

## MEETING MINUTES

29 July 2006

**Project:** Former Trabuco Bombing Range Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study

**Date:** 20 July 2006, 1:00–3:00 PM

**Location:** City Hall, Rancho Santa Margarita, California

**Purpose:** Technical Project Planning Team Meeting 4

**Attendees:**

| Name                | Affiliation                                 | Contact Information                                |
|---------------------|---|--|
| Larry Sievers       | USACE PM                                    | 213.452.3989<br>larry.a.sievers@usace.army.mil     |
| Carleton Fong       | USACE Chemist                               | 916.557.7513<br>carleton.p.fong@usace.army.mil     |
| Joni Jorgensen-Risk | ITSI PM                                     | 925.260.5832<br>jrisk@itsi.com                     |
| Rogerio Leong       | ITSI  | 925.946.3156<br>rleong@itsi.com                    |
| Bill Kelso          | Parsons PM                                  | 303.764.1932<br>william.kelso@parsons.com          |
| Michael Short       | Parsons                                     | 678.969.2451<br>michael.short@parsons.com          |
| Nick Pivaroff       | Orange County Fire Authority                | 949.347.2245<br>nickpivaroff@ocfa.org              |
| Matthew Barr        | RSM-Orange County Sherriff's Dept.          | 949.635.1817<br>mbarr@ocsd.org                     |
| Omo Patrick         | Dept. of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) PM | 714.484.5452<br>opatrick@dtsc.ca.gov               |
| Daniel Cordero      | DTSC  | 714.484.5428<br>dcordero@dtsc.ca.gov               |
| Ron Okuda           | DTSC  | 714.484.5408<br>rokuda@dtsc.ca.gov                 |
| Leticia Hernandez   | DTSC  | 714.484.5488<br>lhernand@dtsc.ca.gov               |
| Tom Wheeler         | City of Rancho Santa Margarita              | 949.635.1800 ext. 507<br>twheeler@cox.net          |
| Paul Catsimanes     | City of Mission Viejo                       | 949.470.3017<br>pcatsimanes@cityofmissionviejo.com |
| Ron Slimm           | County of Orange Harbors, Beaches & Parks   | 714.923.2259<br>ron.slimm@rdmd.ocgov.com           |
| Steve Thornton      | Representative, Congressman Miller          | 714.257.1142<br>steven.thornton@mail.house.gov     |

**Prepared by:** Joni Jorgensen-Risk

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Mr. Larry Sievers opened the meeting by thanking those in attendance for coming and introduced himself as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), LA District Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) Program Manager and Trabuco Bombing Range Project Manager (PM). He said that the project is currently in the right of entry (ROE) phase, and all of the needed ROEs have been submitted to the property owners for their signatures. The ROE allows the USACE access to property, and he admitted they can

appear a bit intimidating, but without fully executed ROEs, the USACE cannot proceed with their investigation. Mr. Sievers indicated that they have been pretty fortunate in that the primary landowner is Orange County. Thomas Wheeler asked if any of the homeowners' associations are included as property owners. Joni Jorgensen-Risk responded that there were a few, and Mr. Wheeler suggested that he could be copied on the ROE submittals so that in the event that the associations had any questions, they could call the City of Rancho Santa Margarita. Mr. Sievers invited the attendees to visit the project Web site ([www.trabuco-bombrange.com](http://www.trabuco-bombrange.com)) for valuable information and to feel free to contact him if they had any questions or concerns related to the project. Mr. Wheeler asked if the Web site was available to the public, and Mr. Sievers responded that it was, and noted that there is also a secure page for the project team to transfer data.

Mr. Sievers proceeded with a definition of the problem at the former bombing range by showing a couple of aerial photographs of the Plano Trabuco and the historical bombing targets (T-35, T-102, T-36, T-108, and T-37) from the 1940s, and a current aerial photograph that included an overlay of the former target locations. One of the targets is now the site of an auto body repair shop, another an office building located between Banderas and Empresa, and another is in an area of the golf course. The problem is that what was once a military bombing range is now a community.

Mr. Sievers provided some information about the USACE, Los Angeles District, whose mission is to serve the public and meet government customer (Air Force, Army, and Navy) needs in Southern California, Southern Nevada, and all of Arizona (the most populated USACE district). USACE provides valuable services such as flood control, regulatory, navigation, recreation, and environmental. They also implement the FUDS program established by Congress in 1986. Prior to 1986, there was no program in place, and very often the Department of Defense (DoD) would "close up shop" and leave behind sites that were not necessarily clean. Congress recognized this as a problem and established the FUDS program to address these former military sites disposed of before 1986. The program carries out response actions on properties that were owned, leased or otherwise possessed by the United States. Properties disposed of after 1986 are included in the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Program.

