

Meeting Minutes  
 Travis Air Force Base  
 Installation Restoration Program  
 Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting

Travis AFB, California  
 25 October 2001

RAB members present:

NAME	AFFILIATION	PRESENT
Col. Jan Swickard	Travis Air Force Base/RAB co-chair	√
Whalen, Jim N.	Mayor Fleming's Office in Vacaville/RAB Community co-chair	√
Child, David	Fairfield Resident	
Corona, Joel	Fairfield-Suisun Chamber of Commerce	
D'Lima, Anne	Travis AFB Resident	
Flores, Lalo	BDC Marine	
Foster, John	Northern Solano County Association of Realtors	√
Guido, Timothy	David Grant Medical Center	√
Kanouff, David F.	National Association of Retired Federal Employees	√
Lucey, John	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	√
Marianno, David	Suisun City Resident	
Morad, Cyrus	Fairfield Resident	√
Moseley, Michael	Daily Republic	
Negron, Daniel	U.S. Air Force/Vacaville Resident	√
Raker, Sarah	SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board	√
Root, Rev. David	Crosswinds Church	√
Rued, Emily	Vacaville Unified School District	√
Rundlett, John	Suisun City Council	
Salcedo, Jose	Department of Toxic Substance Control	√
Sawyer-Shishido, Kathy	Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District	
Taylor, William W.	Travis Unified School District	√
Tolentino, Ron	Solano Garbage Company	√
Urquhart, Kurt	OEA Aerospace	√

Public Members present:

None

Agencies and Contractors present:

- Glenn Anderson Travis AFB
- Allen Brickeen Travis AFB
- Wilford Day Travis AFB
- Bruce James Travis AFB
- DeAnn Lehigh Travis AFB
- Dale Malsberger Travis AFB
- Tom Sreenivasan Travis AFB
- Steve Stopher Travis AFB
- Linda Weese Travis AFB
- Roby Gregg AFCEE/ERD
- Roger Johnson AFCEE/ERD
- Patricia Ryan DTSC
- Wayne Williams CH2M HILL
- Mike Wray GTI
- Kim Krajewski ITSI
- Peter Lange ITSI
- Traci Bjers URS
- Joe Saxon URS
- Deena Stanley URS

## **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Colonel Jan Swickard called the meeting to order and welcomed all that were present. He introduced Ms. Linda Weese from the base's Public Affairs Office who is assigned to support Travis' environmental community relations activities. He also introduced Ms. DeAnn Lehigh who has replaced Mr. Kevin Neurer as the base's environmental program's legal representative.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The July 2001 RAB meeting minutes were approved as final with no changes.

### **Additional Agenda Items and Questions**

#### Meeting Minutes Comments

Mr. John Foster commented that the July 2001 RAB minutes did an excellent job of encapsulating the information on the B-29 bomber and that it should stand as a public record if there is ever a question posed on the issue during future RAB meetings.

#### RAB Training

Ms. Patricia Ryan reported that there would be training available to RAB members on Saturday, October 27th. The training is sponsored by the U.S. Navy and will take place at Treasure Island. Travis RAB members are invited to attend.

#### Sequestering Agent Discussion

Mr. Dan Negron requested an update on FT005 and approval from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) for use of the sequestering agent in the groundwater treatment system.

Mr. Al Brickeen stated that there was a scaling problem (mineral deposition) at the South Base Boundary Groundwater Treatment Plant. Travis AFB officials requested permission from the Water Board to use a sequestering agent (chemical additive) to prevent the build-up on the air stripper and the walls of the pipe in February 2000. The Water Board approved the use of the sequestering agent, but rescinded their approval after a few days. Air Force officials have been in the process of working with the Water Board for approval since then.

Mr. Negron asked when this will be resolved so that FT005 can work at its full capacity.

