

# **Restoration Advisory Board Meeting Naval Weapons Industrial Reserve Plant (NWIRP), Calverton Wednesday December 14, 2022**

The fifty-sixth (56<sup>th</sup>) meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) was held online only via Microsoft Teams application. Panelists for this meeting included representatives from the Navy (Melvin Acree, Addison Phoenix, Melissa Forest, Sharon Baumann, and Jeffery Doepp), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) (Lynn Winterberger and Cecilia Bicknell), New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) (Shaun Surani), Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) (Andrew Rapiejko), Suffolk County Department of Environment & Energy (Amy Juchatz) RAB Community Members (Adrienne Esposito, Amanda Lauth, Catherine Karl, Frank Mancini, Kelly McClinchy, Stephen Shaprio, and Vincent Racaniello [RAB Community Co-Chair]), and Tetra Tech (Ben Francisco, David Brayack, Jackie Boltz, and Lauren Donston), and 36 other residents, interested parties and members of the community. The list of meeting attendees is included as Attachment 1.

## **WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW**

Ms. Jackie Boltz began the meeting at approximately 6:15 pm and reviewed virtual meeting instructions. Mr. Melvin Acree, welcomed everyone to the RAB meeting and reviewed the agenda. Mr. Acree then introduced Ms. Addison Phoenix as the incoming Remedial Project Manager for Calverton, and introduced the RAB Co-Chair, Mr. Vincent Racaniello. Mr. Racaniello thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and provided a community update. As part of this community update, Mr. Racaniello indicated that an agreement was made, and that Suffolk County Water Authority would be providing water service to 64 homes in the Manorville area.

## **PFAS SUMMARY AND CRITERIA AND PFAS INVESTIGATION UPDATE**

Mr. Acree and Ms. Phoenix provided a presentation discussing a per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) summary, available criteria, and Department of Defense (DoD) policy for PFAS investigations. Immediately following this presentation, Mr. Francisco provided the update of the PFAS Investigations at the former NWIRP Calverton. RAB members were allotted 20 minutes after these presentations for questions, and then discussion was open to the public on this topic until approximately 8:30 pm. Copies of these presentations are provided in attachment 2. The summary of discussion, questions, and answers on this topic are provided below.

Ms. Esposito noted her frustration regarding not being able to ask questions between the two technical presentations.

Mr. Racaniello inquired about the access issues at Area of Concern (AOC) -06. Mr. Acree indicated that the town has leased that portion of the property and the owners have not let the Navy back on the property to do more work. Mr. Racaniello asked if there was language in the property transfer documents that would allow the Navy access and noted that this language was in other property transfer agreements. Mr. Acree clarified that the language in the process is Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) specific and that until PFAS are designated as a CERCLA hazardous substance by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that the Navy does not have the same leverage to be able to access the property without permission from the owners.

Mr. Racaniello also noted that there are some pretty high concentrations at AOC-15, which are moving off property toward the Peconic River. He requested that the Navy consider these areas to be a priority during future continued investigations. Ms. Phoenix concurred and indicated these areas would take priority.

Ms. Esposito stated that the results of the 2018 and 2019 drinking water sampling were compared to 2016 EPA Health Advisories and asked if the Navy considered the more recent 2022 Health Advisories which are much lower. Ms. Phoenix indicated that these numbers are below the detection levels, and that the current DoD policy is to use the 2016 Health Advisories of 70 parts per trillion (ppt). Ms. Esposito noted that the Navy could use the detection level as a standard, which is reliable. She further stated that the science shows that the 70 ppt is outdated. Ms. Phoenix indicated that 2022 health advisories are not

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enforceable and are based on draft analyses. In addition, the DoD is waiting for EPA to release drinking water standards. The DoD will also continue to evaluate policies regarding drinking water in the future as appropriate.

