

RAB Minutes

NAS North Island

Restoration Advisory Board

CTO-009

Subject: RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 7, 1996

The thirtieth Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meeting for Naval Air Station (NAS) North Island was held on Thursday, November 7, 1996, in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Dottie Marron, Community Co-Chair for the NAS North Island RAB, called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m., and welcomed RAB and community members. Ms. Marron clarified that public comments are welcome at any time during RAB meetings, not only at the closing.

Approval of Meeting Minutes from the September 11, 1996 RAB Meeting

RAB member Ms. Laura Hunter requested the minutes be revised to read that mercury in San Diego Bay is toxic to humans through fish consumption. The Navy's response was that fish consumption in San Diego Bay was not relevant to the mercury spill at NAS North Island, nor was it part of Ms. Wheeler's presentation. After several discussions and suggestions, it was agreed that a parenthetical statement about mercury's toxicological effects will be added in the minutes before the summary of Ms. Wheeler's presentation.

The approval of the September 11, 1996, meeting minutes was postponed until the December 12, 1996, RAB meeting due to a problem with two different versions of the minutes.

Mercury Spill Emergency Removal Action

Ms. Kim Wheeler, Southwest Division (SWDIV) Remedial Project Manager, provided the RAB with an update on the mercury spill removal action.

- As previously reported, elemental mercury (Hg) was released when a Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) sitting aboard an escort boat parked at "Berth Oscar" inadvertently operated the Hg jettison system. One hundred and sixty pounds of Hg were discharged from the DSRV onto the escort boat, and then approximately 1 to 2 cups (8 - 10 pounds) of Hg spilled into San Diego Bay

and settled into a 27 x 15 foot area of bay sediments directly below the anchored ship. Emergency response began immediately, but as carriers started departing, sediments were churned up and the Hg began to spread into a 100 x 300 foot area.

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Effects Range-Medium (ER-M) of 0.71 parts per million (ppm) for mercury, which reflects site background levels and was approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), is the cleanup goal.
- An environmental clamshell bucket was initially used to dredge sediment, but the Navy switched to an air hydraulic dredge to remove remaining hot spots. The clamshell was first selected because of its high performance rate and low water generation. At the time, it was unknown whether the sea water was contaminated and would therefore require hazardous waste disposal. Based on analysis, the sea water was non-hazardous and could be discharged down the sanitary sewer. Therefore, the air hydraulic dredge was selected.
- So far, two rounds of dredging have been completed, and the Navy is awaiting verification sampling results on the second round.

Ms. Wheeler informed RAB member Mr. Larry McCauley that approximately 100 cubic yards of bay sediments were dredged using the air hydraulic dredge, and approximately 290 cubic yards were dredged using the clamshell bucket.

Ms. Wheeler pointed out to Mr. Ed Kleeman of the City of Coronado that San Diego, not Coronado, must agree to the disposal of water into the sanitary sewer. SWDIV Remedial Project Manager Mr. Richard Mach added that residents of Coronado will not be financially responsible for the discharge since NAS North Island pays the Public Works Center, who then pays the City of San Diego.

- The average Hg concentration of the overall 100 x 300 foot area (divided into 196 grids) is 3.18 ppm based on verification sampling results taken after round 1. Ms. Wheeler assured attendees that dredging will continue until the goal of 0.71 ppm is reached.
- In total, 483 tons of sediment were dredged and put into 43 bins; three-quarters of the bins were classified as non-hazardous, while one-quarter was considered hazardous. As a conservative measure, all bins will be transported by truck to hazardous waste landfills. In order to decrease traffic, it has been decided that no more than 5 trucks a day will drive through the City; an informative letter will be sent to City officials as soon as a transporting schedule is defined.

Ms. Hunter wanted to go on the record saying that she agreed with the Navy's decision to take all waste to a hazardous landfill.

Responding to a question posed by public member Ms. Stephanie Kaupp, Ms. Wheeler announced that approximately 20 trucks will be used in this project. The project engineer from OHM Remediation, Mr. Bill Hurley, stated that the same trucks will be reused to transport all bins back and forth (round-trip); each truck carries approximately two bins per load.