Ms. Sarah Raker stated that in April, the Water Board requested that in the applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) of the interim record of decision (IROD) that all the groundwater operable units be amended to include the provisions that are in the Water Board's recently revised general permit. The general permit specifies such things as if a sequestering agent is going to be used, approval is needed by an executive officer. This is an example of one of the provisions that the Water Board would like to have added to the IROD. The Water Board and the Air Force have been in discussion as to whether these adjustments should be made in the operations and maintenance manual or in the IROD. This issue is now in the hands of the attorneys.

Ms. Raker also stated that this particular sequestering agent has been approved at other sites that have National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. As a Superfund site, Travis AFB is not required to have an NPDES permit. The Water Board is attempting to have a mechanism placed in the IROD so that the Water Board can oversee decisions such as adding sequestering agents to the groundwater system.

Mr. Negron asked if the Water Board could issue a temporary permit for this action. Ms. Raker stated that once the legal office becomes involved, that might be possible. Ms. Raker stated that she and Mr. Brickeen will continue to work closely on this issue attempting to adjust the operations and maintenance manual to include these provisions.

Mr. Negron asked if the Air Force is doing everything it can to meet the Water Board's requirements. Mr. Brickeen answered that to the best of his knowledge, the Air Force was doing everything it could to accommodate the Water Board's requirements.

Ms. Raker stated that some of the pressure concerning the Water Board is a law, recently enacted, with mandatory penalties for dischargers. Since Travis is a Superfund site, the law does not apply to it. However, there is pressure on the state to enforce this law at Superfund facilities. Part of the rationale for including these provisions in the IROD is to make sure that in the event that there is a violation, that the state has some form of enforcement capabilities. The state cannot issue penalties to the federal government; however, the Water Board wants to ensure that it has the process in place to identify and report violations.

Mr. Negron asked if Travis AFB has been providing the necessary analytical data. Ms. Raker answered yes. The Water Board is also concerned with what is being discharged into Union Creek as well as into the groundwater plume.

Mr. Negron asked if the Air Force had exceeded the limitation. Ms. Raker stated that in a couple of instances the Air Force has done so. Mr. Brickeen explained that approximately one year ago, Travis AFB had a problem during the startup of the vapor treatment system at the north groundwater treatment plant. This incident was reported and corrected. More recently, a pump at the south groundwater treatment plant leaked, and the system discharged a quart and a half of

pump oil. This incident was reported and corrected, along with the submission of a technical memorandum to the Water Board.

Ms. Raker also stated that if the IROD included these provisions, it would be in writing rather than verbal agreements between staff that may change over the years. Travis AFB will be treated in the same standard manner as other dischargers that are under the general permit in Region 2.

Mr. Negron stated that it is frustrating because he sees the plume moving and/or getting larger, and Travis AFB has a system that can make the plume smaller. Travis AFB officials are not able to take advantage of the system due to administrative difficulties. Taxpayers' dollars have been spent to have this plume addressed. A short-term solution should be made to get the pumps up and running. This should be a priority.

Mr. Lucey asked if the system is completely shut down. Mr. Brickeen answered no; two wells at the outside base boundary are shut down, which has resulted in the groundwater migrating to the off-base property.

Mr. Brickeen stated that he is concerned about the contract for the operation of the treatment system. There may be a shortage of funds to continue operation of the plant because of the frequent need to changeout the carbon filters. If problems continue, the system may be shut down.

Mr. Negron requested the status of this issue be put on the January 2002 RAB agenda.

Mr. John Foster expressed his displeasure to the Water Board. He stated that it appears that this plume is growing, and the people of Fairfield would not be able to understand this administrative obstacle. He asked if the procedure is used elsewhere and is a proven method, while the details are being hashed out, why the sequestering agent can not be used. He would like the pumps to be fully operational by the next RAB meeting and, if not, he would like to have an explanation why the pumps are not up and running.

Col. Swickard asked Ms. Lehigh to attempt to obtain temporary authority to use the sequestering agent.

Mr. Foster further stated that it is the public's perception that we are all working together for a common good and on the same team.