Mr. Rapjeko indicated that the county also has an issue with the use of 70 ppt. He noted that in previous meetings, the state has said that they recognize that the 10 nanograms per liter (ng/L) maximum contaminant level must be used. He further inquired about the Navy's purpose for using 70 ppt and indicated that per the presentation the 10 ng/L may be used at a later phase in the CERCLA process. For what purpose is the Navy using 70 ppt? Ms. Phoenix responded that as the Navy goes through the CERCLA process the Regional Screening Levels are used to evaluate groundwater. Drinking water is evaluated using the 2016 EPA Health Advisories and EPA drinking water Maximum Contaminant Levels that will be available in the future. The state Maximum Contaminant Levels are considered later in the CERCLA process as an Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirement. She noted again that at this time, the DoD policy is still to use the 70 ppt for drinking water. Mr. Rapjeko noted that in previous presentations the Navy was using the DoD calculated screening level of 40 ng/L for groundwater. He asked if the new EPA Regional Screening Levels supersede the 40 ng/L number and if sites would be re-screened using the new lower levels? Ms. Phoenix replied, yes and that the groundwater results presented in the presentation have all been re-screened against the June 2022 EPA Regional Screening Levels. Mr. Acree added that PFAS is a moving target, the Navy has changed its recommendations based on the new Regional Screening Levels. There were sites that previously would not have moved forward in the CERCLA process that are now recommended for a Remedial Investigation.

Mr. Rapjeko continued the discussion to note that the NYSDEC has proposed guidance values for soil and groundwater which are lower than the EPA levels. He inquired if when those state regulations become final and promulgated, will those be used over the EPA level? Mrs. Phoenix replied that the state levels will come in process later in the CERCLA process. Mrs. Winterberger noted that the state will evaluate based on state levels available whenever the state formally reviews the document and the recommendations.

Ms. Karl inquired why the Navy did not continue monitoring drinking water when there were results that were at least once historically above the state Maximum Contaminant Level especially considering that these plumes move over time. Ms. Phoenix reiterated that the 10 ng/L is not an action level at this time. The DoD is using 70 ppt, and the results are well below 70 ppt so no additional sampling is planned. Ms. Karl expressed concern and confusion that at one phase of the investigation one number is used, and then suddenly in another phase another number is used. She further noted that she is concerned that the private drinking water wells were not considered public water supply for this investigation, indicating that a lot of people in these areas don't have access to the public water supply. Ms. Phoenix indicated that the formal public water supply standards, Maximum Contaminant Levels, apply to a specific definition of public water which takes into account the number of people drinking from the specific well. She empathized and noted that unfortunately this number does not apply to private drinking water wells and reiterated the DoD's policy of using 70 ppt for private drinking water wells.

Ms. Karl transitioned to discussing the investigation results portion of the presentation. She questioned the results of AOC-10, where no further investigation is recommended because the risk screening determined there was no unacceptable risk. She expressed concern that some number is acceptable to expose the public to as potential "collateral damage". Ms. Phoenix indicated that the risk formula looks at hypothetical land use at the source areas in the risk assessment, where concentrations are higher. She noted that private drinking water in the area south of AOC-10 was part of the area that was sampled in 2018 and 2019 to address potential risks to the public. Ms. Karl inquired that if we know that pollution is traveling, why do we not quantify risk outside of the source area? Ms. Phoenix referenced and reviewed isoconcentration maps to show samples collected on the eastern portion of the runway and highlighted where the black

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concentration line delineated results which were below the EPA Regional Screening Levels, , which are below even the Maximum Contaminant Levels.

Ms. McClinchy made the point that there are homes south of Swan Pond and there is someone living there drinking from a private drinking water well. Even though these levels are below even the state Maximum Contaminant Levels, this is still a concern. She reiterated that groundwater is residential drinking water and that the Navy's policy of 70 ppt is deceiving. She continued to express that the Navy is deceiving the public by not indicating that there are private wells within these plumes. She expressed disappointment that the isoconcentration maps were not up on the website prior to the meeting. She noted that the RAB members are trained to understand these maps, and community members want to see these and it is important to keep this line of communication open.

