



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

**RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Number 45**

6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., May 20, 2015, Multiple Use Center, Vieques, PR

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

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| Kevin Cloe – Ex Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic | Stacie Notine – Community RAB Member |
| Dan Waddill - Ex Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic | Luther Landrum – Community RAB Member |
| Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB member, NAVFAC Atlantic | Lirio Márquez – Community RAB Member |
| Madeline Rivera – NAVFAC Atlantic | Jorge Fernández Porto – Community RAB Member |
| Daniel Rodríguez – Ex-Officio RAB Member, EPA | Myrna Pagán – Community RAB Member |
| Weldin Ortiz Franco – PR Environmental Quality Board | Carlos Zenón – Community Member |
| Gloria Toro – PR Environmental Quality Board | Shari Scott – Community Member |
| Mike Barandiarán – USFWS | Melissa Shaw – Community Member |
| Craig Lilyestrom – DNER | June Landrum – Community Member |
| Donald Shaw – USAE | Juan Rosa – Community Member |
| Brett Doerr – CH2M | Kathy Gannett – Community Member |
| Madeline Almodovar – CH2M | Gerardo Cisneros – Community Member |
| Colleen McNamara – Community RAB Member | |

These minutes represent a summary of the meeting presentations, comments, questions, and action items and are not a verbatim transcript of the meeting.

Topics Discussed:

| Opening and Introductions | |
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| Madeline Almodovar (CH2M/Facilitator) | Welcome and meeting opening (6:00 pm) |
| Dan Waddill (Navy – Program Manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agenda and meeting protocol overview. |

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| Community Feedback: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacie Notine (RAB member) suggested the Navy develop an action item list. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Navy agreed to keep track of the action items. • Myrna Pagán (Community member) requested that she be re-instated as a RAB member (last a member 10 years ago). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With other RAB members’ support, she was re-instated. She is to provide her contact information to the Navy. |
| Community Involvement Plan (CIP) and Community Outreach | |
| Madeline Rivera (Navy - Site Manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public website includes the Administrative Record, which contains the public documents that have been developed over the years of the Vieques cleanup. • Newsletters and flyers have been distributed by mail announcing RAB and public meetings and providing information on the status of the cleanup activities. • Based on public input during the Community Involvement Plan update, Navy has developed a Facebook page for disseminating information about the cleanup. |
| Underwater Work Update | |
| Dan Waddill | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navy just completed underwater (UXO 16) munitions investigation just offshore of SWMU 4 to evaluate where items associated with the former open burn/open detonation (OB/OD) activities at SWMU 4 may be located. The information will be used to plan the Remedial Investigation. • A number of RAB and community members participated in a site visit to the area today, and had the opportunity to discuss these activities. |
| Community Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member asked about the meaning of “kicked out.” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Kick out” refers to items that are ejected from the OB/OD pits during the controlled detonation process. Based on the types and quantities of munitions detonated, it is possible to estimate the maximum distance they could have been “kicked out”. • Stacie Notine (RAB member) asked about the types of items found. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The majority of items found were trash, beverage cans, and items that are associated with fishing, such as old/broken lobster pots, fishing hooks, and weights. Some munitions debris and metal scrap were also found. There were six potential MEC items found, all in areas closest to the former OB/OD pits, as expected. Each item was extremely deteriorated, or fairly well encrusted. • A community member asked how much has been spent so far on the underwater investigation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For the underwater portion near SWMU4 the Navy has spent approximately \$200,000. Last year, the Navy spent about \$600,000 performing a side-scan sonar survey around the entire island to identify areas where they may be bottom obstructions or sensitive corals that need to be avoided/protected during the wide area assessment. • Carlos Zenón (President of the South Vieques Fishermen Association) said that he was concerned about wide spread contamination related to Laguna Anones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Navy and regulatory agencies are working together to perform investigations and cleanup in accordance with the laws that govern this type of activity. |

SWMU 4 Interim Removal Action Update

Daniel Hood (Navy Project Manager)

