



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

RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)

Meeting Number 62

5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. | February 17, 2021 | MS Teams Virtual Meeting

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees:

Dan Waddill – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Susana Struve – CH2M/Jacobs
Daniel Hood – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Diane Evers -NOAA
Kevin Cloe – Ex-Officio RAB Member, NAVFAC Atlantic	Juan Baba-Peebles - PRDNER
Douglas Pocze – Ex-Officio RAB Member, EPA Region 2	Angela Carpenter –EPA Region 2
Jessica Mollin – Ex-Officio RAB Member, EPA Region 2	Denise Zeno –EPA Region 2
Mike Barandiarán – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	Adriana P. OyolaVivas (member of the public)
Susan Silander – Ex-Officio RAB Member, USFWS	George (member of the public)
Stacie Notine – Community RAB Member	Jeff Hansen (member of the public)
Myrna Pagán – Community RAB member	Kathy Gannett (member of the public)
James Larkin – Community RAB Member	Laura Olah (member of the public)
Maria Danois – NAVFAC Atlantic	Lorena M. Estrada-Martinez (member of the public)
Michael Morris - NAVFAC Atlantic	Mary Ann Lucking (member of the public)
Bill Hannah – CH2M/Jacobs	Monisha Rios (member of the public)
Brett Doerr – CH2M/Jacobs	Naida Davila (member of the public)
Daniel Concepcion – CH2M/Jacobs	Olga Gallego (member of the public)
Jamie Butler – CH2M/Jacobs	Paul O’Halon (member of the public)
John Martin – CH2M/Jacobs	Shelly Miller (member of the public)
John Swenfurth -CH2M/Jacobs	Tom Bourque (member of the public)
Megan Shimko – CH2M/Jacobs	*Guests on the Phone (no names available)
Leticia Solaun – CH2M/Jacobs	*(757) 469-1691
Lora Pride – CH2M/Jacobs	*(939) 456-7959
Ray Brent – CH2M/Jacobs	*(732) 598-8681
Rosa Esquivel – CH2M/Jacobs	

*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	
<p>Dan Waddill (English) - Navy Project Manager</p> <p>Rosa Esquivel (Spanish)– CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Dan welcomed and thanked the participants for attending the 62<sup>nd</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.</p> <p>Dan announced that the meeting would be presented in both English (Dan W), and Spanish (Rosa E.).</p> <p>Virtual Meeting Logistics</p> <p>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. Attendees were also informed if they encountered any issues during the presentation, staff would be available for assistance.</p> <p>Following the welcome, introductions and meeting logistics, Dan reviewed the agenda topics that included: remarks from RAB members, update for all ongoing projects, and questions/answers from the public.</p>
RAB Remarks	
<p>Myrna Pagán (Community RAB Member)</p>	<p>Myrna requested clarification regarding the funds and purchase of the Detonation Chamber as the meeting materials sent did not match with the latest information received. She added that she was very happy with the news as this is a topic of great importance for the Vieques community. She thanked the Navy for all the work and efforts in regard to the Detonation Chamber. Dan confirmed that funds were received late January and confirmed that contracts were awarded.</p> <p>Myrna also had a question regarding PFAS but indicated that Laura Olah who a subject matter expert attended the meeting should ask questions and discuss this topic with Navy team members.</p>
Project Delays due to Global COVID Pandemic	
<p>Dan Waddill (English) - Navy Project Manager</p> <p>Rosa Esquivel (Spanish)– CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<p>Dan announced that due to the global COVID pandemic, all field activities were postponed from March until May 2020 in accordance with the Governor of Puerto Rico’s Executive Orders and that limited clearance activities resumed on May 2021 following safety protocols and precautions.</p> <p>Dan indicated that while limited field activities were postponed, the Navy and regulatory agencies continued to move forward with project related work plans and reporting.</p> <p>Dan announced that all in-person public meetings will be postponed and near future meetings will be virtual.</p>
• Ongoing Projects	
<p>Dan Waddill - Navy Project Manager</p> <p>Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<p>Dan provided a summary of the status of ongoing projects and informed the meeting attendees with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clearance of surface munitions is being conducted from UXOs 4, 9, and 10.</li> <li>- Within the highly dangerous submunitions area of UXO 4, 42 acres have been surface cleared with 33 acres remaining.</li> <li>- To date 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>

