



NAWO NEWS



NAWO BERRY PROJECT

We are honored to be the recipients of a general support grant from Patagonia once again. The NAWO Berry Project has been called the “Happiness Project.” This current funding is used to purchase plants, shrubs and trees of each Community’s choice on Red Lake, White Earth, and Leech Lake Nations.

These three Nations are suffering food endangerment and health disparities such as Diabetes, high blood pressure , heart disease, cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and substance abuse are the most predominant.

“Specifically for tribal nations in Minnesota, all of the Red Lake Reservation area qualifies as a food desert, and large percentages of White Earth, Leech Lake, Mille Lacs, and Bois Forte Reservations areas are also considered food deserts.” Minnesota Department of Health/Food Access Brochure.

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/communities/titlev/foodaccess.pdf>



“We have always wanted a medicine garden. Now we have blueberries, raspberries, rhubarb, asparagus, apple trees, plum trees, and grape vines.”

“Always wanted grape vines and fruit trees, just never could afford them. It is a dream come true.”

“Two apple trees, one crabapple tree and one plum tree.”

“One of the garden designs and walking paths’ plantings is shaped like the back of a turtle 13 plots in a circle.”



Xcel Energy Monticello Nuclear Reactor

Photo: Mark Fredrickson

Events having the potential to affect public health and safety are occurring at Xcel Energy's Monticello nuclear power plant, about 35 miles up the Mississippi River from Minneapolis. Primary cooling water containing Tritium has been leaking into the ground at least since last November.

Xcel Energy and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) didn't bother to report the Monticello leak of about 400,000 gallons until mid-March, and then announced, with much fanfare, that there is no risk to public health and safety, and that the leak had not reached the Mississippi River. Then, a few days later Xcel Energy announced a second leak of several hundred gallons because the tank into which contaminated ground water had been pumped overflowed. Not bad, for a clown show.

While authorities say not to worry, the problem is that these authorities fail to consider THE authority regarding biological effects of ionizing radiation, the BEIR (Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation) VII Report of the National Academy of Sciences. The BEIR VII Report conclusively concludes that there is no safe dose of ionizing radiation. Every exposure, no matter how small, creates a potential for causing cancers and other mutations.

Considering that the half-life of Tritium is just over 12 years, and that it takes about 10 half-lives before a radioactive substance becomes relatively benign biologically, it is probably premature to speculate about public health and safety impacts. In fact, there are three pathways for leaked radiation to affect the public: it can migrate to the river, which supplies most of the drinking water for Minneapolis; it can migrate into groundwater off-site, where it becomes available for private and municipal pumps; and it can evaporate. There is no doubt that during the next 120 years, some fraction of the leakage will follow each of these pathways and then affect biological activity. Of course, nobody will ever know how much contamination went where, or know what it did when it got there, because radiation monitoring at Monticello, as well as at the rest of the global commercial nuclear fleet, is mostly incapable of detecting radiation in any of these pathways. It makes better PR to just say there is no threat to public health and safety.

This Monticello pipe leak could be an omen of things to come. The leak occurred because a pipe carrying primary cooling water broke. Primary cooling water circulates through the reactor and thereby becomes radioactive. This radioactivity bombarded the pipe through which it flowed with neutrons, and over time, this neutron bombardment causes metals to get brittle. Arguably, the pipe broke because it had become embrittled and something jarred it. The thing of it is, that every bit of metal at Monticello that is part of the primary system that contains and controls the nuclear reaction has also been subjected to this same neutron bombardment. All those metals are at some elevated state of embrittlement, now that the reactor is over 50 years old. As a result, we all now get to sit around and wait to see which components will be next in line to brake, and what the consequences of that breakage will be. That could get real exciting very quickly.

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