

## MEETING MINUTES

### Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for the Environmental Restoration and Munitions Response Program in Vieques, Puerto Rico

Meeting Number 6 - November 17, 2005

#### I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOMING REMARKS

The meeting began at 6:00 pm with welcoming and introductions of those present. Instructions on how to use the simultaneous translation equipment were also given.

A community member asked if the UXO technician training was part of the agenda.

#### II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes from August meeting were approved without changes.

#### III. ONGOING BUSINESS

The agenda for this meeting was reviewed and the technical presentations were discussed first (see Section IV).

##### III.a Action Items Review

Action items were briefly reviewed. The following table summarizes the “open” action items carried over from previous meeting(s) and additional action items resulting from this meeting.

Description	Responsible Party	Status
Charter / Membership Discussion	RAB Members	Open – Ongoing. Will be discuss in the next RAB Meeting of February 2006
Include budget information on next Monthly Report	Jeff Harlow/Navy	Open – To be discuss in the next RAB Meeting of February 2006
Request by RAB member to record meetings via audio tape	Jeff Harlow/Navy	Open – Request will be evaluated, an answer will be provided in the next February meeting

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Description	Responsible Party	Status
Groundwater Study	Jeff Harlow/Navy	Open – Process has been initiated for workshop development, planned tentatively for early 2006
Provide RAB members with a copy of presentations		Closed, presentations included with this minutes
Send attendance list to all RAB Members		Closed, list included with this minutes
Schedule visit to removal action sites	Jeff Harlow/RAB Members	New - Open

#### IV. TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS

##### IV.a NOAA

George Graettinger (NOAA) is doing a watershed database for Vieques. Watershed database and mapping project is being done in many places. NOAA has done this before and follows a standard procedure. The database will include all watershed related studies for Vieques.

##### Questions and Answers

- Nilda Medina (RAB Community Member) – Are you making recommendations on the use of the Vieques water resources, specifically for the biobay?
- George – We have not considered this. We will provide the data to whatever agency is responsible for this action.
- Nilda – If you are investigating the watershed in Vieques, then you should do something with the data collected to correct a problem. If not, then your work is only academic.
- George – We are not a regulatory agency responsible for this.

##### IV. b Environmental Restoration Program Update

Brett Doerr (CH2M HILL) gave a status update on document submittals and upcoming fieldwork (Maps showing sites under discussion were available to use as reference)

- o AOC E and I – Draft Final Work Plans were submitted to RAB in September 2005. Fieldwork is scheduled to begin in November/December, depending on such factors as weather and subcontractor availability.

##### Questions and Answers

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- Stacie Notine (RAB Community Member) - EPA and EQB are having problems understanding the plans. Are you going to continue with the work without the approval of EPA?
- Danny Rodríguez/EPA - The agencies submitted comments and the Navy responded satisfactorily to those comments. We now have a draft final.
- Brett - The draft final work plans were sent out to the RAB in September 2005. The plans include an appendix with regulatory agency comments and the Navy's responses to comments that have been accepted by the regulatory agencies.
- o AOC R - The Draft Final Work Plan was submitted to the RAB in September 2005
  - The site is overgrown with vegetation. CH2M HILL conducted an endangered species survey to identify whether there are any threatened or endangered plants or animal species or habitat in the area where debris removal is to take place. No threatened or endangered species were identified within AOC R, but two specimens of the Cobana Negra tree were identified near AOC J, which is "downstream" of AOC R. The trees will be protected when doing work at AOC J. A letter summarizing this information has been sent to DOI.
  - Vegetation clearance began this week and field sampling will begin after the Thanksgiving holiday.
- o AOC J, AOC R, SWMUs 6 and 7 - Draft EE/CA were submitted to regulatory agencies in August 2005. The regulatory agencies provided comments in September 2005. Preliminary responses to comments were submitted to the regulatory agencies in November 2005, which are under consideration. Once responses that are satisfactory to both the regulatory agencies and The Navy are finalized, the Draft Final EE/CA will be prepared, incorporating those finalized response to comments. The Draft EE/CA will be submitted to the RAB and a public comment period initiated.
  - Public comment period for EE/CA for AOC J, R and SWMUs 6 & 7 by end of 2005. Removal action anticipated to begin in early 2006, pending consideration of public comments on the EE/CA and other factors, such as weather.
  - Ricardo asked for a site visit. Jeff stated that when removal action begins we could schedule a visit.
- o Myrna Pagán (RAB Community Member) asked how much money has been spent on the clean up of Vieques
  - Jeff Harlow/NAVFAC - there is a formal process to report to Congress how much was spent every year. For FY 06: Environmental - \$3M, MEC- \$20M
  - Myrna asked to have something in writing showing how much has been spent. It was taken as an Action Item for next meeting.
  - A member recommended that the Navy send the information before the meeting for the members to review.