Of the 10,000 FUDS assigned nationwide to USACE, the Los Angeles (LA) District has over 1,000. USACE investigates these sites under the Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP) and the Hazardous, Toxic, and Radioactive Waste (HTRW) Program by following the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) rigorous Comprehensive Environmental Recovery, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) process.

Once a site is assigned to a program in the LA District, it will go into a project category that could include Partially Responsible Party (PRP) (currently including 24 sites), where clean-up costs are shared by USACE and other responsible parties; Building Demolition/Debris Removal (BD/DR) (currently 16 sites), where faulty construction is considered a hazard and removal is warranted; Containerized HTRW (CONHTRW) (currently 84 sites), primarily involving underground storage tanks (USTs) that supported old military facilities; Chemical Warfare Material (CWM) (currently 4 sites), designating higher-risk sites that have a different set of investigative standards and are broken out from the other sites; HTRW sites (currently 27 sites), which are the standard fuels and solvents type sites; and MMRP sites (currently 348 sites) that include munitions left behind by the military. The cost to complete the 348 MMRP sites in the LA District is

estimated at more than \$3 Billion, which constitutes over 27% of the national FUDS Program.

Mr. Sievers then reviewed the projects active in the LA District, which includes 130 projects in various stages, with a total FY 2006 budget of \$8.9 million (including \$6.3 million in California). The USACE management goal is to get these sites to the clean-up phase as quickly as possible.

Mr. Sievers reviewed the history of the former Trabuco Bombing Range (TBR) during the development stage in the 1980s. The Santa Margarita Company (SMC) began to clear the site of munitions prior to development, working with El Toro Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) in their clearance efforts until 1988. SMC removed nearly 200,000 pounds of munitions items from the site during development. At the southern end of the site (considered the most contaminated), SMC actually dug up the soil to a depth of 2 to 3 feet and screened the soil for munitions. SMC voluntarily elected to do that for the residential and commercial development; there was no protocol at that time for cleaning old munitions sites.

Mr. Sievers completed a review of the various stages incorporated into the CERCLA process and indicated where the former TBR is in that process, adding that they intend to complete the Proposed Plan and Decision Document phase. The project is currently in the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) phase, and the Work Plan was submitted in June for agency review. The Work Plan is intended to provide the roadmap for the project team to collect valid data to aid in the construction of a conceptual site model (CSM). The validated CSM will be compared against remedial alternatives that include: Do Nothing, Institutional Controls, Construction Support, Surface Removal, Subsurface Removal, or any combination of those alternatives.

Mr. Sievers stated that the technical planning process (TPP) started over one year ago with the first TPP meeting in June 2005. Since then, the team has participated in 4 TPP meetings; finalized the Geophysical Prove-Out Work Plan, field work, and reporting; finalized the Public Involvement Plan (PIP); and submitted the Draft RI Work Plan for agency review (comments are due by 24 August). The team has not had to move too far from the original schedule; field activities originally were slated for summer 2006, and currently are on schedule for mid-September 2006.

He then reviewed a figure developed during construction activities that identified three levels of ordnance contamination, including two areas at the southern and northern ends of the project site where no ordnance was located; an area in the center of the site where "minimal" ordnance waste was found; and an area located south of the center site where "average" ordnance waste was found. He reviewed photographs from 1984 when Rancho Santa Margarita was being developed and also some photographs of munition items found at the site. The range was closed in the 1950s—about the time that the Korean Conflict ended.

Mr. Sievers closed his presentation with a couple of recent newspaper articles about old munitions recovered in the Woodland Hills area and in Ventura, where a teacher was recently injured. These items might look harmless, but they can cause serious injury, so please call in the experts. There were no questions for Mr. Sievers.

Ms. Jorgensen-Risk, ITSI, reviewed the completed project milestones, including: Project Web site launched October 2005; a Public Availability Session held in conjunction with

the distribution of the Draft PIP in October 2005; the Geophysical Prove-Out (GPO) completed January 2006; the PIP finalized in January 2006; the TPP Tech Memo finalized in May 2006; and the GPO Report finalized and the Draft RI WP distributed for review in June 2006,. She said that any outstanding comments on the WP could be reviewed/discussed later in the meeting.

