

MINUTES  
NAVAL WEAPONS STATION (NAVWPNSTA) SEAL BEACH  
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)  
AND COMMUNITY MEETING  
City of Seal Beach Council Chambers  
January 14, 2015

*Participants:*

*Arenal, Christine /CH2M Hill Kleinfelder a Joint Venture (KCH)*  
*Bettencourt, Philip/Community Member*  
*Blake, Geoffrey/RAB Member*  
*Cummings, Esther/Friends of Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)*  
*Faherty, Ryan/Richard Brady and Associates (BRADY)*  
*Feenstra, Chuck/Community Member*  
*Gandara, Jose/RAB Member*  
*Grinyer, Walt/Geosyntec Consultants*  
*Jordan, Jack/RAB Member*  
*Lee, Larry/RAB Member*  
*Reese, Brenda/Remedial Project Manager (RPM), Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Southwest*  
*Shields, Tim/BRADY*  
*Smith, Gregg/Public Affairs Officer, NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach*  
*Smith, Patti/Friends of Seal Beach NWR*  
*Tamashiro, Pei-Fen/RAB Navy Co-Chair, NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach*  
*Thorpe, Darwin/RAB Member*  
*Vance, Carolyn//Friends of Seal Beach NWR*

*WELCOME*

P. Tamashiro commenced the meeting at 6:00 pm at the City of Seal Beach Council Chambers by welcoming all participants. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves and to sign-in and collect handouts at the front table. P. Tamashiro then introduced B. Reese, RPM, to present an overview of the Project Highlights.

*B. Reese presented an update on site work on the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) which consists of the Installation Restoration Program (IRP) and Munition Response Program (MRP). The current status of the following IRP sites was discussed in detail by B. Reese:*

- *Site 7, Station Landfill – Semiannual Landfill Cover Inspections and Maintenance*
- *Site 40, Concrete Pit/Gravel Area – Annual Long Term Monitoring*
- *Site 70, Research, Testing, and Evaluation – Remedial Action Operation*
- *Site 74, Skeet Range – Feasibility Study/Proposed Plan*

*She concluded by briefly discussing the past MRP Preliminary Site Inspection and the upcoming Remedial Investigation at the three MRP sites.*

Questions and answers discussed during the Project Highlights are summarized below.

**Question:** *What did you do with the contaminated well at IRP Site 75?*

**Answer:** *It was an agricultural well. It was decommissioned right away.*

**Question:** *And by decommission, you mean?*

**Answer:** *Following state regulation by sealing it from the bottom up, so that the well does not act as a conduit between different formations. The grout is pumped under pressure so that the grout goes into the formation. The surface completion is also removed and sealed.*

**Question:** *The 42 wells to be decommissioned are monitoring wells, and the one that was decommissioned was agricultural?*

**Answer:** *That is correct.*

**Question:** *Regarding the continuing efforts to identify responsible parties for Site 75, was it confirmed that it was not the Navy or Boeing that caused the contamination? Was it in fact a third party that should be investigated?*

**Answer:** *There are still ongoing efforts regarding this. Other than know the contamination did not come from the Navy, we are still collecting information.*

**Question:** *Regarding the area where the agricultural well was contaminated, what is preventing further contamination?*

**Answer:** *We don't know if there is further contamination or not. But without the pumping of the agriculture well, the plume is at least not drawn into the Navy's direction. The Regional Water Quality Control Board is the lead agency that oversees the investigation and cleanup activities at the industrial sites east of the Navy's property.*

**Question:** *You should be able to find the responsible party based on records including insurance maps, Leaking Underground Storage Tank list, and ownership papers for parcels of property.*

**Answer:** *Yes, the Navy continues to collect these records. At least 20 commercial activities have been identified to the east of Site 75. Many of these sites have been confirmed to have had past releases, and some sites are undergoing remediation. Some of these record collection efforts are carried out by the Navy's attorney.*

**Question:** *Different plumes have a different fingerprint to identify a responsible party, correct?*

**Answer:** *Yes, but a lot of the businesses use the same chemicals.*

**Question:** *There could be several comingled plumes too.*

**Answer:** *Yes, it is complicated.*

**Question:** *Do you have a map with you showing the Site 70 plume in relation to the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge (SBNWR)?*

**Answer:** *It was in the previous RAB meeting technical presentation but not today's. It can be found on our website. Please email P. Tamashiro for more details. Please note that the plume goes deeper and by the time it gets to the wetland, it is over 100 feet below the surface and does not impact the SBNWR – although it creates a challenge for remediation.*

P. Tamashiro thanked the community members and said the Navy will continue to report out to the community and keep them posted. P. Tamashiro then introduced Brenda Reese, RPM, to present an overview of the Budget.