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- Susana Struve/CH2M HILL distributed copies of the Monthly Report in English. Spanish translation will be available later.
- Some members commented that the documents being discussed should have been distributed before the meeting so they have the opportunity to review them before the meeting.
- Danny Rodríguez/EPA explained that the Navy is just presenting what is coming for review and that not all documents that will be discussed in meetings will be available to the RAB prior to the meetings. Members will still have an opportunity to review the documents. (At this moment the presentation was disrupted by loud/emotional arguments presented by a community member)
- Several community members stated that the way the one community member was behaving was not proper. They wanted to continue with the presentation.
- Danny Rodriguez – After several members commented that the agenda should include issues that concern the RAB members, he stated that the draft agenda was submitted to the RAB for review but comments were not submitted by RAB members.
- The community would like to record the meetings. Jeff Harlow/NAVFAC will check on Navy policy and/or procedures for this.
- Jeff Harlow – Because of scheduling constraints and funding availability, there are many documents being issued in a short timeframe.
- Colleen MacNamara (RAB Community Member) – We have commented on several major documents but we have not received answers to the comments. The same urgency that you are requesting from us needs to be applied to our comments. For example, the background investigation report and the TCRA.
- Stacin Martin/CH2M HILL – Responses to comments on the TCRA are ready and can be sent to members.
- Brett Doerr/CH2M HILL – The public comments on the background investigation work plan are being considered by the agencies and responses will be submitted.

#### **IV. e BACKGROUND SOIL INVESTIGATION**

- Brett Doerr - Some locations were moved based on comments received from RAB members during site visit.
  - Danny – Comments (300+) were received and are being considered. Once responses to substantive comments have been prepared, a public meeting will be conducted to present answers to comments. Revisions to the background investigation approach will be considered, based on the comments, if the revised approach may improve the study results.
  - Nilda – We are still saying that all Vieques is contaminated and recommend taking background samples outside Vieques.

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- Brett – It is important to keep in mind that the purpose of the background samples is to distinguish contamination attributed to the specific sites under investigation from inorganics concentrations not attributable to the specific sites. Therefore, collecting samples at locations away from the sites, but on Vieques, is technically appropriate.

#### IV. f EIGHT (8) PI/PAOC SITES

- o Brett Doerr summarized the status of the PA/SI for the 8 PI/PAOC sites. Specifically, a threatened and endangered species survey was completed and not threatened or endangered species were identified within the 8 PI/PAOC sites. Regarding the PA/SI work plan, he stated that the draft final was submitted to the RAB in September, no comments were received, and the final is anticipated to be released in December 2005. Fieldwork is scheduled to begin in December 2005 or January 2006.

#### IV. g RONCO CONSULTING CORPORATION PRESENTATION

Spencer Nelson/RONCO provided a brief presentation on their technology about Munitions and Explosives of Concern Detecting Dogs (MECDD) that can be used to detect explosive compounds.

A demonstration was done on the north beach and south beach of the former range in 2005 and on SWMU 4 (west) in 2003. The process uses items or explosive compounds anticipated to be found on the specific location to train the dogs to locate them.

