



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

**RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Number 43**

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., November 4, 2014, Multiple Use Center, Vieques, PR

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Dan Waddill – Ex Officio RAB Member NAVFAC Atlantic
Kevin Cloe – Ex Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic
Madeline Rivera – NAVFAC Atlantic
Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB member, NAVFAC Atlantic
Denise Zeno – Ex Officio RAB member, EPA
Donald Shaw – USAE
Brett Doerr – CH2M HILL
Mike Barandiarán – USFWS

Wilmarie Rivera – PR Environmental Quality Board
Gypsy Cordova – Vieques City Council
Colleen McNamara – Community RAB Member
José M. Carle – Community Member
Jose Gomez – Community Member
Lirio Márques D’Acunti – Community RAB Member
Luther Landrum – Community RAB Member
Linda LaViolette – Community RAB Member

Topics Discussed:

<i>Opening and Introductions</i>	
Madeline Rivera (Navy/Facilitator)	Meeting began at 6:00 PM. Welcome to Vieques Investigation and Cleanup Restoration Advisory Board meeting.
Dan Waddill (Navy)	Dan Waddill discussed the agenda and introduced Denise Zeno (EPA). Danny (EPA) was unable to attend this meeting because of a last minute meeting planned on the mainland. Two new Community RAB members were welcomed, Linda LaViolette and Luther Landrum.
<i>Agenda Overview</i>	
Kevin Cloe (Navy)	Kevin Cloe presented an agenda overview, which included updates on the Community Involvement Plan, Installation Restoration Program Projects (SWMU 6 and 20), Underwater Project (UXO 16), and the Munitions Response Projects (Blue Beach, UXO 15 and SWMU 4).
<i>Community Involvement Plan</i>	
Kevin Cloe (Navy)	Approximately every five years the Vieques Community Involvement Plan is evaluated and updated. Community input was gathered through individual interviews and a community survey and a draft plan was developed. The EPA, PREQB, PRDNER, and USFWS were involved in the update and have submitted comments and the updated Community Involvement Plan is currently being revised as a result of those comments.

<p>Community Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda LaViolette (Community RAB Member) asked about the process for developing the community involvement plan, involvement of the RAB and regulatory agencies in review and comments on the plan. Kevin Cloe (Navy) responded that the Navy prepares the draft document, which is first sent to the agencies and project team for comment. These comments are incorporated and then a draft final document is sent out to the RAB members specifically for their comment. The RAB members will have a 30-day period to submit comments on the draft final CIP. • In response to a question from a community member about the results of the survey and interviews, Madeline Rivera (Navy) said that a detailed summary of the results of the survey and interviews will be included in the draft final document that will be available for public review.
<p><i>SWMU 6 Sediment Delineation Preliminary Results</i></p>	
<p>Kevin Cloe (Navy)</p>	<p>SWMU 6 was a former waste disposal site. The site is on a very low lying area on the west end of the island. The Navy, as part of their cleanup effort, conducted a removal effort in 2009, to remove trash and debris. Because this area was so low and close to the groundwater table, the removal created a lagoon. Following the removal effort, the Navy did some sampling and the results showed some contaminants of concern that exceeded various risk-based levels – those contaminants found were PCBs, lead, and zinc. A feasibility study was conducted and follow-up sampling was conducted to determine if additional dredging would be necessary and, if so, the amount of sediment that would need to be removed.</p>
<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>Community members asked if the Navy is sampling marine life and when will sampling results be available. Daniel Hood (Navy) said fish and crab from the lagoon were sampled and a risk assessment was done to evaluate consumption of fish and crab in the lagoon (blue crab and some fish). Kevin Cloe (Navy) said the preliminary data look favorable and are undergoing review and validation. The results of the study and the risk assessment are expected to be completed and available in the spring.</p>
<p><i>SWMU 20 Update</i></p>	
<p>Kevin Cloe (Navy)</p>	<p>This was a former maintenance area just south of Camp Garcia, north of Red Beach (Playa Caracas), and near the airfield. Trichloroethylene (TCE) was identified in groundwater at this site. A remedial investigation is being performed at the site to determine if any remedial action needs to be taken. Soil sampling indicates there is not continuing source of the TCE plume.</p>
<p>Community Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member said that at Roosevelt Roads a lot of organic solvents were found on the ground. Compounds were used to neutralize these solvents. Maybe that experience can be used at SWMU 20. Kevin (Navy) responded that the Navy will definitely be evaluating different alternatives to address the TCE in groundwater at this site. • A community member asked if SWMU 20 was affiliated with the landfill. Kevin said no, that SWMU 20 was located near the airfield and supported some helicopter maintenance and other aviation-related operations.

