



Guardian

America's First Choice for Environmental Restoration

A Publication of the Environmental Restoration Program

Travis Air Force Base, California

October 2020

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COVID-19 can keep us out of our favorite restaurants, but it cannot keep us out of the field. The Travis AFB Restoration Program Manager discusses the impact of the virus on our work lives and what we are doing to keep cleanup actions moving forward..... **2**

Next RAB Meeting:

The April Restoration Advisory Board meeting has been rescheduled for October 22, 2020, at 7 p.m. This will be a virtual meeting to ensure the health and safety of the participants. See the details on how to participate below..... **4**

Editor's Corner

Would you like to attend the first ever virtual Travis Restoration Advisory Board meeting? Here is what you have to do:

- 1. Power up a computer with Internet access. Don't have a computer? The three libraries listed on page 4 have computer stations for your use.*
- 2. Open a browser and type in the web address shown at the bottom of this page.*
- 3. Click on the Environmental News link on the right side of the page and follow the instructions. It is that easy!*



(Photograph by Angel Santiago [AEGISS])

Checking the Work: Mr. Gene Clare inspects an electrical box that powers two extraction wells. Groundwater cleanup will continue during the nearby construction of a new KC-46 hangar.

Oversight Over the Site

Travis Field Team Verifies Cleanup Continues During MILCON

By Glenn Anderson

Travis Environmental Project Manager

One of Yogi Berra's famous sayings is "It's not over until it's over", and these words of wisdom can be applied to so many life situations. Ask any Atlanta Falcon fan about how it felt to be winning 28-3 during Superbowl 51 against the New England Patriots (the Falcons lost 28-34). Or when you finish cleaning all of the dirty dishes in the sink, only to see another pile on the dining room table. Or even when you put the last load of laundry in the dryer, and then you see what's on the floor of your kid's bedroom. Words

of wisdom indeed!

Back in the July 2018 Guardian, we described in detail how our soil cleanup efforts were going to support the military construction (MILCON) of a new three-bay KC-46 hangar, and we were happy when the cleanup was finished earlier this year. Another restoration milestone achieved, another piece of property that could be used without land use restrictions to support the base mission, another project folder closed, another pat on the back that the job was done properly. However....

It turns out that there are a number of restoration-related tasks that have yet to be completed. As Mr. Gene Clare,

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



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The *Guardian* is published by the Air Force Civil Engineer Center's Western Region Restoration Support Team, located at Travis Air Force Base. The newsletter is designed to inform and educate the public about the ongoing environmental cleanup program at Travis Air Force Base. Contents expressed herein are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force. Additional information about the program can be obtained from the public web site at <https://www.travis.af.mil/Information/Environment/>. Questions and comments about the program may be sent to this address:

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Questions and comments about the environmental web site may be sent to:

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Year of the Virus

By now, there is nothing more about the coronavirus, COVID-19, sheltering-in-place, social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing, virtual fist bumps, and restaurant takeout that you do not already know. After all, we are all living with this new normal, six feet apart. At first, it felt a little strange to walk into my local credit union office with a mask on; today, I get concerned when I can see people's noses and mouths while standing in line at the grocery store. Especially when they cough.

In fact, during the first few months of spring, it felt as if the whole world was shutting down. Several sports seasons were cut short, restaurants were closed, and the parking lots at the Vacaville Premium Outlet Stores were empty. In the middle of the day!

Commercial businesses were not the only activities that were impacted by the virus. Federal and state governments imposed restrictions that only allowed mission essential operations to continue. Office workers were asked to work from home, after which communications staffs had to move quickly to get everyone connected remotely and securely to their office networks. A new acronym popped up in our conversation: VPN. It stands for Virtual Private Network (for some, it was more like Very Poor Network). Work and the manner in which it is carried out was transformed before our eyes.

Travis AFB was not exempt from these restrictions, and there was a time when I was worried about our ability to continue environmental cleanup under these conditions. Fortunately, my worries were unfounded, and we have not seen any significant adverse impacts on our cleanup performance goals. There are several reasons for this:

1. Treatment Plant Maintenance

— Our field team does an outstanding job of operating and maintaining our groundwater treatment systems, and most of the scheduled repairs and major upgrades had taken place before



VIEWPOINT

Lonnie A. Duke
Travis AFB Restoration
Program Manager

the start of the virus restrictions. They also had permission to enter the base to check on cleanup infrastructure on a regular basis, and we have had several months when all treatment systems operated at 100% uptime. We considered that a major accomplishment before the virus restrictions were put into place!

2. Planning and Programming

— Fundamentally, the coordination of cleanup activities between my office, Travis AFB, our regulatory agency representatives and the environmental contractor is office work. Once most of the network issues were resolved, we could send official email, access information on shared drives and schedule meetings from home. I forwarded calls from my office phone to my personal cell phone and did not miss any official calls. Even the development of planning documents in support of our next multi-year restoration contract (Optimized Remediation Contract) that will start next year has proceeded on schedule.

