

MINUTES
NAVAL WEAPONS STATION (NAVWPNSTA) SEAL BEACH
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)
AND COMMUNITY MEETING
October 16, 2002

Participants:

Carmody, Jack
Garrison, Kirsten / CH2M HILL
Hohenadl, Eike / NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach
Le, Si / Southwest Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command (SWDIV)
Leibel, Katherine / DTSC
Sample, Brad / CH2M HILL
Smith, Gregg / NAVWPSNTA Seal Beach Public Affairs Officer (PAO)
Tamashiro, Pei-Fen / NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach and RAB Navy Co-chair
Willhite, Lindi / RAB Community Co-chair
Wong, Bryant / CH2M HILL

WELCOME

At 7:02 p.m., P. Tamashiro, Navy Co-chair began the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing L. Willhite, the Community Co-chair, and G. Smith, the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) for NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach.

Participants were encouraged to direct any environmental related issues for the Installation Restoration (IR) Program to P. Tamashiro or G. Smith, who are also accessible via telephone or e-mail.

P. Tamashiro introduced Si Le, the Remedial Project Manager (RPM) for the IR Program from SWDIV Engineering Command, who would be presenting a status update on the ongoing IR Program.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

S. Le provided the RAB with an overview of the progress at the NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach's IR Program sites. The following sites were discussed:

- Site 5- Fill Disposal Area, Removal Action
- Site 7 - Station Landfill, Engineering Evaluation and Cost Analysis (EE/CA) and Action Memorandum (AM)
- Site 73 - Water Tower Area, EE/CA and AM
- SWMU 24 - Demilitarization Facility, EE/CA and AM
- Site 14 - Abandoned Leaking Gasoline Underground Storage Tank (UST), Baseline Groundwater Survey Investigation
- Site 40 - Concrete/Pit Gravel Area and Site 70 - Research, Testing, and Evaluation (RT&E Area), Groundwater Monitoring Program

- Site 40 and Site 70, Feasibility Study, Proposed Plan, and Record of Decision (ROD)
- Site 40 and Site 70, Pilot Testing
- Site 74 – Skeet Range, Tier II Ecological Risk Assessment
- Site 4 – Perimeter Road, Site 5 – Clean Fill Disposal Area, Site 6 – Explosives Burning Ground, and Site 7 – Station Landfill, Groundwater Monitoring Program

Copies of the Project Highlights slide presentation were made available as handouts at the meeting.

Questions and answers made immediately following the Project Highlights presentation are summarized below:

Question: Considering the current economy and federal budget reductions, how will the NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach IR Program budget be affected?

Answer: The NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach IR Program has experienced steady budget reductions over the last few years. With less money available the Navy has had to produce cost savings and run the IR Program more efficiently.

These budget reductions are occurring at every Navy installation. It may not be a result of the slowing economy so much as the potential for war. Funds for the IR Program next year could be impacted.

Question: With reduced budgets, the Navy may have a tendency to save costs by conducting additional studies and monitoring efforts instead of moving forward with the recommended full scale remediation efforts.

Answer: This will not be the case with the NAVWPNSTA Seal Beach IR Program. If a study concludes that remediation is the appropriate action, the Navy will conduct the recommended action.

Budget reductions will require the Navy to look very carefully at the recommendations made for IR Program sites. Site risks to humans and ecological receptors are assessed and higher risk sites are given a higher priority than lower risk sites.

There are at least three to four sites targeted for remediation activities in Fiscal Year 2003. The funds planned for these remediation activities were allocated at least two years ago and are in-place for scheduled remediation.

PRESENTATION – Tier II Ecological Risk Assessment Site 74 Old Skeet Range: Sampling and Analysis Plan

P. Tamashiro introduced Dr. B. Sample, the Principal Ecologist from CH2M HILL's Sacramento office who presented a general overview of the sampling and analysis plan for data collected at Site 74 – Old Skeet Range. P. Tamashiro also introduced B. Wong, CH2M HILL Project Manager to provide a brief history of past uses and investigations conducted at Site 74.

Copies of the slide presentation were made available as a handout at the meeting. The questions and answers posed after the presentation are summarized below:

Question: Does the sampling plan for Site 74 include collection/mortality of the endangered species we are trying to protect?