Ms. McClinchy further questioned what constitutes the need for more data in the area of AOC-06 when there are already minimal exceedances. Mr. Francisco replied that data in the source area, which was inaccessible, is needed to further evaluate the potential source area before determining the path forward for the location. Ms. McClinchy indicated that the community needs to be concerned that private business owners don't have to allow permission for the Navy to finish investigations. She explained that there is a portion of Enterprise Park at Calverton (EPCAL) that may be transferred to private businesses and asked if this access issue would continue to be a pattern. Mr. Acree responded that the town and the state could work with the property owners as part of the agreement to include PFAS and keep the Navy involved. However, right now PFAS is not a hazardous substance under CERCLA, which is what the Navy specified in the previous property transfer documents. Future property transfer from the Navy can include specific PFAS language, however anything that was historically transferred does not include PFAS at this time. Ms. Phoenix added that the Navy is anticipating the federal government making PFAS a hazardous substance under CERCLA, which would allow the Navy much easier access to conduct sampling. Ms. McClinchy clarified that as of right now, private owners do not have to allow the Navy access and can hinder schedules of future investigations and if they take over 1,000 acres of the former EPCAL property this could significantly impact the ability for the Navy to conduct appropriate sampling. Mr. Acree confirmed the clarification.

Ms. Phoenix circled back to the discussion and concern of not showing the locations of private drinking water wells on the plume maps with the public. She noted that the Navy is required to keep that data private. Mr. Acree added that the information is available on the public website and general locations are shown in the white circles on the maps. Ms. McClinchy expressed concern that those maps do not show the values, which are what the community is most concerned about. She understands that specific information from a particular property cannot be disclosed but expressed concern that it is disingenuous to say that no homes are affected.

Mr. Carey asked for clarification of consideration of the Fence Line Treatment System (FLTS) and its surrounding infiltration galleries as a source area for PFAS. He noted that it previously was considered a source area but now it is not. Mr. Acree clarified that the FLTS in and of itself is not and has not been considered a source of PFAS because there was no use or storage of aqueous film forming foam (AFFF) or other PFAS containing material in this area. Mr. Carey noted that other areas have been discussed as source areas based on high concentrations and referenced a map [Specifically provided by the Navy at his request in November 2020] which showed concentrations around the infiltration galleries ranging in the 300s. He inquired why this area would not be considered a source.

In email subsequent correspondence the following response was provided: The Fenceline Treatment System intercepted VOC-contaminated groundwater from Site 6A prior to entering the Peconic River. The extracted groundwater was treated to remove VOCs and then reintroduced into the local aquifer at two point sources to the east and west of the extraction wells. The treatment system's impact to groundwater

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flow was very localized and did not impact the area-wide flow of groundwater or groundwater discharge into the Peconic River. There was thus no apparent net effect of the treatment system on the migration of PFAS from the NWIRP.

Environmental investigations to date suggest that PFAS detected at the Fenceline Treatment System migrated there from an upgradient source area. The Fenceline Treatment System area will be investigated as a part of the Remedial Investigation for upgradient areas, specifically Areas of Concern (AOC) 01, 02, & 03). The Navy will investigate the nature and extent of PFAS from AOC 01, 02, & 03 through its migration (including through the Fenceline Treatment System) in the Remedial Investigation. This Remedial Investigation is currently in the planning phase.

In regards to concern for the neighborhood to the east of the facility. Although not downgradient from AOC 01, 02, or 03 (or the Fenceline Treatment System), the Navy twice sampled that neighborhood for PFAS because it is downgradient from other PFAS releases on the facility. Neither PFOA nor PFOS were detected above 70 ppt during the Navy's sampling of off-base drinking water in 2017 and in the most recent sampling event found no PFAS above even 10 ppt.

The Navy is committed to addressing PFAS releases on-base as well as areas where PFAS could have potentially migrated off-base. Please let me know if you would like any additional information.

Mr. Carey additionally requested that NYSDEC shed light on state policy versus Navy policy. Ms. Winterberger noted that the state has not received the report to formally evaluate the Navy's recommendations. The state will take state levels during the formal evaluations and make recommendations accordingly.

Mr. Mancini inquired about the timeframe of the public comment period that the state typically requires before the record of decision is signed. Ms. Winterberger noted that yes there is a public comment period, but the timeframe is unclear at this time while the Navy continues investigations. Mr. Mancini also asked for contact information for the state reps so that the community knows who they can talk to. Contact information for the NYSDEC representatives is provided below.