*The total environmental restoration costs were \$70 million. IRP costs accounted for \$1.01M and MRP costs accounted for \$2.42M in 2014. Looking forward, not a lot of funding is projected for work this fiscal year; however, some modifications are anticipated to fund more work under the IRP.*

Questions and answers discussed during the Budget Status are summarized below.

**Question:** *Why is there no more funding programmed for IRP Site 75?*

**Answer:** *Previously, the Navy was only focusing on clearing that the Navy's operation is not the source of the contamination at IRP Site 75. That task was completed. However, depending on the result of record collection, we may budget for additional rounds of groundwater sampling in FY 16 or beyond.*

*C. Arenal and S. Wright with KCH presented an update on Site 74. The main concern is the lead contamination. Christine presented a review of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Process and the Feasibility Study. Shannon discussed the technology screening evaluation. Numerous technologies were reviewed, including a 'no-action' option. The benefits of each alternative were presented. Christine resumed her presentation by explaining how they developed alternatives based on the technologies available. The Feasibility Study was finalized and a Proposed Plan is in the works. The Proposed Plan is planned to be submitted in summer of 2015 for regulatory agency and public review.*

Questions and answers discussed during the Site 74 Presentation are summarized below.

**Question:** *What is the white powder on the picture of the lead shot?*

**Answer:** *Probably lead oxide.*

**Question:** *Would it be released into the environment?*

**Answer:** *Yes. The lead shot does decompose. That is why we sample for soil with the shot screened or filtered out.*

**Question:** *Regarding Slide 13, no lead in liver risk to animals was determined? What about the 20 geese that died from lead shot?*

**Answer:** *Those geese were not part of this risk assessment. The risk assessment analyzed lead in liver but found no physical signs of blood exposure. The risk assessment doesn't specifically address all animals, just which were analyzed.*

**Question:** *The plan is in place for the lead that was put there years ago from the skeet range. However, materials from the current small arms range still contaminate the area. How do you plan to clean up a site that is continually being contaminated? At some point the continuing contamination needs to be stopped.*

**Answer:** *Agreed. We are considering that in our plan in two ways. 1) We plan to stop the continuing release before we implement the plan. 2) The affected areas of the small arms range and the skeet range overlap. So we will move forward, and as remediation happens, we will do sufficient confirmation sampling for the entire area. At the end of last fiscal year (Sept 2014) the Commanding Officer gave the small arms range the highest priority. The current plan is to have a specialty consultant complete a design. The pistol range will have rubber walls on the sides, reduced number of support posts inside the range, and vertical baffling system across the shooting lanes to prevent ricochets. The target area will have a rubber absorption zone to capture the bullets. Everything will be contained inside this impact area. Demolition of portions of the current range will start in March and last into the summer this year. The range cannot be made to be totally enclosed due to air quality issues and budget constrain.*

**Question:** *Has there been an evaluation of impact on wildlife by the structure? Has the Seal Beach NWR representative seen any of these plans?*

**Answer:** *The construction is totally confined within the footprint of the current range. An environmental review will be conducted. The Navy's biologist will keep the refuge manager abreast of the project development.*

**Question:** *Will there be an opportunity for us to review this?*

**Answer:** *The Navy's biologist will keep the Friends of Seal Beach NWR informed of the progress of this project.*

**Question:** *Will there be vertical impacts regarding the height of the new range?*

**Answer:** *The vertical extent is essentially unchanged.*

**Question:** *Has there been anything done to prevent birds from foraging in the sediments?*

**Answer:** *The birds in the close proximity of the range are usually deterred by the noise generated by the activities at the range.*

**Question:** *Is there any plan to monitor the effectiveness of the new range?*

**Answer:** *The monitoring plan has not been finalized yet, but some sort of monitoring shall be done. A management plan will be developed.*

**Question:** *Degradation in rubber is conceivable. Can you prove it is a sound engineering design? Can you be sure it will work before you begin the remediation?*

**Answer:** *Degradation will be monitored. The monitoring and management plan will address this.*

**Question:** *Will the RAB have a chance to review this plan?*

**Answer:** *The range management plan is not part of the IRP and is not subject to community review. However, we will update you with the progress of the plan development and the major elements of the plan that are associated with the impact to IRP Site 74.*