3. Modern Technology

— Telecommunications has come a long way over the last few years, and we can now use several commercial services to hold virtual meetings. For example, our office uses Microsoft TEAMS to 'meet' twice a week, and our contractor uses the same service to set up monthly meeting with our regulatory agency representatives, as shown by the page 3 photograph. Please note that this is not an official endorsement of one particular service on my part. There are a number of excellent communication platforms available (for example, GoToMeeting and Cisco Webex) that can connect thousands of participants for training events and lectures.

Oversight

■ From page 1

the Travis AFB environmental field manager, pointed out: we still have to continue the groundwater cleanup without getting in the way of the hangar construction, and that is turning out to be a bigger challenge than originally anticipated.

For example, groundwater extraction and treatment (GET) is one to two technologies that is cleaning up solvent-contaminated groundwater near the hangar construction site. The GET system consists of groundwater pumps that push contaminated groundwater from extraction wells into and through above-ground

treatment canisters that are filled with activated carbon. The pumps run on electricity from a transformer that also provides power to several nearby buildings. Unfortunately, these buildings are being torn down to make room for the hangar, which means that the transformer had to be disconnected and removed. No transformer = no electricity = no groundwater extraction.

"We had to scramble a little to come up with a reasonable solution," said Mr. Clare. "By working with the MILCON contractor and base officials, we were able to set up a temporary generator to continue GET operations. At the same time, we are in the process of connecting the extraction network to another transformer that can handle the electrical demand."

This is a lot harder than it sounds. A trench has to be dug to run the cable between the transformer and the pump junction box, and this task requires significant coordination and materials. Also, the generator has to be manually controlled to prevent the pumps from removing water from the wells too

quickly; a running pump without water can overheat and be damaged. Guess who gets to turn the generator on and off? That's right: Mr. Clare!

Another huge undertaking is the moving of a horizontal extraction well from where it is now (under the footprint of the new hangar) to a safer

if an excavator carelessly drives over the bioreactor, it could get stuck in the bioreactor's soft surface material. That would be an expensive accident that no one wants to see.

Field oversight is managed by several dedicated unsung professionals who keep the pumps pumping and the wells well. They ensure that cleanup decisions that take a long time to make are carried out properly so that the best end results are achieved. They are valuable members of a successful cleanup team, and we appreciate their contribution to the base mission.

To ignore their work would be a true oversight!



The Environmental Bunch: Thanks to modern communications technology, representatives of the Travis Environmental Restoration Program, the performance-based contractor, and three regulatory agencies can meet virtually to effectively conduct monthly meetings.

location. "Moving" is not the correct way to describe this. The original extraction well has to be decommissioned, and a new well has to be installed in a different and potentially more effective part of the subsurface. Horizontal drilling has been around since the 1920's, but it is still a complex process that requires a specialized horizontal drill rig and a directional drill bit that can be tracked above-ground for an accurate well placement. This field event will probably take place next year.

Along with these large tasks, there are several mundane jobs that will keep the restoration field team busy. There are a number of monitoring wells in the area that have to be protected from damage by earth-moving equipment, so Mr. Clare will be working with the heavy equipment operators to ensure that they know where caution is needed to protect these valuable assets. The same coordination is needed to prevent damage to the bioreactor that was described in the October 2010 Guardian. In fact,

Viewpoint

■ From page 2

Necessity truly is the mother of invention, and we are seeing the office environment change in significant ways during our lifetimes. So, where will we go from here? What will the office look like next year? In the next decade? Will a shift to teleconferences by government and commercial offices reduce vehicle traffic on our highways and contribute to lower carbon emissions and cleaner air? To maintain a safe social distance, will field teams use robots to carry out routine maintenance activities? Will Artificial Intelligence play a part in the operation of treatment plants? Will we use drones to show you what we are doing to clean up the environment? These are stressful but potentially exciting times, and I look forward to a post-virus world that takes advantage of the benefits that modern technology offers and still lets me take my wife out to a restaurant for dinner!

Meeting Agenda

7:00 - 9:00 p.m. RAB General Meeting

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Approval of Minutes
- III. Additional Agenda Items and Questions
- IV. Discussion Topics
 - PFOS/PFOA Expanded Site Inspection
 - Relative Risk Site Evaluation
 - PFOS/PFOA Remedial Investigation
- V. Cleanup Program Status
 - FY21 Optimized Remediation Contract
- VI. Regulatory Agency Reports
- VII. Focus Group Reports
- VIII. RAB/Public Questions
- IX. Set Time and Place for Next RAB Meeting (15 April 2021)
- X. Set Focus Group Meeting Times

Adjourn

Travis AFB Virtual Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

October 22, 2020
7 p.m.

From the Comfort of
Your Computer

Editor's Virtual Meeting Key Points

1. This is our first virtual RAB meeting, so please be patient as we work out the technical issues. We will post meeting instructions at [www.travis.af.mil/Information/Environment/Environmental News/](http://www.travis.af.mil/Information/Environment/Environmental%20News/) by 20 October 2020.
2. If attending in a public area, we recommend the use of headphones to clearly hear the discussion without disturbing your neighbors.
3. If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for future RAB topics; please send them by email to enviropa@travis.af.mil.



LOCATION OF LOCAL LIBRARIES

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

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