

**MEETING SUMMARY
 FORMER WALKER AIR FORCE BASE (WAFB)
 ROSWELL INDUSTRIAL AIR CENTER (RIAC)
 RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB)
 18 JANUARY 2001**

<p>RAB Members Present: Kathleen Aisling Richard Cervantes Ron Courts Eva Gomez David Gregory Kay Havenor Ken Hirst Kerry Hunter Leroy Lang Ethel Logan Dick Smith</p> <p>RAB Members Absent: Tom Day Steve Harris Julie Jacobs Eloy Ortega Raymond Prescott Mary Kay Samples</p> <p>Facilitator: Sandra Chaloux</p> <p>Guests Present: Ms. Gay Hirst Ms. Kim Zahm Mr. Jeff Firebaugh</p>	<p>Affiliation: EPA ENMU – Roswell City of Roswell Citizen, Y-O Acres USACE, Army Co-Chair Local Geologist, Community Co-Chair National Guard Citizen NM Farm Bureau Citizen, Y-O Acres Citizen</p> <p>Nova Bus Chaves County NM Environmental Department Chaves County Commissioner Citizen Citizen, Latimer Subdivision</p> <p>CEC, Inc – RAB support Contractor</p> <p>Affiliation: Citizen USACE, Albuquerque District USACE, Albuquerque District</p>
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Meeting Summary Review

- Mr. Courts mentioned one clarification to the minutes of the last meeting regarding the water retention pond. There will not be a new retention pond on the airport facility; there is an existing plan for runoff collection that is not constructed yet but is planned for across the northeast portion of the airport property.

DOD Stakeholder Forum Briefing

- The DoD Environmental Cleanup Stakeholders Forum was held in St. Louis from November 14 through November 16. Mr. Havenor reviewed the forum events.

Mr. Havenor thought the conference presented a tremendous amount of information. The attendees were the people involved in the restoration and cleanup of DoD installations or

facilities. The purpose of the forum was to get input from RAB members as well as contractors who were doing work or wanted to do work at these sites.

The forum began with a general session. All of the officials attending were introduced at that time. They discussed what they thought were critical issues – how things don't work as much as how things do work. After the general session, the attendees were free to go to any one of a series of different open group discussions.

The first part of Wednesday included four session topics – Formerly Used Defense Site Improvements, Next Generation of Community Involvement, Partnering with Regulatory Agencies, and Open Discussion. Each of these sessions had a group of people there to respond to input from attendees, who were essentially RAB members (RAB members far outnumbered anyone else in attendance).

According to Mr. Havenor, some of the open discussion sessions turned out to be quite interesting because no constraints were placed on the discussion. After the first break, the second session topics were Range Cleanup, Risk Management and Communications, Site Closure and Permanent Remedies, and Cleanup Privatization.

He would be more than willing to make the meeting information available to anyone who is interested. On a couple of occasions he saw DoD administrators, with firm positions on certain topics, totally reversing their positions after they started to get feedback from RAB members and contractors. Mr. Havenor took this as a sign that there really was some openness and that the DoD was making a true effort to be successful in its cleanups and was trying to get something done. There was a lot of input from both directions.

Ms. Chaloux asked what Mr. Havenor thought RAB members would be most interested in of all the information he learned at the forum. Mr. Havenor thought that this RAB has been extremely fortunate in that they have had close cooperation with the Corps of Engineers. He talked to several co-chairs of other RABs that have never been able to talk to the Corps of Engineers people. He did say that the Albuquerque office is exceptional in that sense, and he came away from the forum with the feeling that this RAB has operated well and has had good contact and feedback from the Corps of Engineers. The Corps, concerning the cleanup process at the Former Walker Air Force Base, has been open and willing to consider possibilities that have come from citizens. He found this to be the most important thing to report to the Walker RAB.

- A RAB member asked what is range cleanup. It deals with ordnance from artillery range sites. *(Further information from the forum is available at <http://www.denix.osd.mil/CL-Forum>).*
- Ms. Chaloux asked for feedback from the RAB community members on the progress they have made over the past 2 to 3 years. The following comments were made by members:
 - Ms. Gomez said that the Corps could still do a better job of letting the landowners know when the fieldwork would be done on their property.

