

U.S. Army Soldier System Center RAB Meeting Minutes for June 24, 2008

**Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Meeting
Conference Center
U. S. Army Soldier System Center
June 24, 2008
Meeting Minutes**

I. Attendance

RAB Members Present:

Robert Campbell	Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MADEP)
Joel McCassie	Co-Chair, Environmental, Safety and Health Office (ESHO), U.S. Natick Army Soldier System Center (NSSC)
John McHugh	Restoration Officer, ESHO NSSC
Christine Williams	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Marco Kaltofen	Co-Chair, Community Member
Dr. Kannan Vembu	Board of Selectmen Representative
A. Richard Miller	Community Member
Elizabeth McCoy	Employee Member, NSSC

RAB Members Absent:

Dr. Charles Czeisler	Community Member, Lakewood Association
Sid Gantman	Community Member
James Straub	Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)
Neill Osgood	Community Member, Lakewood Association
Dr. Harlee Strauss	Community Member
James Fitzgerald	Community Member
Steve Lubic	Board of Selectman Representative

Others in Attendance:

Kevin Palaia	Environmental Consultant, ICF International
Willard Murray	Environmental Consultant, ECC
Debi Heims	Environmental Consultant, H&S Environmental
Joanne Scamurra	Environmental Consultant, H&S Environmental
Stacy Greendlinger	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
James Connolly	U.S. Army NSSC
Michelle Bonanca	Environmental Safety and Health Office (ESHO) NSSC

II. Handouts

1. Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes from March 22, 2007
3. Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2008
4. Memorandum: Fall 2007 Fish and Sediment Sampling Plan
5. June 2008 Draft Environmental Newsletter, Status of Sediment and Fish Studies at Lake Cochituate

III. Meeting Minutes

Mr. McCassie called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm and asked if there were any comments, changes, or revisions to the March 2007 RAB Meeting Minutes.

There was a motion to approve the minutes and the minutes were approved.

Mr. McCassie then asked if there were any changes to the April 2008 RAB Meeting Minutes.

Mr. McHugh commented that they were looking at the “non-hearing” portion of the April meeting. There was a motion to approve the minutes and they were approved.

Mr. McHugh reminded the RAB Members to please pick up a packet of the Fall 2007 Fish and Sediment sampling Plan Memorandum in the back of the room.

Proposed Public Information Handout – Status of Sediment and Fish /studies at Lake Cochituate

Handout: Draft Environmental Newsletter June 2008: Status of Sediment and Fish Studies at Lake Cochituate

Mr. Kevin Palaia began by stating that the purpose of this proposed public information flier was that the Army felt it necessary to educate the greater general public within the Natick Community that could be impacted by any future risk management or cleanup activities that may occur related to the sediments at the NSSC Facility. He added that prior to the release of the newsletter to the general public, the Army wanted to give the RAB members an opportunity to review the content of the newsletter and to provide any input or comments.

Mr. McHugh added that the information in the newsletter is an educational piece that will be used over the next two to three months mainly to provide information of what has been done at NSSC. He added that the flier looks backward historically in time in terms of what has been done in the past; however, it does present the alternatives under CERCLA as we move forward. He continued that it also demonstrates some of the constraints that the facility is under and what can and cannot be done. He gave the example that Fisk Pond is upgradient of the facility and may have some issues but the Army cannot do anything with Fisk Pond.

Mr. Campbell asked if this flier was going out to the larger Army mailing list.

Mr. McHugh commented that it could.

Mr. Campbell suggested that the flier go to local places such as the Public Library.

Mr. Miller added that it should also go to the Natick Town Hall and the Cochituate State Park.

Ms. Williams asked if there were any local bait or boat shops in the area shops possibly where the fishermen pick up their bait or buy their coffee.

Mr. Miller commented that there was the Natick Outdoor Store and also some chain stores around the Natick Mall.

Mr. Kaltofen added that Framingham fishermen should be included too.

Mr. McHugh added that besides the review of the flier, help is requested for identifying specific groups and target areas where the flier should be distributed.

Mr. Miller commented that maybe an email could be sent to let people know where they can pick up the flier.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if the flier was looking for a “red pen”.

Mr. Palaia said that he would welcome comments that could get recorded in the minutes.

