



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

RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)

Meeting Number 48

6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., February 9, 2016, Vieques Multiple Use Center, Vieques, PR

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Dan Waddill - Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Miriam Aldebol -- Community member
Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB member, NAVFAC Atlantic	J. Hines – Community Member
Madeline Rivera – NAVFAC Atlantic	Gabriel Rivera – Community Member
Daniel Rodríguez – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Armando Torres – Community Member
Ramón Torres – USEPA Region 2	Abigail González – Community Member
Mike Barandiarán – Ex-Officio RAB member, USFWS	Julio Rosa – Community Member
Luther Landrum – Community RAB Member	June Landrum -- Community Member
Stacie Notine – Community RAB Member	Douglas McHoul – Community Member
Daniel Vargas – USAE	Ivelisse Avila – Community Member
Brett Doerr – CH2M	Mayat Mair – Community Member
Daniel G. Concepción – CH2M	John Gentile -- Community Member
Maria Danois-CH2M	Arnaud Earhart – Community Member
Héctor Olivieri – Community Member	Marie Rivera – Community member
Ana M. Fabián – Community Member	Elba Sánchez – Community Member
Damair- Community Member	Kathy Gannett – Community 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	
Maria Danois (CH2M/Facilitator)	Meeting began at 6:00 p.m. Participants were welcomed to the interactive poster presentations regarding the Vieques Cleanup Program.
Dan Waddill (Navy Program Manager) Daniel Hood (Navy Project Manager) Madeline Rivera (Navy Site Manager) Brett Doerr (CH2M Project Manager) Mike Barandiarán (Vieques Wildlife Refuge Manager, USFWS) Ramón Torres (USEPA Region 2) Daniel Rodríguez (USEPA Region 2)	Greeted the participants, discussed the information on each of the posters, and answered questions posed by RAB and community members. The topics discussed and a summary of the conversations with the RAB and community members are provided in these minutes. Representatives of the Navy and regulatory agencies were available during and after the meeting to respond to questions. Attached to these minutes are representations of the posters presented at the RAB meeting.
Status of Vieques Installation Restoration Sites	
Daniel Hood	Daniel Summarized the investigation status and the upcoming work at the Installation Restoration Program (IRP) sites located on west and east Vieques. He presented the CERCLA timeline for each of the active IRP sites: AOC E, SWMU 1, SWMU 6 and SWMU 20. Each of the timelines included projected timeframes for each of the CERCLA stages to be completed at these sites. A map showing the locations of the sites was included. The presentation also included photographs from the sites, including site features and data collection.
Status of Vieques Munitions Response Sites	
Daniel Hood	<p>Similar to the IRP presentation, Daniel summarized the Munitions Response Program (MRP) investigation and cleanup status and upcoming work on west and east Vieques. Photographs showing soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment sampling and munitions cleanup work were included on the poster.</p> <p>Daniel also provided information to local outfitters regarding restricted areas necessary to ensure the safety of the public during munitions removal operations at Península Carenero.</p>
Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayat Mair, Arnaud Erhart and John Gentile (local outfitters) expressed their concern about offshore restrictions (exclusion zone) near Península Carenero (specifically Ensenada Honda) that could affect charter boat businesses operating in that area. They stated that Ensenada Honda is a very large area, comprising approximately 4 square miles, therefore closing the entire area may be

unnecessary. They also stated that under weather events this is the only bay where they can safely anchor their boats. They also suggested that the Navy inform the local marinas and issue a Notice to Mariners for those boaters that do not receive the information through DNER, the US Coast Guard or other local agencies. They also suggested that the Navy could call them or use an email list to inform of the specific areas where the Navy would be working on a particular day.

- Daniel Hood responded that the Navy issued a broad exclusion zone so that the public is aware of the area that may be affected by the munitions removal work as it progresses along the peninsula during the next several months and that the reason the exclusion zone is necessary to ensure boat operators are safe while munitions removal takes place on the peninsula in order to make the area safe for potential future public use. He also said that at any one time, the cleanup work will be taking place in a certain location along the peninsula so the Navy can provide more frequent information on the specific exclusion area associated with the current location of cleanup work, which will be a smaller area within Ensenada Honda. He also stated that the Navy may communicate with the local marinas and issue a Notice to Mariners to communicate the exclusion zone information to boaters, including boaters not familiar with the area.

Open Detonation for Removing Munitions on Vieques

Dan Waddill

Dan summarized the open detonation process used during munitions cleanup. Over 95,000 munition items have been safely addressed over the last 10 years in Vieques and data from more than 1,400 samples taken during 150 controlled detonation events and 5 significant brush fires have shown no explosives, lead, or mercury were ever detected in any air sample and that there has never been an exceedance of any air quality health standard, including particulate matter.

Dan also explained why a detonation chamber is not used on Vieques, primarily because use of detonation chambers versus open detonation would significantly increase the risk to UXO workers by having to unnecessarily manipulate munitions and that open detonation has been shown to be protective of human health and the environment.