- Ms. Logan said that the process was moving along as fast as it was going to move. She said that as far as the comfort level of knowing what the water situation is and the potential of what it can be, the project has progressed a great deal in the past two years.
- Mr. Hunter said that even though this was only his third meeting and he does not have a lot of experience with the RAB, he felt that it is important that the people of Roswell are kept informed. He noted the article that appeared in the newspaper after the last RAB meeting.
- Mr. Cervantes said that he has been part of the RAB for about a year and he has taken that time to try to figure out how the process works. He also saw the article in the paper and said that it is good to see some progress being made.
- Mr. Smith said that he has learned a lot and progress is being made. He did not realize that the process would take this long.
- Mr. Courts said he is pleased with the progress the RAB has been making. He doesn't see us making much more progress unless we get into some type of enhanced bioremediation system. He wished he had known about the forum in St. Louis. Mr. Havenor said that the event had been organized on short notice, and that he did not know about it much in advance. Ms. Chaloux said that she thought there would be another similar forum. Mr. Havenor said there was a recommendation by RAB members that the forum be held semi-annually, however, the DoD determines the time frame.
- Mr. Lang first said that he has been here as long as anybody and has attended most of the meetings. He said that he has to commend the Corps because he has attended enough other meetings that left him with feeling that the government agency did not really care whether he was there or didn't really care to listen to him. He has found the Corps, in this situation, to be very intent on listening to what the people are saying. He feels that the Corps has put into action some of the things that he recommended. He thinks the RAB is doing some good and that there is no fast way to solve the cleanup. He thinks that the results will be very detrimental if the RAB doesn't try to solve it. He also pointed out that this area has many different unique situations involving water tables and basins.
- Mr. Hirst said that he was glad that the RAB is trying to do something. He said he doesn't have the background necessary to know if there are other, faster ways to deal with the problem. He is interested in knowing how much weight the RAB carries in the decisions being made. He is looking at this from "the different side of the house" because he attended events like I-CAMP and range conferences; he sees the other side of the picture. Because of this he is glad that the DoD has "bought off" on informing the people.
- Mr. Courts asked Mr. Havenor if there was any kind of discussion about acceptance of time frame at the forum. He asked if any real discussion along the line of "Folks, we are just going to have to accept that this is going to take longer than we hoped it

would across the country.” Mr. Havenor said that the general feelings among the RAB people were, almost unanimously, that they would like to see conclusions reached or results obtained more rapidly than they are currently. He thinks that the people who responded to those things tried to do so in a way that calmed people down in a sense. They can’t really answer the question. All sites are different. We are talking about contamination in groundwater in hopefully a fairly restricted area; some of the sites they are working on are scary. He went as far as saying that some sites are “big-time scary.” It made him feel really good that we have as few problems as we do but we are still getting a good response at the same time. It is a matter of people and money – an allocation of resources.

- A question was asked about how well the DoD is funding RABs and other sites. Several RAB members stressed the importance of funding for sites like Walker. Ms. Chaloux suggested that the RAB write their congressman.
- Mr. Havenor said that he was impressed by the visible attitude change in some of the top people at the stakeholders’ forum. Mr. Havenor said that the criterion for prioritizing sites is risk assessment – relative risk compared to other sites.
- Ms. Chaloux said Mr. Gregory indicated that some of the people at the Army Corps headquarters are interested in having information from this RAB – as a success story – to include in their report to Congress. Ms. Chaloux asked for any other comments about the RAB and its importance. She will incorporate the comments from today and any additional comments in the write-up that will be sent to Congress.
- Ms. Logan got the impression from Mr. Havenor that the RABs were important because they changed the attitude of a number of high officials. She asked, if the source of power is a RAB, what can we do to get more people here. She said this is a handful of people compared to how many people ought to be paying attention. If we had more people, we would have more force and more ability. She doesn’t know what to do to make people care about their water without making everyone excited about the bad water.
- Mr. Havenor said that it is a very slow process. His opinion is that one of the first things we have to do is educate and enlighten the media because they are the ones who disseminate information. The meeting before last he had a telephone call from a reporter at the *Roswell Record*. The question began with what is happening on this project. The conversation very quickly led to the question of why the newspaper hadn’t been informed that these meetings were taking place – and he said – “Well excuse me, but it’s advertised in your paper!” He said although that didn’t particularly slow the reporter down, she also didn’t show up at the next meeting.
- Ms. Logan said that she wishes someone would take pictures of what the Army Corps is doing and put the pictures in the paper. Ms. Chaloux thought this was a good point and that maybe it should be done the next time the Corps is out drilling. Ms. Logan said that she slows down every time she drives by just to see what is going on. Ms. Gomez said that too often people who are accomplishing things do not take the time to make the public aware of what is happening.