Mr. Urquhart asked if other than the one pump on the edge of the base, will the wells along the easement be the last line of defense. He asked if the base will have to install additional wells now that the plume is migrating. Mr. Brickeen stated the off-base wells have not been installed. Once the easement is obtained, Air Force officials will collect more samples to delineate the plume. If the plume has moved further, then the Air Force will determine appropriate locations and/or if additional wells are necessary.

Mr. Urquhart asked if Travis AFB will use the same technology for the extraction and air stripper. Mr. Brickeen answered yes. It all feeds into the south groundwater treatment plant. The problem with this plume is that the contaminant is 1,2-DCA, which is not treated well with carbon. Travis AFB has had to reduce the flow in order not to overuse the carbon and not exceed the discharge limits.

Mr. Negron asked if 1,2-DCA is bad. Mr. Brickeen answered yes. The discharge limit for 1,2-DCA is 0.5, and the discharge limit for TCE is 5.0.

Mr. Whalen asked when the Air Force expects to get the wells back on line. Mr. Brickeen stated that the wells will not come back on line until the base receives the approval of the sequestering agent.

Mr. Urquhart asked what the speed of the plume migration per year is. Mr. Brickeen answered the average groundwater velocity is approximately 50 feet per year.

Mr. Foster suggested that the Water Board give a waiver to allow the use of the sequestering agent until the administrative issues are worked out.

## **Discussion Topics**

Colonel Swickard reviewed the discussion topics.

### **Former Oil Spill Area (SS016) Expansion**

Mr. Wilford Day gave a detailed briefing on the Former Oil Spill Area (SS016) Expansion.

The large SS016 plume is mainly contaminated with TCE. The plume contains hot spots corresponding to old hangar locations. Since TCE is heavier than water, it sinks to the bottom of the water table until it reaches bedrock, where it will spread out and infiltrate cracks. It is almost impossible to remove the pure TCE from these folds.

It is Air Force and regulatory agency consensus that any concentration above 3,000 µg/L is an indication that pure TCE is present. To insure the goal of controlling these source areas was met Travis AFB decided to go after all concentrations of TCE that are above 1,000 µg/L.

Air Force officials conducted additional sampling during January and March 1998, which indicated that the plume is longer and narrower than previously thought. Two extraction wells were installed with one being installed close to the runway and taxiway that would not interfere with the flying mission of the Air Force. Even though these extraction wells may not capture all concentrations above 1,000ug/L, based on the data collected, the Air Force is confident the extractions wells will capture all TCE concentrations above 3,000 µg/L.

### **Thermal Oxidation Technology**

Mr. Tom Sreenivasan gave a briefing on the thermal oxidation technology.

Major objectives of this technology are as follows:

- Destroy cost-effectively the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) found in vapor extracted from wells located in site SS016. Ensure toxic products are not produced during this process and released to the environment.

A schematic of the thermal oxidation system was shown.

Mr. Sreenivasan explained the process of the thermal oxidation technology. Thermal oxidation destroys contaminants and ensures that toxic byproducts are not formed and released to the environment. This process is accomplished by pumping the vapors of VOCs from base extraction wells to the combustion chamber of the oxidizer, heating them to 1450 to 1550 deg F. and holding for a few seconds. The resulting off-gases from the oxidizer are predominantly carbon dioxide and water vapor, which exit the system through an exhaust stack and harmlessly dispersed into the atmosphere. This commercially available technology has been used extensively in the chemical industry since the early 1960s to destroy a wide variety of organic and explosive contaminants. To confirm that complete combustion has been achieved, the exhaust products are analyzed to ensure they meet federal, state, and local air quality regulations.

To ascertain the presence of dioxins and PCB's, if any, during oxidation, Travis AFB officials are conducting a sampling plan that will take place in mid-November.

### **Cleanup Program Status**

#### West/Annexes/Basewide Operable Unit (WABOU) Soil Record of Decision (ROD)

Mr. Glenn Anderson stated that the WABOU Soil ROD is close to being finalized. Soil cleanup actions are scheduled to begin in 2002.

