

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

BONNIE RADER

Community Member—Former Lowry Bombing and
Gunnery Range Superfund Site, Waterton, CO

Interview Date: September 15, 2005

Location: Centennial, CO

EPA Interviewer: We're conducting this interview with Bonnie Rader on September 15 at the Arapahoe County Library. Is that correct?

Radar: Yes, the Smoky Hill Branch.

EPA Interviewer: Let me just ask you to introduce yourself.

Radar: Bonnie Rader. I live by the Lowry Landfill Superfund site. I'm the Director of Citizens for Lowry Landfill Environmental Action Now [CLLEAN]. And that's a site located in Denver, Colorado.

EPA Interviewer: I'll just start with the first question then. What was your first involvement with Superfund?

Radar: We built a new house out in the county in 1974. We knew that there was a trash landfill about three miles from our home, but we didn't feel particularly threatened by that. Shortly after we moved into our home, we started experiencing chemical smells in the air permeating our home. We had seen trucks going out and dumping chemicals, and so we started calling the health department. We were told that it was just a trash dump and there was nothing serious there to harm us, and that it was just a sweet musky smell, that it was our imagination. Being a naïve citizen, I didn't think the government wouldn't tell me the truth, and so I believed them.

As time went on, by 1978 we were developing health symptoms. My youngest son developed asthma. We noticed it happened when the chemicals were in the air the heaviest. Some of my neighbors also felt there was something wrong there. There were fires at the site. The smoke would come into our homes. We sometimes would evacuate. In 1980, I read an article in the *Rocky Mountain News* by [State] Representative Gerald Kopel explaining that the Lowry Landfill site was a chemical dump, and that the chemicals were moving at 380 feet per year to the north and could soon be in our water, and that there were new laws being passed. That was the first introduction. I had to do something that could help me in the situation, what I was experiencing.

EPA Interviewer: Fast forwarding, are you still involved with Superfund, and in what way?

Radar: Yes, we're still involved with Superfund, because the Lowry Landfill site was finally declared a Superfund site. It's now under the leadership of EPA with the Colorado

Department of Health sharing the oversight for the state. The chemicals have not been moved. There's 138 million gallons still buried there. Our group is particularly concerned even though the pits are covered now, and we aren't experiencing chemicals in the air, but now we know that the chemicals may be moving down toward the major aquifers, which serve the entire front range of Colorado. So our group, CLLEAN, is involved because we believe something needs to be done to get the chemicals out of the old pits, and to prevent them from moving further towards our aquifers.

EPA Interviewer: Has your involvement or role changed over time with Superfund?

Radar: Yes, it has.

EPA Interviewer: How so?

Radar: Before Superfund and RCRA [Resource Conservation and Recovery Act], there were no tools for the average citizen to use to protect their families and their living environment. There was totally nothing. And when Superfund was passed, the citizens were given a handle to hang onto to make the changes at the sites that they lived by. It gave the citizens the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. In the very beginning, it was still hard for the citizens because at that time, citizens were considered hysterical housewives, unscientific, and how could we know anything about the environment and how the chemicals impact the environment or humans. That it took scientists to make these decisions. But with constant participation by average citizens, and many of the meetings and the movements that I actually was honored to participate in, that attitude changed. It became a reasonable assumption after a while that the citizens, the scientists, the regulators should all work together because we all have a specific source of expertise. As that happened, it became more apparent that citizen participation was helpful more than a hindrance, and that once citizens were allowed to participate, they tended not to be so angry and combative. It changed the whole format of how contaminated sites were dealt with.

EPA Interviewer: What have been the most significant issues you have dealt with in the Superfund program?

Radar: I think the first and most significant issue was the fact that I didn't have a scientific background, so they told me that I couldn't possibly know what was going on in my family. From health effects, to what was causing it, to what may happen in the future. It was really frustrating to have someone tell me that I couldn't be part of the decision, even though my family was so terribly impacted, and wouldn't let me be part of how this was done. Many times, there were decisions made at my site that only made the situation worse. For instance, before these newer technologies were found, the agencies allowed the operator of the site to spray chemicals that were seeping out of the old pits into the air. Well, that had been our problem all along, that the chemicals were traveling in the air. So, here we were being told that this spraying was not as impacting as having the pits themselves open, and we had to fight really hard to get that stopped.