- Ms. Aisling said that feeding the press the story and having them photograph it has been successful at her sites. She said that even if the event is not newsworthy that day, the press keeps it on file for a little while. She has had extremely good success in writing the story for the press.
- Mr. Havenor commended the *Roswell Daily Record* on the article that they did on the interview with Mr. Gregory. He found it to be an exceptionally good article and did not see anything inaccurate in it. Ms. Chaloux pointed out that another alternative is having one of the community members call someone from the press and tell them what the RAB discussed at the meeting to see if the press is interested. Mr. Havenor said that he is reluctant to speak on behalf of the RAB without clearing it with someone first. Ms. Chaloux said that she would make a note to do a little more to get some media interest to bring more people out to the meetings. She noted that the weather is probably another reason that there are not many extra people at this meeting since it had snowed.
- Mr. Gregory noted early on that he saw the media in a role to serve themselves primarily, but now agrees that the community and the whole environmental restoration process stands to gain. He spoke with the paper's editor and to a reporter as well in attempts to give them a site view and status update.
- Ms. Aisling said that as a part of her job with EPA, she is involved in a number of RABs or RAB-like forums – at a variety of extremely high-risk sites. She said “for the record” she thought this meeting’s attendance was a great turnout. She realizes that this group probably seems small because not everyone was there (due to the snow) – but to her, this is a great group compared to most of the apathetic members of the public that she sees in her day-to-day job. Like everyone else, she wanted to commend the Corps for being accessible and keeping the group informed. She also wanted to commend the group, because they are staying with it even if there is not a sensational story and they are sticking with it over time. Ms. Aisling said that sites which don’t go well, don’t get cleaned up well. The community at large is not well informed when there isn’t a group that is willing to stick it out.
- Ms. Logan envisioned getting the newspaper on a track where the public wants to know what is going to happen next.
- Mr. Courts said that part of the problem is that the problem itself doesn’t affect people north of RIAC.
- Mr. Courts asked whether we still owe information to the airport committee. Ms. Chaloux said that she thinks the committee is on the mailing list. She said she would be happy to bring the mailing list for everyone to look over. Mr. Courts suggested inviting other RIAC committee members to be guests at other RAB meetings. He said that it would be totally appropriate for any of their members to be invited or to be part of the RAB. Ms. Chaloux asked if anyone knew any members of the airport committee. She suggested that one of the members be invited to attend a RAB meeting and if the person liked the meeting, to join the RAB.

USACE Update

- Mr. Gregory began by showing results of the most recent sampling event completed by the city's contractor. He said that this was the seventh quarterly sampling event since the pilot abatement plan came on-line. He also said that this makes the third sampling event for the December time frame, which allows for a comparison of three water level measurements and TCE levels from the same time period.
- Mr. Gregory presented the seasonal fluctuations in water levels in the aquifer as well as plots of the TCE concentration over time on transparencies. He pointed out that the hydrograph follows very consistent seasonal fluctuations in water level in the shallow alluvial aquifer. The hydrograph shows that with irrigation season ending in September, the water level comes back up from the levels recorded in the summer when more water is being pumped for irrigation. The water level goes up in the winter after irrigation season ends.
- The chart of TCE concentrations in SW-9B is not changing much, whereas the TCE concentration in Well 9 has increased. It has the potential to spike again, which could be expected with the water table going up as it did. TCE concentrations around the pumping well under construction, near the eastern perimeter of the base, and not far from Y-O Road, showed nothing remarkable.
- Mr. Gregory noted that back in the summer when the group looked at two spikes that seemed to be anomalies, we have seen the correlation between the groundwater elevation and the corresponding rise in TCE concentration. This time TCE levels were falling off in other wells, yet in the Rowden and Partin wells, the levels spiked up. There has been a lot of discussion about this and it looks as if it is just following the same trend that they have seen in the past.
- On a blank transparency, Mr. Gregory plotted three sample points from December results of 1998, 1999, and 2000, for four wells that are just inside of RIAC's eastern boundary, back to the west boundary, from Y-O Acres Road. These give us a picture of annual changes without the seasonal fluctuations and a better picture of the actual progress that has been made since the abatement plan was put into action.
- Mr. Hirst noted that it is always the same two wells that spike compared to the others. All of the other wells are going down (water levels) in conjunction with one another. Mr. Hirst's theory is that "Stuffy Smith" did not want to carry that stuff very far and he chucked it out in the back of the hangar. Mr. Gregory said that we are seeing a steady, but not a rapid decline. Mr. Gregory pointed out that the narrative on the report shows that the pumping rate has been cut back to a level of 10 gallons per minute (gpm). At this low pumping rate the Corps really does not expect any change in cleanup rates beyond what natural attenuation accounts for. According to Mr. Gregory, 10 gpm is a fairly small amount.
- Mr. Gregory mentioned that as with most of his visits to the site, he learned a little more of the history of former Walker AFB from talking to long-time Roswell residents. Some of this information may help in the Corps' search for a source area. For example, at a previous meeting, Mr. Lang had pointed to an area referred to as the alert area, where B-52s were parked ready to deploy. Mr. Lang indicated that it was common to wash the planes with solvents when needed.

