

RAB Minutes

NAS North Island

Restoration Advisory Board

CTO-057

Subject: RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 22, 1996

The twenty-third Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting for Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island was held on Thursday, February 22, 1996 in the Coronado Unified School District's Board of Education Room from 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Mr. Arno Bernardo, Navy Co-Chair for the NAS North Island RAB, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Bernardo began the meeting with a brief outline of the evening's key topics: an update on the status of the Installation Restoration (IR) Site 2 landfill cut removal action; a report on the IR Site 9 modeling; a discussion by the NAS North Island Biologist regarding burrowing owls and base relocation plans; a presentation of the regulator response to a letter sent by the Community Co-Chair; a discussion of the status of the Technical Outreach Services to Communities (TOSC) funding; an announcement of the March 16, 1996 site tour; and an announcement of the community workshops for the NAS North Island Hazardous Waste Treatment Facility Permit renewal.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from the January 17, 1996 RAB Meeting

- The January 17, 1996 RAB meeting minutes were accepted and approved.

Site 2 Landfill Cut Removal Action Status Report and Slide Show

Ms. Kim Wheeler, Remedial Project Manager (RPM) with Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Division (SWDIV), and Mr. Doug Chen, Project Manager with OHM Remediation Services, provided an overview of the latest activities occurring at the Old Spanish Bight Landfill (Site 2) Cut. Site 2 was a trash incinerator that operated from 1938 to 1947 at the former Building 320 and incinerated solid wastes that may have included hazardous waste.

- Ms. Wheeler stated that the objective of the removal action at the landfill cut is to contain the exposed face of incinerator ash at the landfill cut and repair the exposed portion of a partially paved area adjacent to the landfill cut. She also stated that the two primary threats at the site are heavy metals (arsenic and lead) in soils at the surface of the site that may migrate, and weather conditions (wind,

surface runoff) that may cause contaminants to migrate.

- Ms. Wheeler provided a summary of the key milestones of the project, including: the October 26, 1995 dissemination of a fact sheet that announced the 30-day public review period of the Site 2 project plan; the January 8, 1996 commencement of field work; the February 9, 1996 date for completion of the major field work at the site and demobilization of the contractor; and the February 19, 1996 revegetation of the new slope at the site. Ms. Wheeler added that drainage improvements still need to be finished and the partially paved asphalt still needs to be repaired. It is expected that the Removal Closeout Report (a document that will contain a description of the work conducted, and an explanation of any samples taken and analyses made) will be available for review in March 1996.
- Mr. Chen continued with a slide show that illustrated the activities at the site. The slide show began with a picture of the eroding landfill cut as it was prior to the beginning of field work. The slide showed the orange coloration present at the landfill cut as a result of metal oxidation or rust. Mr. Chen also showed slides of various views of the landfill cut, including: a view of the parking lot located on top of the landfill that was a source of storm water run-on, and a slide that showed the removal of a concrete patch from the north slope of the landfill cut in order to improve drainage at the site. Mr. Chen continued and showed a slide of the landfill cut subsequent to excavation and ready for backfill placement. Two additional slides showed a view of the completed wall that was constructed and placed along the toe of the landfill slope, and a view showing the placement of the geogrid (consists of a synthetic material and is used to make the slope stronger and stable under seismic conditions) that will serve to stabilize the ash backfill.
- Mr. Chen continued with another slide that showed that the soil stockpiles were covered with Visqueen (essentially, a thick plastic cover) after each workday to prevent dust emissions and runoff in the event of rain. The remaining slides represented the last stages of the removal action at Site 2, including the placement of one geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) that will act as an impermeable barrier to prevent infiltration of water to the landfill. Another slide showed a view of the geoweb material (a weblike material that allowed cover material to be placed safely over the GCL) being filled with clean backfill. Mr. Chen completed the slide show with a picture of the completed landfill slope, including the new retaining wall and hydroseed. Mr. Chen stated that seeds native to the area surrounding the landfill cut were planted on top of the GCL and geoweb as part of the hydroseeding process.
- In response to a question from RAB member Ms. Laura Hunter regarding the number of cubic yards occupied by the landfill, Ms. Wheeler stated that she will confirm that number and provide that information to Ms. Hunter at a later date.

- In response to an additional question from RAB member Ms. Lois Ewen, Mr. Bernardo stated that the Navy plans to continue using this area as a staging area for the Public Work Center's construction projects.

Report on the Site 9 Modeling

Mr. Bill Collins, NAS North Island Team Leader for SWDIV, gave a report on the modeling that was conducted at the Chemical Waste Disposal Area (Site 9).

