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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NORTHERN DIVISION
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
10 INDUSTRIAL HIGHWAY
MAIL STOP, #82
LESTER, PA 19113-2090

IN REPLY REFER TO

MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING

SITE 3 - AREA A DOWNSTREAM

To: NSB-NLON Public Meeting Attendees

From: Mark Evans, Remedial Project Manager, Northern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command

Date: 1 October 1997

Subject: Public Meeting Minutes - August 6, 1997
Installation Restoration Program
Naval Submarine Base - New London (NSB-NLON)
Groton, Connecticut

Attendees of the meeting

Andy Stackpole	NSB-NLON
Mark Evans	Navy
Greta Deirocini	Navy
Kymberlee Keckler	USEPA Boston
Patti Lynne Tyler	USEPA Boston
David Peterson	USEPA Boston
Jennifer Hayes	Gannett Fleming
Mark Lewis	CTDEP
Corey Rich	Brown & Root
J. P. Pradeep	Brown & Root
Susan Orrill	RAB Community Co-Chair
Andrew Parella	RAB Member
Bart Pearson	Community
Steve Cicoria	Community
L. J. Chmura	Community (City of Groton Conservation Commission)
Dave Paskavsky	Community (City of Groton Conservation Commission)
Felix Prokop III	Community (Ledge Light Health District)
Dr. Norman Richards	Community (The Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut)
Noah Levine	Community

Welcome and Introduction

Andy Stackpole opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m..

Mr. Stackpole read the public notice that appeared in the New London Day on August 1, 1997.

Mr. L. J. Chmura stated that the law in the State of Connecticut requires a 30-day legal notice, and all he ever saw was an advertisement without a legal notice number on it, and he went to the Groton Library that day, the day after, and yesterday, and there was no literature there from the Navy regarding this meeting.

Mr. Stackpole stated that he went to the library the day before this noticed was published and made sure the information was there.

Mr. Chmura asked why they weren't given a 30-day notice as required by law.

Mr. Stackpole stated that the Navy put a legal ad in the paper (New London Day) on August 1 and the Navy is having a public comment period until September 2. The Navy has a legally stamped notarized copy from the New London Day certifying that the notice was placed in the paper on August 1, 1997.

Mr. Chmura asked if there was a legal number on it.

Mr. Stackpole stated that the requirement is for the Navy to publish a notice in a major local newspaper and the Navy met that requirement.

Mr. Chmura stated that it is suppose to be a 30-day notice before the hearing.

Mr. Dave Paskavsky stated that you may be the Navy but you got to still play by the rules.

Andy Stackpole stated that the Navy follows applicable regulations.

(Mr. J. P. Pradeep gave presentation on the Proposed Plan for the Area A Downstream).

Mr. Paskavsky asked who conducted this investigation, were borings taken and were any lead batteries found.

Mr. Pradeep stated Brown & Root Environmental, the Navy consultant, conducted the investigation. No lead batteries were found and soil borings were conducted.

Mr. Paskavsky asked how deep the boring were taken.

Mr. Mark Evans stated that borings were taken up to 80 feet deep and there were no lead batteries found there. The site that we are discussing is the Area A Downstream not the Area A Landfill. This area is below a large man-made dike that was constructed back in the '40s during the dredging of the Thames River.

Ms. Patti Lynne Tyler stated that the Area "A" Downstream is almost all wetlands.

Mr. Paskavsky asked whether the area was filled in the early '40s.

Mr. Pradeep stated that dredge spoils were placed in the Area "A' wetlands, and the area we're talking about is downstream of this Area "A" wetland and landfill. It's a series of ponds and streams and wetlands.

Mr. Chmura asked if this area was used as a dump for the things that they wanted to get rid of at the base.

Mr. Evans stated that there were no dumping operations in this area. The Navy used a pesticide called DDT to control the mosquito population, and that is the contaminant that is the concern in this area.

Mr. Stackpole stated that this area is where the dike was built. This area was virtually untouched. There are a few areas in here that there was never any kind of filling or land filling going on.

Mr. Chmura asked if the scrap metal or anything like that was disposed of here.

Mr. Stackpole stated that no industrial waste was disposed of there.

(Mr. Pradeep continued the presentation on the proposed remedial action for Area "A" Downstream).

Mr. Pradeep stated that additional information can be found in the Groton Public Library.

Mr. Paskavsky stated that they don't have a copy of the report and asked to receive a copy.

Mr. Pradeep gave Mr. Paskavsky a copy of the Feasibility Study.

Mr. Noah Levine stated that he was on the Navy's mailing list, but did not get a notice in the mail. He hasn't received anything since last year. It just so happens that he caught this in the paper.