One thing that I found from some of our first news conferences, at which we talked about the impacts of what was happening, was that industry doesn't all wear black hats and the citizens don't all wear white hats. Many industry [representatives] started calling me after

press conferences and news releases and talking to me about the fact that yes, we're right, the chemicals didn't have to be buried, there are a lot of alternatives, and we want to help you, but we don't want you to know who we are because we could lose our job. Eventually, some of these industry representatives came forward and made themselves known to me, and they began teaching me what was out there. What I found was that in the regulations, the people who are enforcing the regulations quite often were so involved in regulating that they didn't have time to look and see what options were out there. They only wanted to enforce the rules. That's what they were to do. Because of this collaboration with some industrial representatives, I was able to come forward as a "hysterical housewife," as they used to call us, and say, "Look, here are some options."

One of the most important things that happened out of that is that I was invited to sit on the Office of Technology Assessment's¹ Superfund program where they wrote a report on how Superfund was moving along and what could be improved. One whole chapter in that report is on alternative technology so that you don't have to bury chemicals in the ground any longer. I think that was the most impacting and helpful situation I was involved in since Superfund was enacted. The agencies came on board very quickly, because they too wanted solutions. But, as I said, their role was regulating what was existing at that time. You can't regulate and bring in new ideas very easily. Because Congress took this Office of Technology [Assessment] report and reviewed it and it made sense, and we had industry on board with the citizens, with the states, then it became law that we could do other things, and eventually burial of many hazardous wastes, even in RCRA facilities, was banned because they found even that wasn't working. I think that was the most impacting and the most rewarding of all my experiences in actuality.

EPA Interviewer: Were there significant obstacles in the Superfund program in the early 1980s?

Radar: Yes. One of the biggest obstacles, as I said, was if you didn't have a scientific background, it just didn't seem right to bring you on board to make decisions. Over time, with interaction between the citizens and the regulators and industry, it was found that citizens were helpful sitting on these committees and participating in what happened at their site. Another obstacle was financial. Industry didn't want to spend more money to treat, neutralize, or detoxify their chemicals, or even have a waste exchange program. The cheapest method was burial. Industry was totally, totally against any change. To have citizens coming in and saying something different had to be done, that was a real battle for the citizens. I mean, we were up against the big money, and big money talks to our legislators and our Congress people and it—business runs the economy in the area. No one wanted to have big business leave because you insisted that they not use the cheapest mode of disposal. So I think industry itself and big money was a big obstacle in getting Superfund to move forward in a manner that was really protective of the environment and the citizens. But because of the persistence of the citizens, hanging together and joining nationwide together, and sometimes honestly being obnoxious because no one would listen unless we were, finally it came to light that this obstacle had to be removed.

¹ The Office of Technology Assessment was an office of the U.S. Congress that provided Congressional Members and committees with objective and authoritative analysis of the complex scientific and technical issues of the late 20th century. It closed on September 29, 1995.

When that obstacle was removed, even industry found out it was cheaper to do it the right way because now they weren't going to have to go back and pay medical costs for sick people. They weren't going to have to go back and clean their sites up over and over again. Another obstacle was that everyone said that if we didn't have places to dump, as it happened at Lowry Landfill, we would have midnight dumping. Of course, that frightened us citizens a lot, so that was another obstacle. We were threatened with the fact that the makeup you wear, the shoes you wear, the paper that prints your story all produce a waste, so you're responsible. Where do you want it to go? Well, that frightened us because we didn't want to put ... I mean, most of us didn't want to put it on our neighbor. So that was another obstacle: what are you going to do with it?

