



# Guardian

America's First Choice for Environmental Restoration

A Publication of the Environmental Restoration Program

Travis Air Force Base, California

October 2019

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*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

*A cleanup project is not done until the paperwork is finalized, and the theme of this edition of the Guardian is records. As in a decision document known as a Record of Decision (ROD) and a transition to electronic records. A ROD is a challenging record to complete, because it is a legally-binding document that locks in a decision, so it receives a lot more scrutiny than a simple data report. And as libraries fill up with records, it makes sense to use a better way to store them.*

*Want a copy of a ROD or any record from any Air Force base? Then visit the Air Force Civil Engineer Center Administrative Record (<http://afcec.publicadmin-record.us.af.mil/Search.aspx>), click on the base, and type in a document name.*



(Photograph by Angel Santiago [AGEISS])

**Panel for Your Thoughts:** Gene Clare from the Air Force Civil Engineer Center tests electrical panels that operate an air injection system. Naturally occurring microbes use the oxygen in the injected air to break down solvents in groundwater. Please see the October 2017 Guardian for details.

## A ROD About Nothing

Travis AFB Closes Two Sites and One Cleanup Program

By Glenn Anderson

Travis Environmental Project Manager

Last month, long-time viewers of the popular situation comedy "Seinfeld" learned that an American media-services company spent a lot of money to acquire the rights to all 180 episodes of this iconic show. In two years, subscribers of their streaming service will be able to binge-watch "The Show about Nothing" to their hearts content.

Obviously, there was a lot more to the show than just nothing. Each week the audience saw the life of a

small-time comedian, his interaction with friends and other unique personalities, and funny commentary on the seemingly insignificant aspects of everyday life. The show lasted nine seasons, and quotes from many episodes have become a part of our modern lexicon.

Don't believe me? What images cross your mind if someone yells "NO SOUP FOR YOU!"? I smile inside just thinking about it.

So, what does a sitcom have to do with a Record of Decision (ROD) for Travis Air Force Base?

The answer is surprisingly obvious: Nothing!

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Visit our Environmental Program web site at <https://www.travis.af.mil/Information/Environment/>



Travis Air Force Base, California

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# Recording More with Less

Record keeping is not the most exciting part of a project manager's job, and just the mention of records can be an effective sleep aid. However, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is required to maintain records per the Federal Records Act (<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2018-09/documents/interim-records-mgmt-policy-20180822.pdf>). The collection and storage of official records into an organized body of information are important responsibilities of a federal agency for several reasons:

1. Records help us to make better decisions. Even earlier records can be useful to find out what led to a past cleanup decision in order to guide future decision-making. With turnover in staff and limited project transition time, it's often how new project staff learn about the past.

2. Records show that the public participated in remedy selection. Before a cleanup is selected for a site, it is presented to the public to elicit questions and comments on it. For example, Travis AFB has published Proposed Plans that described preferred remedies and held public meetings to promote open communication on cleanup matters between base representatives and community members. Copies of the Proposed Plans and transcripts of the discussion during the public meetings are kept in the Travis AFB Administrative Record (AR.)

3. The agency attorney needs them. If a lawsuit is filed against a federal agency, the records in its AR provide the evidence that a court of law will accept, and the court will base its review of agency decisions on this information. So, if the records that present the rationale for an agency's actions are not in the AR, they will not be considered by the court. Additionally, records are reviewed by the attorneys before they are made available to the public under the Freedom of



## VIEWPOINT

Nadia Burke  
 U.S. EPA Remedial  
 Project Manager

Information Act (<https://foiaonline.gov/foiaonline/action/public/home>).

Unfortunately, the number of records continues to grow while the available storage space and resources to manage them shrinks. This is one of the reasons our office is transitioning to electronic only record keeping and will no longer accept paper copies of project records.

This transition will help us meet the Office of Management and Budget requirement to go "paperless" and manage all permanent records in an electronic format by the end of 2022 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/M-19-21.pdf>).

Now, instead of a large, three-ring binder filled with paper, we will receive an e-mail attachment or if too large, a compact disk (CD), of a document in Portable Document Format (PDF). The document is then uploaded into a central records management system.

Electronic documents have several significant advantages over paper versions.

1. Thanks to computer technology, it is easier and less time consuming to search a 1,000-page PDF file for specific words or phrases. This really speeds up my document reviews. And with a laptop, the documents are easily portable. If I still need a hardcopy, I can choose to print only the pages I need.

2. Thanks to the Internet, records can be sent an office across the country in a matter of minutes and at almost no additional cost. This cannot be said for paper copies.