Mr. Kaltofen continued that because the flier states Fish Studies on the cover, that the obvious question, which seems to be missing and should be prominently displayed is, “Should I be eating the fish from the lake?” He added that he thought it would be difficult to send this flier out without discussing the status of the current fish advisories at the lake.

Ms. McCoy asked if there are any standard answers that the Regulatory Agencies give for situations like this, for any Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).

Dr. Vembu added that the flier talks about samplings at the lake but since the early nineties how many samplings have been done and when. This information would then have some value for the people who are looking at it.

Mr. McHugh asked if he was looking for a timeframe.

Dr. Vembu responded affirmatively. He added that it will demonstrate that the sampling is still going on.

Mr. Miller commented that the measuring of the flier success should be in terms of two questions; what difference does it make and who cares?

Mr. McHugh added that this flier is not supposed to be directed at environmental professionals.

Mr. Kaltofen commented that the flier does read a little bit like it is directed to environmental professionals. Questions like what is the lake actually safe for, what is the status of the fish advisories, should you be eating the fish, and if so, how many should be written very clearly in the flier. He added that people will use this and think about eating the fish. He continued by pointing out that not all the issues out in the lake are due to the Lab but people will use this to decide whether or not to fish in the lake.

Mr. Palaia said that the flier does talk about risk assessments performed and that the human health risk assessments, in part, are still ongoing. Some conclusions may be able to be drawn with the ecological risk assessments with a limited potential for eco-risks. He added that how far we want to go with the human health risk assessments should be addressed.

Dr. Vembu added that it is looking for a take home message under the Comment to the Community Section.

Mr. Palaia continued with the explanation of the various sections of the flier.

Introduction

- NSSC was Listed as a Superfund Site on 1994
- Sediment, surface water, fish and benthic studies, investigations and risk assessments began in the early 1990s – present
- Sediment Feasibility Study (FS) 2007-present
- Army is considering potential risk management and cleanup options for NSSC Sediments

SSC Background

- NSSC (Natick Labs) – U.S. Army research development and engineering facility since 1954
- 1994 Superfund Site
- Operable Unit 1 – ground water extraction and treatment system operating since 1997
- Contaminated soil removal actions

Sediment Background

- Operable Unit 2
- 50+ years of storm water discharge to Lake Cochituate
- PCBs, pesticides, metals and petroleum compounds
- Elevated PCBs at MSO in Pegan Cove likely related to NSSC transformer release in mid-1980's
- Active storm water outfalls retrofitted with oil-water separators in 1990's
- No current known NSSC sources of PCBs to lake
- Other possible non-NSSC contaminant sources to lake

Data Collection

- Remedial Investigation Activities
- Sampling and analysis of sediment, surface water, fish, benthic organisms
- Sediment toxicity testing
- Benthic invertebrate surveys
- Wildlife Surveys
- Angler survey
- Ecological Risk Assessment – concluded limited potential for risk to ecological receptors
- Human Health Risk Assessment – ongoing
- Oversight by US EPA, MassDEP and USFWS

Dr. Vembu asked if a sentence could be added when they expect the HHRA to be completed so that people could feel more comfortable of the results.

Mr. Palaia added that they could probably do that.

Ms. Williams said that it was planned to be done by the fall.

Mr. Palaia continued showing a map of the installation boundary, Lake Cochituate, Sediment Sampling Locations, as well as fish collection areas. He continued with the evaluation of Risk Management Alternatives.

Evaluation of Risk Management Alternatives

- Army is preparing Feasibility Study (FS)
- Screen and evaluate several potential risk management and cleanup alternatives for NSSC sediment
- Alternative 1: No Action
 - Require under Superfund process; 5-yr reviews
- Alternative 2: Limited Action/Institutional Controls (ICs)
 - ICs to reduce exposure to fish, signage, public outreach, cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews
- Alternative 3: Institutional Controls/Monitored Natural Recovery
 - ICs to reduced exposure to fish, signage, public outreach, cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews
 - Long-term monitoring of sediment, water, and fish PCB concentrations over time to evaluate natural recovery
- Alternative 4: Clay Capping/Monitoring/ICs
 - Pre-remedy survey; clay cap; long-term O&M and monitoring
 - ICs to reduce exposure to fish and minimize cap damage; cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews

- Alternative 5: Composite Capping/Monitoring/ICs
- Pre-remedy to survey; geotextile and sand cap; long-term O&M and monitoring
- ICs to reduce exposure to fish and minimize cap damage; cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews
- Alternative 6: Sediment Stabilization/Mechanical Dry Dredging/Off-Site Disposal/ICs
- Pre-remedy survey, silt curtains; cofferdam, dewatering, stabilization of sediment, dredging, off-site disposal, monitoring
- ICs; cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews
- Alternative 7: Hydraulic Dredging/Geotextile Tub Dewatering/Off-site Disposal/ICs
- Pre-remedy survey; silt curtains; hydraulic dredging dewater sediment using geotextile tubes, off-site disposal, monitoring
- ICs; cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews
- Alternative 8: Hydraulic Dredging/Mechanical Dewatering/Off-Site Disposal/ICs
- Pre-remedy surveys, silt curtains, hydraulic dredging, dewater sediment using mechanical presses. Filters, off-site disposal, monitoring
- ICs; cooperative agreement with State; 5-yr reviews

Dr. Vembu asked when the evaluation for the alternatives would be completed.

Ms. Williams said that it was also in the fall.

Mr. Campbell commented that the cooperative agreement was not with DEP but with DCR.

Mr. McHugh stated that the cooperative agreement does not exist yet.

Mr. Campbell added that it should say that.

Mr. Palaia added that it is written in the flier to state that the cooperative agreement will be with the state agencies that have jurisdiction over the lake.

Mr. Miller asked if that could be any agencies other than Mass DCR.

Mr. Palaia responded that there is a possibility that Mass Department of Public Health (DPH) could be involved.

Next Steps

- Complete HHRA
- Complete FS
- Army will release a Proposed Plan describing various cleanup alternatives, and the proposed cleanup approach and rationale
- Public meeting and formal comment period
- Army responds to public comments in Responsiveness Summary
- Prepare Record of Decision (ROD)

Commitment to the Community

- Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) – since 1995
- RAB meetings are advertised in local news media and open to public
- Environmental Open Houses
- Community mailing list for periodic Environmental Newsletters

For More Information

- U.S. Army Natick Soldier Systems Center
- Mr. James Connolly
- Environmental, Safety, and Health Office
- (508) 233-5550 phone
- James.B.Connolly@natick.army.mil

- Information Repository
- Morse Institute Library
- 14 East Central Street
- Natick, MA 01760
- (508) 647-6520 phone
- www.epa.gov/region1/superfund/sites/naticklab

Dr. Vembu asked in the Commitment to Community section, would it be possible for someone on the RAB to be listed as a contact person. He continued that often the community would rather talk to its peers.

Mr. Kaltofen said that he would take on the responsibility and said his email address is kaltofen@wpi.edu.

Mr. Miller commented that he liked the flier and that it contained good information. He asked that the map marking for Pegan Cove be moved into the center of Pegan Cove. He added that maybe it should be discussed how much has been done in cleanup dollars or the amount of work in years in an attempt to quantify this and to demonstrate the commitment. He asked if the budget estimate was thirty million dollars.

Mr. Palaia added that in the data collection section of the flier, they could add numbers such as over two hundred sediment samples have been collected across the NNSC. He commented that the dollar value addition is an Army decision.

Mr. Miller repeated that the dollar value would be a quantifiable way of measuring the commitment. He commented that a reporter would go straight for the quantifiable information first and that maybe we should be ahead of him.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if the other sources of contaminants in the presentation were in general or for PCBs.

Mr. Palaia responded that it was general but it did include PCBs. He added that there are a lot of storm water outfalls that discharge into the lake also that there is run off from railroads and roadways.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if there was a hot spot.

Mr. Palaia responded the Birch Road location by Middle Pond. He added that the flier keeps it generic.

Mr. McHugh added if there are any more questions or comments on the flier after tonight to email them to Mr. Jim Connolly.

Mr. Miller added that the State Park Headquarters (for fishing on the lakes) should be included.

Mr. McHugh commented that they have copies of all the reports and they have been communicating back and forth but he added that they don't want their information listed due to staffing issues.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if they have a fish advisory.

Ms. Williams said that there is a fish advisory website and that it is very easy to navigate around. She suggested that the website be put into the flier.