<i>Underwater Work Update</i>	
Dan Waddill (Navy)	<p>The Navy has done a lot of work on land and the underwater work is underway. The methods for this work, which are being developed with assistance from the U.S. Army, are being developed right now.</p> <p>Remote equipment will be used from the surface in addition to the use of divers. A wide area assessment will be done, using sensors to record where there are metal anomalies - places that have a lot of metal underwater.</p> <p>The work plan is expected to be available for RAB review in the Spring of 2015. The target for field work is the Summer and Fall of 2015. A biological assessment is also scoped, together with the National Marine Fisheries Service, with the intent of avoiding impact on endangered species including coral, turtles, and sea mammals. The wide area assessment itself does not impact the bottom.</p>
Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community member asked if the wide area assessment will be done with a magnetometer or sonar. Dan (Navy) said side scan sonar has been used. This work will be done mostly by electromagnetic sensors, magnetometers and video.
<i>Beach Dynamic Study</i>	
Dan Waddill (Navy)	<p>Most of the beaches are on the east end and the SWMU 4 beach is on the west end. It has been observed that beaches come and go. When trying to clear a beach, what is happening in the near-shore underwater environment, since it affects the beach environment and vice versa, needs to be understood. The way the sand is moving, to design the underwater work and the beach cleanup in the most effective way, also needs to be understood.</p> <p>Sensors have already been installed to measure the size of the waves and current speed offshore and their effect on the beaches. Next steps include measuring elevation of the sand at the beaches regularly for about a year to determine how that corresponds to the waves and currents that have been measured offshore.</p> <p>Munition surrogates (fake munitions, made of same weight and shape of real munitions) will be put in place and tracked to determine how they move. This will be performed in 2015 and will provide valuable information.</p>
<i>Underwater Area (UXO 16) offshore of SWMU 4</i>	
Dan Waddill/Navy	<p>At SWMU 4, on land, a removal action will be conducted to support USFWS land use, which is planned public access to portions of SWMU 4. Because the areas intended for public use are adjacent to the beach at SWMU 4, the water offshore also needs to be evaluated. Divers will be completing this effort in 2015.</p>
<i>Underwater Area (UXO 16) offshore of Cayo La Chiva</i>	
Dan Waddill/Navy	<p>A removal action offshore of Cayo La Chiva is being planned. There are nine munitions items in the water around that island, offshore of the public beach. There are already buoys and warning signs in place. However, to make that area safe, the munitions will be removed. That is moving ahead of other underwater work being performed because of the proximity to the public beach. An Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) was conducted, to determine ways to remove those items and their approximate cost.</p> <p>A work plan will be available for RAB review around the Fall of 2015. Field work is planned for late in 2015, early 2016.</p> <p>Following that, there are plans to address the area around Mosquito Pier. Daniel Hood (Navy) informed that an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) showed a lot of</p>

	<p>debris under Mosquito Pier and that some effort will be required to sort through that debris to ensure there are no munitions items mixed in.</p>
<p>Community Feedback</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member asked if the Navy’s objective is to see that Cayo La Chiva can be reopened for public use. Dan (Navy) said that the Navy is working with Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (PRDNER) to support their future use of the land and determine the work required. • A community member commented that Cayo La Chiva, like SWMU 4, will experience trespassers that can’t be kept out. Dan (Navy) responded that the remedy will take the possibility of trespassing into consideration. • A community member asked if La Plata is off-limits until the investigation is complete. Madeline Rivera (Navy) said La Plata is closed because the Navy closed Blue Beach during the removal action. • A community member asked if munitions items identified at La Chiva will be removed to the surface or destroyed underwater. Dan (Navy) said the Navy will be exploring the possibility of encapsulating them underwater, destroying them underwater, or moving them to land for destruction depending on various factors, including safety. There is endangered coral in that area. Underwater detonations would have to be carefully considered because the Navy wants to avoid damage. Ideally the Navy would remove the munitions, bring them ashore and handle them that way. • A community member asked if work would stop and a time-critical removal action initiated if munitions were found underwater, the same process that is followed for UXO found on the surface. Dan (Navy) said that even though it is possible, the scenario has not happened yet due to more accessibility of things in land than in water. • A community member commented that many people have potentially been anchoring at areas known to contain munition items. Dan (Navy) responded that the warning buoys and barriers placed by the Navy at Bahia Icacos have been very effective, as there have been no accidents associated with underwater munitions. • A community member asked how precise are the sensors and what are the criteria for selecting the areas for the removal action (e.g. SWMU 4, Cayo La Chiva, Mosquito Pier). Dan (Navy) discussed how sensors work and that the Navy is interested in the community’s feedback for setting priority sites. • A community member asked if talk about people renting Mosquito Pier was part of the decision to work there. Dan (Navy) said no. The Navy is trying to work at the sites where most visitors go. • A community member said that the time critical action at Bahia Icacos has gone on about 5 years, Cayo La Chiva has been looked at for 2 years now, and wanted to know how long action at Mosquito Pier will take since there is a lot of interest from the community. Daniel Hood (Navy) informed that an ROV survey was performed in 2011 under the pier and recorded on video. There was no obvious evidence of munitions there, but there was a lot of debris there (concrete, trash, etc.). SWMU 4 is being accelerated because the land area will be opened to the public. Mosquito Pier was selected because the techniques used in the wide area assessment won’t work at the pier. People would need to go under the pier to perform the work. <p>The next step will be the dive work at SWMU 4, then Cayo La Chiva and then transition to Mosquito Pier around 2016. Although there were some calls about a bomb being</p>