But as time went on, in our case in particular, we went to then-Governor Richard Lamm and had a meeting (he invited industry) about keeping this site open and using it further. The health department said there'll be midnight dumping if the site is closed. We stood our ground, and Governor Lamm believed us. He stood beside us, and the site was not allowed to go forward, the RCRA site that had come in on the Superfund site as well. The health department did a study. Three months after they did the close-down, they did a study and found that midnight dumping had gone down, not up, and that the bigger industries in the state had gone to on-site neutralization, recycling, waste exchange programs, and it was the beginning of a whole new era. The stumbling block was that you were going to cause midnight dumping if you pushed this ticket. But as it turned out, because we continued the dialogue, because we continued talking, and we continued looking, it came to light that it just wasn't true. We weren't going to cause midnight dumping, it wasn't going to cost industry more, industry in Colorado would not be shut down, and none of them did, because of the closure of this site. Those obstacles were big.

I guess the next obstacle was that citizens don't have funding for any of their activities. Most of us have to work. Industry has an open-door policy with everyone. They have the money to pay people to go and lobby and meet and reflect their interests, while we didn't. So that was another issue that we joined in nationwide—that the citizens don't have the same resources, and yet we're living with the impacts. We have a right to have help. So we did what was called "Superdrive for Superfund" in 1985, I think it was. We joined nationwide and we went to Washington, DC, and we lobbied our Congressional Representatives, and tried to get in and see President Reagan. Couldn't do it, of course. It was shortly after that that Congress said that citizens should be funded out of the Superfund funds. Industry did have the money to go forward on their own. Industry does have open doors to people that we don't, and we have to carry on our daily work, our family, and so it was only right that we be funded. That obstacle was overcome when they started the TAG [Technical Assistance Grant] grant program, and it's been a boon to most citizens who are willing to use it.

The next obstacle was the process to get the TAG grant. It was very cumbersome. It was very bureaucratic. Citizens couldn't understand it. The agencies have tried to make that program—or make the paperwork—less tedious, and I think that part of that obstacle's been overcome in that some of the paperwork isn't as monumental now. Also, EPA provides TAG grant guidance in the area so if you have trouble filling out the papers or understanding how to get your reimbursements, they help you. So part of that obstacle's been overcome, but my own experience is that it's still a difficult process, but not like it was.

EPA Interviewer: Any others?

Radar: Probably a zillion others, but I can't think of them right now. *[Laughing]*

EPA Interviewer: OK. I guess the logical question then is: are there any obstacles now in the present-day Superfund that maybe weren't present at the beginning? Anything new that's arisen? Or do you feel that generally that the obstacles that exist have been addressed?

Radar: Well, I think as a whole the EPA—most of the people in the EPA—have tried to make Superfund a citizen-friendly program. But what happens is you have different Administrations come in. And when different Administrations come in, some of those Administrations have a philosophy that we're overreacting to the crisis out there with chemical contamination or radioactive contamination. Sometimes they're closely tied to an industry, and industry complains that the Superfund money is wasted, and that they really shouldn't have to pay in because many of them weren't even present back then, etc., etc. Some of the Administrations cut the funding, or at this time are trying to cut funding for Superfund. They cut back some of the programs at EPA which oversee these sites, which makes it more difficult to have personnel there to help us at the sites.

Also, cutting back the funding, I've noticed at our site in particular has caused what I call a fast track of studying the site. I believe that they believe they're moving in the right way with this study, but at the same time, there isn't the time or the money to devote to what's happening at the site, the daily emergencies, the daily surprises. I think one of the big problems we have right now is whether or not the Administration funds this program in a manner that you can have project managers full time, you don't keep changing the project manager so they don't know the story, they don't know the history, the citizens are starting over with each new one. You don't have the funds to maybe go in and enforce when it's really necessary. There are no enforcement funds, there's not time for that. So I think the funding of the agency with various Administrations and who they're most impacted by has really been an impediment, even today at this time, and I noticed it's happening a lot with DOD [Department of Defense] sites. The Bush Administration is trying to pull back the funding for, and trying to say DOD shouldn't have to go in and clean up their sites. That's not good for anyone. It's not good for Superfund. It's not good for the citizens. And, in the long run, it's not going to be good for the responsible parties, because if this is allowed to go on the way it is, and we don't spend the funds we need to get it cleaned up, the impacts can be disastrous. And of course, we taxpayers always end up paying for the leftovers.