Public member Ms. Marilyn Field questioned why the Navy didn't use its own barges. Mr. Collins, SWDIV Team Leader, noted that even if the Navy owned its own barges, contractors are not allowed to use government equipment.

Ms. Field also questioned how the cost of keeping carriers out at sea compares to the cost of the estimated cost of cleanup. Mr. Magee, Environmental Engineer for NAS North Island, explained that the cost of keeping carriers out at sea is approximately \$1 million a day compared to the estimated \$850,000 the cleanup will cost. Ms. Wheeler added that she would like to put a disclaimer on any price estimate because remediating Hg is not a science and could cost over or under the estimated \$850,000.

- In conclusion, there have been no injuries or accidents reported, no spills, and no concerns from air continuously monitored at the staging area and the pier during dredging. The public comment period has ended (September 1, 1996 - October 1, 1996), yielding responses only from the Environmental Health Coalition.

Responding to comments made by various RAB attendees, Ms. Wheeler speculated that if carriers had not moved and churned sediments, cleanup would have taken approximately 2 weeks. Ms. Wheeler clarified that the Hg jettison system on board the ships is used for emergencies only.

Ms. Hunter questioned why a Cleanup and Abatement Order was not issued to stop the carriers from disturbing the cleanup site. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Project Manager Mr. Rafat Abbasi stated that it would take too long to issue such an order. Mr. Magee confirmed that initially carriers were stopped, but then had to be allowed to move. Mr. Sandor Kaupp, sitting in for RAB member Mr. Richard Dittbenner, recommended that the Navy should have capped and covered the location so that sediments would not be disturbed, even in between carrier departures. Ms. Wheeler responded that both long-term and short-term caps were considered, but determined to be not feasible.

Ms. Field questioned how this project interferes with the home porting project. Mr. Collins noted that so far the projects have not affected one another, but there may be an overlap soon. Mr. Mach added that he attended the NOVA (contractor dredging the home porting area) CQC meeting and their concern was that they would prefer the carriers park further forward, which would be in the mercury area. Subcontractors of NOVA are working around the carriers and the mercury cleanup schedule.

Mr. Charles Cheng of the RWQCB suggested establishing an emergency response plan

specifically for mercury-related situations. Ms. Wheeler relayed that the Navy has an emergency spill response plan that they are required to follow. Mr. Mach made a motion that the Navy should look at current emergency plans, modify them to include procedures during a mercury spill if necessary, then update the RAB at the next meeting.

Update on Sites 9 & 11

Mr. Magee gave RAB members an overview of projects on sites 9 and 11.

- Currently, there is a soil vapor extraction project going on at Installation Restoration (IR) Site 9. There is an SVE system located at Area 1 (fiery marsh), where wells are placed horizontally to capture contaminants in the area. Contractors are in the process of putting in wells at Area 3.
- Since it is approximately 30-40 feet to groundwater at Site 11, the SVE system utilizes vertical wells.
- There was an incident on Site 9, Area 3, where a crew not following specifications of the Health and Safety Plan left soil piles uncovered over night. In the morning when the wind blew and the soil warmed, an odor was reported causing some workers in adjacent buildings to experience headaches and feelings of nausea. Construction has now ceased.
- The Navy has decided to amend the Health and Safety Plan, and has written a letter to DTSC entailing changes. As soon as the Navy approves the changes, they will be placed in designated information repositories.

Mr. Magee explained to RAB member Mr. Howard Bacon that contractors on this project had to work at night in order not to conflict with the day schedule of the Weapons Department; night operations were not adequately discussed in the current Health and Safety Plan, therefore, it should be amended.

Mr. Mach also gave a presentation concerning the incident at Site 9. Mr. Mach noted that more communication was needed between the contractor, the Navy, and Weapons and Naval Aviation Depot (NADEP) people.

Ms. Hunter believed that the contractor who caused six people to become sick and violated two elements of the Health and Safety Plan should be punished.

