



Guardian

America's First Choice for Environmental Restoration

A Publication of the Environmental Restoration Program

Travis Air Force Base, California

July 2019

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The Travis AFB Restoration Program Manager cannot possibly be thinking about retirement, can he? Mr. Duke discusses the challenges involving a restoration staff that is approaching retirement age on program performance..... **2**

Next RAB Meeting:

The next Restoration Advisory Board meeting will be held on April 16, 2020, at 7 p.m., at the Office of the Northern Solano County Association of Realtors. The meeting agenda is forthcoming..... **4**

Editor's Corner

We tried to not make it too obvious, but the theme of this edition of the Guardian is aging. As in an aging staff and aging infrastructure. Both issues require plans to replace the old with the new. Both offer unique challenges and can impact program execution and performance.

Of the two, retirement probably offers the greater challenge. So, if you know a recent high school or college graduate who is looking for a rewarding career in the service of his/her country, please refer them to the www.usajobs.gov website. This one-stop resource shows all vacant federal government jobs and the skills and education needed to apply for them. Who knows; you may become the next Travis RPM!



(Photograph by Doug Berwick [Jacobs])

Tanks A Lot: A heavy equipment operator begins to move a 10,000-gallon tank from a flatbed trailer and into the South Base Boundary Groundwater Treatment Plant. This tank will receive contaminated groundwater from multiple extraction wells prior to treatment in six activated carbon canisters.

Looking Under the Hood

Vintage Treatment Plant Gets Serious Performance Upgrades

By Glenn Anderson

Travis Environmental Project Manager

A favorite pastime of many car enthusiasts is attending classic car shows. Each car looks like it just came off the assembly line, although everyone knows that it has been beautifully restored with a plush interior and a shiny chrome exterior.

The display gets better when the owner turns the key and revs up the engine to show viewers that this work of engineering has a lot of power under the hood and is not just for show; it can really go!

Improved performance is the objective of most car renovation projects, especially when the original condition of the vehicle makes it more suitable for a junk yard than a car show. In fact, the more rusted and worn out the car body and wheels appear at the start of a restoration, the more impressive the final product at the end of the restoration.

After years of continuous operation, most engineered systems require significant upgrades and possibly a complete equipment replacement to improve system reliability and to take advantage of technology advancements. This is particularly true for groundwater treatment plants. Even with routine maintenance

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Visit our Environmental Program web site at <http://www.travis.af.mil/About-Us/Environment>



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Tired and Retired

Several weeks ago, we said goodbye to another Air Force Civil Engineer Center staff member who found another challenging job close to his parents and other family members. Although he still works for Uncle Sam, his farewell party reminded me of the many past team members who have retired from federal civil service and moved on to the next phases of their lives.

Actually, I sit in the Travis AFB Restoration Program Manager (RPM) seat because the previous program manager retired a few years ago. In addition, three of the five previous RPMs retired and made room for the next program manager to assume the responsibility for the soil and groundwater cleanup at Travis AFB. Over half of the previous environmental engineers also left via retirement. The Program Manager for Travis in San Antonio and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager also retired in the last couple of years.

When an employee devotes herself/himself to a career and puts in the appropriate number of years of productive service, retirement is a well-earned reward. It is a part of employed life that can be both exciting and scary, and the decision to retire should never be made lightly. It requires prior planning and a little soul searching to make sure that this is the right decision at the right time.

Because turnover is a part of employed life, employers seek out enthusiastic new hires and provide training opportunities with the goal of maintaining a productive work force. This can be a challenge in federal civil service, because a new employee cannot be hired for a specific position until that position becomes vacant. It is not easy to arrange for a proper turnover when the person with the knowledge and experience is gone.

Fortunately, Uncle Sam relies on specialized contractors to carry out specific tasks, so today's federal employees must have a solid understand-



VIEWPOINT

Lonnie A. Duke
 Travis AFB Restoration
 Program Manager

ing of contract management in order to be successful. Contractors do not have the same hiring limitations as those in federal employment, so the contracted work can continue in spite of significant personnel changes. It is up to the contractor to find and hire the people who can help the team to meet contract goals.

At the same time, of the four government and one contractor support employees that handle restoration issues on Travis AFB, only one is under the age of 50. This means that only one person will make it to the end of the next environmental restoration services contract, at best. My senior project manager and I have over 40 years of combined Travis restoration experience, which is not easy to replace under the current federal hiring structure.

So what is a RPM to do? First, it is critical to use whatever time is available to turn over assignments and conduct on-the-job training, both at the project and program levels. Because we meet regularly with our contractors to coordinate field tasks and guide the direction of the cleanup program, this is not as hard as it seems.

Second, when we get the chance to hire new personnel, we try to find those with the right education, experience, and enthusiasm. If a person needs to improve their skills in a particular area, there are local university extension courses available to strengthen that area and make the new hire more productive.

Finally, it takes a team effort to carry out field activities and meet contractual requirements, so there is no substitute for open communica-

Upgrade

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and occasional parts replacement, these systems, which are exposed to sun, wind and rain conditions each day, will eventually wear out. To avoid system failure, equipment upgrades are necessary.