Milestones forecast for the near future include responding to reviewer comments on the RI WP and distribution of the final WP on 7 September 2006. Following that, the field personnel, equipment, and subcontractors will be scheduled for a field start date projected for 18 September. Before the field team is mobilized, a review of executed ROEs will be required to confirm that all parcels planned for the investigation have the necessary legal documents in place. Mr. Wheeler asked to be informed if there is anything that he can do to help move those ROEs through. Ms. Jorgensen-Risk said that once they have completed an internal check, she will follow up with Mr. Wheeler.

Omo Patrick asked if a review period had been factored into the schedule for the Final Work Plan. Mr. Sievers suggested that the path forward will be to formally respond to reviewer comments for their approval and then publish the final document. Mr. Patrick felt that there should be an additional 30-day review period on the final document, to which Ms. Jorgensen-Risk responded that such an interval was not built into the existing schedule. Mr. Patrick reminded the team that DTSC has not had sufficient time to complete their California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process and will need those additional 30 days to complete that process. Mr. Sievers asked that DTSC submit their CEQA schedule to him so that he can make sure that the team is on track with their CEQA process and then asked when DTSC had planned on issuing a public notice of the CEQA. Mr. Patrick responded that the plan was to release concurrently with the draft Work Plan and the next opportunity would be the final submittal. Mr. Sievers said that he had spoken to DTSC management and they had indicated that they could complete the CEQA process in 30 days after the release of the draft Work Plan and suggested that they do not need to wait for the final submittal. Mr. Patrick responded that they take the information for the CEQA from the Work Plan, and since the Work Plan was late, they are working on it now and it will go to their legal department and is expected to be completed in draft by 24 August, and looking for a final by 7 September (for concurrent issuance with the Final Work Plan). Mr. Patrick suggested that the public review schedule could possibly be shortened by a week or two if they do not receive many comments from the public. Ms. Jorgensen-Risk suggested that they will monitor that process as they approach those key dates. Mr. Sievers added that they encourage DTSC to complete that process as quickly as possible so that the team can maintain their existing schedule. Ms. Jorgensen-Risk wrapped up her presentation stating that the team expects to complete the field investigation by 8 November.

Bill Kelso provided an update on the upcoming field effort, starting with the geophysical investigation. The main instrument that will be used to locate metallic objects underground will be the EM-61, which is used in conjunction with a global positioning system (GPS) locator. These data will be assimilated onto a map and reviewed by a geophysicist in the field to discriminate out bottle caps, nails, and the like, and to select anomalies whose signatures appear to indicate potential ordnance. He reviewed the project maps showing the areas proposed for investigation, which will actually include about 2% (approximately 10 acres) of the total undeveloped portions of the former bombing range. The geophysical investigation will include meandering paths, grids (considered 100% coverage), and transects. He added that vegetation in some of the areas is so dense that they will have to use a DR mower to trim back the vegetation.

They will meander around the trees as they cut their path in preparation for instrument use. In addition, because some of the canyon walls are very steep, they will use a handheld magnetometer (different instrument from the EM61), and will do the best they can to investigate the canyon areas (given the steep terrain). Mr. Wheeler asked if the investigation would be up on the bluff (near Mission Viejo above and across the creek), to which Mr. Kelso responded "no." Mr. Kelso added that the paths presented in the maps were conceptual, and if site conditions warrant path changes once the team is in the field, then those changes will take place as necessary.

The office trailer will be located in a disturbed area (within the park) located west of the golf course. The field equipment will also be stored in this area within a storage container. Another container will hold munitions debris (inert items removed from the ground). There will also be a magazine that will hold all unexpended munitions removed from the ground. The magazine will be located in an area removed from the field trailer to the north. A demolition will destroy those unexpended items in one event at the end of the project.

Selected targets that look like they could be munitions will be dug up. In the event that the team needs to dig near homes, occupied buildings, or sensitive areas, they will use an explosive containment barricade ("Bud Light") if inside a Minimum Separations Distance specified by the Corps of Engineers.

Mr. Kelso moved on to munitions constituent sampling that will include the collection of 20 samples for Phase I sampling. Pointing to the sampling location map, he showed that they will be making an effort to collect samples in undisturbed areas near the former targets. These Phase I samples will be analyzed for explosives contaminants. An additional 20 samples will be held in reserve in the event that Phase II sample collection is needed to determine the nature and extent of contamination (i.e., if Phase I samples show contamination). Background soil samples will also be collected from pristine areas (removed from the target areas) to determine baseline conditions. Samples will be collected in the area of the demolition site before and after the demolition event.