**Question:** *Alternative 4 in the Feasibility Study, removal of soil with excavator, does not seem to be very selective.*

**Answer:** *It is selective considering the area in the wetland that will be cleaned up using this method. The areas are chosen, so the impact can be minimized.*

**Question:** *If you go down 1 foot in the 8.5 acre area, it will cause habitat destruction. It will be a clean cut, correct?*

**Answer:** *Correct.*

**Question:** *It will be taken off-site?*

**Answer:** *Yes.*

**Question:** *Soil will have to be brought in to restore it. This will be very expensive. Why not use hand labor and wheelbarrows to selectively excavate? The area was previously broken up into 1 foot sampling grids.*

**Answer:** *The sampling grid used for the investigation was 100 by 100 feet.*

**Question:** *I don't understand how the alternative containing big excavation, soil restoration, and re-vegetation is an effective way to spend money. Will it no longer be a wetland?*

**Answer:** *The upland area is not wetland.*

**Question:** *You are just going to clear the upland area, correct?*

**Answer:** *Yes*

**Question:** *And the wetland?*

**Answer:** *Not the entirety, we are going to be selective in wetland area.*

**Question:** *Why not be selective with the upland area?*

**Answer:** *Because it wasn't feasible based on the risk assessment. It was based on risk to the most sensitive receptor, and the extent of the excavation was designed to be protective.*

**Question:** *What about the migratory birds such as the geese that died?*

**Answer:** *The risk assessment focused on protecting the most sensitive bird species so that all birds will be protected.*

**Question:** *Are you going to provide the calculation of the costs for the alternatives?*

**Answer:** *The Feasibility Study has a breakdown of the costs.*

**Question:** *What is the process of putting comment into the record for the FS?*

**Answer:** *Notification was sent out in February 2014 to request for comments. Fish and Wildlife and other agencies made comments. So at this time, comment period on the Feasibility Study is closed. The Proposed Plan will come out next for comments.*

**Question:** *And the Remedial Action Work Plan?*

**Answer:** *That will be a few years down the road. That will also be available for comment.*

**Question:** *How long until groundbreaking?*

**Answer:** *At least 4 years from now.*

**Question:** *So all these concerns about the excavation extent have been addressed?*

**Answer:** *Since the Navy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) have looked for the best alternative to clean up the site, I think that the issue of the extent of excavation has been thoroughly examined.*

**Question:** *What will happen to the wetland?*

**Answer:** *The impacted wetland area will be re-vegetated and monitored during the period of restoration.*

**Question:** *What is the time of recovery?*

**Answer:** *The time of recovery was examined in the Net Environmental Benefit Analysis. Re-establishment of macro invertebrates was evaluated then. Based on the experience of the wetland recovery without intervening at IRP Site 5, it should take less than 15 years for the vegetation to be re-established at IRP Site 74.*

**Question:** *When was the last time you surveyed material on Case Road?*

**Answer:** *The presentation last May represented the last survey. The practices used at the small arms range have not changed since then. We will do a count again when the range is shut down for renovation.*

**Question:** *The rainfall recently could have mobilized materials. Friends of Seal Beach NWR would like some barriers to be placed to mitigate material from washing into the wetland.*

**Answer:** *Putting in temporary solutions could create more waste in the short term and the existing vegetation could prevent materials from being washed into the wetlands.*

**Question:** *It is only 8 feet or so distance from Case Road to the wetland. We would like you to be more proactive. Couldn't you use erosion control materials?*

**Answer:** *We will defer this comment to the Public Works Department to assess feasibility.*

**Question:** *What is the frequency of use of range?*

**Answer:** *The range is in use every day, but the usage has been significantly reduced now compared to the past.*

**Question:** *Is there a requirement to restore upland area to its current configuration?*

**Answer:** *Re-vegetation is one of the components of the preferred remedial alternative for the upland area.*

**Question:** *Considering the difficulty in resorting uplands, maybe that is not the best solution. Could you make it into a wetland instead?*

**Answer:** *To convert upland to wetland is a major issue involving many entities and agencies. In addition, the upland area is used as habitats for other protected species. The Navy will collect and consider opinions from various agencies and community members on how best to restore the uplands.*

#### *ANNOUNCEMENTS*

P. Tamashiro announced that the next RAB meeting will likely be a site tour in July 2015.

#### *ADJOURNMENT*

P. Tamashiro adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Note: This is a meeting summary, not an actual transcript.