



**Vieques Environmental Restoration Program  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Atlantic**

**RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)**

**Meeting Number 58**

**6:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m. | February 26, 2019 | Jorge’s Ice House Activities Center, Vieques, PR**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

Dan Waddill – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Madeline Almodovar – CH2M/Jacobs
Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Daniel G. Concepción – CH2M/Jacobs
Kevin Cloe – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Maria Danois – CH2M/Jacobs
Madeline Rivera – NAVFAC Atlantic	Juan Torres Douglas – CH2M/Jacobs
Daniel Rodríguez -- Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Stacie Notine – Community RAB Member
Susan Silander – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	Myrna Pagán – Community RAB member
Mike Barandiarán – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	Barb Skochil – Community Member
Mitsuka Bermúdez - USFWS	Jeff Skochil – Community Member
Courtney Wolf – United States Coast Guard, San Juan	Mary Kay McHoul – Community Member
Kara Stanton – United States Coast Guard, San Juan	Nancy Magacial – 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:**

<b>Opening</b>	
<b>Madeline Almodovar</b> (CH2M/Jacobs/ Facilitator)	The meeting began at 6:00 p.m. Participants were welcomed to the 58 <sup>th</sup> Vieques RAB meeting and were guided through a series of posters highlighting different aspects of the Vieques Environmental Restoration Program. Representatives from the Navy, USEPA, USFWS and USCG were available to answer questions.
<b>Dan Waddill</b> (Navy Program Manager) <b>Kevin Cloe</b> (Navy Project Manager) <b>Daniel Hood</b> (Navy Project Manager) <b>Madeline Rivera</b> (Navy Site Manager) <b>Mike Barandiarán</b> (USFWS Vieques Wildlife Refuge Manager) <b>Daniel Rodriguez</b> (USEPA Region 2) – Remedial Project Manager <b>Kara Stanton</b> (USCG) – Waterways Safety Officer	Navy and regulatory agency representatives greeted the attendees, provided information, and answered questions posed by RAB and community members. Each poster was also available to the attendees as a handout. A summary of the discussions is provided below. Dan Waddill welcomed the participants, discussed the agenda and how the meeting was organized.

<b>Community Members Opening Remarks</b>	
<b>Stacie Notine</b> (Community RAB Member)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stacie mentioned that she recently heard about EPA’s Ocean Dumping Program and expressed concern as to why USEPA nor the Navy have mentioned this program in the past.</li> </ul>
<b>Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Danny Rodríguez (USEPA) indicated that he does not know the policy for this program. He added that all the sites, including UXO 16 (underwater) are being addressed by the Navy following the approved work plan which included a record search to see if there is information on areas used as target practice or locations of sunken ships. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stacie Notine said she was still concerned about the concept of “ocean dumping” and that this has not been mentioned in any conversation.</li> <li>Dan Waddill (Navy) added that the Navy is not aware of this program and requested more information from Stacie. He also reminded the participants that the Vieques Environmental Restoration Program is regulated by CERCLA.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>General Project Update</b>	
<b>Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Investigation</b>	
<b>Dan Waddill (Navy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dan indicated that “PFAS” are associated with firefighting foams and have been a recent subject of analysis across the country; they are emergent contaminants. On Vieques, there has been historic use of these materials, therefore this investigation will determine the sites where these chemicals were used, and if the targeted contaminants are present, any measures needed to address any potential contamination. The Navy is initiating the investigation process and will work with regulators to develop a plan to address these chemicals. Since potable water for Vieques comes from the main island of Puerto Rico, PFAS are not a concern for the drinking water supply in the island. The Navy will keep the community informed on the progress of this investigation.</li> </ul>
<b>Area of Concern (AOC) E</b>	
<b>Kevin Cloe (Navy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kevin indicated that AOC E is on the west side of the island, in the public works area transferred to the Municipality of Vieques. There was a former 500-gallon underground storage tank used to collect oil from vehicle maintenance activities. The tank was removed in 2001 along with the impacted soil free product, yet residual contamination remained above drinking water standards. To address this situation, the Navy implemented in 2011 a groundwater treatment pilot study using in-situ chemical oxidation that reduced the contaminant concentrations to acceptable levels for unrestricted use of the groundwater. This remedial approach was successful and after three years of monitoring a Record of Decision (RD) was issued for the site. The ROD had a Contingency Plan to address potential rebound effects to below Remediation Goals (RGs). Three contaminants were slightly above the RGs so the Contingency Plan was implemented in October/November 2018 using the same remedial approach used</li> </ul>

