MEETING MINUTES

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

Meeting Number 7 – March 2006

Note: These minutes are a summary based on informal notes taken at the meeting. They are not intended as a verbatim transcript and may not have captured everything that was discussed. If comments or additional notes are provided by others who were present at the meeting, within 30 days of distribution of these minutes, that will be added as an attachment to the minutes.

I. CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOMING REMARKS

The meeting began at 5:40 pm with welcoming and introductions of those present by Susana Struve. Susana also stated that Jeff Harlow, Navy Co-Chair, accepted a new position within the Veteran's Administration; therefore, the Navy Co-Chair role will be filled (at least temporarily) by Chris Penny and Madeline Rivera. She also mentioned that Kevin Cloe will be taking over Jeff's technical projects. Instructions on how to use the simultaneous translation equipment were also given.

Susana explained that the RAB is open for new members and the applications were available at this meeting, USFWS offices and La Luz de la Esperanza Library.

II. TECHNICAL PRESENTATONS

II.a Vieques Island Crab Sampling Project - NOAA – Mike Buchman (see presentations attached)

Mike Buchman explained that NOAA is a trustee for natural resources, and mentioned the objective of this study and sampling plan. Samples of land crabs and fiddler crabs were collected across the island at locations of potential crab harvesting, some of which were near SWMUs and AOCs. Crabs were also collected from one reference area in Vieques (Blue Horizon) and one reference area in the Humacao Wildlife Reserve. No explosives were detected in any of the samples collected. PCBs were detected in only one location, Laguna Kiani (SWMU 6), but all detections were well below conservative human health and ecological screening benchmarks. Pesticides were rarely detected (other than very low levels of DDT and its metabolites), but DDT compounds above reference area were detected in

Note: This summary is presented in English and Spanish for the convenience of the reader. Every effort has been made for the translations to be as accurate as reasonably possible. However, readers should be aware that the English version of the text is the official version.

Nota: Este resumen se presenta en inglés y en español para la conveniencia del lector. Se han hecho todos los esfuerzos para que la traducción sea precisa en lo más razonablemente posible. Sin embargo, los lectores deben estar al tanto que el texto en inglés es la versión oficial.

Laguna Kiani and Red beach. No pesticide concentration exceeded ecological screening values for the protection of crustaceans.

NOAA conducted an ecological risk evaluation using the American Robin and the shrew as predator even when these two species do not exist in Vieques because of their large diet. NOAA did this because both of these species represent extremely conservative ecological receptors because they consume vast quantities of food. If the risk evaluation using these receptors finds no unacceptable risk, then it is unlikely there would be unacceptable risk to any other ecological receptor of similar food chain ranking that could be found on Vieques. The risk evaluation was conducted with the highest concentration of each constituent detected, and under the assumption that 100 percent of the constituent was assimilated and that 100 percent of the organisms food had these constituents' levels, all of which are highly conservative assumptions.

ATSDR conducted a human risk analysis and concluded that there is not risk from eating crabs from Vieques, based on the levels of PCBs, pesticides, and trace elements found in the crabs collected during this study.

Discussion Points

- Jorge Fernandez (RAB Community Member) – How do you explain that in some areas trace metals were not detected? Mike replied that some trace elements were detected everywhere, but most were below benchmarks.

- Nilda Medina (RAB Community Member) – We could think that the east side of Vieques will show more contamination than the west due to the type of activities that occurred there for 60 years, but your data doesn't show that. Then, can we say that contamination from the east side can travel to other areas? Mike – No, we cannot say that.

- Nilda – If you were a Viequense, will you eat crab from those areas? Mike replied that given that there are options, he would choose not to eat crabs adjacent to SWMU 6.

- Nilda – The problem we have with ATSDR is that they never find anything wrong and we do not believe in their studies. FWS needs to place a warning sign in the area of Laguna Kiani alerting the people that the crabs are contaminated.

- Jorge – NOAA has made a real effort and it is recommending a more in depth study. We do not want ATSDR to come to Vieques to tell us what we can eat or not. We recommend that ATSDR not be involved in any studies related to Vieques and that any future studies are given to another agency.

Note: This summary is presented in English and Spanish for the convenience of the reader. Every effort has been made for the translations to be as accurate as reasonably possible. However, readers should be aware that the English version of the text is the official version.

