



**Vieques Environmental Restoration Program  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic**

**RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)**

**Meeting Number 55**

**6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. | April 25, 2018 | Jorge's Ice House, Vieques, PR**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

Dan Waddill – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Madeline Almodovar – CH2M
Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Daniel G. Concepción – CH2M
Kevin Cloe – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Maria Danois – CH2M
Madeline Rivera – NAVFAC Atlantic	Don Shaw – USA Environmental
Julio Vázquez – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Daniel Vargas – USA Environmental
Daniel Rodríguez – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Michael Sosa – USA Environmental
Doug Pocze – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Thomas Bourque – UXO Pro
Denise Zeno – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Jeff Saunders – TRC
Mike Barandiarán – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	Jeff Newsi – TRC
Juan Babá Peebles – Ex Officio RAB Member, PREQB	Myrna Pagán – Community RAB Member
David Otani – US Coast Guard	Lirio Márquez D'Acunti – Community RAB Member
Cody Petersen – Federal Emergency Management Agency	Stacie Notine – Community RAB Member
Brett Doerr – CH2M	Colleen McNamara – Community RAB Member
John Swenfurth – CH2M	

*These minutes represent a summary of the meeting presentations, comments, questions, and action items and are not a verbatim transcript of the meeting.*

**Topics Discussed:**

**Opening and Introductions**

<b>Madeline Almodovar</b> (CH2M/Facilitator)	The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. Participants were welcomed to the 55 <sup>th</sup> Vieques RAB meeting and guided through a series of posters highlighting different aspects of the Vieques Environmental Restoration Program. Representatives from the Navy, USEPA, PREQB, USFWS, and the US Coast Guard were available to answer questions.
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<p><b>Dan Waddill</b> (Navy Program Manager)  <b>Kevin Cloe</b> (Navy Project Manager)  <b>Daniel Hood</b> (Navy Project Manager)  <b>Madeline Rivera</b> (Navy Site Manager)  <b>Mike Barandiarán</b> (USFWS Vieques Wildlife Refuge Manager)  <b>Julio Vázquez</b> (USEPA Region 2 Remedial Project Manager [RPM] – Terrestrial MR sites)  <b>Daniel Rodríguez</b> (USEPA Region 2 RPM – Offshore [Underwater] MR site)  <b>Doug Pocze</b> (USEPA Region 2) – Federal Facilities Section  <b>Denise Zeno</b> (USEPA Region 2)  <b>Juan Babá Peebles (PREQB RPM)</b>  <b>David Otani</b> (US Coast Guard Waterways Management Specialist)</p>	<p>Navy and regulatory agency representatives greeted the attendees, provided information, and answered questions posed by RAB and community members. Each poster was also available to the attendees as a handout. A summary of the discussions is provided below.</p>
<b>Informal Question and Answer Session</b>	
<p><b>Dan Waddill</b> (Navy)  <b>Daniel Hood</b> (Navy)</p>	
<p><b>Community Feedback</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Myrna Pagán (RAB community member) distributed a flyer and read a letter addressed to the Governor of Puerto Rico, Dr. Rosselló, about methods to destroy old munitions. Some of the methods mentioned included gas-phased chemical reduction, supercritical water oxidation, and detonation chambers. Ms. Pagán added that she expects to receive feedback from the Navy and the regulatory agencies on alternative methods for disposing of unexploded ordnance (UXO) in Vieques. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dan Waddill (Navy) thanked Ms. Pagán for presenting her statement and responded that the Navy regularly discusses all available technologies to address UXOs with the Vieques Restoration Program Partnering Team, which includes members of the regulatory agencies. The technologies that have been selected by the team for Vieques are the safest alternatives for removing munitions and protecting the field workers, public, and environment.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Stacie Notine (RAB community member) asked about the approximate density of items found within the Submunitions Area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Daniel Hood (Navy) reported that estimates indicate that thousands of submunitions may be present within the VNTR. He also reiterated the importance and effectiveness of the technological methods used in Vieques restoration activities, including the use of a remote-controlled excavator to rake and cut vegetation prior to conducting controlled burning events.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Status of Vieques Installation Restoration Sites</b>	
<p><b>Kevin Cloe</b> (Navy)  <b>Madeline Rivera</b> (Navy)</p>	<p>Kevin Cloe (Navy) described work that is being performed on the environmental sites located on West and East Vieques. These sites include AOC E, SWMU 6, SWMU 1, and SWMU 20. The poster developed for this project showed projected timeframes for the completion of each CERCLA step for these sites. A map with an aerial image of Vieques showed site locations and photographs highlighted the work performed on each site.</p>
