

RAB Minutes

NAS North Island

Restoration Advisory Board

CTO-008

Subject: RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, September 11, 1996

The twenty-ninth Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting for Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island was held on Wednesday, September 11, 1996, in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Mr. Arno Bernardo, Navy Co-Chair for the NAS North Island RAB, called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Mr. Bernardo welcomed RAB and community members, summarized the evening's agenda items, and announced that Ms. Marcia Mingay, Public Participation Specialist for the Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), will no longer attend RAB meetings due to cutbacks on state travel for nonspecific regulatory issues.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from the August 28, 1996 RAB Meeting

The August 28, 1996 RAB meeting minutes were amended and approved as annotated, with one abstention. The last sentence of the first bullet on page three was amended to read:

- "Industrial waste discharge ceased in 1972 with the construction of the Industrial Waste Treatment Plant (IWTP)."

Update on Extended Remedial Investigation at Site 10

Ms. Kim Wheeler, Southwest Division (SWDIV) Remedial Project Manager, provided an update on Installation Restoration (IR) Site 10. The following is a summary of Ms. Wheeler's presentation:

- Site 10, the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office (DRMO), has been under Remedial Investigation (RI) since January 1994. While in phase 2 of the investigation, an area on the shoreline, called the Shoreline Slag, became a subject of concern and the target of an emergency removal action and extended RI.
- In the 1940's to mid 1960's a smelter operated on the site. Aluminum and other types of metal from aircrafts were melted here, and the slag (smelter residue) was

deposited along the shoreline, adjacent to Site 10.

- Just before the 4th of July 1995, two exposed slag outcrops containing radium-226 hotspots were discovered on the shoreline. An emergency removal action was conducted July - November 1995, and periodic briefs were presented to the RAB. During the removal, the slag was discovered to extend inland and along the shoreline.
- The objectives of the extended RI are to define the extent of the Slag Disposal Area based on observations from the emergency removal action; to characterize the soil, groundwater, and bay sediment; to conduct a risk assessment; and to evaluate effective remedial options.
- The project kick-off meeting took place on June 18, 1996 with attendees including: California Department of Health Services (the regulatory oversight for radiation); California Department of Fish and Game; RAB Community Co-Chairs; Environmental Health Coalition; Regional Water Quality Control Board; and the Department of Toxic Substance Control.
- At the kick-off meeting, the team agreed to begin the RI to delineate the extent of the Slag Disposal area by implementing a Reconnaissance Survey. The survey will utilize radiation detectors and electromagnetometers (metal detectors) to survey the land and beach area. Radiation detectors will be used to help define the lateral extent of the slag, since they only detect radiation in the top 6 to 12 inches of a surface. Metal detectors are used to define the vertical extent of the slag since the detectors can survey down to 11 feet below ground surface.
- The Reconnaissance Survey will be performed by the Oakridge National Lab of Colorado, using Ultrasonic Ranging and Data System (USRADS). Its benefits include: the ability to attach radiation detectors, metal detectors, and other sensing devices; producing real-time positional data; on-site verification of survey coverage; and faster, more complete characterization with fewer errors.
- The Navy prepared and submitted a Reconnaissance Survey Work Plan for 30-day review and comment. A copy can be found in the information repositories at designated libraries.
- Currently, the team is addressing and transmitting responses for comments on the survey work plan, as well as preparing for the actual Reconnaissance Survey, scheduled to begin on Monday, September 16, 1996. Results are expected by November 1996, followed by a meeting held to review results, which will then be presented to RAB members.

Update on Mercury Spill Emergency Removal Action

Ms. Wheeler gave the RAB an update on the recent mercury spill which took place at NAS North Island.