Answer: No. The plan identifies surrogate species that would be collected to evaluate the impact to endangered species. This would allow us to collect the best information with the least amount of uncertainty, while not harming the endangered species.

Question: If the Ecological Risk Assessment identifies that lead concentrations are toxic and are adversely affecting endangered species, is the next step to conduct a removal action, potentially degrading endangered species habitat in the process?

Answer: Yes, but that scenario is worst case. And, if you look at the lead and lead shot distribution in slides 9 and 10, you will see that the contaminated area identified for a potential removal action represents a very small portion of the overall refuge.

Question: Is there a strong indication that low populations of endangered species coincide with the areas that contain high lead concentration?

Answer: John Bradley, the National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Manager with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service was also interested in the relative proportion of habitat potentially effected by a lead removal action. He has some 15 years of clapper rail nesting data. With this data the Navy can get an accurate indication of clapper rail use over the entire NWR and where endangered species uses coincide with areas of high lead concentration.

With the levels of lead found at Site 74, it is likely that the assessment will determine some level of ecological risk to these endangered species. Studies have shown that the ingestion of even a single lead shot by ducks have led to mortality.

Comment by P. Tamashiro: The Ecological Risk Assessment will allow the Navy to identify the level of risk lead contamination presents to targeted species. If a removal action is needed, the Navy would focus on the “hot spot” areas where the lead concentrations are highest, resulting in less impact to

endangered species habitat within the NWR.

Question: The Ecological Risk Assessment is evaluating a number of different species to determine species sensitivity to lead contamination. Each of the species being evaluated has different exposure pathways (i.e., some species are exposed to the lead through ingestion of plants while others are exposed through sediment) and each of these species have different processes of digestion. Does the study take this into account?

Answer: Yes, the Ecological Risk Assessment acknowledges that the multiple species function at different trophic levels and therefore have differing levels of exposure to the lead contamination. The purpose of the study is to identify the species that is most sensitive to the lead contamination and derive removal action goals to protect the most sensitive species while also protecting those less sensitive species.

Question: Is the Ecological Risk Assessment concerned with polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) in addition to lead contamination?

Answer: No, while this type of contamination is present at Site 74, it does not present a significant risk to wildlife. The screening-level Ecological Risk Assessment previously conducted at Site 74 identified that only lead and antimony should be evaluated further.

PAHs at Site 74 were determined not to pose any ecological risk. Unlike lead, PAHs will break down over time. In addition, most mammals and birds have varying degrees of ability to metabolize PAHs. While PAHs are widely distributed throughout the site, unlike lead, they are not readily available in the soil.

Comment by P. Tamashiro: J. Bradley, the NWR Manager, listened to this presentation earlier today as he was not able to attend this evening. He commented that over the last 10 to 15 years, the clapper rail population at the NWR has fluctuated. This fluctuation did not seem to correlate with the high concentrations of lead at the site, which has been around since the 60s. This observation would seem to support the conclusion that lead contamination at Site 74 has not caused a systematic impact to species at the NWR.

Comment by B. Sample: If the Ecological Risk Assessment determines a lead removal action is required at Site 74, the destruction to the wildlife habitat caused by the removal action must be balanced against the risk posed by the site contamination. The required clean up would be conducted with control levels to limit habitat degradation.

COMMUNITY FORUM

P. Tamashiro opened the Community Forum. She announced that the Draft Sampling and Analysis Plan for Site 74 had been issued and would be received by the RAB for comment shortly. Comments to the Plan were requested by December 15, 2002 or sooner, if possible.

P. Tamashiro asked if the participants had any questions regarding recently released reports. No questions were posed. Participants were encouraged to contact P. Tamashiro by e-mail or phone with questions regarding the Draft Sampling and Analysis Plan or any other recently received reports.

P. Tamashiro concluded the Community Forum by announcing that the next RAB Meeting would be held on November 13, 2002 (the second Wednesday in November). It was announced that two topics would be presented:

- Groundwater Monitoring Program at Sites 4, 5, 6, and 7
- Pilot Test Work Plan Addendum for Site 40

Notices of the meeting will be distributed to the RAB and RSVPs are requested.

ADJOURNMENT

P. Tamashiro concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and reminding the attendees to please return their badges and sign-in before leaving. The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Note: This is a meeting summary, not an actual transcript.