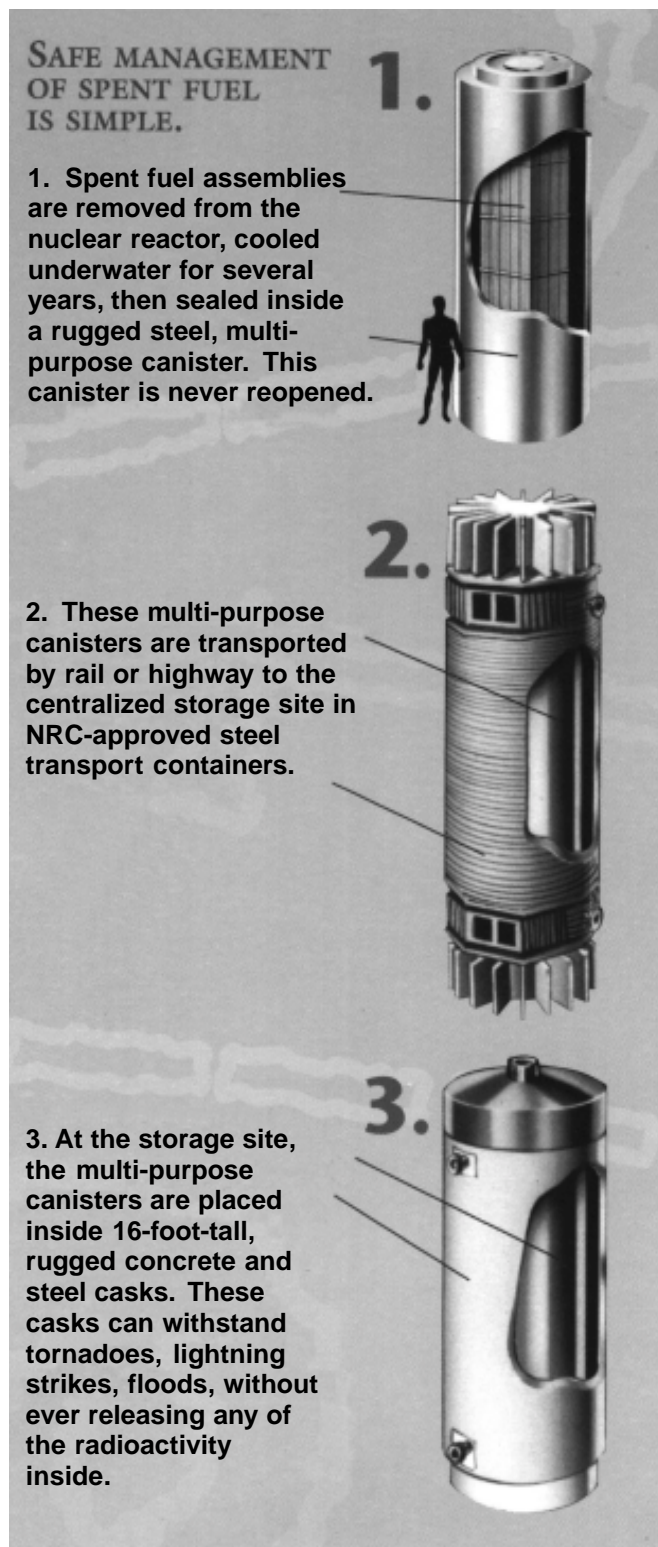
If terrorists wanted to use our spent fuel to obtain weapons-grade materials for a nuclear bomb, they would first have to set up and operate a reprocessing plant...a feat that would be more difficult than stealing a bomb.

**Q.** *What I want to know is how much your temporary storage facility is going to cost.*

**A.** The budget for construction and development of the project is \$100 million. The money will be used for site preparation; construction of the access road, administration building, visitors center, security and health physics building, operations and maintenance building, canister transfer building and storage pads; procurement of canister transfer and transport equipment, and transportation corridor construction. The budget also includes personnel costs, licensing fees and host benefits, as well as a contingency amount. Also, we will be spending about \$430 million to procure or fabricate the shipping canisters and another \$134 million for the storage casks.

The annual operations and maintenance costs are estimated to be \$49 million for a 20-year facility operating life.