- Mr. Collins began with a review of the history of the site: compliance wells placed at the site detected contamination in the groundwater causing concern that contamination may be entering the bay; the results of the original samples were reconfirmed; 30 Petrex samplers were installed on the shore of the site to take soil gas samples; and, through the Petrex samplers, two areas containing contamination were identified. In response to the detection of contamination, the Navy installed 105 additional samplers in the bay. The new samplers also identified contamination. The Navy also installed seepage meters (devices that have valves that monitor groundwater movement) to determine whether the contamination was coming from the bay or the site. Most of the meters indicated that water moves primarily from the island to the bay.
- Mr. Collins reviewed additional sampling that was conducted at the site. After a long and careful sampling process, it was concluded that the site contained dichloroethylene and vinyl chloride. Mr. Collins noted that the quantities found are less than what was predicted in the computer modeling done for the site. He also noted that if these contaminants were to reach the bay, they would be diluted by a factor of 3800.
- In response to RAB member Mr. Howard Bacon's question, Mr. Collins stated that the Navy is currently working on a method to install remediation devices along the bay to treat the contaminated groundwater before it reaches the bay.
- Mr. Collins stated that an addendum to the Remedial Investigation (RI) report will be available for review in approximately one month.

Discussion of the NAS North Island Burrowing Owls and Relocation Plan

Mr. Clark Winchell, NAS North Island Biologist, provided an in-depth discussion of the status of the wildlife at NAS North Island, and discussed the facility's relocation plan for the burrowing owls. Before beginning his presentation, Mr. Winchell thanked Mr. Bernardo and Mr. Magee for their interest in and attention to wildlife in all of their projects.

- Mr. Winchell began with an overview of the general wildlife at NAS North Island. The station itself measures nearly 3,000 acres and is relatively flat. Its

highest point is 10 meters. Seventy-five percent of the land at NAS North Island is developed or, in biological terms, unavailable for wildlife purposes. Of the 25 percent of the undeveloped land, 60 percent is dredge spoils or artificial land. The remaining 40 percent of the undeveloped land is the original land and habitat that naturally occurred at NAS North Island. The land at the station ranges from extremely fragmented pockets of open areas to disturbed grasslands filled in by very dense buildings.

1. Mr. Winchell described the four active wildlife programs that are managed at the station's Staff Civil Engineering (SCE) office. Mr. Winchell noted that all of the wildlife in the station's program are monitored and individually tagged in order to study fecundity, survivorship, mortality, and movement.
 1. The office manages a program for the great blue heron. The heron's nesting colonies are in one location directly across from Building 3. Because of the program, the heron is able to breed, rear its young, and feed and forage.
 2. Another program that the station actively manages is the California least tern, a small shore bird. NAS North Island supports one of 39 breeding colonies in California. Because most of the beaches on the station are developed, the SCE office uses old runways or concrete helicopter landing pad mat sites to mimic the beach. After the grading and weeding of the sites is complete, sand with shell debris (required for nesting) in it is placed across the site. Least tern decoys are also placed on the site to help attract the birds to the site. Mr. Winchell added that half of the least tern colony is lost each year as a result of avian predation.
1. The SCE office also manages a program, primarily on the station's beaches, for the western snowy plover. The program began two years ago and, as a result, individual nests are still being located. The office has made major efforts to locate the nests, but some work still needs to be done.
1. The final program that the office manages is the burrowing owl, the only owl that nests in the ground or in burrows in North America. Burrowing owls do not dig their own burrows, but rather rely heavily on the ground squirrel to dig the burrows for them. The owls occupy the burrows as they are abandoned by the ground squirrels. The owls live in the mowed weedy fields and golf courses of NAS North Island because those locations mimic the owl's natural grass prairie habitat. The owls are live-captured each spring so they can be monitored, measured for growth, and individually banded or tagged with the US Fish and Wildlife Service band. The owls are monitored in pairs as they nest across the years. The owl's life span is about 4.5 years.
- Mr. Winchell added that the SCE office started an education program to alert the public that burrowing owls are located at NAS North Island. The education program raised an interest in the urban wildlife program, and called for the installation of signs in the area of the burrows to inform individuals operating

lawn mowers to avoid driving over the burrows. Since signs were installed at the burrows, the burrowing owl population has doubled.

- Mr. Winchell explained the different types of burrows, including the burrow used by the female for incubation. Mr. Winchell also explained the owl's mating process: the owls live 4 to 5 years, and within that period they often switch mates, although the owls continually reuse the same burrow complex.
- Mr. Winchell discussed the burrowing owl relocation process that the SCE office has used. Simple artificial burrows (chamber-like tubes) are placed into the ground and positioned like natural burrows. After the artificial burrows are placed into the ground, it is expected that a female owl will occupy it in the spring. The owl uses the artificial burrow just as it would a natural burrow (i.e., it brings food to the location). Mr. Winchell stated that only young owls are involved in the relocation process. The relocation process strives to supply a habitat for the burrowing owl in an area where there is no potential conflict for those dispersing to the area.

Discussion of the Regulator Response to February 6, 1996 RAB letter

On February 6, 1996, Ms. Marron sent a letter to the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and the California Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) requesting the presence of representatives from each of the two agencies at future RAB meetings. Ms. Marron stated that both agencies responded positively to her request.

- Mr. Charles Cheng, RWQCB, was present at the meeting. Mr. Cheng stated that his supervisor has stated that due to staffing shortages at the RWQCB, special arrangements will need to be made to accommodate his attendance of future RABs. Mr. Cheng added that although arrangements have not been made, he is hopeful that he will be able to attend future meetings.
- Three representatives from DTSC (Ms. Marsha Mingay, Mr. Rafat Abbasi, and Ms. Chia-Rin Yen) were present at the meeting. Ms. Mingay stated that she has faxed the letter to her supervisor in Sacramento to make him aware of the RAB's request for continued DTSC participation in the RAB. Ms. Mingay also thanked Ms. Marron for her letter.

