



# Guardian

America's First Choice for Environmental Restoration

A Publication of the Environmental Restoration Program

Travis Air Force Base, California

October 2009

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### Editor's Corner

1. This edition of the Guardian is a little lean, mainly because we are still in the field, rushing to complete all of the necessary data collection before the start of the winter rains. Once clay soil absorbs enough water to make it soft and pliable, it is almost impossible to carry out field work in a safe and cost effective manner. Future editions of the Guardian will focus on the work that was accomplished this summer.

2. You may have noticed that the appearance of the Travis AFB Environmental Restoration Program web site has changed. All AF public web sites are maintained by the Air Force Public Information Management System, which recently was upgraded to version 2.0. The new version offers new forms of content (videos, for example) and improves the way that content is displayed. We hope to take full advantage of these features in the near future.



(Photo by Glenn Anderson)

**Optimization:** This Thermal Oxidation Unit is one of several engineered treatment systems on Travis AFB that is removing solvent contamination from the subsurface. The challenge is to find ways to get the most out of these systems while reducing their impact on energy consumption.

## Our Carbon “Bootprint?”

### Cleanup Management Practices Include Energy Usage

**By Lonnie Duke**

Travis Environmental Project Manager

A term that is being used often in the national media is “carbon footprint.” A **carbon footprint** is “the total set of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual, organization, event or product” (UK Carbon Trust 2008).

For the military, the total set of GHG emissions from military operations (aircraft, ships, tanks, buildings, etc.) is referred to as a “Carbon Bootprint.” The Department of Defense consumes more than 1% of the energy produced in the United States, especially petroleum products like jet fuel, gasoline and diesel. As one can imagine, the U.S. armed

forces have fairly large carbon bootprints.

Each branch of the service realizes that energy consumption must be reduced as a practical as well as a policy matter and is taking steps to promote energy conservation. For instance, the Air Force is looking into renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, and is performing studies to measure the actual size of its carbon footprint. These studies will help to identify further efforts to perform its missions in a more environmentally friendly manner.

Most of us can relate to the practical aspects of energy conservation. As the price of fuel or electricity generation increases, there will be less money for other priorities. So, the push for reductions in energy consumption

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Visit our Environmental Restoration Program web site at <http://www.travis.af.mil/enviro>



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The *Guardian* is published by the 60<sup>th</sup> Civil Engineer Squadron's Environmental Restoration Program. The newsletter is designed to inform and educate the public about the base's ongoing environmental cleanup program. 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

<http://www.travis.af.mil/enviro>. Questions and comments about the program may be sent to this address:

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[enviropa@travis.af.mil](mailto:enviropa@travis.af.mil)

# Uncle Sam Wants You...

...to comment on our Proposed Groundwater Cleanup Actions.

Your turn is coming to review our proposed remedies to clean up contaminated groundwater. These proposals will be available in 2010, so until then, you can find out more about the Travis cleanup program in a number of ways.

The most interactive way is for you to attend one of the face-to-face meetings held by the Travis Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). Here you can listen to the latest status on cleanup and talk to the Board and the Travis Environmental Restoration Staff. There are several RAB meetings that you can attend between now and then – in fact there is one coming up this month! See page 4 of this newsletter for the details.

Another way, and a significant part of our community outreach program, is this newsletter. The *Guardian* offers an effective and relatively inexpensive way to convey information to a large number of interested readers like you. It allows us to show you the progress we are making in cleaning up contaminated sites and restoring property so that it may be used to support mission related activities.

Many of you receive the electronic copy of our newsletter, but we post our newsletters, meeting minutes and fact sheets on the "Library" and "News" sections of our public access web site. You can find the URL (web address) of our web site at the bottom of page 1 and in the first column of this page.

Unfortunately, a disadvantage of a newsletter is that it only allows for one-way communication. We write, you read. We describe, you evaluate. This is why the *Guardian* is only a part of our community outreach endeavors.

One of the best ways to contact us with a specific question or request is by email. Our environmental public affairs email address is shown at the bottom of the first column of this page. If it is 2 o'clock in the morning and you absolutely have to tell us about a broken link on our web site before trying to get another wink of sleep, email is your best bet. We do not monitor



## VIEWPOINT

Mark H. Smith  
Travis AFB Remedial  
Program Manager

our inbox 24/7, but we do our best to find the information you need and get it to you in a timely manner.

If you are a two-finger typist and prefer to talk about a particular topic, I put my phone number on the last page of this newsletter. You will also find my email address as well as the phone numbers and email addresses of environmental regulatory representatives who specialize in community involvement. Two of the phone numbers are actually toll-free, so the calls will not cost you a penny!

Communication is such a vital aspect of any government project, and the Travis cleanup program is no exception. We exchange information with our environmental regulatory representatives and contractors on a daily (and often hourly) basis to coordinate meeting schedules, guide field investigations, and facilitate site cleanup decisions. That last point (cleanup decisions) is really the focus of this viewpoint.

Once we complete all of our sample collection and data gathering for this year, we should be ready to identify the Air Force's preferred remedy for each contaminated groundwater site on Travis AFB. However, we cannot just select a course of action by ourselves. We need to obtain regulatory AND COMMUNITY acceptance of each remedy to complete the selection process.

Why do we need community acceptance? Well, there are several reasons:

1. It's the law. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (often referred to as Superfund) is the federal environmental law that our restoration program must follow, and it states that we must consider community acceptance of our cleanup plans as part of the remedy selection process. So, asking for your input is a legal requirement.