- **Ecological Issues** - The draft final technical memorandum was submitted to the regulatory agencies on October 22, 2001, for review. The agencies have 30 days to review the technical memorandum.
- **Cleanup Levels** - The Air Force has been internally working on the remedial design for RW013 (radiological site) for approximately five months. Both the industrial and residential cleanup values that are in the ROD are barely above the detectable limit, and laboratory instruments can not measure as low as these cleanup values.

In order to address this, a computer model was used to provide risk-based levels that are higher than the current risk values. These new cleanup values will be submitted to the regulatory agencies and will be placed in the third revision of the ROD.

- **Acceptance Levels** - The CAMU technical memorandum has been finalized.

### **Minor Issues to be Resolved**

- **Skeet Range** – Air Force officials are working with the U.S. EPA to develop acceptable text describing how this recreational facility will be managed.
- **Institutional Controls** - Air Force officials working with U.S. EPA to develop acceptable descriptive text on what to do if a site cannot be cleaned up to residential levels.

### **Third Revision to the Draft WABOU Soil ROD**

Mr. Anderson stated the ecological protection technical memorandum has delayed the ROD schedule. The Air Force will submit the third revision of the draft WABOU Soil ROD by the end of October 2001. The targeted date for the ROD to be completed is January 31, 2002.

The remaining schedule of this document is as follows:

- October 31, 2001      Third revision to be submitted.
- December 31, 2001      Draft final to be submitted for Air Staff and the regulatory agency signatures.

Mr. Negron asked if a third revision is a normal part of the process. Mr. Anderson stated that the Air Force has submitted for agency review a draft, a revised draft, a second revision to the draft, and a third revision to the draft. It is not a standard part of the IRP.

Mr. Negron asked the regulatory agencies if the end of the year was a realistic schedule. Mr. Lucey stated yes, from the U.S. EPA's standpoint, it is very doable. Ms. Raker and Mr. Salcedo stated yes but that the DTSC's attorney will need to look at the document one more time.

Mr. Whalen asked was if it were possible to have avoided the regulatory agencies not meeting the schedule. Mr. Anderson stated that in order to conduct a cleanup action, the Air Force needs the (1) legal authority (ROD), (2) funding, (3) means to spend funds (contracts), and (4) compliance with all environmental laws. With this document, the Air Force was required to conduct ecological surveys of the area where the contaminated soil will be deposited. These surveys took two years to complete.

Mr. Whalen asked what effect this has on the budgeting process, where there is money to spend and it can not be spent. Mr. Anderson stated that the Air Force will lose it.

Mr. Negron asked if Travis AFB is currently in that type of situation. Mr. Anderson stated the current time limitation is that the ROD needs to be signed by January 31, 2002. If it is not signed within that timeframe, then the designs cannot be completed, and some ecological surveys will expire and must be redone. In addition, the funds that are on contract are being spent to manage the contracts, although work is not being performed yet.

Mr. Whalen asked if this document is not signed by the end of the year, how far will this set Travis AFB back. Mr. Anderson stated because the environmental surveys will expire, Travis will not be able to obtain the funds to do the work until 2006. In addition, the money to pay for the cleanup actions has been set aside for 2002, and that is when Travis AFB needs to spend it.

In response to a question by Mr. Negron, Mr. Brickeen stated Travis AFB has budgeted \$3.2 million for 2002.

In response to a question by Mr. Foster, Mr. Anderson stated that this process to produce the WABOU ROD began in April 1998. The document was submitted to the regulatory agencies as a draft in June 1998.

Mr. Foster commented that given this is the third revision and since the regulatory agencies have seen it four times, it seems that the agencies should have great confidence in the document.

Mr. Timothy Guido asked if this document is not accepted, should Travis AFB officials be proactive in preparing to redo environmental surveys. Mr. Anderson stated that there are no funds for this task, and it takes two years to complete.