- UXO 16 Nearshore Non-Time Critical Removal Action – Second Event

<p>Dan Waddill - Navy Project Manager</p> <p>Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<p>Dan indicated that the underwater munitions removal from Bahia Icacos, Bahia Salinas del Sur, and Puerto Diablo is anticipated to resume in early 2021; Dan further added that this will be a multi-year operation, with Navy working in the water periodically for the next 10 years.</p>
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- Funding for Detonation Chamber in Vieques

<p>Dan Waddill - Navy Project Manager</p> <p>Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<p>Dan indicated that the Navy had received the funds for purchase of and operation of the detonation chamber and water jet cutting system. The equipment has been selected and contracts have been awarded to the selected vendors. Dan 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.</p> <p>Dan indicated that due to safety reasons, open detonation would continue to be used to address munitions that do not qualify for the chamber.</p>
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### Vieques Community Involvement Plan (CIP) Update

<p>Dan Waddill - Navy Project Manager</p> <p>Rosa Esquivel – CH2M Community Involvement Lead</p>	<p>Dan/Rosa provided an update and indicated that in the Spring of 2020, a survey was made available to the public where the Navy solicited community feedback on various issues, such as public awareness of the cleanup, community concerns and information needs, and opportunities for public participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dan indicated that the information was solicited via a bilingual survey that were mailed to every island resident in February of 2020 and was also made available via Survey Monkey. Due to the COVID pandemic, a second survey period was made available to the public (August 1 through September 4).</li> <li>Dan indicated that a total of 140 survey responses were received, and this information was included on the CIP. He added that this document is being reviewed by the regulatory agencies and is expected to be available for public review in the Spring of 2021.</li> <li>Dan indicated that a notice will be published announcing the public review period.</li> </ul>
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<p>Community Feedback</p> <p>Dan Wadill/Navy Daniel Hood/Navy Megan Shimko/CH2M – (English) Moderator</p> <p>Leticia Solaun/CH2M – (Spanish) Moderator/Translator</p>	<p>Megan Shimko and Leticia Solaun (moderators) presented attendees questions to the Navy team.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laura Olah (member of the public) – asked which vendor(s) companies were awarded the contracts? <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> </ul> </li> <li>Kathy Gannett (member of the public) - asked what types of munitions will go into the chambers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dan indicated that the Navy anticipates that mostly small projectiles will be demolished by the chamber; also “bomb dummy units” (BDU) which the chamber is should be able to handle. Dan further described the BDUs which are small practice bombs shaped to fall through the air and are used for practice.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Paul O’Halon (member of the public) – asked the Navy to describe which types of UXO do not qualify to be detonated on the new detonation chambers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dan indicated that some UXO items are very sensitive that they cannot be moved at all, therefore do not qualify. Other UXO items are so large that they would not qualify as they would damage the chamber and they would not qualify. He further added that the Navy has published information about these items in factsheets; (1) fact sheet discussed the controlled detonation chamber; (2) fact sheet that talks about open detonation that</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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are conducted. Both factsheets describe the types of UXO that qualify, also safety and health concerns.