- This is a cost effective technology – dogs can discriminate between scrap and explosives. Heat is a factor. Dogs can work approx 20 minutes and rest 40.

#### Questions and Answers

- A RAB member asked what kind of training the dogs have on explosives chemicals. Spencer Nelson – if we suspect chemical weapon compounds then we train the dogs specifically on these. This is much easier than explosives.
- Michael Diaz (Community Member) – Many things have been denied that have been used here, if we can use to detect these items, then we can trust more.
- Colleen – Will the scrap remain on site or will it be removed?
- Jeff – The TCRA is removing scrap
- Roberta Britton (Community Member) – How long will it take to cover the area with the dogs?

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- Spencer – We are doing an acre per day, but depend on site conditions.
- Jeff – We don't have a contract with RONCO. This is a tool that we are evaluating to be used in conjunction with the removal process currently underway. It is an example of continuing to evaluate various removal processes and their potential applicability to ordnance removal on Vieques.

#### **IV. h AIR MONITORING – John Lowe (CH2M HILL)**

Purpose is to document concentration in air from three (3) monitoring stations located near the western line of former LIA. Locations are OP1, boathouse and OP5 – downwind from detonation area. Equipment set to collect metals, explosives and particulate matter. Results – based on three (3) data events collected no contamination from detonations is suspected.

#### **Questions and Answers**

- Stacie – Was EPA present during data collection?
- Danny – Yes, I was present
- Nilda – The air monitoring is being done to demonstrate that open detonation is safe but we don't agree. We insist that the chamber should be used.
- Stacin (CH2M HILL) – The air monitoring is an ongoing process. Depending on data collected and in consultation with EQB and EPA, we may move the stations or add others.
- Colleen – This is a move in the right direction. Why aren't you placing the stations closer to the community?
- John Lowe (CH2M HILL) – you may only see emissions from car exhaust and background contamination from other sources if placed too close to the developments.
- A set of graphics showing detected contamination was presented. Detection is very low, basically showing no difference in the data collected prior to detonation, during detonation, and after detonation. One station did show elevated levels following a detonation event. However, this elevated concentration may be attributable to the volcanic eruption in Montserrat Island. The data are still being evaluated before drawing any firm conclusions.
- Colleen – Everything in Vieques is blamed to volcanic eruption or Sahara desert dust. How can you determine this is the case?
- John – It was just observed that the volcanic eruption was reported just before the elevated readings were recorded, and we have not seen elevated concentrations before or after other detonations. Again, the data are still being evaluated,

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additional air monitoring data are being collected, and no decision will be made on just this one piece of information.

- Sixto Pérez (RAB Community Member) – Proposed to write a letter to government requesting stopping the open detonations needed to collect data for air monitoring because this way the Navy will complete the removal of munitions while collecting data.

#### **IV. i GENERAL DISCUSSION**

- The Technical Workshop is tentatively scheduled for January 2006.
- It seems that the Public Library in Isabel II is closed. The library has not been accepting the more recent documents submitted.
- RAB Community member assistance to meetings
  - María Padilla officially resigned.
  - Discussed the approach of sending a letter to those members not attending the meetings. Several RAB members expressed that the Charter provides the means to remove from the RAB those not attending (or sending a delegate), and that a letter is not necessary. These members recommended the procedure in the Charter be followed.
  - The Co Chairs are reviewing the draft letter. Susana proposed a conference call to discuss membership and technical workshop.
  - Again members restated that the Charter procedure be followed because there may never be a majority of the members present to make a decision.
  - A community member asked what the minimum membership is.
  - Susana answered that there is no fixed number, but this is one of the larger RABs.
  - Danny – The RAB membership should be open again to request new members.

#### **V. Next RAB Meeting**

The next RAB meeting is scheduled for February 15, 2006 at 5:00 PM. The location will be confirmed.

#### **VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

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