- On July 1, 1996, elemental mercury (mercury) was released from a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) sitting aboard an escort boat parked at "Berth Oscar," during prelaunch checkout when the mercury jettison system was inadvertently operated. Response began immediately to recover the 160 pounds of mercury discharged from the system, but about one cup (7 to 8 pounds) spilled into the San Diego Bay.
- Mercury is not a carcinogen and is therefore not harmful to humans unless it vaporizes and is inhaled. Air monitoring is being conducted at the removal Site to protect workers. The risk driver is exposure to the marine environment. If mercury is converted to an organic form and enters into the water column it becomes extremely toxic.
- The concentrations of mercury detected range from background up to 1,000 parts per million (ppm). The Effects Range-Medium (ER-M) set by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was selected as the cleanup goal. The ER-M for mercury is 0.71 ppm, which coincides with background mercury levels at the spill Site. This means that sediment containing above 0.71 ppm mercury has a 50 percent chance of toxicological effect.
- To date, 290 cubic yards of Bay sediments were collected from the spill area using an environmental dredge bucket mounted from a pier-side crane. This dredge is designed for environmental projects. Some desirable features: it is designed to seal as it pulls up sediment, creating minimal water turbidity (disturbing sediment and mixing it with water); it is slow and careful, and it precisely determines depth at the dredge location. When dredging is complete, Navy Public Works Center Divers will collect sediment samples; the samples will be analyzed for mercury and compared to the 0.71 ppm cleanup goal. Sampling results are expected the week of September 16, 1996, before the U.S.S. Constellation San Diego (Constellation) pulls out of San Diego Bay (September 23, 1996).
- Although there are no air emissions expected because mercury doesn't vaporize at ambient temperatures, air monitoring is being conducted on top of storage bins holding dredged materials.
- On average, there will be twelve site workers at a time driving their personal vehicles to the site, these will also be a one-time mobilization/demobilization equipment such as trucks and storage tanks. Off-site disposal of dredged sediments takes place after characterization and transportation preparation. Currently, the Navy estimates up to 40 loads required. Only 3-5 trucks will be sent per day to minimize traffic impacts; trucks will use the approved truck route

to Interstate 5.

- All proper documentation has been prepared for this Removal Action. Public notices appear in three newspapers: *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *Coronado Journal*, and *Coronado Eagle* (9/01/96), and the Action Memorandum is available for a 30-day public review and comment period. For questions, please contact Ms. Wheeler at 556-7315, Ms. Chris Potter at 532-1164, or Mr. Ken Mitchell, NAS North Island Public Affairs Officer, at 545-8167.

Answering a question posed by Mr. Ken Moser, member of the Baykeeper organization, Ms. Wheeler detailed the process of dewatering. The removal area contains 15-cubic-yard roll-off bins filled half-way with dredged sediments. Vacuum trucks equipped with hoses are used to suck off water from the top, then the bins are gravity drained at the staging area. The buckets

are sealed and the water is pumped out into Baker tanks. Once most of the water is out of the sediment, it is transported to an approved disposal facility, depending on concentration levels of mercury.

Ms. Wheeler informed public member Ms. Stephanie Kaupp that the City of Coronado does not require notification of possible traffic delays if truck traffic is within normal range. Mr. Bill Collins, SWDIV Team Leader, noted the existence of a City/Navy agreement on how to manage waste leaving the island, including a signed agreement between Captain Steuer and the City on how to report traffic. Mr. Kleeman of Coronado City proposed writing a letter to the City indicating what will be done and in what time frame. Mr. Collins assured RAB members that he will keep the Mayor informed.

Ms. Wheeler illustrated to Ms. Kaupp that if mercury levels exceed 260 ppm, they must be reported and transferred to a high-level mercury landfill; there are only a few of these landfills in the country (the closest is found in Cincinnati, Ohio). Ms. Wheeler noted that the Navy does not expect bins to transfer to such landfills due to lack of high mercury levels. The bins will probably be transported to a RCRA Hazardous waste landfill. Mr. Neal Clements, OHM Remediation, mentioned Kettleman Hills (California) as a possible landfill.

Replying to a comment made by public member Ms. Betsy Gill, Ms. Wheeler expressed that this cleanup was not accounted for in the budget (since it was an accident), but will receive all funding from The Navy Environmental Compliance Account (NECA) and will cost from \$.5 million to \$1.5 million.

Answering a question posed by Ms. Hunter regarding air emissions, Mr. John Bruton, of OHM, clarified that dredging equipment is powered by air pressure, not diesel.

Ms. Hunter suggested the Navy look at previous records of spill accidents and change procedures to ensure employee health and safety. Ms. Wheeler addressed Ms. Hunter's

doubt as to the "one cup" of mercury spilled in the Bay contaminating 290 cubic yards. The original globules of mercury broke down into beads, spreading into a bigger area over time. Mr. Collins relayed that divers collected a large amount of mercury quickly, but trouble began when an aircraft carrier had to leave the dock and it churned up sediments. Ms. Wheeler also relayed that the claim that there are 140 pounds of mercury stuck in a line is currently being verified, and added that Lieutenant Danny Hernandez, Public Affairs Officer for the Deep Submergence Unit, would be able to answer most questions. Lt. Hernandez can be reached at 553-8643.

