



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

RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)

Meeting Number 63

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. | August 4, 2021 | MS Teams Virtual Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Dan Waddill – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Angela (member of the public)
Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Armando D (member of the public)
Kevin Cloe – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Hector Julian Camacho (member of the public)
Douglas Pocze – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Kara (member of the public)
Jessica Mollin – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USEPA Region 2	Keith (member of the public)
Mike Barandiarán – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	Laura Olah (member of the public)
Susan Silander – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	LaViolette, Linda (member of the public)
Stacie Notine – Community RAB Member	Lorna Rivera (member of the public)
Myrna Pagán – Community RAB member	Lorena M. Estrada-Martinez (member of the public)
Maria Danois – NAVFAC Atlantic	Luis Martinez (member of the public)
Bill Hannah – CH2M/Jacobs	Mark Martin Bras (member of the public)
Brett Doerr – CH2M/Jacobs	Mark Tolbert (member of the public)
Daniel Concepcion – CH2M/Jacobs	Martin Walker (member of the public)
John Martin – CH2M/Jacobs	Natasha Bannan (member of the public)
Rosa Esquivel – CH2M/Jacobs	Ryan (member of the public)
Susana Struve – CH2M/Jacobs	JC Kreidel – NAVFAC Atlantic PAO
Juan Baba-Peebles - PRDNER	*Guests on the Phone (no names available)
Angela Carpenter –EPA Region 2	*(757) 636-6901
Daniel Rodriguez – EPA, Region 2	*(315) 289-2240
Denise Zeno – EPA Region 2	*(787) 504-9530
Adriana P. OyolaVivas (member of the public)	*(757) 831-3907
Cynthia Burgos Lopez (member of the public)	*(347) 693-1610
Fernando Caminero (member of the public)	

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

## Virtual RAB Meeting – Welcome and Introductions

Kevin Cloe (English) - Navy Project Manager  
 Rosa Esquivel (Spanish)– CH2M Community Involvement Lead  
 Fernando Caminero (Spanish Translator)

### Welcome and Introductions

Kevin welcomed and thanked the participants for attending the 63<sup>rd</sup> Vieques virtual RAB meeting and indicated that due to the COVID pandemic all in-person meetings have been postponed for the foreseeable future. He further added that the goal is to continue having quarterly RAB meetings, and other public meeting virtually until all COVID restrictions have been lifted and it is safe for everyone to return to in-person events.

Kevin announced that the meeting would be presented in both English (Kevin C.), and Spanish (Rosa E.).

### Virtual Meeting Logistics

Information to enhance meeting effectiveness was provided, and also announced that the public would have the opportunity to ask questions using the platform's chat box and also by submitting questions to the project's assigned phone line

Following the welcome, introductions and meeting logistics, Kevin reviewed the agenda topics that included: remarks from RAB members, project update, and questions/answers from the public.

## RAB Remarks

Myrna Pagán (Community RAB Member)  
 Fernando Caminero (Spanish Translator)

- Myrna Pagán commented that the information provided for the RAB meeting, specifically for UXO 16 Non-Time Critical Removal Action is a bit confusing and requested for clarification. She wants to know if the Bioluminescent Bay adjacent to UXO 15 will be addressed? She indicated that information provided at PRAP meeting indicated that the bordering bioluminescent bay would be worked on as UXO 16, however no information was made available as only Bahia Salinas de Sur, Bahia Icacos, Puerto Diablo and surrounding areas were mentioned.
  - Daniel Hood responded that those are the only places the Navy is working right now. Additionally, added that the Navy is working on completing a three (3) month diving operations. The Non-Time Critical near shore removal will take years to complete; worst areas will be addressed first, just as it was done with land cleanup.
  - Kevin Cloe added that underwater investigation work is yet to be started for any underwater areas and clarified that the only underwater work is the removal action which is ongoing. UXO 16 area includes the area of the Puerto Ferro Bay, which is adjacent and associated with UXO 15, included as underwater associated to UXO 16. UXO 15 was investigated, found no evidence of ecological or human health risks.
- Myrna Pagán mentioned that technical advisors are needed to help the community review technical documents/maps. Asked who can be contacted for information.
  - Kevin responded that Navy can work with the community to provide information on technical assistance that is available through the Navy under the Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) program. In addition, he further added that EPA has similar programs to provide public assistance for technical support. Danny Rodriguez with EPA indicated that he could provide support for their programs as needed.
  - Danny Rodrigues (EPA) told Myrna that she's welcome to stop by his office and they can discuss the grant programs available to the public.
- Stacie Notine (Community RAB member) commented and requested that the all Factsheets, and Flyers provided to the public to be dated, numbered, and for all photographs provide a location of where work and pertaining activities are being conducted. Ms. Notine requested that this information is added for all underwater ongoing activities, coral restoration and all cleanup activities, on land, beaches, sea, or seashore.
  - Kevin Cloe responded and indicated that the intend of the photos shown in the presentation is a representation of the types of work being conducted. He further added if specific information is needed, the Navy can provide that information.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Olah (member of the public) commented that she shares Myrna’s questions and concerns regarding the potential artificial segmentation of environmental and human health risk assessments associated with similar activities. “Segmentation occurs when an action is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. An action can be too narrowly defined, minimizing potential impacts in an effort to avoid a higher level of federal NEPA documentation. The scope of an action must include the consideration of connected, cumulative, and similar actions.” Reference: <a href="https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/38/200.4">https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/38/200.4</a></li> </ul>
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**Project Update - Ongoing Field Activities**

