



Vieques Investigation and Cleanup

Navy Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic

RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)

Meeting Number 31

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m., November 15, 2011 – Lighthouse, Vieques

DRAFT FINAL MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Mike Barandiaran (USFWS)	Donald Shaw (USA Environmental)
Wanda Bermudez (RAB member)	Brett Doerr (CH2M HILL)
Kenji Buttler (CH2M HILL)	Daniel Hood (Navy)
Cristina Corrada (community member)	Madeline Rivera (Navy)
Angela Carpenter (EPA)	Daniel Rodriguez (EPA)
Kevin Cloe (Navy)	Lionel Sanchez (RAB member)
Felix Lopez (USFWS)	Susana Struve (CH2M HILL)
Lirio Marquez (RAB member)	John Tomik (CH2M HILL)
Stacie Notine (RAB member)	Julio Vazquez (EPA)
Daniel Ramos (USA Environmental)	Dan Waddill (Navy)
Wilmarie Rivera (EQB)	Tim Wenk (CH2M HILL)
Pedro Ruiz (Navy)	Douglas McHoul (community member)
Luis Davila Soto (former TRC member)	Mary Kay McHoul (community member)

1. Welcome and Introductions - Kevin Cloe/Navy Co-chair

The meeting began at 6:15 PM. Kevin Cloe (Navy) welcomed those present and proceeded to describe the agenda for the meeting.

Susana Struve informed the public that there are simultaneous translation devices at the back of the room and a list on which people can write their names and contact numbers in case they are interested in getting added to the mailing list.

2. Vieques Environmental Fair Summary (Madeline Rivera/NAVFAC)

The Navy led a planning committee consisting of federal, commonwealth, municipal government departments, and not-for-profit agencies who developed the approach and coordinated the environmental fair execution. The goal of the fair was: To let the community know about who are the agencies and individuals working for the environment in Vieques. Seventeen agencies/non-profit organizations participated in the fair, which was sponsored by local businesses, contractors, and other organizations.

The fair took place in the town square on October 20, 2011. The mayor of Vieques opened and closed the fair, which lasted from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm. We estimate that at least 500 people participated. Children went through Madeline's "school" on munitions learning about the dangers of UXO and the location of restricted areas. Many educational displays were provided on munitions safety and environmental cleanup, conservation, recycling, and ecology, and related topics. The Puerto Rico Police Band and municipal band played live music, and there were prizes, a raffle, and snacks for children. A clown helped communicate the Navy's UXO safety message with a board game.

The agencies that coordinated the event will continue to meet on a regular basis and are planning to have another similar activity in 2 years.

3. Vieques Environmental Restoration Program Overview (Daniel Hood and Kevin Cloe/Marina)

Daniel Hood and Kevin Cloe gave a summary of the status of the Vieques Restoration Program.

West Vieques. Of 17 total sites, 13 have been closed out. Nine sites have been closed out prior to National Priorities List (NPL) listing via No Further Action Report (NFA); four sites (Area of Concern [AOC] H, AOC J, AOC R, Solid Waste Management Unit [SWMU] 7) have been closed out with No Action (NA)/NFA via Record of Decision (ROD). Three sites are currently in the feasibility study phase (AOC E, SWMU 4, SWMU 6), and one site is undergoing a pilot study (AOC I).

East Vieques. Of 56 total sites, 36 have been closed out via an NA/NFA Decision Document. A post-ROD remedial work plan is being developed for one site (SWMU 1); one site is in undergoing an environmental site inspection/pilot study (PI 4); one site is undergoing an environmental site inspection (UXO 15); and 17 sites are in the remedial investigation (RI) phase (UXO 1 through UXO 14, and UXO 16 through UXO 18).

Progress of Surface Clearance of Munitions and Explosives of concern – East Vieques (through 10/30/11)

- Munitions have been removed from the most heavily affected areas. A total of 1,817 acres have been surface-cleared of munitions. To date, a total of 37,053 munitions items have been removed and destroyed (7,269 bombs and 12,797 sub-munitions). The Interim Removal Action is projected to be completed in 2016 (a total of 2,880 acres to be surface- cleared), and it is estimated to reduce the explosive safety risk at the surface by more than 95 percent. The sub-munitions area is estimated to contain approximately 44 percent of the remaining explosive safety risk, although the area comprises only 6 percent of the remaining area to be cleared of munitions and explosives of concern (MEC).

Progress of Subsurface MEC Clearance at Roads and Beaches - East Vieques

- To date, approximately 28,000 anomalies and 1,350 items of material potentially presenting an explosive hazard (MPPEH) have been excavated and 21 percent of the subsurface excavations have been completed. The geophysical survey indicates that approximately 131,000 anomalies and 6,500 munitions items remain in the subsurface roads and beaches. Some of the roads on the Live Impact

Area are full of metal artifacts; the Navy probably will be looking at other alternatives for removing them and optimizing the cleanup work.

Questions and Answers:

Q: When will the fans area on the map be investigated?

A: Fans are part of the NPL and will be investigated. It will take 1 year for the Sampling and Analysis Plan to be developed and approved. The area in the water will be looked at and may be broken up on the map.

Q: Is there an update about the prescribed burning variance?

A: No update, we are still waiting for a decision for the regulatory agencies

Q: What will happen to those 75 acres if the variance is not approved?