- Summarized the work being done on the land portion of SWMU 4:
 - Governor of Puerto Rico requested the Navy accelerate the investigation and cleanup at various sites (including SWMU 4), so that Fish and Wildlife (FWS) land use plans could be implemented. For example, the Navy has completed the non-time critical removal action (NTCRA) at Puerto Ferro, which allowed the road to and the area around the historic lighthouse to be opened by FWS. SWMU 4 and the offshore area adjacent to SWMU 4 were also prioritized.
 - The SWMU 4 NTCRA objective is to reduce the explosive hazards so that the site can be used for fishing, hunting, hiking, bird watching, and beach use.
 - FWS plans to construct a picnic and parking area, and an observation tower with a coastal trail for hiking and biking.
 - The NTCRA includes munitions removal activities at all the aforementioned areas. To ensure the Navy complies with environmental regulations, biologists are embedded with the teams to identify sensitive habitats and species to ensure they are protected.
 - During the NTCRA, one archeological item from the 1800s was found, the information for which was sent to the State Historical Preservation Office in San Juan.
 - Expect to complete the NTCRA by the end of this summer. Afterward, the appropriate follow-up activities and paperwork will be performed to make the property available for FWS' planned use. The Navy will support FWS installing signs and informational kiosks.

Community Feedback

- A community member asked if this work is being done under a Record of Decision (ROD).
 - The current work (which covers approximately 125 acres) is being done under a removal action, not a ROD. The final remedy for the site, which will be jointly selected by the Navy and regulatory agencies with public input, will be for the entire 400-acre area and will be done under a ROD.
- A community member asked if there have been open detonation activities in other military installations.
 - Every military base has had an area designated for OB/OD activities. In some places this practice is still allowed.
- Gypsy Cordova (community member) asked about the handout which says that investigations at 51 out of 73 sites have been completed. He also asked about remaining length of the cleanup.
 - There are 18 munitions sites currently under investigation. The Eastern Conservation Area (UXO 1) is the first munitions site that will be closed with a ROD, which is currently under regulatory review. All the land sites are currently planned to be completed within 10 years. The water will take longer, approximately 15 years.
- A community member asked if there is a sequence plan for the sites.
 - The sequencing of work is discussed in the Site Management Plan (SMP), which describes the activities planned for the next 5 years. Like in any plan there may be deviations and schedule changes, but the SMP is updated every year to reflect any schedule revisions. The document is available to the public,

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| | <p>and it can be found on the Navy's public website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member asked if the Navy uses any chemicals to clear the land. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No chemicals are used to clear the vegetation; it is done by hand or machinery by personnel from USA Environmental. |
| Status of Sites and Upcoming Activities | |
| Kevin Cloe (Navy Project Manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarized the status of the environmental sites and investigations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SWMU 6, located on the west end of the island, is in the investigation stage. Today during the site visit, RAB members had the opportunity to look at this particular area and view the conditions of the lagoon; mangroves are growing well. ○ AOC E, located in the west end of the island, is a former underground fuel storage tank site, and has a ROD in place. The tank was removed and the remediation activities were completed. The site conditions will be monitored to ensure the remedy is effective. ○ SWMU 20, on the east side of the island, was a former helicopter maintenance area; there is an ongoing investigation for groundwater contamination resulting from the maintenance operations that took place there. ○ SWMU 1 was a former landfill on the east side of the island; there is a ROD in place for that site, with modifications to the remedy being considered. ○ Cayo La Chiva (UXO 18) is the small island right off of Blue Beach/Playa La Chiva. A Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) is currently under development; it will be submitted for regulatory review in July. ○ In the underwater area surrounding Cayo La Chiva, there are nine suspected munitions items which will be addressed by an interim removal action. ○ The Navy is working on remedial investigations (RIs) at multiple munitions sites across the east end of the island. An RI Status Report for six munitions sites was submitted for regulatory review. ○ The ROD for UXO 1 is anticipated by the end of this fiscal year. |
| Community Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stacie Notine (RAB member) asked if the community gets informed before the final decision is made of these sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The community has the opportunity to comment on the draft final documents, once the regulatory agencies comments have been addressed. Once all comments have been addressed, the remedy for the particular site is implemented, and a site final report is issued. All the work plans and reports for the investigations are available to the public for review. The community also can comment on proposed final decisions for all sites during the public comment period on the PRAPs. |
| Regulatory Agencies Update | |
| Mike Barandiarán (Refuge Administrator- FWS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarized FWS activities in the Refuge and clarified some topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FWS in not closing any lagoon on Vieques; some areas have been temporarily closed because there are biological investigations being conducted. ○ Regarding Laguna Anones, it is important to clarify that neither FWS nor any of the local, state or federal agencies opened the lagoon to the ocean. Ephemeral lagoons like Anones follow natural cycles depending on the |