Ms. Hunter commented that mercury may not cause direct human problems, but can be traced in the Bay fish, which humans eat. Ms. Hunter questioned the use of ER-M levels as opposed to Effects-Range-Low (ER-L) levels. Ms. Wheeler noted that ER-L is below the background levels in the area. Ms. Hunter objected to calling ER-M the background level, when it is the current state of contamination in the Bay at that point. Mr. Collins clarified that ER-M is close to the natural background of sediments without man-made contamination.

Answering questions asked by Mr. Richard Mach, SWDIV Remedial Project Manager, and Mr. Moser, Mr. Collins stated that mercury being cleaned up from the spill, and background mercury from antifouling paint on ships can be differentiated after sampling depending on the levels calculated. Also, the mercury spilled is in elemental form, meaning it is less harmful.

Mr. Collins informed RAB member Mr. Clay Kordahl that 11.5 pounds of mercury were recovered thus far (a little over the 7-8 pounds originally estimated).

Ms. Wheeler told Mr. Moser that sediment traps were installed before the September 23rd departure of the Constellation in order to get an idea of how much sediment is disturbed during prior carrier movements.

Mr. Sandor Kaupp, taking the place of RAB member Mr. Howard Bacon, explained that the reference sites are out on the edges of the turning basins. Mr. Kaupp added that it is possible to go below background level (to an ER-L level) and have a clean spot, but at some point too much money and time is spent in the turning basin when as soon as a ship moves in or out, the pristine spot becomes equal to background again because of sediment redistribution.

Mr. Greig Peters, from Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), pointed out that

ER-M and ER-L are based on a nationwide database, and don't take into account that there may be a difference in the relative biological availability of *that* chemical in *that* sediment in *that* location. A site-specific objective should be created that determines scientifically what level is harmful.

Mr. Kaupp explained to Mr. Kordahl that cyanide will not be found in the mercury spilled, but is found mostly in crude non-elemental mercury.

Community Involvement

Ms. Mingay sent Mr. Bernardo her ideas on RAB involvement in the community. She noted the RAB members' responsibility to facilitate the exchange of information between the project teams and the community. Mr. Bernardo urged the members to talk to friends, neighbors, schools, family members, and organizations in an effort to communicate ideas and interests. Ms. Mingay also suggested RAB members hold demonstrations in classrooms, write editorials for local papers, and set up booths at local events,

Ms. Hunter expressed disappointment over the extent of sharing and limited topics allowed at RAB meetings. She requested having sharing time on the agenda so members may bring relevant information to RAB meetings. Mr. Bernardo clarified that the RAB was set up for Restoration and cleanup programs specifically at NAS North Island. Mr. Collins added that RABs originally were designed by President Clinton for closing bases due to land transfer. In the case of non-closing bases, the decision was made that RAB members would participate only in Installation Restoration processes required under CERCLA. Mr. Mach mentioned the

Regional Forum on Military Bases Technology coming up on the 26th and 27th of September in San Francisco, which would be a great time to voice concerns. Ms. Dorothy Marron, RAB member, will be attending the conference this year.

Mr. Kaupp encouraged RAB members to ask the Public Affairs Officer to distribute articles in local newspapers, and set up a regular meeting monthly where they can discuss various concerns not heard at RAB meetings.

Mr. Bernardo informed Mr. Kordahl that Technical Assistant Grant (TAG) money from DOD is still in debate as to procedures used and how to disperse the money.

Mission Statement Changes

Mr. Mach recalled RAB members have been attempting to revise the Mission Statement wording regarding the elections of people onto the RAB. Ms. Hunter noted that on Page C-3f, it explains that open nominations for potential RAB members will be held in November and April. Mr. Mach proposed interested persons should be added periodically by their request. All agreed that Mr. Mach will revise the statement and send it out with the next RAB meeting minutes so it can be reviewed and voted on at the next meeting.

Mr. Bernardo inquired about the next RAB meeting dates, which need to be tailored to Ms. Marron's school schedule. Ms. Khoury, Contractor providing community relations support services, suggested October 3rd or 31st, and November 7th or 21st. RAB members agreed on November 7th. Mr. Collins requested Ms. Khoury reserve the Winn

room for the RAB meeting in early December.

The next RAB meeting has been scheduled for 7 November 1996 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library.

Mr. Bernardo adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.