<p><b>Community Feedback</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community member asked about the progress of investigation after the impact of Hurricane Maria.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kevin Cloe indicated that the storm mostly impacted base operations at Camp Garcia and reported that the Navy had prepared a PowerPoint presentation, to be shown after the poster session, presenting hurricane impacts at the different sites.</li> </ul>
<b>Underwater and Beach Investigations Status Update</b>	
<b>Kevin Cloe (Navy)</b> <b>Daniel Hood (Navy)</b>	<p>Kevin Cloe (Navy) provided an updated status of the underwater investigations, as well as the Beach Dynamics Study. The updates included the UXO 16 Wide Area Assessment and Remedial Investigation (RI) offshore of SWMU 4.</p> <p>A map of Vieques showed where underwater investigations are being conducted and photographs highlighted the underwater and Beach Dynamics investigations.</p>
<b>Community Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A community member asked about the impacts of the Hurricanes Irma and Maria on the underwater investigations.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daniel Hood (Navy) indicated that prior to the storms the Navy had set up UXO surrogates in the water and have been tracking their movements; the surrogates provided valuable data to assess the level of sand movements and their impact on the movement of UXOs during these storm events.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Process</b>	
<b>Madeline Rivera (Navy)</b>	A poster developed for the CERCLA process included a flowchart and described each type of documentation generated for review by the regulatory agencies and the public. Madeline highlighted the steps in which the public can provide direct input into the decision-making process, like submitting comments on Proposed Remedial Action Plans (PRAPs).
<b>Status of Vieques Munitions Response Sites</b>	
<b>Daniel Hood (Navy)</b>	<p>Daniel Hood (Navy) presented a summary of the Munitions Response Program investigations including the planned and upcoming work. A poster presented on this project, focused on the status of munitions response site work performed on the Eastern Maneuver Area, Live Impact Area, Surface Impact Area, and the Eastern Conservation Area.</p> <p>The poster showed sampling and restoration activities with a written description of each site location. A Vieques map showed the site locations, approximate areas, and the status of each area.</p>
<b>Key Areas Where Accelerated Cleanup is Taking Place to Foster Public Access</b>	
<b>Madeline Rivera (Navy)</b>	A poster prepared for accelerated cleanup activities included a flowchart of the CERCLA process and described each type of documentation generated by the Navy for review by the regulatory agencies and the public. The poster included detailed timelines for SWMU 4, Peninsula Carenero, and UXO 18 Cayo La Chiva. Madeline explained how the Vieques Restoration Program is making significant progress in focused restoration efforts at beaches and public roads within these sites.
<b>Community Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A community member asked how the beaches were impacted by Hurricane Maria.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daniel Hood (Navy) stated that Hurricane Maria mainly impacted schedules, causing postponement of activities. Daniel added that the Navy and USFWS are</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	working jointly to recover the access roads to the public beaches, since some of them were heavily eroded by stormwater runoff and tidal action.
<b>Proposed Safety Zones</b>	
<b>Dan Waddill</b> (Navy) <b>David Otani</b> (US Coast Guard) <b>Brett Doerr</b> (CH2M)	<p>This proposed safety zone poster included a map of Vieques with the different types of proposed safety zones around the coastlines. A legend described the areas where mariners are prohibited from entering the area due to the presence of underwater UXOs, and also described the areas where anchoring, dredging, or trawling are prohibited due to the potential presence of underwater UXOs.</p>
<b>Community Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community member asked why is it important to establish different types of safety zones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dan Waddill (Navy) stated that the zones are being established to protect the general public and mariners who could encounter underwater UXOs, and also to protect the public during clearance operations while working on the Submunition Area coastlines. During clearance operations, the proposed safety zones will be enforced while terrestrial activities are taking place in the Submunitions Area.</li> <li>○ Brett Doerr (CH2M) added that the safety zones are proposed based on results from an underwater-wide area assessment investigation, where the probability of finding UXOs on and beneath the seafloor was determined.</li> <li>○ David Otani (US Coast Guard) added that the US Coast Guard oversees safety zones to protect the public and boaters from potential hazards during special operations and from permanent risks in ports and coastal areas of the United States.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Post-Hurricane Condition of the Project and Path Forward</b>	