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| | <p>amount of rain they receive which may impact the natural contour. It would be a major project to attempt to open or close the lagoon to the ocean.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The blue crab is a regulated species in Puerto Rico with an established ban period (July 15th through October 15th). For the last 3 years, FWS has accommodated a sustainable crabbing activity. Fishing permits will be issued at the refuge office through May 29th. ○ FWS is working with the State Police, DNER, National Park Service, the Vieques Municipality and different local organizations to remove the horses from public areas. This effort will begin on June 5th and will include gathering, marking, and registering the horses. |
| <p>Weldin Ortiz-Franco (PREQB President)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Presented information about PREQB personnel changes, described current activities performed by the agency, and commented on some of the issues discussed at this meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gloria Toro will continue working on Vieques. Wilmarie Rivera has taken a different position within the agency. ○ PREQB has been reviewing documents, providing comments for several environmental and munitions sites. PREQB has participated in several meetings and site visits. ○ To address the concern about the technical documents being available to the public, PREQB could add a Vieques link to its public website. A conference call prior to the meeting to confirm the agenda and the topics to be discussed could accelerate some of the technical discussions. Having more site visits (similar to the visit today) could be useful to share information and discuss specific issues on site. ○ Mr. Ortiz stated that he will contact the EPA Regional Administrator, Ms. Judy Enck to discuss if there is something additional the agency could do to accelerate the investigations and finalize the technical documents for Laguna Anones. |
| <p>Daniel Rodriguez (EPA)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Summarized EPA’s activities since the last meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EPA reviewed and commented on three technical documents, comprising the Sampling Plan for UXO 13, the RI at UXO15 (Puerto Ferro), and the Time Critical Removal Action for PAOC EE (Punta Conejo). ○ The agencies and the RAB have been discussing Laguna Anones (part of the LIA) for over a year, since the lagoon borders were sampled. The Navy presented the data in the Status Report which is under regulatory review. ○ EPA has been involved in all the discussions related to the munitions removals and has observed recent controlled detonation activities on Vieques and Culebra. ○ The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) is almost ready to be finalized. EPA had comments and we are awaiting the revisions. The objective is to have the CIP available for public review next month. |
| <p>Community Feedback</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kathy Gannett (community member) would like to know EPA’s position regarding detonation activities, the noise impact, and the potential dispersion of contaminants. She also wanted to know if it was possible to receive a notification of when these activities would take place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Daniel Rodríguez (EPA) responded that the Navy has performed air |

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| | <p>monitoring in the past. The Navy added that they currently inform the Vieques Municipality and the regulatory agencies of the planned controlled detonation activities approximately 48 hours prior to the detonation day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jorge Fernández Porto (RAB member) acknowledged the Navy collected air monitoring information in the past. However, the public believes that an air monitor should be installed near the populated areas so we can see if particulates from this activity are reaching the community. He also suggested to perform detonations on Fridays, as it used to occur, for which the community was aware. |
| <p>Craig Lilyestrom (Director of Marine Resources - DNER)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarized the activities DNER has been performing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are a series of “cayos” which after an evaluation process it has been determined they are located within the Commonwealth’s territory. ○ DNER started evaluating Cayo La Chiva several months ago and will evaluate Jalova, Jalovita, Cayo Conejo, and Cayo Yayita in July to determine what the best use would be for these areas and to provide the Navy an idea of the level of cleanup needed. ○ DNER would like to get input from the RAB and community regarding a use plan to be proposed by DNER. |
| <p>Community Feedback</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member asked if for those areas under federal jurisdiction that have archeological value, the Navy and DNER have an agreement on how to preserve these sites for future generations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Craig Lilyestrom (DNER) said that DNER verified with the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture (ICP, in Spanish) that on Cayo La Chiva there are some archeological sites. The use plan would try to avoid any impact to those areas. • A community member asked who has the jurisdiction on the Vieques lagoons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Craig Lilyestrom (DNER) responded that he will have an answer to this questions for the next meeting. |
| <p>Adjournment</p> | |
| <p>Madeline Almodovar</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next RAB meeting is scheduled tentatively for August 25. Contact the Navy if you have conflicts with that date. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm. |