On Travis AFB, the most important groundwater treatment plant is located at the south base boundary. Not only does this system treat contaminated groundwater at two off-base sites, it also prevents groundwater contaminants from flowing beyond the base boundary.

The South Base Boundary Groundwater Treatment Plant (SBBGWTP) was built as an interim clean-up project in the late 1990's and used an air stripper to remove solvents from groundwater. When final groundwater remedies were selected in 2014, the air stripper was permanently shut down, and activated carbon be-

came the main groundwater treatment technology.

Even though the SBBGWTP has performed at a consistently high level, it faced decades of groundwater treatment as dissolved contaminants move beneath the flight line toward the southern base boundary, and its reliability cannot be maintained without capital improvements. So, the base temporarily shut down this plant last May and began a complete

system upgrade, which consisted of the following tasks:

1. Removal and disposal of an oil-water separator and construction water tank.
2. Removal and disposal of the air stripper and associated piping.
3. Removal and disposal of an acid tank that was used to prevent scale buildup in the air stripper.
4. Removal and disposal of an aeration tank that put oxygen into treated water before it entered Union Creek.
5. Replace an existing 13,000-gal-

7. Install four additional 2,000-pound activated carbon canisters to improve treatment efficiency. Two canisters are new, and two canisters came from another on-base treatment plant.

8. Replace the old remote connectivity system that controlled the plant with an easier-to-use upgraded system.

9. Install new piping in the plant to accommodate the new tanks and carbon canisters.

10. Install a new sediment filtration system that uses a centrifugal separa-

tor to remove sediment from contaminated groundwater before entering the carbon canisters. The older system required almost daily maintenance to remove the large amount of sediment from the groundwater, so it does not clog the canisters.

The old components were removed from the plant, evaluated for reuse, recycled, or sent to a local landfill for disposal.

Once all tasks were completed, the system was successfully tested and the new connectivity system was engaged. With a new lease on life, the new SBBGWTP will carry out the treatment of contaminated groundwater in a more efficient and effective manner. It may not be as pretty as a reconditioned 1970 Dodge Challenger, but it has the horsepower to get the job done for decades to come.



Before and After: Significant changes have been made to the South Base Boundary Groundwater Treatment Plant to make it more efficient and increase its lifespan. The left photograph shows the old air stripper that was shut down because of rising operational costs. The right photograph shows two new and two used activated carbon canisters that will improve plant performance. (Photographs by Gene Clare)

lon treated water tank with a new 8,300-gallon tank with seismic restraints. The old tank was no longer useful and was cut up for disposal.

6. Install a new 10,000-gallon tank that will receive contaminated groundwater from multiple extraction wells. Since it takes less energy for the pumps in the wells to push the water to this tank, wear and tear on the pumps is reduced.



Viewpoint

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tion with regulatory agency representatives, contractors, service center representatives and base officials. Even with reduced manpower, we can still get a lot accomplished when everyone is working with the same goal in mind.

No one employee is indispensable, and the program will continue to do great things after my career ends someday. I am not ready to put away my field boots and plan my farewell party quite yet, because there is still a lot to do before we can wrap up our current contract and start up a follow-on contract. There are still cleanup decisions to make and sites to close. The day when my professional goals are met and the team can work successfully without me will start the next phase of my life. Someday!



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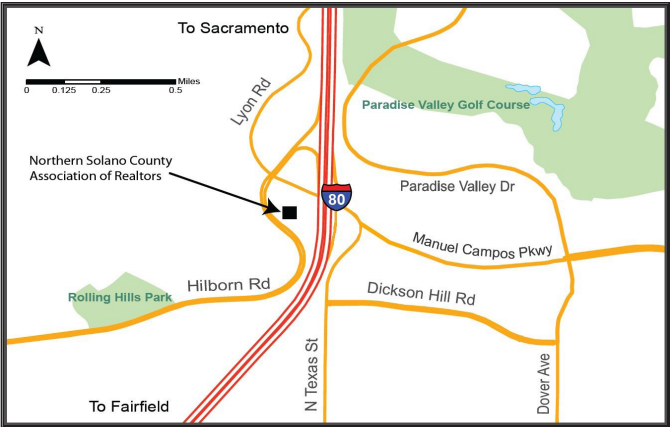


If you would like more information or need special accommodations for the RAB meeting, please contact Lonnie Duke, (707) 424-7520.

Travis AFB Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

April 16, 2020 7 p.m.

Northern Solano County Association of Realtors 3690 Hilborn Road Fairfield, CA



LOCATION OF INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Vacaville Public Library 1020 Ulatis Drive Vacaville, CA 95688 (707) 449-6290 Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Friday-Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday: 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Fairfield-Suisun Com. Library 1150 Kentucky Street Fairfield, CA 94533 (707) 421-6500 Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Friday-Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sunday: 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Mitchell Memorial Library 510 Travis Boulevard Travis AFB, CA 94535 (707) 424-3279 Monday-Thursday: 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Friday: Closed Saturday: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.
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