<b>Dan Waddill</b> (Navy)	<p>The Navy showed a PowerPoint presentation that included background information on the status of the project sites pre-hurricane and the activities taken to ensure the safety of field personnel and to protect equipment. Dan added that the Navy used different tools to gather data related to the hurricane impacts on the project sites, including installing trail cameras and setting up underwater surrogate munitions. The presentation showed field pictures from the trail cameras and documentation of the impacts on Camp Garcia's base operations. The main hurricane impacts involved heavy erosion on the coastlines and access roads, damage to property due to strong winds and heavy rains, and destruction of electrical power/communication lines and solar photovoltaic panels. The Navy is supporting government agencies in dealing with a capsized vessel (Ferrell) off the coastline of Vieques. The presentation also included the post-survey conditions of various sites open to the public and the preliminary results from the North Convoy Target Area RI.</p>
<b>Community Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community member asked about damage to the equipment used to collect air quality data. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dan Waddill (Navy) stated that the Navy is working to establish reliable electrical power for the air monitoring equipment. In the meantime, there are no scheduled controlled burns in the Submunitions Area.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Stacie Notine (RAB community member) asked if there are depleted uranium (DU) rounds within the Submunitions Area.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dan Waddill (Navy) clarified that the DU rounds were fired into the North Convoy Area, which is not located within the Submunitions Area. The Navy is currently working on a Remedial Investigation (RI) to follow a study conducted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission focused on the DU rounds. The findings of this RI accounted for and disposed of thirty-three (33) DU rounds; the rounds and surrounding soil were shipped off-island for disposal after samples were collected.</li> <li>● A member of the public asked if there were any increased risks to the public resulting from Hurricane Maria impacts.</li> <li>○ Dan Waddill (Navy) responded that post-hurricane beach surveys had not found UXOs or munitions-related items on any public beaches or on the beaches that had been cleared previously. The Navy continues to maintain 3R (Recognize, Retrieve, Report) munitions safety information kiosks to ensure public awareness of the dangers that UXOs present and on permitted activities in the areas open to the public. The posters also reinforced that the public should not engage in unauthorized access to areas still under investigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Agency Update</b>	
<b>Doug Pocze (USEPA)</b> <b>Denisse Zeno (USEPA)</b> <b>Julio Vázquez (USEPA)</b> <b>Daniel Rodríguez (USEPA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Julio Vázquez (USEPA) stated that the USEPA accompanied the Navy and contractors through the North Convoy Area, overseeing the field activities and the depleted uranium investigation and sampling.</li> <li>● The USEPA completed a 2-day site visit to Munitions Response and Environmental Restoration sites within the Vieques Environmental Restoration Program, as part of the 5-year review process to determine if remediation decisions should be revised or updated because of current site conditions. The USEPA is also reviewing the SWMU 4 PRAP and expects that the review will be completed by this summer (2018), after which the public will have the opportunity to review the report and make comments.</li> <li>● Doug Pocze (USEPA) introduced himself as the Federal Facilities Section Chief overseeing the Vieques Restoration Program and Naval Activity Puerto Rico. Mr. Pocze provided his contact information and thanked the participants for contributing to the RAB meeting.</li> </ul>
<b>Mike Barandiarán (USFWS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mike Barandiarán (USFWS) stated that he is glad that the public participated in the RAB meeting. Mike thanked the Navy, its contractors, and other regulatory partners for their support and donation of equipment and personnel to allow a steadfast vegetation clearance and to repair public roads and recreational sites within the Vieques Wildlife Refuge and throughout Vieques.</li> <li>● Mike indicated that USFWS is working jointly with the Navy to restore the refuge to pre-storm conditions and for continuing their public awareness campaign about permitted activities within the Refuge.</li> <li>● Mike added that there is a continued effort to manage vegetation debris by composting; thus, enhancing the Vieques landfill's useful life. Mike expects these efforts to continue through the summer of 2018. He also provided a summary of the</li> </ul>

	public access beaches within the Refuge and the timeline for additional areas to be opened.
<b>Community Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stacie Notine (RAB community member) asked about the status of the revised USEPA lead blood-level standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dan Waddill (Navy) responded that the Navy is working closely with USEPA; and he stated that as regulations/standards are developed and released, they are adopted into the Navy’s risk assessment processes.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Adjournment</b>	
<b>Madeline Almodovar</b> (CH2M)	Madeline (CH2M) thanked all the participants and presenters for attending and contributing to the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 p.m. The next RAB meeting is scheduled for August 1, 2018. After the meeting, the next meeting was rescheduled to August 8, 2018.