A: More signs will be placed; keep in mind that 44% of the remaining safety risks are in this area. Our concern is how to do it safely.

Q: What about rain exposing more material?

A: Erosion is an issue. We have been trying to quantify erosion. The Interim Removal Action is not final. A Sampling Plan is in the works.

Q: Why has nothing been done about the toxicity in the food chain?

A: Before we can fully address the potential effects o the food chain, the area needs to be deemed safe for our people to get out there to work.

Comment: It seems to us that nothing has been done in all of these years

A: We follow the CERCLA process, it is a slow process and every step has to be approved by the regulatory agencies.

Q: It seems you don't have a baseline to evaluate water quality.

A: To evaluate the water quality, we already installed wells on the perimeter of the east side.

Q: Why aren't you collaborating with others and using other technologies (universities/organizations?)

A: We are trying to balance the cost of how we are currently working vs. introducing new technologies if they are available. In any case, the Department of Defense (DOD) has to authorize all the technologies we consider. The Vieques program can only use technologies that have been approved.

Comment: There are pictures online of a recent detonation event, can you give us more details

A: Yes, it was for a 500-lb item that had to be detonated in place.

4. Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis for East Vieques Site 13 (UXO-13)- Daniel Hood/NAVFAC

Daniel Hood gave a summary of the recent activities performed at UXO 13, the data gathered from the ranges and gun positions Identified at this site.

- 48 munitions items and 363 munitions-related scrap metal items were identified in UXO 13. Approximately 5% (116 acres) of UXO 13 was investigated using transects. Only one MPPEH item (a flare) was identified west of Range 7 (relatively low hazard). The remainder of MPPEH items were found either within or east of Range 7 (620 acres). UXO 13 was identified as one of the highest-priority sites based on the DoD Prioritization Protocol.
- The objective of the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) was to evaluate Interim Remedial Action alternatives to reduce explosive safety risks associated with the explosive safety hazards of munitions:
 - o Munitions items containing MPPEH were identified in the eastern (620-acre) portion of UXO-13.
 - o Investigations of the western portion of UXO-13 will be conducted as a separate project to further asses if any hazardous munitions are in this area.
- Three alternatives were considered:
 1. No Action: leave the site as it is
 2. Engineering controls for a select area within UXO -13, where explosive safety hazards were identified
 3. Removal of surface Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) from a select area within UXO-13, where explosive safety hazards were identified
- Alternative 3 was selected as the recommended removal action alternative for the following reasons:
 - High level of efficiency in meeting the remedial action objectives
 - Relatively moderate ease of implementation
 - Relatively higher cost than Alternative 2
 - Allows the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to implement several of its recommended land use goals
- The EE/CA was released for public review; a public notice was published in *El Vocero* on October 17, 2011. The public had until November 30,2011 to provide comments.
- After comments are addressed, the Draft Final Work Plan for implementing the EE/CA will be submitted for Restoration Advisory Board review in mid-December 2011.

Questions and Answers:

Q: We would like to know how you address the vegetation on the site

A: All the information related to the vegetation is available on the Biological Assessment done for the site which is available on the administrative record.

Q: What would happen to the Agent Orange found on the site if it is burned?

A: We have only found fragments of napalm bombs that were dropped from the air.

Q: How do you spell success?

A: Having a Record of Decision approved.

Q: Do you still receive \$20 million for the clean up?

A: Yes. But this amount can vary depending on priorities from Congress.

Q: What is the plan for the beaches on the north side?

A: First beach we address will be by the perimeter fence boundary. Some areas cannot be accessed yet.

5. **Environmental Quality Board (Wilmarie Rivera -EQB) and Environmental Protection Agency (Daniel Rodriguez -EPA) Oversight Activities**

Wilmarie Rivera from EQB gave a brief report on the activities in which EQB and EPA have participated:

- September 1, 2011 - Sustainable Agriculture Symposium organized by EPA in Vieques.
- October 20, 2011 – Environmental Fair in Vieques – EQB distributed materials reinforcing the 3R message (Recognize, Report, Retreat) and distributed hats, coloring books, and other educational materials.
- October 24 – 28, 2011 – Environmental and Munitions Subcommittee meeting in New York.
- EQB consultants have also have reviewed /approved several technical documents.

6. **Fish and Wildlife Service Update (Mike Barandarian/ USFWS)**

Mike gave a brief summary of the ongoing Refuge activities.

Q: There is a rumor that Aluma is building cottages?

A: This is just a rumor. Currently, USFWS have 5 construction projects:

- 1) Office building/Visitor Center (Aluma/Shaw) on the refuge
- 2) Residence/Bunkhouse for visiting scientist, etc. at Camp Garcia- 95% complete.
- 3) CNG or CGN – Building/Replacing the bridge to La Chiva. Detour until March 2012.
- 4) Green house where the maintenance yard is.
- 5) Shade house where the fire hanger was.

Q: What about a butterfly garden?

A: Three butterfly garden sites are planned

Q: The building lights on at night are extremely bright.

A: Lights are going to shine down/reduced, not out. Camp Garcia is to be off the electrical grid. We are trying to use more "green energy".

Closing

Susana Struve thanked the attendees. The meeting ended at 9:05 PM.