- NYSDEC: RCRA Permitting Section Chief, Albany office; Ms. Lynn Winterberger (518-402-8651 and [lynn.winterberger@dec.ny.gov](mailto:lynn.winterberger@dec.ny.gov)).
- NYSDEC: NWIRP Calverton Project Manager, Albany office; Mr. Henry Wilkie (518-402-8651 and [henry.wilkie@dec.ny.gov](mailto:henry.wilkie@dec.ny.gov)).

Ms. Esposito requested that the NYSDEC step up. She noted that NYSDEC is supposed to have policies that protect the public, but under the Navy's policy, all groundwater could be contaminated, and nothing would have to be done. She insisted that as we move along in this process, we need state regulators to help stop residents from drinking contaminated water. Ms. Winterberger responded that any wells that are above 10 ng/L, which is the NYS drinking water standard regardless of private or public, that information is forward to NYSDOH (Shaun Surani), and it comes back to the NYSDEC in the division of environmental remediation, and they work with the individual homeowners to provide water. Mr. Surani confirmed that NYSDOH not only works with NYSDEC but also with Suffolk County and will continue to look at the state Maximum Contaminant Levels as the action level. He noted that the current understanding is that the off-site private wells that were sampled by the Navy are not currently exceeding the Maximum Contaminant Levels but requested that anyone with concerns or contradictions reach out to him directly. Contact information for the NYSDOH representative is provided below.

- NYSDOH: NWIRP Calverton Project Manager; Mr. Shaun Surani 518-402-7860 and [Shaun.Surani@health.ny.gov](mailto:Shaun.Surani@health.ny.gov) ).

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Mr. Racainello further noted that what is a safe level of water to drink, is the level that is safe regardless of whether it is a private well or a public well. Those standards are health standards, and those levels are what are publicly acceptable as safe to drink.

Ms. Giglio stated that she has seen the money that the Navy has put into the remediation at this property. She is reaching out to the state to determine at what point it becomes non-sensical just to connect people to public water based on all the money and effort that has already been completed here over the last several decades. The fact that the Environmental Bond Act passed is great, but there is more that can be done. She inquired about the next step in the investigation process to help this. Ms. Winterberger indicated she would take those questions to her management.

Ms. Giglio also inquired about what the Navy is doing to proceed with investigations where access issues are a problem. Mr. Acree responded that the Navy sends access requests to the individual property owners or tenants. This request has been sent to the owner of the property at AOC-06 on October 16, 2020, however, there has been no response. Ms. Giglio noted that there was a bill that was adopted that the governor signed, that the individual owners of the LLCs have to list their names, and she would like to know who it is. Ms. Phoenix replied that the Navy will provide what is allowed, without disrupting personal privacy concerns. Ms. Giglio inquired why this process takes so long, as these investigations have been ongoing here for many years. Ms. Phoenix clarified that this investigation is under the CERCLA process which was presented on a previous slide. The CERCLA process is intentionally slow and iterative to ensure comprehensive evaluation. She welcomed Ms. Giglio to reach out offline for further discussion.

**SITE 7- BIOSPARGE SYSTEM UPDATE**

Ms. Donston provided a presentation on the Site 7-Biosparge System Evaluation. A copy of the presentation is provided in Attachment 2. The summary of the discussions, questions and answers regarding this topic are summarized below.

Mr. Milligan asked for clarification about the schedule of the Biosparge system. Ms. Donston clarified that the system is currently in operation but would be shut down in the winter. The system will then be brought back online in the spring or summer 2023 for the third round of sparging. Ms. Phoenix added that this system is the last polishing treatment, not the first line of defense type system. The Biosparge system is conducted in rounds to stop and evaluate the results to see if we have achieved cleanup goals.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Ms. McClinchy noted that everyone understands that the residents in the surrounding community have some serious concerns. The residents appreciate meeting with the Navy multiple times throughout the year. What the residents feel is also lacking is the communication with NYSDEC and NYSDOH and she extended an invitation to start a line of communication from the residents with NYSDEC and NYSDOH.

Ms. Pawson stated that the government has made a comment that if homes are above the specified level, then bottled water will be provided. However, bottled water only goes so far, as it can't be used for showers and bathing. They requested that the community be hooked up to public water and insist that Navy provide some funding.

Ms. Phoenix provided the closing remarks and thanked everyone for attendance and closed the meeting. The meeting was then adjourned.