



# Guardian

America's ~~First~~ Choice for Environmental Restoration

A Publication of the Environmental Restoration Program

Travis Air Force Base, California

April 2010

*Award-Winning*

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## Acronyms

**AFCEE:** *The Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment provides Air Force leaders with the expertise and professional services needed to protect, preserve, restore, develop and sustain the nation's environmental and installation resources.*

**CAMU:** *A Corrective Action Management Unit is a designated area within a facility that is designed to carry out a corrective action, such as contaminated soil management. The Travis AFB CAMU is an on-base soil repository built on a closed landfill.*

**MTBE:** *Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether is a volatile, flammable, and colorless liquid. It is a gasoline additive but is no longer used in California; it can pollute large amounts of groundwater when gas with MTBE is spilled or leaked at gas stations.*



(Photo by Glenn Anderson)

**Boring Progress:** Field technicians use a hollow-stem drill rig to collect subsurface soil data and groundwater samples for laboratory analysis. The 2010 summer construction season offers the last opportunity to support the selection of groundwater remedies by the Air Force 2012 cleanup goal.

## Out Standing in the Field

### 2010 Construction Season to Support Remedy Selection

**By Lonnie Duke**

Travis Environmental Project Manager

In last January's Guardian, we reported that Travis AFB won a prestigious award for having the top Environmental Restoration Program in Air Mobility Command. However, the Restoration Branch is not resting on its laurels. There is little time left to achieve the Air Force goal of selecting and carrying out remedies for all of its restoration sites by 2012.

So, for a second straight construction season, the base will be filled with the sounds of drill rigs, back hoes and earth moving equipment. Here is a summary

of the field work that has to take place this summer to either meet that goal or directly support the base mission:

**Site Characterization:** After a brief work stoppage because of a rainy El Nino winter, we will continue to install monitoring wells at six groundwater sites to complete our understanding of groundwater conditions and contaminant distribution. The data from these wells will support groundwater cleanup projects and the selection of groundwater remedies.

**Vegetable Oil Injection:** Thanks to the positive results from two biology-based demonstration projects, Travis will try to speed up the breakdown of chlori-

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



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# A Regulatory Fairwell

Recently, we learned that Mr. John Kaiser from the California Water Quality Control Board – San Francisco Bay Region (RWQCB) has decided to call it a career and retire soon. John is one of four section leaders in the Groundwater Protection/Waste Containment Division of the RWQCB. He is responsible for the section that provides regulatory oversight to 30 Department of Defense (DOD) programs, so he is involved in surface water and groundwater quality issues at military installations and other federal facilities.

The primary responsibility of the Water Board is to protect and enhance the quality of regional surface water and groundwater for beneficial uses. This duty is carried out by formulating, adopting, and implementing water quality plans for specific water bodies, by prescribing and enforcing requirements on waste dischargers, and by requiring the investigation and cleanup of water contamination and sources of pollution that contribute to the degradation of water quality.

John does not deal with the day-to-day issues that are characteristic of any regulatory program; he relies on a staff of project managers to take care of them. However, one of John's strengths is his willingness to go into the field and find out for himself how our cleanup program is progressing. For example, he often participates in our Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meetings, which gives him the opportunity to talk with both base leaders and community members. In the fifteen year history of the Travis AFB RAB, John is the only senior manager from a regulatory agency to routinely attend these public meetings. I cannot overemphasize how important it is for the citizens of Solano County to see for themselves that RWQCB management is actively looking out



## VIEWPOINT

Mark H. Smith  
Travis AFB Remedial  
Program Manager

for them.

One of the highlights of John's participation in the Travis AFB environmental restoration program took place in the spring of 2006. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) was conducting its annual training workshop for Department of Defense program managers, and John asked if he could bring a team of fifteen SWRCB members to Travis AFB to showcase a successful environmental restoration program. This field visit gave us the opportunity to describe in detail our overall approach to groundwater cleanup and to show off the innovative groundwater technologies that were under evaluation at the time. It is not every day that we get to represent the Air Force in front of such an influential group of state regulators, and John's confidence in our accomplishments and progress gave us a welcome boost.

We often see in newspapers and on television that Water is the new Oil and that the management of this precious resource has become both a political issue as well as a critical aspect in the lives and livelihoods of so many Californians. It is so reassuring to see the active involvement of senior regulatory management in issues that are so important to the State, and John's absence from our public meetings will definitely be noticed.

So, John, thank you for your contributions to our cleanup efforts. You have set the bar high and leave behind a legacy of professionalism and trust that we will not forget. You will be missed.



## Standing

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nated solvents at up to four sites by injecting a type of vegetable oil, known as Emulsified Oil Substrate (EOS), into contaminated groundwater. The oil promotes the growth of bacteria that use the oil as a food source. The bacteria also use up the oxygen in the groundwater, creating optimum conditions for the breakdown of chlorinated solvents to take place.

**New Treatment System:** At one time, California used a gasoline additive, known as Methyl Tertiary Butyl Ether (MTBE), to keep the air clean, until California EPA realized that it acted as a groundwater contaminant when it leaked out of underground storage tanks. The Travis AFB gas station is no exception. Although the tanks have been replaced, a new groundwater extraction and treatment system is needed to clean up the residual MTBE. However, unlike other treatment plants on the base, this one will be completely solar powered and will not use any base electricity.