	<p>out at Mosquito Pier, divers discovered that it was just a fuel tank that a lobster fisherman is using to catch lobsters.</p>
<p><i>Punta Conejo Peninsula (EE)</i></p>	
<p>Daniel Hood (Navy)</p>	<p>The peninsula at Punta Conejo has been closed for nearly 3 years. The site was investigated and around 2,500 buried items were found, mostly trash, and only 2 MEC items. This was a former Marines staging area, so the end of that beach was closed to make sure that Blue Beach (next to it) was still safe for the public. Additional evaluation of Blue Beach and the adjacent parking area was done and additional buried munitions debris items were found. The beach was closed and a time critical removal action was initiated. The action started in May 2014 and was finished ahead of schedule. The area has been completely cleared, being careful with sensitive areas like archeological sites, endangered species and plants.</p> <p>To the north of the beach, the surface and subsurface down to 1 foot was cleared. Navy worked with USFWS to specifically monitor turtle habitats while performing the work, and a biologist was present every day with the teams.</p> <p>Twenty-eight items were found and removed and signs will be maintained to inform people to keep to the parking areas, stay out of the vegetation, and avoid digging. The beaches are cleared to 4 feet. The parking area is fine. The beach was turned back over to USFWS in late October and the area will be open once they finish their preparation work.</p>
<p>Mike Barandiarán (USFWS)</p>	<p>Mike said the Navy did an excellent job on the beach and sea turtle areas. USFWS will be opening the beach on November 15 to the public. USFWS was supposed to be working this week, but the weather is keeping heavy equipment out of the area, so the opening may be postponed one more week or it may be opened in stages. If it's opened in stages, La Chiva will be opened first and La Plata and Escondida will be kept closed. La Plata will be open by Thanksgiving, if the weather cooperates.</p>
<p><i>UXO 15 Puerto Ferro Lighthouse Peninsula</i></p>	
<p>Daniel Hood (Navy)</p>	<p>Access to the lighthouse area was accelerated by working with the regulatory agencies to open the area around the lighthouse, the road to the lighthouse and the beach near the lighthouse. Signs were installed on both sides of the road. A kiosk was installed at the entrance gate informing of areas available to the public, and another kiosk was installed at the lighthouse including information about the 3Rs and the site, and including a panel for USFWS to add history information about the site.</p> <p>USFWS designated a parking area, and it was checked for munitions. No munitions were found in that area. The beach next to the lighthouse and two other beaches were cleared (the second one to be completed in January – when turtles are not nesting there). Additional other paths that aren't planned to be open, but that might be used, were cleared.</p> <p>Signs were intentionally kept small and simple, since it is likely that they will need to be replaced often. They are yellow-orange in color with various messages, in both English and Spanish. Within 24 hours of the signs being installed, the ones on the beach were vandalized. The plan now is to use 600-pound concrete blocks as signs on the beach and to stencil the safety message on them.</p> <p>The area around the lighthouse was swept, and no munitions were found. The rusted remnants of a tower were removed. USFWS will build a path and stairs down to the beach. Next year USFWS expects to open the area and have an opening ceremony.</p>

Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A community member asked if it is safe to go birding off of an area of Puerto Ferro where there is another little lagoon. Daniel Hood (Navy) explained that the area is still restricted because it is still under investigation. Mike Barandiarán (USFWS) explained the status of the area of the peninsula that is open to the public.
<i>SWMU 4 Biosampling</i>	
Brett Doerr (CH2M HILL)	<p>SWMU 4 biota sampling (fish and blue crab) was recently completed in Laguna Boca Quebrada. Prior to that, the remedial investigation was done that included sampling of surface water and sediment. The surface water and sediment data were used for a risk assessment and showed there was no unacceptable risk to a hypothetical fisherman (not supposed to fish there anyway). Some contamination was found, but the levels were not very high. Because there was uncertainty in how the explosives may bioaccumulate in the tissue of the fish and the crab, we went out to catch fish and crab and analyzed them.</p> <p>Popular species for eating were targeted, though very little fish or crab were found in the lagoon. Tarpon seemed to be the only thing in the lagoon, likely because they are more salt tolerant. The only crab caught were blue crab.</p> <p>The sampling was finished in September and the laboratory still has the data. Once back, it will be validated by an independent data validator and then the risk assessments will be performed with the data. This will then be used to revise the feasibility study for the site.</p>
Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madeline Rivera (Navy) asked when the revised plan will be released. Brett Doerr (CH2M HILL) responded that the results will be available sometime in 2015. Daniel Hood (Navy) pointed out that the removal action at the pits will be started after the Christmas break.
Closing	The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 pm.