Ms. Sue Orrill stated that the Navy has been meeting with the public for over ten years. It started as a technical review committee which reviews some of these documents. This has been going on as early as the 1980s. She stated that she is a resident of Gales Ferry and a member of the technical review committee which was later renamed the Restoration Advisory Board. The board usually meets four times a year or every three months depending on when certain public meetings are being held. We can't beg enough people to come. If your interested, we'll let you know when the next meeting is.

Mr. Paskavsky stated that he was interested.

Ms. Orrill asked if he would put that on the address list that you may be interested in joining the restoration advisory board. So, if you are interested that's what we're trying to do, make sure that the information is getting examined by the public and comments get made. It was six months ago that 250 letters were sent out about the RAB meeting.

Mr. Levine stated that the last one he went to was last year.

Ms. Orrill stated that it's good that this gets publicized. The defensiveness that I hear coming from the public at large I really don't understand. That's the whole purpose of the restoration advisory board members. I'm the Co-chairman and the non-Navy person community member at large. So, I've had calls and given out the information. I usually have a personal copy of the documents. I've lent those out to make it easier than going to the library.

Mr. Bart Pearson stated that when the meetings first started the medical officer from the City use to attend the meetings, and then for some reason we haven't seen him for a long time.

(Patti Lynne Tyler from EPA gave a presentation on the development of Preliminary Remediation Goals).

Mr. Chmura asked if this area drains into the Thames River.

Mr. Paskavsky asked if any of it goes into the Groton reservoir.

Ms. Tyler stated that it does not drain into the Groton reservoir , but Stream 5 eventually comes out and drains into the Thames River and the same with Stream 6, so they do eventually drain into the Thames River.

Mr. Paskavsky asked how long does it take for DDT to break down and go away.

Ms. Tyler stated that it takes many, many years. U.S. Fish and Wildlife services continues to monitor fish from the Great Lakes area and they still see very high concentrations. What you end up seeing is you don't have as much DDT but you get the breakdown products like DDE which is a lower toxic, but was responsible for the eggshell thinning of the Bald Eagles.

(Ms. Tyler continued her presentation).

Mr. Paskavsky asked if there are problems with PCBs.

Ms. Tyler stated no.

Mr. Chmura asked if the Navy tested for dioxins.

Ms. Tyler stated that the Navy did. We're looking for pesticides. We are able to show that pesticides are driving the risks and looking at clean-up goals for inorganics.

Dr. Norman Richards asked looking back, what information do you think you would have gotten with sulfides, with the metals that you found.

Ms. Tyler stated that they wouldn't have been available. Looking at the concentrations of the pesticides by far drives the risk. There's no question about it at all, and the toxicity tests we have are 100 percent across the board. What I would like to mention is we are going into an area that is a wetland. We're going to have to excavate and destroy that area. We will restore that area in kind and in place. That area has been delineated. It will include regrading, replanting, and restoring that wetland.

Dr. Richards asked if that will be in a one-to-one ratio.

Ms. Tyler stated yes in kind and in place, same footprint.

Mr. Paskavsky asked what the Navy is going to do with the soil that is cleaned out of the ponds.

Ms. Tyler stated that it depends on what's in the sediments or the soils. If it has high concentrations of DDT, it will be brought to an outside hazardous waste landfill.

Mr. Chmura asked what caused such a concentration of DDT in that particular wetland.

Ms. Tyler stated that they used DDT for mosquito control.

Mr. Chmura asked how did the Navy get rid of that in that other area, the Area "A' wetlands.

Mr. Stackpole stated that we've seen small concentrations up there, but Area A wetlands do not show the same levels of DDT as the Downstream Area. It probably came out in the water and settled in the Downstream Area.

Dr. Richards asked how were the pesticides applied.

Mr. Stackpole stated that based on historical records, there's a number of different ways. Pesticide bricks would dissolve in the water or they would break them up and spread them out in little pieces.

Mr. Chmura asked if the Navy capped the other wetland where the dredge spoils are.

Mr. Stackpole stated that the other wetland is going to remain the way it is. There is no action there to be taken because there isn't a risk to the environment there.

Mr. Chmura asked if anything is leaching out of that into the groundwater.

Mr. Stackpole stated no, we've done all the investigations. There are numerous wells, and we've done a lot of groundwater modeling.

Mr. Chmura stated that they used to dump batteries and mercury at the Subase.

Mr. Stackpole stated that the area that had dumping operations was the Area A Landfill, and it's being capped right now. If we just cap the wetlands it wouldn't help the environment. We're trying to replace in kind.

Mr. Chmura stated that it's the more logical thing to do. The other area which is capped, you're going to have to monitor that for life.

Mr. Stackpole stated that there are monitoring wells in there, and we have to maintain the cap. That was all taken into account.

Dr. Richards stated that the goal in this restoration is to restore the structure and function of the system. What functional values do you look at, and how long do you predict it will take to arrive at the same structural use.

Ms. Tyler stated that there was an assessment done on the wetlands. It described specifically the wetland and what the values are. We will look at an environmental monitoring plan and collect data for a few years and make a comparison. At that point in time, it's hard to say how many years it will take to restore. Five to ten years, it takes a while.