EPA Interviewer: What were your expectations when your involvement began in Superfund?

Radar: Well, in the beginning, I'd been through so much since 1974, so when October 1980 rolled around, I was ecstatic. I thought, "Whoopie! We have got some power here now. Somebody's going to come and help us." I think probably as naïve as most citizens are who haven't been involved civically, I kind of thought that the government now was going to come in and take these laws and just take care of me and I could sit back and relax, and it hasn't worked out that way. If you don't participate, the old saying "If you snooze, you lose" is really true, because the agencies can come in and do all kinds of things at your site. But if you don't get in there and tell them your position and what you see as a problem and what you see as

a solution, and if you aren't willing to work with them, it's going to go the way the PRPs [potentially responsible parties] or whoever wants it to go. So, has Superfund been good for me? Yes. Has it been the easy ride I thought it would be? No. In fact, I think it's been a lot more work. Has it been worth it? Yes. Would I want Superfund rescinded? No.

EPA Interviewer: What is your most memorable story about your involvement with Superfund?

Radar: I think my most memorable story is when we did the Superdrive for Superfund. What we each did in our own areas, we had a rally and invited people to come. We talked about all the sites in Colorado, and then everyone signed a petition supporting a strong Superfund, and we went out and had petition drives, and we put them all in a big barrel. This truck came through from Boston, and they picked up our barrels and they went to every state and they'd have a big rally. I can't remember how many thousands of petitions we got from here in Colorado saying we need a strong Superfund to protect the public.

After the truck had gone around and gathered all the petitions, individuals such as myself took a little vial of water—a little jar of water from our kitchen faucet and a little scoop of soil from our backyard, and we capped them up and went to Washington, D.C. We went and we met with Mr. Ruckleshaus, who was the head of EPA at that time, and we tried to get in and see the President and we couldn't. Then we had appointments set up with all of our Congresspeople. We had our little bottles and our dirt and our water, and I went up to the offices where Congressmen Brown and Schaefer were located, and Pat Schroeder, and I tried to get in past the security. The security had the police come down and back me off and get me away and I said, "What have I done wrong?"

They said, "You're carrying Superfund wastes."

I said, "No, I'm not. I'm carrying water from my faucet in my home and dirt from my backyard."

They said, "No, no. You're carrying hazardous waste—Superfund waste—and you will not be allowed to come in here because you may pour it on the Congressman's desk." I thought this was just really outrageous. I couldn't even get angry; it made me laugh.

At that time the general who was in charge of Star Wars [a missile defense program] was coming through. He came past and he showed his badge, and he looked over and saw these people circling me, and he said, "What you here for, honey?"

And I said, "Well, they won't let me in because I've got toxic waste."

He says, "You do?"

I said, "Yeah," and I showed him my little bottles, and he laughed and he said, "Give 'em hell, honey," and he went on through. Oh, and Gary Hart was there too at the time.

About that time, Pat Schroeder saw all the police down surrounding all of us citizens, and she called down and said, "What's going on?"

They said, "One of your constituents is down here with hazardous waste."

She said, "Well, send her up." Right after that, Gary Hart called down and found the same thing and says, "Well, send her up." So, of course, the media got hold of that. But I got to go up and meet with Pat, and she really listened to the story, and she was very responsive. So was Gary Hart. In fact, Gary Hart carried through. He actually passed the first law banning the burial of flammable, hazardous liquid waste because of what we brought to him. So that was pleasing.

Then, shortly after that, the reporters are all around, running all these answers, and they said to me, "Do you mean two of your Congressmen wouldn't even let you up to see them because you had toxic waste?"

And I said, "Yeah, I can live by a hundred million gallons of this stuff, but they don't want my little bottles." That was in *The Washington Post*, and it just went over so well, and it was shortly after that that Congress did authorize a stronger Superfund law. So activism can work.