Ms. Raker asked if Travis AFB officials have exhausted the possibility of a waiver and/or extension on the environmental surveys. Mr. Brickeen stated not at this point, but it will be done if necessary.

In response to Mr. Guido's request, Mr. Brickeen stated that his office will give the RAB monthly updates on this issue.

Mr. Foster commented that one of the great things about this forum (RAB meetings) is the positive experience of keeping everyone on the same page and seeing why it is so important to meet deadlines.

Mr. Whalen asked for a rough estimate of the cost for each of the delays. Mr. Roger Johnson, AFCEE, stated it has cost the Air Force approximately \$15,000 per month for all contracts.

Mr. Foster commented again that the regulatory agency should feel confident that the WABOU ROD is now a better product and that he is comfortable that the concerns have been elevated and addressed. Mr. Lucey stated that his personal feeling is that this document is now a better product. The regulatory agencies are coming from a perspective of national consistency and that

every issue has been worked through. Mr. Lucey also commented that nationally, Travis AFB is on the leading edge for the RODs.

Ms. Raker commented that it is a good thing that Travis AFB is managing the skeet range now rather than dealing with a big cleanup issue later.

Mr. Brickeen stated that he will submit monthly progress reports and a schedule of the steps required to get the work completed by summer.

### **Real Estate Agreements**

Mr. Brickeen reported that a misunderstanding occurred regarding the insurance clause for the off-base easement, which is currently in the process of being purchased by the base in order to perform cleanup actions at FT005. The property owner required that the contractor have \$2 million in liability insurance. The Air Force accepted the property owner's requirement resulting in an additional cost of \$25,000. Through innovative negotiation with their insurance carrier, CH2M Hill was able to obtain the full coverage at no additional cost. An additional \$2,000 is needed for escrow.

### **Summer Construction**

Site FT005's easement delay has resulted in construction delays to spring/summer 2002.

### **Budget Update**

Mr. Brickeen reported that all proposed fiscal year 2002 projects will be funded by Air Mobility Command (\$3.2 million). It will cover the following:

- Nine projects for operating existing systems;
- One project for remedial design;
- Five projects for remedial actions (including work for RW013 and funding for an off-base easement); and
- Six administrative projects.

### **Regulatory Agencies Report**

No reports.

### **Other**

Mr. Foster commented that the Water Board will fine the Air Force if they exceed the discharge limit, yet will not allow the sequestering agent. It is like giving a fire truck a speeding ticket for speeding to a fire. It seems that there could be an allowance made if there is an excessive discharge or violation of some type, perhaps an administrative action. Penalizing the Air Force by fines appears to be inappropriate. Ms. Raker stated that if it were a private discharge, a penalty would be issued which is \$3,000 per violation per day. This law passed because there were many cleanup sites that were discharging into the waters of the state, and there was no followup by the regulatory community.

Ms. Raker stated that she agrees that the Air Force is doing a great job in the cleanup at the site. However, Union Creek is a sensitive water body, and within the Basin Plan, there is a provision stating nothing can be discharged into Union Creek unless an exemption is obtained, which has been provided to the Air Force.



Ms. Raker also stated that the state government cannot fine the federal government. The Water Board wants to ensure that the Air Force is doing the same thing that the other dischargers are doing, regardless if the Water Board can fine them.

Mr. Brickeen commented that Travis AFB is following all the requirements, although it may not be fully documented in an operations and maintenance manual or IROD. Travis AFB is doing what is required in the general permit. The issue is how Travis AFB documents its procedures/actions.

**Focus Group Reports**

The Focus Groups did not meet this quarter.

**RAB/Public Questions**

No questions were asked.

**Set Time and Place for the Next RAB Meeting:**

The next RAB meeting will be on January 24, 2002, at the Vacaville Senior Center.

**Next meeting topics/suggestion**

Suggested meeting topics are to be submitted to Mr. Brickeen.