Mr. McHugh said that they will also talk directly to Cochituate State Park.

Mr. Kaltofen repeated his general comment that when we are done, we should not be in the position of people eating contaminated fish from Lake Cochituate. He concluded that that will be his measure of our success.

Mr. Miller commented that in ten to twenty years from now, he wondered if the contaminants that are left in the water should have been removed.

Dr. Vembu asked if there could be an expansion of the ecological risk so that people would understand what limited potential of risk means. He suggested that it go in the data collection section of the flier.

Ms. Williams commented that the EPA could agree with that statement if it is specific to wading or swimming. She added that we are still working on the fish aspect.

Mr. McHugh suggested breaking the “swimming, wading and ingestion of fish” statement apart.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if anybody knew if yellow perch fish were particularly tight in their feeding range. He referred to page seven of the fall 2007 Fish and Sediment Sampling Program Memorandum. He commented that it appeared that the whole body numbers for total PCBs were skewed high. He added that the bluegill whole body numbers were lower.

Mr. Palaia commented that yellow perch fish were higher in the food chain and tends to be more localized. He added that bluegill fish tend to be localized too verses bass.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if PCB 1668 was on the 209 congener list.

Mr. Palaia answered affirmatively.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if there was a relationship between the specific PCB congeners contributing more for the mass or location.

Mr. Palaia commented that in Appendix B both homolog and total PCB data is listed. He added that the revised report will list the congeners.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if the data would be available on a CD or in excel.

Mr. Palaia said that it would.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if specific congeners were being seen such as 116.

Mr. Palaia responded that he was not sure, but it would be in the revised reports.

Mr. Kaltofen asked what equipment blank actions are.

Mr. Palaia explained that it was an action level and that equipment blanks are run to determine if there is any cross contamination in the filleting process. He added that rinsate blanks are taken from the filleting knives and the cutting boards that were used. It looks for contaminants in the rinse water. He added that if there is contamination in the rinse water, which there was in a couple of situations, then the data gets qualified.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if that is after the equipment gets cleaned.

Mr. Palaia responded yes.

Mr. Kaltofen commented that he was looking at page 7 of the Appendices and if he divides by one thousand he is looking at parts per billion. He asked if the results collected were from the blank itself or from the rinse water. He continued by saying that all 209 congeners were listed and if added up, then the number comes up to a couple of ppm in the equipment blank.

Mr. Palaia commented that he would check into this. He also suggested reading the data validation memorandum as it discusses the meaning for this. He concluded that the revised memo with the CD should be out in a few weeks.

Mr. Kaltofen asked again if anything struck Mr. Palaia about the congener relationships and if it was possible to do a statistical analysis comparing them. He asked if it was hard or expensive.

Ms. Williams asked Mr. Kaltofen to explain what he was asking.

Mr. Kaltofen said that since all this data exists, he was wondering if there was a pattern of high PCB congeners and is it a regional problem that needs a regional solution, a short term, localized problem or more of a global problem.

Mr. Palaia said that it could be done with a finger print analysis.

Mr. McHugh asked if there were any more comments.

Mr. Miller commented that on the memorandum map, the body of water was listed as Pagen Brook Cove instead of Pagen Cove and added that the wording should be placed in the center of the cove.

Mr. McHugh requested additional comments on the flier to be given to the Army by July 4th.

Dr. Vembu asked if the public would understand the names, Operable Unit One and Two.

Ms. Williams commented that the EPA website uses those names.

Mr. McHugh asked to revisit the groups and concerned groups for flier distribution. He mentioned the following: the larger mailing list, the Natick Library, Natick Town Hall, Natick Cochituate State Park, the Natick Outdoor Store, REI, Framingham fisherman, the Conservation Commission of Wayland, Java Joes and other coffee shops such as the Starbucks by Route 135, State Parks, the Advisory Board, and the Conservation Commission. He asked if there were other groups that should be included.

Ms. Williams asked if there was a water skiing club in the area.

Mr. Miller said that water skiers get their information through the state parks. He added that there is at least one bass fishing group that comes and the state park knows that information. It was added that Natick Police Department run the kids fishing derby.

Mr. McCassie stated that Bass Masters have a tournament on the lake that may be sponsored by the police department and the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. McHugh added the Board of Health and the Framingham Health Department should be added.