So, you can see that this will be a major project for Tooele County.



**As you can see, there are many questions and issues to be addressed, and Private Fuel Storage welcomes opportunities to openly discuss these kinds of matters.**

**If your civic club, church group, or other organization would like the opportunity to learn first hand about the Skull Valley storage facility for spent nuclear fuel rods, a representative from PFS will gladly meet with your organization.**

**To arrange for such a meeting, please call toll free 1-888-701-8585, or you may write to:**

**Private Fuel Storage  
P.O. Box 1405,  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-1405.**



- A. Scott Northard, PFS Project Manager, made a presentation to the Utah Tribal Leaders meeting on January 9, 1998. He encouraged Tribal leaders to inform themselves and their people about the Skull Valley project and invited them to visit a working nuclear plant and storage facility in Minnesota.
- B. Bill Schalk, who heads the Public Affairs Committee for Private Fuel Storage, met with about 30 members of the Salt Lake Chapter of the Health Physics Society on January 12, to present background on the PFS project and answer questions.
- C. Bill Schalk (right), presents a \$150 check to Wendy Luke, president of Tooele High School Key Club. The check, along with other money collected by the Key Club, went to purchase a new wheelchair for THS senior Mike Eyer (seated). Looking on is Kendall Topham THS Assistant Principal.
- D. Approximately 20 members of the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians traveled to Yucca Mountain, NV, and toured the five-mile-long tunnel where scientists are performing tests to determine the site's suitability for a permanent repository. The trip is one of many initiatives the Band has taken to better understand the science, technology and policy issues involved in nuclear waste storage.
- E. Bill Schalk (standing, left) spent a full day at Tooele High School on January 13, making presentations to more than 300 science students. Students were asked to analyze the pros and cons of all types of electric power sources--wind, solar, coal, nuclear, oil and gas. They learned the steps in nuclear power generation--from mining of raw uranium to the storage of nuclear wastes.

# The Skull Valley Band of Goshute: A Brief Perspective

The Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians is a federally recognized Indian Tribe located in the west desert of Tooele County, Utah. They are a part of the larger Shoshonean-speaking Native American groups that lived in the Intermountain West.

The Skull Valley Band represents the historic Great Basin desert way of life perhaps better than any other group because of the nature of their territory. They lived in the most desolate part of what is now western Utah and Eastern Nevada.

Although exact boundaries are difficult to determine, they lived in an area between the Utah's Oquirrh Mountains on the east and Nevada's Steptoe Mountains on the west, and from the south end of the Great Salt Lake to an area almost parallel with the south end of Utah Lake. There are also indications that they had established some areas of Utah's now-populous Wasatch Front. The territory was located entirely in the Great Basin, which is one of the most arid areas on the North American continent, but also

richly varied in terms of climate, topography, flora and fauna.

Because of this territory, their culture has long been recognized as the simplest in the Great Basin. In aboriginal times, they lived at a minimum subsistence level, with no economic surplus on which to build a more elaborate sociopolitical structure. Organized primarily in core families, the Band hunted and gathered in family groups, and would often cooperate with other family groups. These cooperating groups made up a village. Men usually hunted large game, while women and children gathered plants, seeds, and insects. Though hunters shared large game with other village members, each family was able to provide for most of its needs without assistance.

The Goshutes had a thorough understanding of growing cycles, climate variations, and animal distribution patterns. Their basic diet consisted of wild berries, plants, seeds, small game and insects.

The Tribe's first contact with whites was documented in 1826. Further contact with white people was sporadic and

insignificant from that time until the arrival of the Mormons in 1847, when contact became continual and prolonged.

On October, 12, 1863, the Band signed a treaty with the US Government. In 1917, and again in 1918, the US Government, by Executive Order, set aside and reserved specific land for the Skull Valley Indian Reservation.

The Skull Valley Band of Goshute currently has 124 members. About 30 of those live on the reservation, with the remainder living and working in the outlying communities of Tooele, Grantsville and Salt Lake City, or out-of-state.

The reservation consists of approximately 18,000 acres. The reservation contains few natural resources, so the Band must rely on economic development. At this point, much of the Band's income and benefits are derived from a rocket test facility located on leased reservation land.

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PFS

P.O. Box 1405  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110-1405