Once the data are collected and assembled, the RI Report will be developed to document the work completed and present the data collection results. Once the RI Report is finalized, additional documents that will be issued include the Feasibility Study, the Proposed Plan, and the Decision Document.

Paul Catsimanes asked if the oversized maps that Mr. Kelso had been using were on the project Web site. Ms. Jorgensen-Risk responded that they were and could be found under the RI Work Plan. He asked if the team reviewed development data/reports from the Mission Viejo Company when Mission Viejo was being developed. Mr. Sievers replied that there was no information available to review. Ms. Jorgensen-Risk asked Mr. Catsimanes if he would like hard copies of the maps, and Mr. Sievers said he could take those maps with him today.

(Although not directly related to the TBR project, Mr. Short added that the 100-pound bomb targets were traditionally 649 acres in size (3,000-foot radius) and 99% of the items dropped on that target were found within the 3,000-foot radius; 95% have been found in the 2,000-foot range. He added that the munitions used at Trabuco were much smaller and therefore, far more accurate.)

Daniel Cordero asked if the team had walked the area east of the Adobe Hut (not included as an area of investigation) near Toll Road 241, and added that the specific area is within the 2,000-foot radius where 95% of the items are traditionally found. Mr. Short replied that they did not walk that area, but they did attempt to locate data from the road construction; to his knowledge there were no items found. Mr. Sievers added that they are completing a survey in the area between the golf course and the road that could potentially (if items found in that survey) provide for step-out locations. Mr. Cordero asked if the plan was to provide for step-outs if they find something on the edge of a target boundary to go outside that boundary. Mr. Sievers responded that the data collected in this phase would be used to build the CSM, and when they move to the next phase it would be used to provide recommendations to step out or not. Mr. Short added that they will traditionally recommend stepping out in 100 foot grid increments in the event that something like that happened. Mr. Short reminded Mr. Cordero that this is not a removal action. Mr. Patrick added that the DTSC will be asking USACE to expand their investigation in the area east of the Adobe Hut and west of Toll Road 241. Mr. Kelso stated that the reason that area was not included was because it is actually outside of the boundary of the former range.

Michael Short provided a quick review of the TPP process identifying the four phases:

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| Phase 1 | Identify the project (considered 90% of the TPP process)                           |
| Phase 2 | Determine data needs   |
| Phase 3 | Develop data collection options (including meandering paths, grids, and transects) |
| Phase 4 | Finalize a data collection program (basically what the Work Plan has done for us)  |

The goal for this phase of the project is to determine if a hazard still exists and where, and to remove any hazards that are found in the course of the investigation. If we do find munitions, the project will likely go to the next phase; however, if we do not find anything, then Institutional Controls (ICs) may be the best alternative for the site. ICs could include items such as more signage on the trails and public education. The main intention of this phase is to fill some data gaps that exist to make sure that the site is safe.

Mr. Short said that the final phase of the TPP process is dependent of the first phase, and if data needs are not clearly defined in Phase 2, then Phase 4 will be incomplete. He stressed that all TPP members have a voice, and the project team needs to hear from them if they have concerns or comments. The focus of Phase 4 is on the detailed scoping of the sampling and analysis program, which is included in the Work Plan.

Mr. Short then reviewed the **Site Closeout Statement** (collectively assembled at TPP meeting 1):

*To manage the munitions and explosives of concern (MEC)/munitions constituents (MC) risk through a combination of remedial action, administrative controls, and public education, thereby rendering the site as safe as possible to humans and the environment, and conducive to the anticipated future land use.*

He said that he made a couple of changes to the statement that updated the verbiage and also added that future land use is critical to the process, because whatever the land use is, or is anticipated to be, dictates the level of effort required to make the site safe.

The CSM was reviewed and he explained that the purpose of the CSM is to depict the relationships between contaminants at a site and the potential exposure pathways to human health or the environment. Exposure can take place when construction crews encounter buried unexploded ordnance (UXO) while completing some excavation work, or UXO can become exposed from erosion, earthquakes, or any type of soil movement. He reviewed the CSM Accident Event Tree and explained that he considers this an "accident waiting to happen." The slide depicted a piece of ordnance on site that was accessible to the human population (as at Trabuco), and, if the item did not detonate as it was configured to do, all that is needed now is for an energetic force to be applied to do some damage. That energetic force is not necessarily human; it could be an earthquake or an animal, but it is some kind of energetic force that can detonate that sensitive fuse.