And you know, the neat thing was... One of the things that was interesting about this whole movement is that in the beginning, as I said, we were looked at as hysterics and crazies and just mad people, which some of us were, no getting away from it. I can remember walking in the halls of the health department or the EPA, and some of the project managers would see me coming down the hall and whip around and go right back in their office. By the time the Superdrive for Superfund was happening, we had learned to talk to each other. These people in the agencies were so supportive and wanted this Superfund passed so much, because they were good environmentalists as well. They wanted the right thing done out there. These people had to go out and face the angry people of the world and take the blame for what had happened and what wasn't happening, regulatory-wise. Once a citizen can realize you probably have the same goals, you're just restricted in different areas, it's amazing how you become so close. Many of these people literally had put their reputation and their jobs on the line to help the citizens.

I guess, really, I should have said my most memorable experience is when Anne Burford Gorsuch was in office. I can remember people in the Agency trying to help us make right decisions, and they were told if they talked to us in the citizenry, they would be fired. They would lose their jobs. Those people had honest intentions and only wanted to do what was right, and it was a terrible era. So, I think that would probably be just as memorable as the other, because I remember those people working so hard to help me, knowing that if they were found out, they'd lose their jobs. I think that, in itself, always told me that, you know, it doesn't matter if you're citizen or if you're agency, you have your good and you have your bad in both. What you have to do is be fair in your judgment—who's good, who's bad, and just go the path with the right one. So I think those two experiences were probably my most memorable.

EPA Interviewer: This question may again be redundant. What was the high point of your involvement in the Superfund cleanup? Is that the same as your most memorable?

Radar: No. I think the high point in all of this time has probably been the respect that our group has gained from industry and from agencies, and from many of the Congressional Representatives, who even though they don't agree with us and don't want to do it our way, they know that we're a credible group. That was a long, hard time coming. I think that if you establish yourself as a credible group, that your intentions are straightforward and honest, I think you can accomplish a lot more. We haven't won our battle yet, so I can't say that there is a high point for us at this point other than the reputation that we have with the important entities involved in this Superfund site. But we won lots of little skirmishes, and we're going to continue to try and win the battle. When we win the battle, that will be my high point. When I see those chemicals cleaned up out of the ground out there, then I will know we've won.

EPA Interviewer: What is the low point of your involvement in the Superfund cleanup?

Radar: The low point is that we've worked so hard, and we get so few yeses. There's always a reason we're told that something can't be done that on the surface is only good common sense. There again, you get into the lobbying of the laws, and the lobbying of the responsible parties. I guess the really low point is that in the Superfund law, it states that the most cost-effective technology or treatment, or whatever, must be used at a site. The most cost effective isn't always the most protective of the environment and human health. And yet the law states that.

I think that's a real low point for myself and our group because we know that the fact that the PRPs can use the most cost-effective technology means that rather than pumping something and treating it, they can try to contain it and cover it. We know that containment doesn't work, because we're seeing it move every year. I've been involved in this since 1974, and chemicals are being found in places out there now where [it was] never thought possible before. So, I think my low point is that if we're going to talk about addressing the needs of a site, we shouldn't talk about the most cost-effective all the time. Some of that's reasonable, but not when it comes to the realities of what's happening at a site.

EPA Interviewer: If you could have changed one thing about the Superfund program back when you first became involved, what would it have been and why?

Radar: In the very beginning, I think that sentence means. Well, it was citizen participation. And we did change that. That was the thing I wanted changed the most. Because people had been making decisions about what was happening in my environment all these years, and we were being negatively impacted, and I had no say about what was happening in my living environment. And it just got worse instead of better. The part that was most important to me was citizen involvement that was taken seriously. Not just lip service, not just pats on the back, but actual participation by the citizens in the decision-making process.

EPA Interviewer: How has your interaction or relationship with EPA changed over time?

