



## Vieques Investigation and Cleanup Navy Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic

### RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Number 41

6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., April 30, 2014, Multiple Use Center, Vieques, PR

### DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

**Attendees:**

Mike Barandiaran – USFWS	Madeline Rivera – NAVFAC Atlantic
José M. Carle – Community member	Dan Waddill – NAVFAC Atlantic
Antares Ramos - NOAA	Kevin Cloe – NAVFAC Atlantic
Félix Aponte Gonzalez - DRNA	Wilmarie Rivera – PR Environmental Quality Board
Kathy Gannett – Community member	Gloria Toro Agrait – PR Environmental Quality Board
Craig Lyliestrom - DRNA	Brett Doerr – CH2M HILL
Jorge Fernández Porto – Community RAB member	Luis Dávila - Visitor
Elisa Sánchez - Visitor	Mark Martin - Visitor
Stacie Notine – Community RAB member	Susana Struve – CH2M HILL
Daniel Rodríguez – USEPA	Madeline Almodovar – CH2M HILL
David Whitall - NOAA	Donald Shaw - USAE
Diane Wehner - NOAA	Gerardo Cisneros - Visitor
Margaret Mair - Visitor	Wanda Bermúdez - Visitor
Kathi Rodríguez – Community Member	Mary Kay McHoul – Community Member
Douglas McHoul – Community Member	Luis Ortiz - USDAFS
Iván Vicens - USDAFS	

**Topics Discussed:**

Susana Struve (Facilitator)	<b>Opening</b> Meeting began at 6:30 PM. Welcome to Vieques Investigation and Cleanup NAVFAC Atlantic Restoration Advisory Board.
Dan Waddill (Navy)	Dan Waddill discussed the agenda and introduced David Whitall/NOAA.
David Whitall (NOAA)	<b>NOAA Fish Study</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David presented the NOAA fish study scope and planned activities.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	➤ How far will the study be done (boundaries)? Can old studies be posted? Issues with food contamination are urgent, and other studies should be made available.

David Whitall	➤ Types of fish to be studied include species that are commonly caught and eaten, as well as other edible marine species such as lobster. Previous studies could be made available on the website and are available by contacting David Whitall directly.
Jorge Fernandez Porto	➤ Are you going to use bait species, commercial fish or large species that may be able to show cumulative effects?
David Whitall	➤ We are going to look at scientifically significant fish.
Jorge Fernandez Porto	➤ How precise is the energetic material analysis going to be?
David Whitall	➤ The analysis will include low detection levels. Fisheries in the Caribbean have declined, so the focus is not just fish we eat, but commercially localized areas in the island?
Member of the Public	➤ Is human health assessed during the study?
David Whitall	➤ This is not the focus, just potential contaminants in fish, but someone with the interest could compare the results with human risk levels.
Member of the Public	➤ Is the cause of the fish population declining because of contamination?
David Whitall	➤ The cause is not known. While it may be related to contamination, it may also be related to other environmental factors other than contamination. Additionally, if it is related to contamination, there are many potential sources of contamination, not just past military activities on the island.
Member of the Public	➤ Is it because of overfishing?
David Whitall	➤ It's possible, but we will not be able to determine that with this study.
Susana Struve	Susana discussed the benefits of being a RAB member and re-introduced Dan Waddill.
Dan Waddill	<p><b><i>Navy Project Update, including Underwater</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dan discussed the current and planned underwater work and side-scan sonar survey results (13,000 acres offshore have been scanned) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Wide-area assessment, including underwater geophysics being developed using results of side-scan sonar survey</li> <li>○ Investigation planned for 2014 in underwater area adjacent to SWMU 4 to ensure the water is safe in that area so USFWS can decide when to open portions of SWMU 4 to the public</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Jorge Fernandez Porto	➤ In SWMU 4, is the cleanup going to be finished when the area is open to the public by the USFWS?
Dan Waddill	➤ Portions of the site may be opened to the public before the cleanup work for the entire site is completed, but the areas opened to the public will be cleaned up prior to opening them for public access. The Navy will continue to work with USFWS during the cleanup process, and information will be provided to the RAB.
Member of the Public	➤ Are there going to be specific items looked for?
Dan Waddill	➤ It is a wide search, looking for any item on the ocean floor or just below the sand; divers will determine how best to address any specific items found (for example, items embedded in corals). However, we do not expect to find major explosive hazards based on what we have found on the land at SWMU 4.
Member of the Public	➤ How will items be dealt with if they move?