(Mr. Stackpole asked if there are any more comments or questions).

Mr. Chmura stated that he understood that the Navy is going to dump the water that is there after being filtered into the Thames River. How are we going to be sure that the water is going to be safe and not affect the fish.

Mr. Mark Lewis stated that the Navy, like any other applicant, is required to meet the State's requirements and standards and treat the water that is discharged in the river. We will ensure that they do so.

Mr. Chmura asked if the CT DEP will have somebody there full-time monitoring the results, or do you wait two years for the report.

Mr. Lewis stated that they won't have somebody there full-time, but on a monthly basis. That is to be determined by the individual engineer who writes the permit for the discharge.

Mr. Chmura stated that we haven't been able to get any of these reports earlier than two years after-the-fact when the job was all done and nobody bothered to look at them.

Mr. Stackpole stated that normally, the discharge monitoring reports are submitted weekly and bi-weekly, and it will show whether or not you are meeting your limits.

Mr. Lewis stated that those are public documents and if you haven't been getting copies, I'd be glad to meet with you afterwards.

Dr. Richards asked what is the nature of the discharge. Obviously, you're not going to go to a diffuser. How will the water physically be discharged.

Mr. Stackpole stated that the Navy is going to dewater the ponds and streams. The project area will be isolated off, and all the water out and treat it. It will not be a very high flow rate. The sediments will be dried, excavated, and taken out.

Mr. Chmura asked if there will be solids going out with the water as well.

Mr. Stackpole stated no, this discharge will probably be better quality than some of the river water discharging from the Thames.

Mr. Chmura asked if there are traces of PCBs.

Mr. Stackpole stated no, the contaminants of concern in this area is DDT, and that's what we'll be looking at.

Mr. Levine asked if there are any other studies or areas that have had these one-to-one replacements of wetlands. It seems to be rather difficult to reproduce a man-made wetland. How can you see how efficient they have been in actually replicating this.

Ms. Tyler stated that the EPA actually lays out the steps from Section 404b of the Clean Water Act of the procedures that follow in terms of impact to wetlands. There's no regulations that actually give you specifics about a ratio that you must follow. It gives you a general guideline that it could be one-to-one with respect to looking at functions. It's very hard to say that we've done it at other sites. There's a significant amount of literature on restoration or creation. We're talking about a system that's already a wetland. For that system to restore back into a wetland system that we're bringing down to a grade, shouldn't be that difficult. We have plans to monitor. Keep in mind, the wetland system right now is degraded. We have phragmites in there so hopefully what we're doing is trying to make it a better quality, better functioning wetland.

Mr. Levine asked if the Navy is totally removing the wetland. By saving it, you are taking it away and putting it back.

Ms. Tyler stated that restoration or creation is not an exact science. It's not, and probably for an engineer, it would be very hard to comprehend that, but in terms of looking at the functions and values of that wetland, it's something that we will work together, EPA, the State, and Navy to accomplish that. The risk is significant enough from exposure of DDTR that we'd like to see something done in there. It's the lessor of two evils.

Dr. Richards stated that the Navy described the goals and concepts. In describing the wetlands you really didn't discuss the existing precontamination value of this kind of wetland, a forested wetland. So, maybe you could describe the value of this kind of wetland versus other kinds of wetlands, and what's the scale of value.

Ms. Tyler stated that a forested wetland provides nutrient retention and flood flow storage. There's a number of things, but this wetland is very interesting because we have some salinity in the sediments because of the run-off. We had to pick reference areas but it was hard to get the same cover and same substrate. We tried to look at different areas in the woods that would have the same substrate and same vegetated substrate. With a forested wetland, it's very mature and typically high functioning. So, recreating something like that is one thing, and that would be very difficult. We do it in Superfund. We do it quite frequently. I couldn't tell you if it's successful or not because we have to wait a few years.

Dr. Richards stated that you mentioned the salinity, so you really would have to have a prestressed wetlands in terms of effects from all the chemicals. I'm sure in your risk assessment you have sort of a safety factor where you've accounted for the major stress of the salinity.

Ms. Tyler stated that may not necessarily be so. We have not been able to see that with the toxicity testing.

Dr. Richards stated that the water quality and standards are mostly done with single species and single chemicals.

Mr. Stackpole asked if anybody else had any comments.

Mr. Pearson stated that his home was directly affected by this. It seems to me that at some point in time, prudence ought to dictate. I think it's time. My recommendation is to take a unique segment and do something.

Mr. Levine asked if there was any mobility of DDT in the water.

Mr. Stackpole stated that there might have been a possibility in the 50s, but not now.

Ms. Tyler stated that it would be hard to see that.

Mr. Andrew Parella stated that Patti did an excellent presentation, and I think it should be cleaned up.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m..