And that excess solvents pooled in a low area just off the tarmac. Mr. Gregory also mentioned that he had been working on this project for 2 years when he learned of an explosion that occurred back in 1947 or 1948. There was a collision when a fueling tanker lost control and blew up a maintenance hangar. The structure was used for storage of fuel and possibly solvent.

- Using a transparency, Mr. Gregory discussed the separation between the upper and lower alluvial aquifer. He indicated that a clay layer separates the upper zone and the lower saturated zones. Together these make up the shallow alluvial. The Corps doesn't know how continuous this clay layer is. This discussion was to answer questions from previous meetings concerning whether there was contamination down into the artesian aquifer. Mr. Gregory pointed out that the City routinely tests its wells and that we would see TCE if it was present. At the last RAB meeting, the pumping test that the Corps is in the process of conducting was discussed. The purpose of this pumping was to determine whether the Corps could slightly increase the water that it is removing. He said that the 40 gpm that is being pumped over by the fence line is certainly more than the 10 gpm by the hangars and the cluster of wells in the area near building 85.
- There are wells that are being installed in conjunction with the pump test. There are six observation wells and one pumping well. We wanted to be able to get dual use out of the pumping well, although the initial purpose is to use it in a pumping test to determine whether the aquifer can handle a higher pumping rate. If the pumping test shows they can pump more aggressively, perhaps the pumping well can be converted into an extraction well.
- Since the last RAB meeting, the Corps has installed the five wells (shown on a transparency) that were screened. They stopped at the top of the clay area that separates the upper and the lower alluvial. The wells were set up as temporary wells, analytical data was collected, and results were compared with data from existing wells. By and large, there were consistently higher TCE readings in the lower alluvial in that area. Observation wells are now placed in that lower alluvial zone. The goal was to put in a temporary well, sample at a higher depth, then drill through the clay layer that divides the upper and lower alluvial, sample at the lower alluvial, and compare the analytical results. The results consistently showed that the lower alluvial had higher concentration levels. The data is preliminary, but the levels were in the 70 to 80 ppm ranges, with some as high as 84 ppm. The clay acts as a barrier for water but not for TCE. Although TCE is heavier than water, over time most if not all of the TCE on site will be in the dissolved phase and it will be moving in the formation, in the water.
- A RAB member asked how long this project will go on and whether it will end when the TCE levels are acceptable by the health department. Mr. Havenor said that the purpose of the monitoring wells around the pumping wells is to aggressively pump the big (pumping) well and monitor the observation wells and the groundwater responses so that calculations can be made between the two types of wells. This will determine what the sustained yield will be from the aquifer. That information will be used to determine the size of the pump and to figure out how to dispose of the water.
- Mr. Gregory said that the Corps has an idea of where the TCE is but not where it is coming from. Once the wells are pumped aggressively, the results from the monitoring wells surrounding the pumping well will show the path of the TCE. For example, if the monitoring well levels to the south of a pumping well decreased after aggressive pumping, and the

monitoring wells to the north of the pumping well stayed the same, it would be safe to conclude that the source of the TCE is to the north of the pumping well.

- Mr. Gregory said the Corps was hopeful that the pumping test now in progress would show results similar to the pumping test done in 1999. He recalled that the Corps did a pumping test a year and a half ago in an area northwest of the wells at SW2-B. Results from the pumping test conducted in May 1999, showed that 10 gallons a minute was very low and that a more accurate rate was probably 300 gallons a minute. There was a concern about how much water will be pumped out and how much water the community is using. The RAB audience suggested that the Corps pump aggressively and long enough to see what is going on and hopefully where the TCE is coming from. Mr. Gregory said that the goal is to determine what the sustainable long-term pumping rate is.
- Mr. Gregory introduced two new Corps people at the meeting. Mr. Kim Zahm is the chief of the Design Branch, and Mr. Jeff Firebaugh is a project manager in the Programs and Project Management Division in the Albuquerque office. As of January 14, 2000, Mr. Gregory began working for the Department of Energy and he is no longer a Corps employee, but is on a temporary contract with the Corps.

Next Meeting

- The next RAB meeting was set for Thursday, April 19, 2001, at 7:00 p.m. at the National Guard Building #524.

Action Items

- Prepare RAB member comments to be forwarded to Congress
- RAB to e-mail additional comments to Ms. Chaloux