- Kathy Gannett (member of the public) – asked what percentage of military waste qualify and do not qualify?
  - Dan indicated that at this time the Navy does not have information that can be calculated as safety approval from Navy Safety Explosives office is pending. He further added that it is uncertain what kinds of munitions are remaining as these are discovered as the project progresses.
- Monisha Rios (member of the public) – asked how will the Navy control contamination from underwater cleanup?
  - Dan indicated that underwater cleanup is controlled through planning between the Navy and regulatory agencies. He added that with all upcoming work, the items found are raised and floated ashore. The Navy does not expect contamination during that process.
- Laura Olah (member of the public) – commented that in March 2020, the Department of Defense (DoD) published a list of installations where a PFAS assessments are being conducted for use or potential releases. She indicated that twelve (12) sites are in Puerto Rico, and asked how many are located in Vieques and what is the status of these assessments?
  - Kevin Cloe indicated that Navy is in the process of preparing a PFAS workplan for the site inspections to investigate potential PFAS. Kevin further added that there are no PFAS sites confirmed to date; however, the Navy has 13 sites that will be investigated. Navy is working with regulatory agencies to finalize the workplan and initiate that work.
- Monisha Rios (member of the public) – asked if other countries that used Vieques for practice, are contributing to the cleanup effort?
  - Dan indicated that the cleanup is fully funded by the United States and no other countries are contributing.
- Stacie Notine (Community RAB member) – presented a number of questions/comments:
  - a. PFAS - she has brought up in the past that RAB members had conversations with staff who worked at the OP, that ships were used as targets particular the Killen area and that it was typical to use foam. Ms. Notine further added that interruptions of meetings, not being followed sequentially related to this matter is of great concern and asked the Navy who indicated it currently has no identified PFAS sites if they can name sites and provide information about these sites?
  - b. Vieques was used for profit /military practices, by NATO and allied nations, by all information that we have, it should had covered this matter. When the Navy states that the US Navy is the only paying for cleanup, it contradicts information provided previously and feels that this information should be discussed/acknowledged.
  - c. Nations were invited to bring their own munitions to use in Vieques. Reason why there is concern, is because Vieques was the only place in Atlantic that allowed weapons training.
  - d. The Navy once solicited for applications/permits to use the site (called hazardous waste treatment for the OP unit).
    - Dan indicated that the Navy is investigating 13 sites for potential PFAS contamination, however it is uncertain what will be found. Historical data is being reviewed, the Navy and regulatory agencies are working together to determine what areas might have PFAS issues and is an investigation in process.
    - Dan indicated that the Navy is aware that other NATO countries conducted training exercises in Vieque;, however they are not contributing to the cleanup, and further added that the US Navy is fully responsible for the cleanup.
- Kathy Gannett (member of the community) – requested for the Navy to improve the communication tools in order to reach the Vieques community. It is her opinion that current

communication tools have been a failure for more than twenty years as current methods are not working as the level of community participation is very low. She further added that information is not being provided in a format and language that can be easily understood by the community. Suggested for a grant to be offered to the local community and hire local community members to do outreach. Kathy further added that this would help to increase community participation, create focused groups, and roundtables. Main concern expressed is the level of participation is low, only way it can be changed is if locals are in charge of distributing and reaching the community.

- Mary Ann Lucking (member of the community) commented that she was glad that no munitions were detonated underwater, and asked:
  1. Can we have more information on what size munitions will be floated, where, and how?
  2. Is the plan for terrestrial detonation in chambers for the underwater UXO or are they too large for chamber?
  3. As this is not considered a time-critical removal, can we offer public comment to section 7, review and can we solicit public notification for comments?
  4. On Wednesday February 3, six (6) explosions were heard at approximately 5:41pm, are these associated to the time critical detonations that closed the beaches on February 1<sup>st</sup>?
  5. How do you inform the public on Vieques about detonation schedule not documents? To confirm, RAB members are informed when detonations are will happen; information such as open-air detonation and size of detonation, etc?
  6. Is the role of the RAB members to inform the community? If so, can they be notified of the detonation information and schedule?
  7. Did the Navy recently produce a document indicating there have been no accidents where a person was injured by UXO on either Vieques or Culebra? If so, we would like to correct that at this time, as there have been more than one UXO related injuries on Culebra.
  8. Would like to know about public comment timelines for future underwater cleanups for the next 10 years.
  9. Are contaminated metals recycled locally?
    - Dan responded that UXO items are floated to nearest beach and are detonated, following safety methods mandated by industry.
    - Comment period is over for the time critical removal; however, the Navy is always open to receiving public comments, and encouraged the public to submit questions/comments.
    - Dan commented that large UXO items are often found and these weight between 250-500 lbs, he further added that less commonly founds bombs are those that weight about 1000 lbs.
    - Daniel Hood responded that the Navy never conducts detonations in the evenings. There have not been any detonations associated with the Time Critical Removal action yet. He indicated that a detonation would only be schedule if an item is discovered, as none has been found that would require this activity. Dan further added that no detonations activities were scheduled for that day.
    - Dan stated that advanced open detonation notices are provided to regulatory agencies, Public Safety Police, and Mayor's office for both Vieques and Culebra.
    - Dan stated that comment periods are for many actions, including the comment period for the CI is completed, as well as the underwater removal action. As the work progresses, the public will have opportunities to provide their input. These will be advertised, and the public is always welcome to submit comments.
    - Dan stated that he is not aware of any documents produced in relation to injuries by UXO.