<p>Kevin Cloe - Navy Project Manager Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead Fernando Caminero (Spanish Translator)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin indicated that since the last meeting back in February 2021, the U.S. Coast Guard established maritime safety zones in the waters just offshore of portions of the former training range, due to potential safety hazards posed by unexploded ordnance, such as bombs and projectiles, that may be present in the area.</li> <li>• Kevin added that the new regulation (33 CFR 165.787) prohibits mariners from anchoring dredging or trawling within the safety zones at all times. It also prohibits persons and vessels from being in the safety zones when the Navy is conducting munitions clearance operations in nearby areas on land. The purpose of this new rule is to ensure the safety of people and vessels in the navigable waters around Vieques. Violators are subject to a maximum penalty amount of \$95,881.</li> <li>• Kevin showed a map of the areas of the island which are off limits and the maritime safety zones. This map included closed areas and all beaches next to the safety zones, such as Bahia Salinas del Sur, Bahia Icacos, and Puerto Diablo.</li> <li>• Kevin indicated that the Navy would continue to maintain warning signs and buoys at beaches and water areas associated with the safety zones. The signs are designed to alert boaters to the safety zones and the potential fines for violating the U.S. Coast Guard requirements. Kevin further added and encouraged the public to comply with all access restrictions.</li> </ul>
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**Ongoing Project - UXO 16 Nearshore Non-Time Critical Removal Action**

<p>Kevin Cloe - Navy Project Manager Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead Fernando Caminero (Spanish Translator)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin provided a summary of the status of ongoing projects and informed the meeting attendees with the following information:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Underwater munitions removal within Bahia Salinas del Sur, Bahia Icacos, Puerto Diablo, and surrounding areas resumed in May 2021, and added that this will be a multi-year project, that will include the removal of munitions from the water several months each year.</li> <li>- Kevin showed several photos of the underwater activities and described the work performed by munitions and scientific divers which include assessing an underwater munition prior to removal. Kevin indicate that the munitions divers assess each item to determine the most appropriate manner in which to remove it and the scientific divers assess the corals growing on or around the item to ensure they are protected when the item is removed. Kevin stated that where feasible, coral is relocated by the scientific divers to a location where it will not be damaged or destroyed during munition item removal.</li> <li>- Kevin indicated that over 200 underwater munitions have been removed as part of the NTCRA and further added that munitions divers that are removing munitions at times use an inflatable bag with a harness to lift the items to the surface and tow them to shore where they await for disposition.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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**Ongoing Projects - Time Critical Removal Action at Playa Caracas (Red Beach) and Playuela (Garcia Beach)**

<p>Kevin Cloe - Navy Project Manager Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin indicated that a Time Critical Removal Action for potential munitions at Playa Caracas (Red Beach) and Playuela (Garcia Beach) was completed in July 2021 and the information gathered from those areas, as well as historical information, will help determine the most appropriate path forward for Playa La Chiva (Blue Beach) and is currently being evaluated.</li> </ul>
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Fernando Caminero (Spanish Translator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin indicated that this TCRA, is in addition to previous TCRA's and other investigations that have previously been conducted at Playa La Chiva.</li> <li>• Kevin confirmed that the Navy continues to work with the regulatory agencies throughout this process.</li> <li>• Kevin stated that at Playa Caracas (Red Beach) and Playuela (Garcia Beach), various types of equipment was used to search for munitions along trails, grassy and vegetated areas, as well as sandy beach areas. Kevin further added that advanced geophysical methods were used to help detect underground metallic items at the beaches, which were then dug up by munitions technicians to determine if they were munitions or not.</li> <li>• Kevin indicated that no munitions and/or explosives of concern (also referred to as MEC, which are munitions that may represent an explosive hazard) were identified. He commented that a case of small arms ammunition and a low number of munitions debris were recovered.</li> </ul>
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**Ongoing Projects: Terrestrial Removal Actions**

Kevin Cloe - Navy Project Manager Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin indicated that ongoing projects include the removal of land munitions from ground surface at UXOs 4, 9, and 10 in the former Live Impact Area and the former Surface Impact Area.</li> <li>• Kevin indicated that within the highly dangerous submunitions area of UXO 4, a total of 47 acres have been surface cleared and 28 acres still remaining.</li> <li>• Kevin stated that to date the Navy has removed over 110,000 munitions and explosives of concern, and almost 20 million pounds of metal has been collected and processed, with the vast majority of that metal being recycled.</li> </ul>
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**Funding for Detonation Chamber in Vieques**