Discussion of Technical Outreach Services to Communities

Ms. Marron provided an overview of the status of the Technical Outreach Services to Communities (TOSC) funding.

- Ms. Marron stated that she contacted Mr. Dale Manty of the Hazardous Substance Research Institute (HSRI), the organization that receives the funding for TOSC.

HSRI has five regional centers that provide technical support for the military and other agencies. HSRI received a \$1 million grant and a \$150,000 portion of that grant is to be used for providing technical assistance. Grants are distributed to groups on a case by case basis. Mr. Manty stated that he felt that the RAB is a good potential candidate for assistance.

Announcement of March 16, 1996 Site Tour

Mr. Mike Magee, NELP and IR Program Manager for NAS North Island, announced the next NAS North Island Site Tour scheduled for March 16, 1996. (The site tour will begin at the Island Club in Building X at NAS North Island.) He also asked for RAB member input on the possibility of combining the March RAB meeting with the Site Tour. Mr. Magee stated that the length of the RAB meeting would be reduced to one hour and would be held prior to the Site Tour.

- It was decided by RAB members present that the March RAB would be combined with the March 16, 1996 Site Tour. The Site Tour will be preceded by an abbreviated RAB meeting, a discussion of the Installation Restoration (IR) Program and the Navy Environmental Leadership Program (NELP), and an overview of the IR Sites located at NAS North Island.

Announcement of Community Workshop for the NAS North Island Hazardous Waste Treatment Facility Permit Renewal

Ms. Mingay provided an overview of the Draft Permit, including the new permitting requirements for hazardous waste treatment facilities, and stated that the Draft Permit will undergo a 45-day public review and comment period.

- Ms. Mingay stated that although the Draft Permit will serve as a renewal of the old permit, the quantities and limits of the permit are changing. The maximum volume to be treated at treatment units will be changing. All of the wastes that were formerly treated at the oily waste treatment unit will now be treated at the oil recovery plant. The maximum volume of the oil recovery plant is 250 million gallons/year. The maximum allowable volume of wastes treated at the industrial waste treatment unit will not change; the maximum volume will remain at 500 million gallons/year.
- Ms. Mingay also stated that the maximum storage quantity at storage areas has also changed: the number of containers that can be stored at the existing container storage area will increase from 592 55-gallon containers to 944 55-gallon containers. Although the new container storage area was not in use with the old permit, the draft permit will call for storage of up to 3,128 55-gallon containers. The polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) storage unit will increase from a capacity of 172 55-gallon containers to 312 55-gallon containers.

- In response to a RAB member question, Ms. Mingay stated that once the storage containers are full the material is shipped off. According to legal requirements, the station can not store the wastes on site for more than one year.
- Ms. Mingay asked for input from those present concerning the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documentation that will accompany the draft permit renewal. RAB members Ms. Hunter and Mr. John Machol provided input to Ms. Mingay; their comments will be forwarded.
- Ms. Athena Cozakos, Public Works Center, discussed the Corrective Action planned for the site. Ms. Cozakos explained that there is an overlap on this project between two statutory requirements: Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), required under the IR Program, and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), required when permitting hazardous waste storage facilities. The Corrective Action module of the permit, which can affect IR Program schedules, is required as part of RCRA permitting requirements.
- Ms. Mingay stated that a Visitor's Day hosted by the Navy will be scheduled sometime during the 45-day comment period. The date will be announced through the information that will be sent out announcing the comment period.

General and Closing Questions and Answers/Comments

- RAB member Mr. Howard Bacon expressed his concern about the air quality problems present in Coronado as a result from the operation of NAS North Island. Mr. Bacon asked that a greater effort be made in the future to protect the air quality in Coronado. As a result of Mr. Bacon's concern, a conversation followed regarding the purchase of air credits and the public perception of the air quality in Coronado.
- Ms. Mingay asked that a copy of the transcript be forwarded to her so that she can review Mr. Machol and Ms. Hunter's comments concerning the CEQA documentation.
- The next RAB meeting will be held in conjunction with the NAS North Island Site Tour that is scheduled for March 16, 1996 at the Island Club at NAS North Island from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Agenda topics for the RAB meeting will include: an update on the status of the TOSC funding; a report on the status of the Chemical Waste Disposal Area (Site 9) and the Industrial Waste Treatment Plant (Site 11); and an update on the activities at the Public Works Salvage Yard (Site 4).
- Following are the dates of upcoming NAS North Island RAB meetings (All meetings, except the March 16, 1996 meeting, will be held in the Winn Room at

the Coronado Public Library. The March 16, 1996 RAB meeting will be held in the Island Club at NAS North Island.):

Saturday, March 16, 1996

Thursday, April 25, 1996

Wednesday, May 22, 1996

Wednesday, June 26, 1996

Mr. Bernardo adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.