- The Health and Safety Plan also failed to define "stockpiles." The new amendments will illustrate that any pile, no matter how small, will be spread along the entire trench, and each little mound will be covered with 6 inches of clean soil, then covered with plastic.
- The Weapons and NADEP people suggested continuously monitoring the site

during excavation activities and making a video of work performed (engineers and health and safety personnel have already begun filming). In order to comply with this monitoring suggestion, Weapons and NADEP people will be evacuated from the site during the 3-day weekend of November 9-11, 1996, when the contractor plans to do all the additional pipeline and well work needed while monitoring the site.

Mr. Mach pointed out that this was a cost-plus contract with an award fee (there was a 10-percent pot of money available for profit based on the evaluation level [0-100] the Navy gave the contractor). In this case, the contractor lost half of the fee available to them. Mr. Mach added that a warning was given to the contractor that if health and safety violations occur again, they will receive a level zero evaluation and lose all the fee.

Mr. Doug Chen, OHM Remediation, gave the RAB a status report on construction at Sites 9 and 11.

- On Site 11 construction has been completed. The emissions data gathered thus far indicated that the influent is about 200 ppm, while the effluent is zero; the emissions rate based on 12 ppm is 0.04 tons per year.

Answering a question posed by Mr. Abbasi, Mr. Chen noted that based on a pilot test, the Navy was expecting to see 2,500 ppm influent concentration; so far this has not been reached.

- To concentrate on the productive wells, nonproductive wells are being isolated and the flow rate will be reduced (the influent concentration should rise in the next couple of months).
- The upcoming tasks at Site 11 include incorporating to a 24-hour operation (starting November 21, 1996), and installing a large transformer the week of November 15, 1996, to make this new work schedule possible. Air sparging will begin on December 20, 1996, and then in February 1997, exhaust air will begin to be re-injected.
- Construction at Site 9 is not complete; two horizontal wells and 40 vertical wells will be installed during the weekend of November 9-11, 1996. Operation of the system should begin in late December 1996, and follow the same startup schedule as Site 11.

RAB Charter Review

Mr. Mach presented RAB members with a copy of the charter illustrating the two areas he changed (when the RAB would accept applications for new members, and how to vote them in). The changes were approved and the Co-Chairs signed the accepted document.

RAB Community Co-Chair Nomination

RAB member Ms. Lois Ewen nominated Ms. Marron as Community Co-Chair and commended Ms. Marron on the wonderful support she has offered the RAB.

Mr. Mach noted that according to the recently amended RAB Charter, voting on this position will take place in December and duties will span from 1 January to 31 December. Voting for the RAB Community Co-Chair will take place at the next RAB meeting.

Ms. Marcia Mingay, Public Participation Specialist with DTSC, informed RAB members that the Department of Defense decided to fund DTSC's RAB participation through negotiations, based upon relevance of agenda items. Ms. Mingay mentioned that if anyone would like to discuss any issues, including mixed waste and the home porting project, she would be available after the meeting. Ms. Mingay also added that the proposed rule for RAB TAG regulation was circulated during a 60-day comment period, and DTSC made comments on that rule and sent them to Washington D.C.

Ms. Marron announced the dates for the next RAB meetings. In December, the RAB will meet on Thursday, 12 December 1996. The January meeting will be held on Thursday, 16 January 1997.

On 12 December 1996, Ms. Hunter will give a presentation of her toxic map at 6:15. To assure the presentation of equal information, Ms. Mingay recommended Ms. Hunter give an overview of how she sees the sites, and then the Navy can state what they conclude at those sites. Mr. Collins noted that the Navy can only speak for sites on NAS North Island.

Mr. Mach asked RAB members for suggestions concerning additional training they would like to receive. Ms. Hunter relayed she would like a presentation on air toxics and associated health risk assessment. Mr. Mach recommended that a presentation be given by the air board.

The next RAB meeting has been scheduled for 12 December 1996, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Winn Room at the Coronado Public Library.

Ms. Marron adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.