Nota: Este resumen se presenta en inglés y en español para la conveniencia del lector. Se han hecho todos los esfuerzos para que la traducción sea precisa en lo más razonablemente posible. Sin embargo, los lectores deben estar al tanto que el texto en inglés es la versión oficial.

- Danny Rodríguez (EPA) – Why did NOAA send the data to ATSDR? Mike replied that NOAA does not do human health risk analysis. ATSDR is the agency that does human risk analysis.

- Jorge – How can you conclude that there is a risk for crabs but ATSDR concludes that there is no risk for humans from the consumption of crabs? Could you provide the raw data for us to do the risk analysis? Mike stated that NOAA did not conclude that there is a risk to ecological receptors from consumption of crab or to the crabs themselves. There were certain constituents that were detected occasionally above screening criteria. Remember that these screening criteria are very conservative and simply exceeding them does not mean there is risk to the crabs or predators of crabs. It suggests the data may need to be further evaluated. The screening criteria used for humans are different from the ecological screening criteria. Mike further stated that the data are on NOAA's web site.

- Oscar Diaz (FWS) – What is the position of the RAB members about placing a sign in Laguna Kiani even when crabbing is not permitted in PR by DNER regulations? Emilio Garcia (RAB Community Member) stated that we need to warn people that crabbing in this area may harm their health.

IIIa. Removal Action Project at SWMU 6 & AOC J – Pedro Tejada (Right Way Environmental)

Pedro explained that the objective of the project is to remove the solid wastes in those areas to remove the uncertainty associated with the debris being a future source of contamination. The project will remove all visible waste, followed by confirmatory sampling to ensure remaining concentrations are safe. He also explained how much is estimated to be removed from each area. The waste will be classified as debris, scrap metal, tires and soil. Scrap metals and tires will be disposed in Puerto Rico as recyclables. Other debris will be disposed off in the Vieques landfill, and the soil will be tested to determine final disposition. The Navy is still discussing with EPA and EQB the testing protocols for the soil.

Discussion Points

- Jorge – Is the 11,000 tons a maximum number or could this number increase? Pedro replied that this number is a conservative estimate; it may be higher or lower.

- Sixto Perez (RAB Community Member) – How much will go to the Vieques landfill? Pedro answered that 11,000 tons includes all the wastes. Tires and metal will go to recyclers in PR. The non-hazardous waste will go to the Vieques landfill and the soil may be used as cover material. This is still under discussion with EPA

Note: This summary is presented in English and Spanish for the convenience of the reader. Every effort has been made for the translations to be as accurate as reasonably possible. However, readers should be aware that the English version of the text is the official version.

Nota: Este resumen se presenta en inglés y en español para la conveniencia del lector. Se han hecho todos los esfuerzos para que la traducción sea precisa en lo más razonablemente posible. Sin embargo, los lectores deben estar al tanto que el texto en inglés es la versión oficial.

and EQB. How much goes to the landfill depends on how much can be segregated.

- Linda LaViolette (Visitor) – Are you talking about soil that may be contaminated? Pedro replied that if the material is hazardous will not be disposed of in Vieques. It will be disposed off in a permitted facility on the mainland USA.

- Sixto – Will permits be requested for any soil needed to fill those areas? Pedro replied that if the fill material is brought from a quarry, then we will provide you with the permits for the quarry.

IVa. Budget Presentation – Chris Penny (NAVGAC ATL)

Chris explained how the allocated funding for FY 04 and 05 has been spent. This was an action item from last RAB meeting. FY 05 includes items that have been obligated but may not have been executed yet.

Discussion Points

- Michael Diaz (RAB Community Member) – What is MPPEH in FY 05? Chris replied that it refers to the Material Potentially Possessing Explosive Hazards. This is a test to process 400 tons of ordnance related scrap. We are processing only inert, concrete filled items to determine if this process is cost effective.

- Michael – Do you have the exact numbers for each item in the summary? Chris – Some numbers may change because we are still working on some tasks.
- Jorge – Could you explain the high cost associated with the septic tank project? That's a high number for a septic tank. Bill Hughes (Shaw Environmental) stated that the project not only includes the septic tank, but also the testing of existing pipes, installation of new large diameter pipes along a considerate distance from Camp Garcia, several manholes and the installation of a new leaching field. The system will support the rehabilitated buildings in Camp Garcia, the public restroom in front of Camp Garcia and new buildings to support FWS in the near future. Camp Garcia is the central location to coordinate all work related to the clean up.