Underwater and Beaches Investigation Status Update

Brett Doerr

Brett summarized the underwater and beaches investigation status and explained the significance of the Beach Dynamics Study for helping to understand the behavior of the beaches and munitions that may be present on the beaches and in the near-shore areas, and in the planning of upcoming underwater cleanup work. He mentioned that the Navy had initially performed munitions cleanup on several beaches and found that over time metallic objects (detected with metal detectors) returned to the beaches, either from washing up from the ocean or becoming detectable due to beach erosion. Therefore, it was realized that a study of the beaches and nearshore areas would be critical to help plan future investigations and cleanup of these areas.

The update included timelines summarizing the progress and upcoming activities for UXO 16 (underwater areas) and the various beaches. A map of Vieques showing the location of beaches and underwater areas under investigation was presented. The map was complemented with pictures showing activities related to the Beach Dynamics

	Study, the UXO 16 Wide Area Assessment, and Expanded Site Inspection offshore of SWMU 4.
Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julio Rosa (Community Member) stated that he would like to see the beaches cleaned first and opened to the public to allow tourism and asked that the Navy keep this priority under consideration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dan Waddill responded that the Navy originally focused on removing munitions from land areas with the highest explosive risk. Now the Navy is moving into other areas, including the beaches. In addition, investigations such as the Beach Dynamics Study, Wide Area Assessment and Expanded Site Inspection are helping characterize the beaches and underwater areas for further investigation and cleanup. ○ Ramón Torres (USEPA) agreed that the cleanup is a lengthy process and is based on a risk management approach. • Hector Olivieri (Community Member) asked if there was a map with the expected projected path and approximate location of UXOs based on where the munitions had been fired from. He also asked whether the Navy has found helicopters or aircraft in the underwater sites, because he has heard of diving tours to these sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brett discussed the historical sunken ship records search the Navy conducted and that he was unaware of any sunken helicopters or aircraft. Brett emphasized that if Hector or anyone has additional information about sunken vessels, including helicopters or aircraft, they should provide that information to the Navy. He also emphasized that because munitions may be associated with sunken vessels, that unless there is public record that sunken vessels are safe to dive on, the public should avoid those areas and promptly report this kind of information to the Navy following the three 3Rs (Recognize, Retreat, Report) procedure. • Ana M. Fabián (Community Member) asked whether there was a record of the work that CH2M did during the 1980s and 1990s at the Naval Activity Puerto Rico installation (Roosevelt Roads) concerning munitions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brett stated that he will provide information about how to access NAPR public records via email.
Key Areas Where Accelerated Cleanup is Taking Place to Foster Public Access	
Madeline Rivera	<p>Madeline summarized the status of various sites under expedited cleanup to enable USFWS to implement their land use plan, including areas designated for access to the public. She highlighted the cleanup progress on: SMWU 4, Peninsula Carenero, UXO 15 (Puerto Ferro peninsula), and UXO18 (Cayo la Chiva).</p> <p>The presentation included a map with the locations of the sites under accelerated cleanup and the CERCLA progress timelines for each of these sites.</p>
Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A community member commented that they were able to access more areas of UXO 15, Ensenada Honda, and Punta Carenero during former naval exercises than they are currently allowed to access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Madeline Rivera responded that investigation and cleanup work being conducted under CERCLA is being overseen by the USEPA and Commonwealth agencies and that Congress determined how the land will be used. Thus access restrictions are dictated by law that the Navy must comply with.

Regulatory Agencies Update	
US Fish and Wildlife Service	
Mike Barandiarán	<p>Mike provided information on several topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ USFWS agrees that the beaches are a top priority. DNER and USFWS will co-manage the beaches and cayos, which are under DNER jurisdiction. The USFWS Comprehensive Conservation Plan describes intended uses for the sites. The timeline for implementation at the beach areas depends on the results of the beach and underwater studies being conducted. ▪ USFWS anticipates that UXO 15 will be open relatively soon, but investigations are still ongoing there. The cleanup work on SWMU 4 that will allow public access is close to being completed. ▪ Playa Grande Lagoon is currently undergoing a natural closure process (natural processes are responsible for the closure, not people); the natural channel is blocked and the secondary channel does not maintain enough flow to avoid sedimentation at the entrance. To prevent sand sedimentation, maintenance dredging could allow water flow from the ocean. However, this would be a high cost maintenance operation requiring permitting from DNER, US Army Corps of Engineers and the municipality of Vieques.
Community Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julio Rosa (Community Member) suggested that Playa Grande Lagoon dredging be performed by contractors using sand dredging permits and under the supervision of the Municipality of Vieques like it was done in the past. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mike Barandiarán replied that USFWS will begin talks with DNER, US Army Corps of Engineers and the Municipality of Vieques to suggest that they negotiate granting sand dredging permits to contractors for a moderate fee so that the dredging maintenance operation may be done more economically and under the supervision of the municipality of Vieques.
US Environmental Protection Agency	
Ramón Torres	Ramón stated that munitions cleanup activities require interaction among multiple regulatory and governmental agencies. Exclusion zones are delimited when a munitions response action is to be performed. Exclusion zones are enforced by the Navy, and civilians not involved in the cleanup operation cannot be in the area due to safety reasons.
Adjournment	
All Presenters	Presenters thanked all the participants for coming. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m. The next meeting will be held in May 2016.