	<p>in 2011; the Navy will continue to monitor the site for three additional years to check the effectiveness of the remedy.</p>
<b>UXO 16 Status</b>	
<b>Dan Waddill (Navy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UXO 16 is a site that includes almost 12,000 acres of water surrounding the former VNTR and NASD. The Navy and the regulatory agencies have been working on developing a final strategy for the underwater remedial investigation at this site to allow USFWS to open beaches near Punta Carrenero. The immediate action includes an island-wide near-shore munitions removal action focusing on high priority areas. The first step is to perform reconnaissance of potential munitions in April to be able to prioritize munitions for removal on specific areas. Munitions removal will occur periodically throughout the year. The Navy will provide the community with regular updates.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Feedback</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stacie Notine asked for more information on how the Navy will determine the high priority areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dan Waddill indicated that, for example, there is already a good amount of information on the presence of munitions in the water near Bahia Salinas del Sur or in the former Live Impact Area (LIA) on the north side; munitions have been identified in the course of the investigations therefore these two areas are good candidates for munitions removal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Roads and Beaches</b>	
<b>Daniel Hood (Navy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The road and beaches work has been broken down into the northern and southern areas. For the past two years the Navy has been working on the roads to have access to Punta Carrenero as they are priorities for USFWS. The sampling phase of the Remedial Investigation has been completed. With the underwater investigation underway, the Navy is making steady progress in the field, so the beaches can be open to the public. The Navy will continue to share with the community the results of the investigations.</li> <li>• Hurricane Maria slowed down the process, but the Navy has continued to make progress. The work in the Submunitions Area (75 acres) is about one-third completed; contractors are working on doubling the equipment to get back on schedule. This is a sensitive area that demanded work with remote equipment to cut the vegetation before field teams can get on site. It is a slow and very dangerous process (perhaps the most dangerous munitions remediation place in the US). Over the years the Navy has been able to clear a small number of submunitions (about 15,000 items) in the majority at the LIA, yet the Submunition Area is a very complicated challenge as there are over 1,000 submunitions/acre.</li> <li>• As field teams encounter items visible on the surface, these are recorded and addressed by controlled detonations in place, as the items are too dangerous to move. There is always the risk of “sympathetic detonations”, that is why the Navy</li> </ul>

	<p>implemented a boat safety zone around the LIA to protect the boaters. Large unexploded items were removed first. Using a magnetometer the field teams are now addressing the small munitions. It is a slow, expensive, but safe process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion is a consideration of the final remedy for the site. After every rain event, UXO technicians check the site before staff from USFWS can monitor turtle nesting areas. Since the Navy used large munitions along with small munitions, it is a very complicated process to remove big and small munitions as there is imminent danger; this is one of the reasons Congress designated the LIA as a wilderness area with no access to the public.</li> </ul>
<b>Upcoming Proposed Plan for UXO 12 and 14</b>	
<b>Daniel Hood (Navy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dan indicated that due to the government shutdown some of the planned activities got re-scheduled, which was the case for the public meeting for UXOs 12 and 14 Proposed Plan. The meeting will take place within the next two months. This area has been studied and the Navy is ready to propose a final remedy for the 5,000 acres of land so it can be transferred to USFWS for habitat conservation purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Agencies Update</b>	
<b>USEPA</b>	
<b>Danny Rodríguez (USEPA)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Danny indicated that for the last 16 years he has been stationed on Vieques reviewing work plans to make sure they comply with the regulations. The reports are developed with the data gathered from the environmental and munitions response investigations.</li> <li>Danny indicated that last week USEPA announced funding opportunities for an educational institution, private or public, to address environmental concerns on the Island of Vieques through the agency's Public Participation Research Grant. The funds are geared for environmental investigation; the deadline for submitting an application is April 23, 2019.</li> </ul>
<b>USFWS</b>	
<b>Mike Barandiarán (USFWS)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mike indicated that USFWS is happy to announce that some areas have been open post hurricane Maria, that is, most of Punta Arenas on the west side and Playa Grande. USFWS expects to open these areas in their entirety and some of the areas that were opened pre-Maria by May of this year.</li> <li>Although the Visitor Center is not open yet, with the return of USFWS's environmental educator, the agency should be able to start posting contact information, so the community can reach the staff.</li> <li>Parcel B (Sports Center Complex) was transferred to USFWS. Park Services has agreed that the Municipality can use the land for recreational activities for the public; the Municipality is working with HUD and is receiving proposals for refurbishing the building.</li> <li>Parcel C (area adjacent to the landfill) is still under investigation by the Navy; the intention is that when the investigation is completed, it can be transferred to the Municipality.</li> </ul>

<b>Coast Guard</b>	
<b>Kara Stanton</b> (US Coast Guard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regarding the Safety Zones, Kara indicated that they intend to enforce the safety zones to protect the public during the removal actions. Following the Coast Guard posting on the Federal Register, these restrictions will have a public comment period of 45 days including a public meeting. The proposed Safety Zones include areas with different levels of restrictions. There will be “no entry areas” which have more stringent monitoring during operations. There will be a warning issued to first offenders and legal actions for recurrent boater trespassers.</li> <li>Daniel Hood added that there will be a coordinated effort with the Coast Guard to announce the proposed safety zones and restrictions particularly reaching tourism and outfitter companies and marinas in the island. The implementation of the safety zones restricts the access to the area and protects the public from the dangers of potential munitions. FURA and USFWS have supported these efforts in the past with the involvement of the Coast Guard. The implementation of safety zones reinforces and provides legal leverage to support access restrictions.</li> </ul>
<b>Adjournment</b>	
<b>Dan Waddill</b> (Navy)	Dan thanked all the participants and presenters for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m. The next RAB meeting was scheduled for May 8, 2019. After the meeting, the next RAB meeting was rescheduled to May 7, 2019.