Va. Air Monitoring Presentation – Stacin Martin (CH2M HILL)

Air monitoring began in August 17, 2005. The community requested the monitoring and the EQB chairman also made a commitment with the community that the Navy will conduct air monitoring during demolition activities.

Note: This summary is presented in English and Spanish for the convenience of the reader. Every effort has been made for the translations to be as accurate as reasonably possible. However, readers should be aware that the English version of the text is the official version.

Nota: Este resumen se presenta en inglés y en español para la conveniencia del lector. Se han hecho todos los esfuerzos para que la traducción sea precisa en lo más razonablemente posible. Sin embargo, los lectores deben estar al tanto que el texto en inglés es la versión oficial.

Stacin presented raw detection data for the different demolition days. Iron and copper have been detected and there was one detection of nickel. All detections are at or slightly above the detection limit, with no detections above the screening criteria. Detected concentrations do not vary between samples collected prior to, during, and after detonations. Also explained the location of the three monitoring stations (OP1, OP5 and boat house).

Discussion Points

- Michael – those metals that you do detect, are those from the demolitions or the soil? Stacin replied that we cannot say from which one. Iron is a very common metal. We can compare our data with other monitoring stations in PR.

- Nilda– If the detections are so low, does this have to do with the amount of explosive that is detonated in each demolition event? Stacin – No, the amount of net explosive weigh (NEW) is large, coming from various items.

- Nilda – The Vieques people is contaminated with cancer, and this data doesn't show anything, then where is our health problem coming from? This data does not please us because it seems illogical that nothing is detected.

- Sixto – In Vieques we detect the dust from the Sahara desert, the ashes from the Montserrat volcano, how is it possible that your air monitoring is not detecting anything? We don't accept this data.

- Jorge Colon – (Showed a photo of the cloud formed during the March 17, 2006 demolition event). Is this typical for each event? (Requested data on what is detonated in each demolition event by NEW and type of munitions).
- Stacin – could not tell from the photo because of lack of reference, but appears to be a little larger than average.

- Jorge Fernandez – Is it typical to have fires during demolition? Stacin – Not typical but does happen, but not during all events.

- Nilda – The community must be informed of when the demolition events will occur. Stacin – We notified the regulatory agencies, the Coast Guard, the MOV, FAA, FWS and PR police.

- Danny – If the dates are announced, it may provoke a protest, which may result in exposing more people to danger. Nilda – When the Navy was conducting training, they announced them, why not now? We believe this is a lack of responsibility from the Navy.

Note: This summary is presented in English and Spanish for the convenience of the reader. Every effort has been made for the translations to be as accurate as reasonably possible. However, readers should be aware that the English version of the text is the official version.

Nota: Este resumen se presenta en inglés y en español para la conveniencia del lector. Se han hecho todos los esfuerzos para que la traducción sea precisa en lo más razonablemente posible. Sin embargo, los lectores deben estar al tanto que el texto en inglés es la versión oficial.

- Ricardo Jordan (RAB Community Member) – We met with members of other RABs and we learned that in their community they were informed of gas releases. That's why we are asking here. Probably the monitoring equipment is in the wrong location, can we agree on locations that do detect the events?

- Stacin – In February the Navy received the results of the audit done by EQB and EPA about the monitoring and they are recommending changing the station located in OP1 because it is too high and my not be detecting anything.

III. ONGOING BUSINESS

Susana suggested that the presentation on TCRA be left for the next RAB meeting. ***(Note, the TCRA response to comments did not get distributed in Vieques, the files (English and Spanish) will be send to the RAB members, the information will also be sent via regular mail).***

The date for the Risk Workshop is tentative for June 10, 2006.

V. Next RAB Meeting

Susana will send an e-mail with suggested dates for both the workshop and the next RAB meeting. The location will be confirmed.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Note: This summary is presented in English and Spanish for the convenience of the reader. Every effort has been made for the translations to be as accurate as reasonably possible. However, readers should be aware that the English version of the text is the official version.

Nota: Este resumen se presenta en inglés y en español para la conveniencia del lector. Se han hecho todos los esfuerzos para que la traducción sea precisa en lo más razonablemente posible. Sin embargo, los lectores deben estar al tanto que el texto en inglés es la versión oficial.