Radar: Well, as I said, in the beginning there were the scientists and there were the citizens. As time has gone on, as I said earlier, both the citizens and the scientists realized that interaction was necessary to come up with the correct solutions for the citizens who were living with this problem. The scientists had all that knowledge, but they weren't living with the problem. One example I remember is everything back in the beginning of Superfund was

based upon cancer. In my case, it wasn't cancer. It was nosebleeds, it was asthma, it was my son turning blue from lack of breath. It was tingling hands and feet. It was headaches. Mundane things to most people, but to us experiencing it everyday, very serious. So this idea that the scientists had that the only thing you had to look at was cancer... The cause and effect of chemicals, you could still die and not have cancer from the effect of chemicals.

As time went on, even the scientists at EPA realized that this was true. Eventually this concept that only cancer was the measuring point was changed. It's still not perfect, but at least now we can go outside the realm of cancer and talk about the effects on the body in other ways. That changed a lot. Eventually it was citizens and scientists working together, trying to hear each other, whereas in the beginning it was scientists way up here saying, "We have the answers because we're the scientists," and us down here, "You don't have the answers because you aren't a scientist and you don't know." But sometimes good, down-to-earth knowledge is as important as the scientific knowledge, and that's finally been brought together, in my opinion. Not perfect, but it's been brought together.

EPA Interviewer: Has the Superfund program had a positive impact on environmental protection in America?

Radar: Yes. Yes, it's had a positive impact. I guess what you'll get from some citizens is that they may say no because they weren't there before Superfund. Maybe I'm fortunate that I was there before Superfund, because I know how out of control everything was, and how little control a citizen had on their life. When you get right down to it, Superfund has had a good impact. The only thing is, as I said earlier, it depends on an Administration, and who lobbies an Administration, whether the Superfund stays strong or not. And that's devastating to the average citizen who's out there in the field trying to do something every day.

EPA Interviewer: Are the challenges today the same as when you began the program? If yes, how are they similar? If no, what's different?

Radar: Challenges are the same, because we're still trying to get them to clean the chemicals out of the pits. So it's the same, but it's changed, because we're at least allowed to be part of the process. But the regulations still allow some things to happen and go on that don't allow what we consider to be the prudent thing to happen at a site. So, some has changed and some hasn't.

EPA Interviewer: Did the EPA administrative reforms of the mid-1990s have an effect on the program?

Radar: I would say yes. I would say that the harmful thing is that we still have the Superfund law out there, so most people who aren't associated with Superfund don't understand that when funds are cut from the program, many times it's the same as not having a program. Any time funds are cut from a program, that's important. It's going to hurt the average citizen. And my personal opinion is that it's also going to hurt the people within the agencies who are really trying to do the job right, and they can't. It's demoralizing to both the agency workers, it's demoralizing to the citizens, and it just means we're going to have another fight. Sometimes I wonder when I see this if sometimes we don't have this clock fall back to the old time where people get so mad, angry, that they want to get up and fight again and they join

together, and that causes change. I don't know. But it's hard work, and it's demoralizing to both sides. I would say that's the change that I think I saw in the 90s.

EPA Interviewer: Can you describe the role of state and local governments back when you became involved in the Superfund program initially and as it has evolved?

Radar: State and local. As I said, when I would call the state health department regarding the chemicals we were smelling, we were basically told there was nothing there but trash. I was pretty angry with them. I was angry with the tri-county health department, and I was angry with the state health department, because as far as I was concerned, they lied to us. Later on, our group went to both agencies and went through their files. It was a real revelation, because what I found was, before Superfund and RCRA were installed, states had very little regulatory authority over where industries dumped their chemicals. In the case of my Superfund site, the Lowry Landfill Superfund site, the state and tri-county had issued numerous warnings to the City of Denver, the owner of the site, telling them they were doing environmental damage and they were possibly harming the area's citizens. It was very contentious for them. At one point, the owner of the site, the City of Denver, wrote a letter which in effect said, "If you don't like what we're doing, sue us and see what happens." Well, of course, there were no laws. After that experience, I could really see that the state had tried, and that there were many good people in that agency that had seen what was happening and were very concerned about it, but had no authority to do anything.