Dan Waddill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ During the investigation, items found will be removed or, if they cannot be removed, a plan to address them will be developed. In addition, there is a beach dynamics study planned for a number of beaches in Vieques to help determine how items on and near beaches move. However, other studies have shown items in the near-shore environment do not tend to move much.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ When do we expect the data from the study?</li> </ul>
Dan Waddill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The study adjacent to SWMU 4 is planned for late 2014 and the data will be presented after it has been evaluated and discussed with the regulatory agencies.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How far along are we addressing methodologies?</li> </ul>
Dan Waddill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We continually evaluate existing and new technologies.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Is there an effort to classify more areas as areas of potential concern?</li> </ul>
Dan Waddill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The studies planned will allow us to determine which areas are potential concern and which areas are not.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There was a suggestion to have the studies be more accessible on the website.</li> </ul>
Kevin Cloe (Navy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We could have information on the beach study and underwater technology at the next RAB meeting. In addition, once the study reports are finalized, they are made available on the website.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are there going to be maps, more useful information, photos? What is the timeframe?</li> </ul>
Dan Waddill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ We do produce maps and photos of the investigation and cleanup work and look for ways to continue to make the information readily available. As underwater work is completed, the information will be shared. It is important to note that the cleanup work must take into consideration protection of threatened and endangered marine species.</li> </ul>
NOAA personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Navy is required to have a Standard Operating Procedure to minimize the effects of the work, consult with NOAA on endangered species, and have a decision process for the proposed solutions. All the available information is factored into the decision.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ This is the second time I hear about damage to the coral. I would prefer the item be removed.</li> </ul>
Dan Waddill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ While the work will reduce the explosive hazards, there are stakeholders who are responsible for protecting threatened and endangered species, so their concerns need to be included in the decision making process.</li> </ul>
Mike Barandiarán (USFWS)	<p><b>Agencies Update – US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency provided an update on the upcoming closure of the bridge at Playa La Chiva (Blue Beach).</li> <li>• There will be patrolling of the areas due to turtle nesting season.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Can you explain why it is important to proceed with SWMU 4?</li> </ul>
Mike Barandiarán	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Because the community is interested as an economic incentive (for example, concessionaires, bird watching, snorkeling, paddle boarding, etc.), and to make sure that crabs are safe for human consumption.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ What is the status of the shark study?</li> </ul>
Mike Barandiarán	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It will be restarted in 2015. There are lots of sharks in Vieques; it is a spawning area for females. We will study shark movement through Culebra and the Virgin Islands.</li> </ul>
Wilmarie Rivera (PREQB)	<p><b>Agencies Update – Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (EQB)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DNER now will be part of the Department of Defense-State Memorandum of Agreement (DSMOA). The Navy is providing additional funds to DNER to participate in the technical review process and attend meetings.</li> <li>• The Sustainability Task Force meeting was held on 7 April 2014, and a discussion of the cleanup was a component. DNER and USFWS will help reforest areas after cleanup has occurred.</li> <li>• There were two detonations in water in Culebra. Samples were taken (required) before and after the detonations to gather data that could be used in Vieques.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The USACE has developed some SOPs that can be shared with the Navy.</li> </ul>
Member of the Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Has DDT from pesticides used in crops in Puerto Rico been found?</li> </ul>
Kevin Cloe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ DDT was used in the 40s widely as it was an allowed pesticide; DDT has been detected in some samples.</li> </ul>
Wilmarie Rivera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ I will take the concern to the PR government.</li> </ul>
Daniel Rodriguez (USEPA)	<p><b>Agencies Update - US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vegetated area adjacent to Playa La Chiva that is being checked for munitions is being visited by multiple agencies to ensure the work is taking place in accordance with the approved work plans.</li> <li>• An economic value study about recreational activities in coral reefs is being performed.</li> <li>• The barriers at Icacos Bay that were installed to keep boats outside of the area were visited.</li> </ul>
Susana Struve	<p><b>Closing</b> Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM</p> <p>Action Items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>