2. It is the smart way to do business. In

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## Viewpoint

■ From page 2

managing our cleanup program, we have access to various resources. Our team of contractors and regulatory representatives consists of engineers, geologists, biologists, chemists, attorneys, public participation specialists, etc. On any given day, we will ask the right person for the right answer to a particular problem. However, our neighbors often have the formal education or the background knowledge that we need to arrive at that right answer. And, we are not afraid to ask for your help.

3. It promotes open government. As a federal civil service employee, I believe it is important to keep our cleanup program as transparent as possible. There are definitely times when military information must be kept from others to protect lives, but a cleanup program relies on public involvement to protect human health and the environment.

4. It makes us accountable. To give our neighbors a high level of confidence that we are spending their tax dollars wisely, we need to work as if our mothers and spiritual leaders (and perhaps our accoun-

ants) are watching and listening to us while in the office.

So, how do we obtain community acceptance of our preferred remedies? The Superfund law requires responsible parties to issue a Proposed Plan that summarizes the proposed cleanup strategies and explains why they are the most technically appropriate and cost effective ways to clean up the contamination at particular sites.

To promote community involvement in our remedy selection process, the Proposed Plan gives its readers the opportunity to comment on any of the proposed remedies. It states the timeframe (known as a public comment period, which normally lasts 30 days) when we will ask for comments and describes several ways (phone, email, written correspondence) to send those comments to our office. And, it is written so that you do not have to be a rocket scientist to understand it.

We will also hold a public meeting during the public comment period, during which we describe the proposed remedies and give interested community members the opportunity to voice their comments, concerns, and recommendations. This

meeting is more formal than the RAB meetings, since we hire a court stenographer to record the discussion on the proposed remedies word-for-word. I have read, uh, transcripts of our previous public meetings, and, er, am glad that I was hired, uhh, for my work ethic rather than my silver tongue!

We are currently scheduled to issue our Proposed Plan for groundwater cleanup in the first half of 2010. So, when you receive your copy of our Proposed Plan in the mail, please look over the parts that interest you and let us know what you think. And whether you are a rocket scientist or not, we would love to hear from you!

## Bootprint

■ From page 1

starts at the highest levels of Air Force leadership.

On Travis AFB, there are many ongoing activities designed to reduce the size of the base's carbon footprint. For example, new utility meters are being installed in facilities so that their energy usage can be tracked. Solar power is being utilized to pump contaminated groundwater to treatment plants. Opportunities to partner with local businesses and contractors to produce renewable energy are being evaluated. New facilities are now designed to take advantage of natural lighting, and a team of experts will soon visit the base to look for additional opportunities to reduce energy consumption.

Energy security is and will continue to be for the foreseeable future an important consideration in every military decision.

## From the Field

Without a doubt, the 2009 summer field activities on Travis AFB have proven to be the busiest yet. This is the last year that any significant data collection can take place before the process of selecting remedies for 23 groundwater sites begins next year.

At one point, two drill rig crews were bouncing from site to site each day: drill-

ing soil borings to evaluate soil strata here, installing monitoring wells there, and collecting groundwater samples for laboratory analysis wherever needed. Rather than waiting for the results of sample analysis from the lab to determine whether all data gaps had been filled, they moved to the next site to continue the work there.

Since a picture is worth a thousand words, here are several photographs of this summer's field activities.



*A laboratory technician from the Environmental Protection Agency sets up air sampling equipment in the mechanical room of an office facility. Air sample analysis will identify any solvent vapors that may enter from contaminated water beneath the building.*



*A field crew uses a track-mounted drill rig to collect soil borings within a building. This specialized rig is small enough to operate in confined spaces and powerful enough to collect samples from several hundred feet below the ground surface.*



*In the background, a long-arm excavator removes contaminated sediment from Union Creek. In the foreground, a field technician checks on the performance of a gas-powered pump that is dewatering the contaminated portion of the creek.*

Photo by Glenn Anderson

Photo by Glenn Anderson

Photo by Glenn Anderson

## Meeting Agenda

### 6:30 - 7:00 p.m. Open Forum:

The open forum allows RAB and community members to discuss ongoing Travis AFB restoration program activities with the Travis AFB environmental staff on a one-to-one basis.

### 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
  - Union Creek Cleanup Break
  - 2009 Summer Fieldwork Results
- V. Cleanup Program Status
- VI. Regulatory Agency Reports
- VII. Focus Group Reports
- VIII. RAB/Public Questions
- IX. Set Time and Place for Next RAB Meeting
- X. Set Focus Group Meeting Times

*Adjourn*

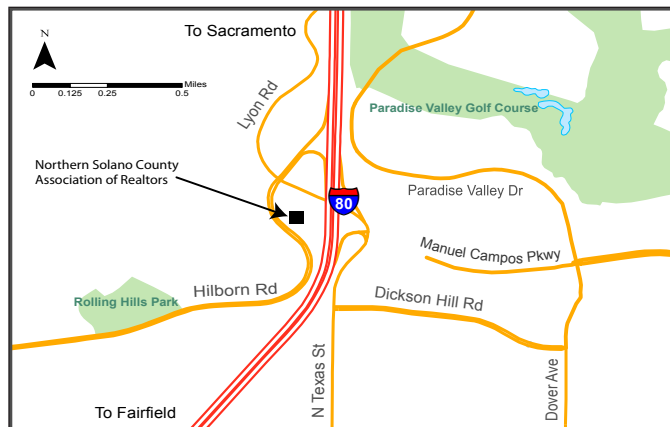
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## Travis AFB Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

October 22, 2009  
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 Mark Smith, (707) 424-3062. You can also view our web site at <http://www.travis.af.mil/enviro>*

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

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