- Daniel stated that all decision documents that require public input are made available and provided to RAB members and the public.
- Dan stated that all metals are not recycled locally. Daniel further added that all metals are fully inspected and are not contaminated before these are shipped to San Juan recycling facility.
- George (member of the community) asked if the Navy can share links to the documents mentioned.
  - Dan shared the link from the presentation of the website where documents and fact sheets can be obtained.
- Laura Olah (member of the community) asked if the Navy can discuss how the water jet can be used to reduce the size of the large munitions and prepare them for the chamber.
  - Dan responded that the water jet uses high pressure water and abrasive sand to cut through metal and explosives. In the process it will cut munitions into pieces. The Navy is discussing with vendor how the system works and are learning how it will operate.
- Laura Olah (member of the community) commented if munitions have been in water for decades, can't the Navy wait a few months to use the chamber instead of the open-air detonations on the beach?
  - Dan explained that what drives the use of the chamber is the safety considerations and not timing and or waiting. Can munitions be safely moved to the chamber and set up to be detonated the right way? These are considerations taken before determining when to detonate munitions.
- An unidentified member of the community asked the Navy to state the model number of the chamber and other equipment recently purchased.
  - Daniel Hood responded NABCO TCV9.
- Stacie Notine (Community RAB member) commented that there are number of documents on the Administrative Records that are not being sent to RAB members. She would like to know if they will be continued to be sent. She will send a list of documents that she'll like for the Navy to send to her.
  - Dan asked Ms. Notine to submit a list of documents and added that documents are being sent via USPS mail to RAB members as is usually done; added that these are also loaded onto the website and are made available to the public.
- Stacie Notine (Community RAB member) asked status about Centralized Processing Center (CPC) how has it been operating, is scrap material being stocked piled? How much and what type of material is handled and shipped? Who manages the CPC?
  - Daniel explained due to COVID all activities were slowed but have now resumed mainly in the SIA area (9 and 10). Metals are being collected and processed for recycling. The volume has decreased, and no stockpiling is needed at this time. The authorized dealer in Puerto Rico is GEMA. Navy manages the CPC.
- An unidentified member of the community asked if the Navy is testing and documenting what is released from any given munition after detonation, if so, is this information being shared with the public?
  - Dan commented that a lot of testing has been conducted and is described in detail on an air monitoring and air quality fact sheet available to the public on Navy's website.
- An unidentified member of the community asked if Navy is familiar with the results of the research by Arturo Massol Deya a professor of microbiology in Puerto Rico. The referenced research is "*Massol, A., D. Pérez, E. Pérez, M. Berrios, and E. Díaz. 2005. Trace elements analysis in forage samples from a US Navy bombing range (Vieques, Puerto Rico). Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health. 2(2):263-266*".
  - Dan responded that the Navy will review

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An unidentified member of the community commented that it appears that the Navy's website is not working properly as it does not load, is it operational?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dan responded that in general the website is operational and sometimes the issue is using "http://" instead of "https://".</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Mr. James Larkins (Community RAB member) commented that he had texted questions, none were answered. He had incorrect number, he resent the questions at a later date. Questions submitted are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the reason the RAB does not have participation in the Decision-Making committee of Regulatory Agencies? Please give specific reasons, (legal or otherwise).</li> <li>2. What weight does community comments have in the decision-making process (1-10)</li> <li>3. What weight does RAB comments have on the decision-making process (1-10)</li> <li>4. What is the reason RAB Members are not informed of Open Detonation? The RAB is the community's Representative and participates, not the Police, Fire Department, FAA. Etc.</li> <li>5. Are you currently doing Air Monitoring? If YES, state the areas; monitoring equipment being used, and where we can obtain a copy of the testing results. If NO, WHY.</li> <li>6. Will you provide a detailed accounting of munitions detonated in open explosions vs those detonated in the Detonation Chamber? Since Safety Concerns was the stated reason (ie. size of Munitions) for open detonation, what is the full criteria for this decision.</li> </ol>
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**Adjournment**

<p>Dan Waddill - Navy Rosa Esquivel - CH2M</p>	<p>Dan thanked all the participants and presenters for attending the first virtual meeting. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m. The next RAB meeting will be announced soon.</p>
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**Acronyms and Abbreviations**

CIP	Community Involvement Plan
CPC	Central Processing Centre
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
LIA	Live Impact Area
MEC	munitions and explosives of concern
NAVFAC	Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NTCRA	Non-Time Critical Removal Action
PFAS	per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances
PRDNER	Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources PRAP Proposed Remedial Action Plan
RAB	Restoration Advisory Board
SIA	Surface Impact Area
TCRA	Time Critical Removal Action
USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
UXO	unexploded ordnance