

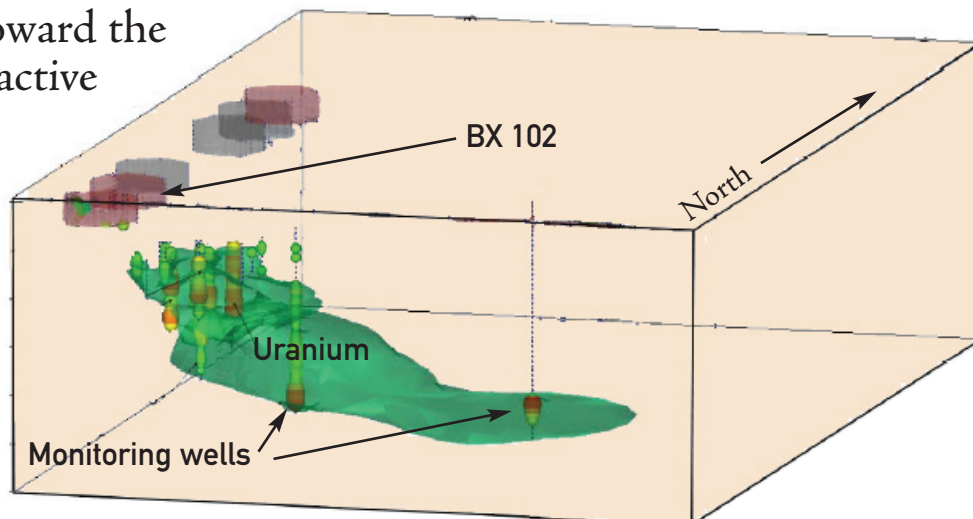


Tracking the Uranium from Tank 102

A major spill in 1951 dumped 7 tons of uranium to the soil. Never cleaned up, the uranium is now headed toward the Columbia with billions of gallons of other radioactive and chemically hazardous wastes

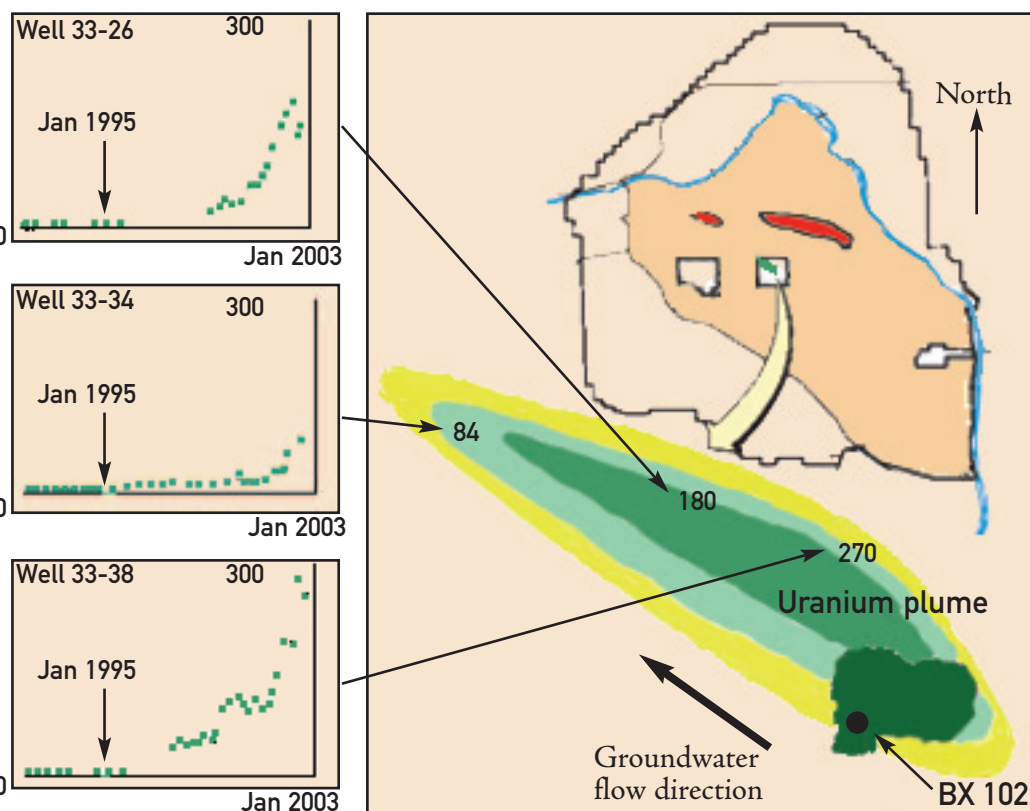
► 1951-1991: Uranium migrates down 250 feet toward the groundwater

On March 20, 1951, workers at Hanford spilled 91,600 gallons of liquid waste into the soil at underground waste storage tank BX-102. The waste included about 7 tons of uranium metal. The diagram at right shows the path taken by the spilled uranium. In the early 1990s, the uranium reached the groundwater generally 250 feet below and 400 feet east of the tank.



► 1991-2003: Uranium moves several thousand feet toward the Columbia

The charts at right show uranium levels at three monitoring wells from 1995 to 2003. Groundwater and uranium in the area move to the northwest. The dark green blob at right corresponds to the green in the illustration above. The yellow, light green and medium green areas show shown at right depict the course of uranium in groundwater. The drinking water standard for uranium is 30 pico-curies per liter. Levels in the area in yellow are above 3; light green above 30 and medium green above 100.



Charts and graphs on this page are not to scale. Units are micrograms of uranium per liter of groundwater. Sources: U.S Department of Energy; S.M. Stoller Corporation

► Beyond 2004: Uranium reaches the Columbia where it will be taken up by plants, animals or people, or get swept to the Pacific Ocean

No one can be sure when the uranium reaches the river, but scientists say waste is moving faster at Hanford than previously predicted.

► Other leaks, spills and dumps in the vicinity of Tank 102

Over the years, some 346 billion gallons of water containing very large amounts of radioactive, hazardous chemicals used to dissolve nuclear fuel were spilled on the Central Plateau at Hanford. The diagram at right shows the location and amounts of some of those releases in an area known as "200 East." Gray vertical lines show the location of groundwater monitoring wells.