Kevin Cloe - Navy Project Manager Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin indicated that the Navy received the funds for the purchase and operation of the detonation chamber and water jet cutting system. He indicated that the equipment has been selected and contracts have been awarded to the selected vendors. Kevin further added that the vendors are assembling the equipment and it is expected for this process to take between 6-8 months and upon completion of the assembly the equipment will be shipped to Vieques.</li> <li>• Kevin stated that the Navy is currently working with the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board (DDESB) to obtain approval to operate the detonation chamber, and confirmed that due to safety reasons, open detonation will continue to be used to address munitions that do not qualify for the chamber.</li> </ul>
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Community Feedback  Kevin Cloe/Navy Daniel Hood/Navy Susana Struve/CH2M – (English) Moderator  Fernando Caminero/Contractor – (Spanish) Moderator/Translator	Susan Struve(moderator) and Fernando Caminero (moderator/translator) presented attendees questions to the Navy team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stacie Notine (Community RAB member) – presented a number of questions/comments:                         <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Stacie stated that initial CFR was made available for public comment on October 19, 2020 in a Proposed Plan requesting comment, as a result of CH2M requests to the Coast Guard to work with them to divide the safety zone area. She added that, “At no time did anyone mentioned this to the Vieques community.”</li> <li>b. Stacie asked why the initial request for comments refers to the Coast Guard to the Port of San Juan would be advising the marine community when the safety zone is activated? Does this mean that when divers will be working on in the safety area, a marine broadcast notification or notice to mariners concerning the arrival or departure of liquid natural gas carriers will be issued? If so, why is that?                                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daniel Hood responded that the Navy has been working for five (5) years to establish the safety zone in Vieques. One (1) specific RAB meeting took place to discuss the safety zone areas, the Coast Guard attended three (3) separate RAB meetings and posters were made available at every meeting since the Coast Guard was contacted to establish the safety zone Area.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>
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	<p>c. Stacie indicated that at no time was a request for public comment period issued and/or mentioned for this topic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daniel Hood responded that the Coast Guard process requires that a public comment period is issued, and it was the Coast Guard who issued this request for public comments. In addition, the Navy provided opportunities for the public to provide comments during RAB meetings for last five (5) years.</li> <li>- Daniel Hood indicated that there might be confusion regarding the safety zone established for Vieques which its language is specifically for munitions removal in and around the east end of Vieques and/or in support of Navy's land base clearance, and is not related to the transportation of liquid natural gas.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Laura Olah (member of the public) – asked which vendor(s) companies were awarded the contracts for detonation chamber and water jet cutting system and also what types of permits are required to operate the equipment? Ms. Olah further added that on 6 Oct 2018, the Static Detonation Chamber 1200 CM (deployed at Camp Minden, Louisiana) received DDESB approval and has a copy in case is helpful.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daniel Hood replied and indicated that NABCO is the vendor who was awarded the detonation chamber contract and Gradient Technology is the vendor awarded the contract for the cutting jet system.</li> <li>- Daniel Hood indicated that as part of Superfund no permits are required, however safety paperwork is required with Navy and the Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board.</li> <li>- Daniel Hood indicated that Congress mandated that the chamber chosen for Vieques needed to be a mobile chamber, therefore no mobile chambers have been approved by DDESB for production demolitions. Mr. Hood, further added that they have been approved for emergency response units such as bomb squads, fire, police departments around the country, but none have been approved for production demolition as proposed to be conducted in Vieques.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hector Camacho (member of the public) – asked about specifications regarding the chambers that will be used, and will this information be available to RAB members before it's use?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daniel Hood indicated that chamber specific information is already available online and can be found by searching NABCO's webpage and under TCV9 unit.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Stacie Notine (Community RAB member) – what metals are being shipped/exported from Vieques to Puerto Rico (San Juan) and what recycling companies for metals, sediment soils are being used for all ongoing activities? Are materials being sent to landfills in Peñuelas?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daniel Hood indicated that recycling materials are all sent to San Juan. The materials are sent to HOMECA Recycling facility in San Juan, Puerto Rico.</li> <li>- Daniel confirmed that currently recycled metal materials are only being sent to recycling companies and not to landfills. However, indicated that at times investigation materials from environmental sampling (i.e. soil and groundwater) are sent to landfills for proper disposal.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Adjournment</b></p>	
<p>Kevin Cloe - Navy Rosa Esquivel - CH2M</p>	<p>Kevin thanked all the participants and presenters for attending the RAB virtual meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m. The next RAB meeting date is to be determined and will be announced soon.</p> <p>For additional information and or questions, you may contact Navy's Public Affairs Officer, please see information below:</p> <p>JC Kreidel NAVFAC Atlantic Public Affairs and Communications Officer Email: <a href="mailto:navfaclant_pao@navy.mil">navfaclant_pao@navy.mil</a></p>

Phone: 757-322-8005

### Acronyms and Abbreviations

CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DDESB	Department of Defense Explosives Safety Board
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
MEC	munitions and explosives of concern
NAVFAC	Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command
NTCRA	Non-Time Critical Removal Action
PRAP	Proposed Remedial Action Plan
PRDNER	Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources PRAP Proposed Remedial Action Plan
RAB	Restoration Advisory Board
TAPP	Technical Assistance for Public Participation
TCRA	Time Critical Removal Action
USCG	United States Coast Guard
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service