After Superfund came into effect, the state, and people from Colorado were very active in voicing their role because they wanted to participate in whatever happened in the state. I have to respect them for that because they are our closest agency... They're our most responsible agency that we turn to. They're the first ones we probably will turn to, being our local agency. I think the state, even though it hasn't been perfect, really tried from the very beginning to make sure that when these laws were passed, that the states were involved because of their responsibility to their citizens. I think we've had some pretty good leadership, at least from the state health department and tri-county. The state health department has been very good. There have been occasions when we've had Administrators who, as I said, realized that industry is very important to the local economy and so on and so forth, and sometimes the rules like in air quality and cleanup, maybe the state hasn't been as diligent all the time as they should have. But I would say, if we're just talking about my experience with my site, I would say they've been very diligent. I can't complain.

EPA Interviewer: What role, if any, have you observed the Superfund program playing in redevelopment of properties?

Radar: Well, in the beginning, I've seen that Superfund sites shouldn't be redeveloped, and that was for a number of reasons, including the Love Canal, which started the whole Superfund program, actually. And that was all very logical. I've seen changes over the years. I've seen where the agencies now believe, and Congress now believes, that if the site is not as totally destroyed as the Love Canal was, that perhaps we could call them "brownfields" and develop on them. I've never felt really comfortable with that, because it depends on how well it's cleaned up. I don't know if this is a good or a bad thing. I think that settling people into an area where we know there's been contamination without making sure that it's thoroughly cleaned up is a very dangerous step to take. I understand that we need to reuse

sites, but I'm just not sure it's a wise idea. The experiences that I've had with sites that have been "cleaned up," some of the impacts to people afterwards haven't been good. I guess only time will tell on that one. I don't have a clear picture in my mind at this point in time whether I'm right or wrong. I just know it makes me nervous.

EPA Interviewer: What is the biggest challenge the Superfund program has dealt with over the past 25 years?

Radar: Funding. I would say funding. You go through an Administration that supports it and really gives it the OK and gives the people the funds to go out and do the job, and then another Administration comes in and starts taking it away. As I said earlier, you can have a law called Superfund and you can have rules that go with it, but if you don't have the money to enforce it, there's no law then.

EPA Interviewer: Do you see a day when hazardous waste sites will be cleaned up and the Superfund program as we know it today will no longer be needed?

Radar: No, I don't think we're ever going to have every site cleaned up. I don't think it's technically impossible in the future. I think in the future we're going to have technologies that definitely will be able to go in and, say, for instance, treat radionuclides. We have technologies now, but it's very expensive, and it's not sure. The case at Lowry Landfill Superfund site is those chemical pits are so deep now because they put 50 to 100 foot lift of trash and clay on top of the pits, and we still have 100 million gallons of chemicals under there. Getting to them is going to be very dangerous, probably very expensive, and it's going to take a long time. Sites like Lowry are going to be in the operation and maintenance mode probably forever. Until somebody decides to get in there and use some technologies that really start sucking the chemicals out and treating and so on and so forth. Superfund's going to be necessary for a very long time because we have many sites that are not cleaned up. They will not be for years. On top of that, we're going to be finding more sites that we don't know of right now. Superfund is a very important part of this program for the citizens.

EPA Interviewer: Is there anything else about your involvement with the Superfund program over time that you would like to share?

Radar: I'm thankful for Superfund. I'm thankful for RCRA (I know that's not part of this). I'm thankful for both laws. I'm thankful they came in at the same time. Superfund cleans it up, supposedly; RCRA controls future dumping. They're both interactive. Superfund's going to have to come back to address many RCRA sites, in some cases I believe. I think they're interactive. And I'm thankful for both of the laws.

Am I always pleased with the process and how much success I find from it? No. It's frustrating and it's wrenching. It's a daily fight and struggle. I'm constantly being disappointed. My group members are being constantly disappointed, but at least it gives us hope. As long as the law continues on, as long as it gives citizen participation an important role, and as long as it's funded, [pause] I think I'm glad it's there.

EPA Interviewer: Thank you very much.