Mr. Short concluded his presentation by saying that the TPP meetings and the TPP process are critical to the effective design of the program, and he reiterated that communication is critical to this process. He thanked everyone for their cooperation and communication throughout this process.

Speaking to Leticia Hernandez, Mr. Sievers stated that the media did get a chance to report on the release of the Work Plan. The Work Plan has also been posted to the Web site and is available to the public at the Rancho Santa Margarita Library. He added that they are doing all that they can to make the document accessible to the public to provide them with an opportunity to understand what is going on at the site and allow them to comment on the document. Ms. Hernandez referred to Mr. Patrick's question regarding the CEQA process and the possibility of a public meeting. Mr. Sievers responded that the Trabuco project has had a public meeting (October 2005), and if DTSC needs to conduct an additional public meeting, that would be their responsibility with their release of the CEQA. He added that as the project gets closer to the actual field investigation, the USACE will make sure that the media is contacted in an effort to help educate the public on what will be taking place at the site. Steve Thornton offered access to Congressman Miller's weekly newsletter as well. Mr. Sievers agreed that would be a great resource and considered that the project could use the newsletter now to announce the release of the Draft Work Plan. Mr. Thornton asked Ms. Jorgensen-Risk to just send him an email with the particulars and he will get it posted in the newsletter.

Mr. Sievers said the he just picked up the Encroachment Permit from Orange County, and all we are waiting for now are the signed ROEs; the golf course has signed their ROE. There was continued discussion about the project schedule, a public meeting, and the CEQA process between Mr. Sievers and Mr. Patrick, and Mr. Sievers said the USACE wants to work with DTSC to make this project a success. Mathew Barr asked why they were not investigating the area south of Antonio Parkway. Mr. Kelso responded that the area is not part of the original boundary of the former bombing range. Mr. Sievers added that there are transects in the general area, but not in the area of the existing dog park and skate park. Mr. Patrick and Mr. Cordero added that they will be requesting additional investigation effort in that area, primarily due to the proximity of the Adobe Hut and the level of rounds found there. Mr. Patrick asked Mr. Barr if they had received any calls regarding possible munitions sightings in that area, to which Mr. Barr responded that he was not sure, but there have been some calls in the area of Arroyo

Vista (the center line of the target area). Mr. Wheeler added that the sightings have been there, the Business Park, and City Hall. Mr. Sievers returned to the slide that showed the recent finds and reviewed those finds, and reminded those in attendance that the developer identified the heaviest contamination in the southern section of the site. He confirmed with DTSC that they will be requesting additional transects in the area of the dog and skate park. Mr. Wheeler added that the parcel is either owned by the City or the County, and they are battling that out in court. Mr. Sievers suggested that maybe the best alternative would be to see what is found closer to the target (as proposed in the existing Work Plan) before moving out at this stage; if there are no finds closer to the target, there would not be much justification in moving out from that point. Ms. Jorgensen-Risk asked if ROEs should be submitted on those parcels in time for the RI. Mr. Wheeler said that the city put in the dog park and the skateboard park, and that there were no finds during construction activities. He considered it a good idea to expand the investigation between the park and the water tank.

Mr. Patrick suggested that DTSC will try to send in their comments as they come in, and Mr. Sievers added that there was no reason to save them all for one big submittal.

Mr. Sievers adjourned the meeting at 3:09 P.M.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Ms. Jorgensen-Risk provide copies of submitted ROEs to Tom Wheeler, City of Rancho Santa Margarita
- Ms. Jorgensen-Risk to provide copies of the oversized maps to Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Slimm.
- Ms. Jorgensen-Risk to provide RI WP release announcement text to Steve Thornton for Congressman Miller's newsletter.

#### **HANDOUTS:**

1. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District, TPP4 Package, July 20, 2006. The package included the following items:
2. Technical Planning Process Team Meeting 4 Agenda, 20 July 2006
3. Trabuco Bombing Range Project Schedule dated 7/18/06.
4. Final Meeting Minutes, dated 10 November 2005, for the Technical Planning Process Meeting 3 held 27 October 2005.
5. Former Trabuco Bombing Range, DERP—FUDS No. J09CA0209, Remedial Investigation (RI)/Feasibility Study (FS), Technical Planning Process (TPP), July 20, 2006 PowerPoint Presentation handout.