**Bioreactor Installation:** An interesting summer project will be the installation of a second solar-powered bioreactor. Previous Guardian articles described a bioreactor as a large underground percolator that uses biological and chemical processes to remove high concentrations of solvents from groundwater. The base installed its first bioreactor just outside a former battery shop 15 months ago, and it has performed very well. Solar power provides the energy to pump contaminated groundwater through reactive material (mulch and iron), so it does not use base electricity. As a result, it is considered to be an environmentally-friendly cleanup technology. The excavation of soil to install a bioreactor also removes a large amount of solvents from the source area, speeding up the cleanup. This one will be built just north of an aircraft parking area.

**Groundwater Monitoring:** Each year, the base collects groundwater samples from monitoring wells to measure the progress made in cleaning up contaminated groundwater and to measure the performance of several groundwater treatment plants. A lot of this work takes place in the late spring/early summer time frame.

**Fence Maintenance:** It may not seem significant, but the fences and signs around several soil sites are looking a little worn and require some maintenance. Also, a new fence with gates will be built around a large soil repository, known as a Corrective Action Management Unit (CAMU).

**Soil Investigation:** Travis AFB has taken action at all but one soil site, and the holdout is a former fire training area on the southern side of the base. A data gap investigation will take place this summer to more clearly identify the distribution of contaminants at the site. The investigation will involve the collection of soil samples from predetermined depths in test pits. The results of this investigation will be used to carry out the last remaining soil action and wrap up the Travis AFB soil cleanup program.

**Pipe Relocation:** A new fire station will be built this year to replace the current facility that the fire department has been using for decades. The new fire station will be located next to the Central Ground Water Treatment Plant (CGWTP). The footprint of the new fire station covers several underground water transfer pipes associated with the CGWTP, so they will have to be relocated. The new fire station will be built with a passive ventilation system as a precaution to ensure that firefighters are not exposed to vapors from contaminated groundwater.

**Soil Cleanup:** Although not classified as an Environmental Restoration project, the Restoration Branch will be involved in the cleanup of an old Rapid Runway Repair (RRR) train-

ing area on the south side of the base. The RRR site was originally set up in the early 1990's to train airmen on the procedures to repair a runway at a deployed location. An investigation of the RRR site discovered construction debris containing asbestos and lead-based paint. Once the base learned of the presence of these hazardous materials at the RRR site, it was closed.

What makes the RRR cleanup so interesting is its relationship with an unrelated Runway Repair and Lighting project that is also starting in 2010. One element of this project is the construction of a runway parallel to the existing northern runway that will be used for training pilots on short takeoffs and landings. The design for the runway construction project calls for an additional 175,000 cubic yards of material to be trucked onto the base.

This is where the RRR site enters into the picture. Along with the asbestos and lead-based paint, there is approximately 40,000 cubic yards of clean soil, concrete and asphalt that can be used as fill or aggregate material. So, the cleanup project will start with the separation of hazardous materials from the clean material at the RRR site. The hazardous materials will be trucked to an appropriate disposal facility, and the usable material will be used in the runway project.

By summer's end, the contamination at the RRR site will be cleaned up, and a large amount of construction material will be made available for a large military construction project that will directly support the base mission. So the project at the RRR site could be considered to be win-win situation.

It will take a lot of planning and proper execution to successfully carry out this amount of field work, so the Restoration Branch will be out, standing in the field with their environmental contractors, making it happen. So, get your popcorn ready, because it will be quite a show!



## 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**
  - Case Study in Sustainability
  - General Thomas D. White Award

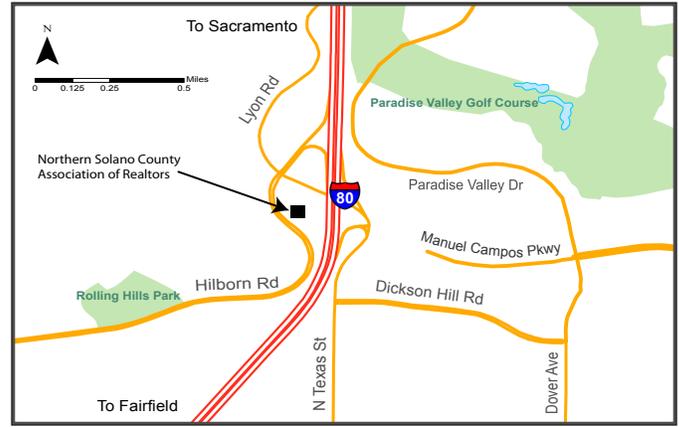
*Break*
- V. **Cleanup Program Status**
  - Upcoming FS/PP/ROD Schedule
  - Upcoming Field Schedule
- VI. **Regulatory Agency Reports**
- VII. **Focus Group Reports**
- VIII. **RAB/Public Questions**
- IX. **Set Time and Place for Next RAB Meeting**
- X. **Set Focus Group Meeting Times**

*Adjourn*

## Travis AFB Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

April 22, 2010  
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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*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>*

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