Others that were mentioned were the Community Action Department, Social Services Group as well as the Natick Services Council, the ELKS, VFW, AM-VETs, the Boys and Girls Club, the Patriots Trial Boy Scout Council, and the Italian Club on Washington Street.

Mr. Miller added that the users of the Pagen Cove Park is in the jurisdiction of the Natick Recreation Department but has no organized activities.

Mr. McHugh said if you think of any others to please let the Army know.

Mr. Kaltofen asked how many fliers were planning on being printed.

Mr. McHugh commented that he wanted to find out how big the mailing list was. He added that they will make as much effort as they can to get the appropriate number of fliers printed and distributed.

Ms. Williams added that this was a different focus for the flier. It discusses what has been done, the history of investigation, where we currently are, and it addressed the proposed plan and the ROD. She added that its purpose is to educate the people of what to expect in the CERCLA process.

Mr. McHugh added that there is a lot of information we can share but we are trying to keep the flier as a tri-fold.

Mr. Miller suggested building a box in the flier for the important information.

Ms. Greendlinger added that this may require some tape editing to gain some space or another possibility is to shrink the map.

Mr. Kaltofen added that it seemed like the green and red colors on the map are suggesting safe verses not safe areas. He added that maybe the colors should be based on concentrations of contaminates.

Mr. McHugh asked if there were any other comments. He thanked everybody for their suggestions. He added that he would like to get the flier out later this summer.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if there were any other questions from the RAB regarding items on the agenda.

IV. Public Comment Period

Mr. Miller said that he would like to give a quick update on the lake. He explained that he missed the April 2008 meeting. He stated that the first year of the Solar Bee® Evaluation did not reveal a lot of information. He commented that the units had many malfunctions. He added that the units had been fixed and currently were working and were mechanically flawless. He stated again that there was little to show on its progress at the end of last season. He is hoping that he will have more to say this year in September or October.

Other issues: The Conservation Commission had a hearing last week regarding Fisk Pond (which is upstream). The concern was that water chestnut weeds were building up in the lake. This year, it was agreed to remove the weeds with a floating harvester for one season with maintenance work to follow. He commented that the project would be starting in a few weeks.

He added that the Conservation Commission also approved a project that has received funding for a new trail. It will be called the Henry Wilson History Trail. It will be located on the east side of Fisk Pond, in a corner of Cochituate State Park. He added that the Mass DCR and the town have partnered to make this a reality. He added that if you Google Henry Wilson History Trail you could get more information.

Dr. Vembu asked if Solar Bee® was the only floating circulator being evaluated.

Mr. Miller commented that the town of Wayland has been experimenting for about a year with SUNGO® floating circulators from Eco-Guide International, Inc. in Quebec. He added that they had no immediate payoff in the first season with the exception that the weeds were growing slower. He added that he believed in April of this year, after a lot of debate, they decided to add a onetime round of herbicide to the lake to see if that helped. The argument was that the dose of chemicals cuts the weeds down in the area thus increasing the flow of the circulator. He wondered if the herbicide addition would impact the evaluation. He concluded that they were committed to completing the experiment.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if the State Park would get a copy of the environmental report.

Mr. McHugh responded affirmatively.

Ms. Williams asked if the harvester actually dredges.

Mr. Miller responded that he did not believe that they were dredging.

Mr. Miller added that a statewide report by the Toxics Action Center has just been released. The subject is aquatic/marine problems and management for lakes. The website is toxicsaction.org and the article is featured on the first page of the website. He added that it could be down loaded for free or you could buy copy for ten dollars. He commented that he thought it looked very good. He added that the article uses Lake Cochituate as their specific example in the Statewide Report. He added that the Toxics Action Center should be added to the RAB distribution list.

He added that Tufts University lost their graduate student (through graduation) who had been evaluating the floating circulators. They also had funding issues. However, they have internally located money to fund the study for another year and they found another graduate student to continue with the project.

Ms. Williams asked who was running the project at Tufts University.

Mr. Miller responded the Professor in charge is John Durant, and the graduate student is Ms. Maris Mann-Stadt.

Mr. Kaltofen asked if there any questions.

There was a motion to adjourn.

The motion to adjourn was approved at 8:15.