3. Thanks to computer backups, records are not lost if disaster strikes the network servers in my

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# Nothing

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But, like the show, there is a lot more to this document than just nothing. The title of the document is the “No Further Action Soil Record of Decision for Munitions Response Area TS060 (Old Skeet Range),” and the purpose of this document is to record the decision that nothing needs to be done at the Old Skeet Range.

Actually, a lot of work has already been accomplished at this closed range. The July 2017 edition of the Guardian described the field work that cleaned up soil that had become contaminated with lead from lead shot and polychlorinated aromatic hydrocarbons from clay pigeons used in past skeet shooting, and the April 2018 edition described the Air Force proposal to carry out no further action at the range, based on the achievement of reaching all residential soil cleanup levels by the field team.

So why make a big deal about a decision to do nothing at a cleaned location? There are several reasons for this.

First, this is the first No Further Action ROD that the Travis AFB Restoration Program Manager had ever written; and all RODs are reviewed, accepted and signed by representatives of the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, the Environmental Protection Agency, the

California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. Because a ROD is a legally-binding document, it receives a lot of technical and legal scrutiny from subject matter experts of all four agencies, and the process to complete this review and acceptance takes a lot of time and effort. So, when representatives from four agencies agree on a course of action (even if the action is nothing) and sign a document to make the decision official, it is a big deal!

to fund future cleanup programs. Similarly, Congress expects public funds to be spent wisely and keeps the pressure on federal agencies to meet or exceed their cleanup goals. So, this ROD contributed to meeting the Air Force 2019 cleanup goals.

Finally, this ROD wraps up an entire cleanup program. The Old Skeet Range was managed under the Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP), a sister program to the Environmental Restoration Program. The MMRP focuses on non-operational ranges and is designed to investigate and clean

up unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, and contamination associated with munitions. Along with closed small arms training ranges and bombing ranges, the MMRP addresses closed skeet ranges, and the two sites at the Old Skeet Range were the only MMRP sites on Travis AFB. So, by closing these two sites, the Travis AFB participation in the MMRP is



**Bottom's Up:** Field engineers finish the deconstruction of the treated water tank at the South Base Boundary Groundwater Treatment Plant by lifting the tank bottom from the concrete floor. The left photograph shows the tank after the sides have been removed. The right photograph shows the heavy equipment used to lift the tank bottom off of the treatment plant floor. For more information about this project, please read the July 2019 Guardian edition. (Photographs by Gene Clare)

Second, this No Further Action ROD documents the completed response and closure of two soil sites. One important way that the Department of Defense measures cleanup progress is by the number of finished cleanup actions and closed sites, and department representatives use this information annually when they ask Congress

finished.

Although restoration activities at Travis AFB will never achieve the same popularity and impact pop culture as a beloved sitcom, positive images come to mind when someone yells “NO more SKEET cleanup FOR YOU”. I smile just thinking about it.



# Viewpoint

■ From page 2

office.

And, finally, with computer resources that are more available in households and usually free at the local libraries, electronic records are more available to the public. The Air Force Civil Engineer Center AR website (<http://afcec.publicadmin-record.us.af.mil/Search.aspx>) makes cleanup records for all Air Force installations available 24/7, and the EPA Superfund websites <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/search-superfund-documents> and <https://www.epa.gov/enviro/sems-search> have search functions that will improve during this transition period. So, the next time you have a burning question about a cleanup, or are just having trouble sleeping, an electronic answer is available and waiting to be downloaded--saving trees one PDF at a time.

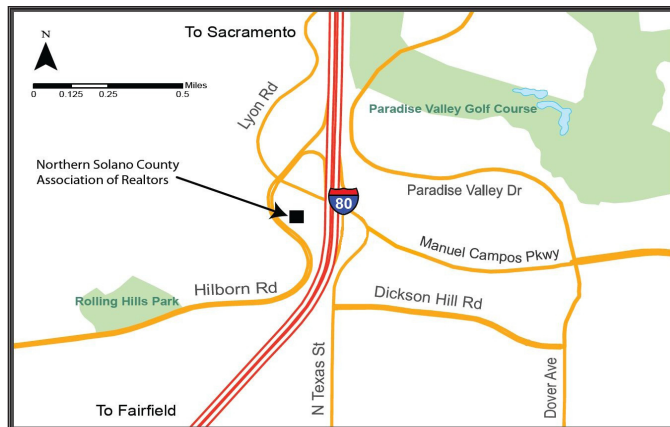
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## Travis AFB Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

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.



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

**For more information about Travis AFB's restoration program, please contact:**

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