

F.W. 98-13



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-0300

Oct. 19, 1998

Public Affairs Office

Re: Fort Wingate Depot Activity, Restoration Advisory Board Meeting

Attached for your information are the minutes from the Sept. 9 meeting.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 9, beginning at 7 p.m. at the Best Western Inn & Suites, 3009 W. Highway 66, in Gallup, New Mexico. For overnight reservations at the hotel, you may call 1-800-722-6399 or (505) 722-2221. *Please mention that you are part of the Fort Wingate group.*

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (817) 978-3395.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Anita Horky", is positioned above the typed name.

Anita Horky
Public Affairs Specialist

**Fort Wingate Depot Activity
Restoration Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
Sept. 9, 1998
Gallup, New Mexico**

Attendees:

Ed T. Begay, Navajo Nation Council
Sharlene Begay-Platero, Navajo Nation, Division of Economic Development
Edison Blatchford, Navajo Nation, Property Management Department
Gerald Curley, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area Office
Rose Duwyenie, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area Office-BES
Larry Fisher, Tooele Army Depot
Lisa Fisher, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
Dwayne Ford, Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth
Robert Gregory, Program Management Company
Jeanne Hale
Chuck Hendrickson, Environmental Protection Agency, Region 6
James (Tim) Hensley, New Mexico Environment Department, Surface Water Quality Bureau
Barbara Hoditschek, New Mexico Environment Department, Surface Water Quality Bureau
Julie Jacobs, New Mexico Environment Department, Ground Water Quality Bureau
William Little, TPL, Inc.
Jennifer Park, New Mexico Environment Department, Ground Water Quality Bureau
Tom Placueio
Ann Sasahara, Navajo EPA/Superfund
Allen Sedik, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Albuquerque Area Office
David Sinclair, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office
Todd Stevenson, New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
Lawrence Talomanto

Welcome and Introductions:

Mr. Larry Fisher, Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) military co-chair, began the meeting at 7:10 pm with a welcome and introductions. A date for the next RAB meeting was set for Dec. 9, 1998, at 7:00 pm. The location of the meeting may be changed; all RAB members and the public will be informed of the chosen location.

Format for next (Dec. '98) RAB Meeting:

Mr. Fisher said the Army would like to change the format of the next RAB meeting from the current format (formal presentations followed by questions and answers) to a "job fair" format. The job fair format has staffed stations, and meeting attendees walk among the stations and learn one-on-one about a variety of topics related to the environmental restoration of Fort Wingate Depot Activity (FWDA). In this manner, attendees have more access to subject experts for those topics of greatest interest to them.

FWDA RAB Meeting - Page 2

Comments regarding the proposed format were as follows:

- Similar format for Department of Energy (DOE) projects has worked well.
- Additional DOE experience was positive. The meeting was structured with an initial group introduction, followed by attendee interaction at the various stations, followed by a group summary and conclusion at the end. All questions were recorded, and cards were provided for written responses.
- Feedback forms can be provided to comment and/or suggest improvements.
- New Mexico Environment Department (NMED)/Ground Water Quality Bureau (GWQB) has a conceptualized geologic cross-section that shows how various rocks, sediments, soils and sources of contamination can interact and would be willing to set this up for the group.
- NMED/Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) has a similar display which shows the interaction of watercourses and watershed areas and also would be willing to set this up.
- A concern was noted regarding how notes/minutes could be recorded at each station and provided to the public. The Army committed to find a way to implement appropriate record keeping.

Administrative Functions:

Mr. Dwayne Ford, Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, mentioned some administrative matters. He said the FWDA Administrative Record was in the process of being established at the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) offices at the Federal Building in Gallup (301 W. Hill Ave). The record is a "living" record and will expand with additional documents as they are produced. Comments and suggestions are encouraged. Mr. Gerald Curley, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Navajo Area Office, is the official point of contact for the record; however, the record is not yet in place.

Remedial Action Updates - Building 503:

Mr. Ford provided a summary of the history and demilitarization function of Building 503.

Materials sampling of the building had indicated that it was contaminated with explosives compounds. The most cost-effective means of remedy was demolition of the building and flash flaming of the building materials to eliminate the explosives contamination. The contractor mobilized to the site on June 15, 1998. As of today, the building is gone, and general policing of the area is being conducted in advance of final demobilization from the demolition site.

All asbestos and lead-based paint materials were removed from the process equipment, utility lines and building surfaces. The building materials were flash flamed in metal roll-off containers located adjacent to the building site on or about Aug. 18, 1998. A public notice was posted in Gallup and the surrounding communities. Confirmatory samples were taken of the materials under the building; no contaminants were detected. All residual materials were disposed of at one of the following facilities, as appropriate: construction landfill, metals recycling site, approved asbestos and lead-based paint landfill, and industrial waste water treatment facility.

Bison Herd:

Ms. Lisa Fisher of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF) provided a history of the bison (not buffalo) herd currently inhabiting FWDA and distributed two handouts (attached).

The herd was established in 1966. Because of the hunting prohibition on FWDA, the herd has prospered to a current population of 75. (The current capacity of the land is 70-80 animals.) NMDGF originally intended to manage the herd population by allowing hunting. Political pressures against the proposed hunting, however, ultimately resulted in a court injunction prohibiting the hunts. In 1993, the herd was moved to the El Malpais area. However, many animals roamed out of the designated area and proved to be a nuisance to surrounding communities. Further research was unable to identify a suitable location in New Mexico for the herd. NMDGF met with the Navajo and Zuni and determined the bison were incompatible with the planned future land uses of FWDA. As a result, removal of the herd from FWDA was determined to be necessary.

Because removal of the herd is a federal action, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is required. NMDGF is leading the effort to conduct the EA, and a draft is scheduled for completion on Sept. 15, 1998. The EA will evaluate three options: 1) No Action 2) Live removal of the herd by tranquilizing the bulls and herding of the rest 3) Live removal of all the herd using net gun methods.

The schedule for completion of the EA process was presented as follows:

Draft EA	15 Sep 98
Comment Period Over	15 Oct 98
Request for Bids for Purchase of Herd	15 Oct 98
Response to EA Review Comments	1 Nov 98
Submit Final EA	6 Nov 98
Close Bidding Period	1 Dec 98

The Draft EA will be made available to all RAB members for review. The bison removal project is scheduled for completion in March 1999. The move has been specifically scheduled for this time because the herd is easier to move in cold weather, mortality from heat stress will be minimized, all calves will be stronger than in the fall, and unborn calves will in a relatively stable portion of their gestation period.

Mr. Todd Stevenson of NMDGF stated that a provision in the state regulations supports a state action with federal (in this case Department of the Army) review. This eliminates the need for a formal Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) process.

NMDGF prefers that the herd be sold. In this way, the department would be able to recover many of the costs incurred in maintaining the herd over the years. Expected bidders include several private firms interested in the particular genetics of the FWDA herd because the animals are, on average, one-third larger than typical bison. In the event no suitable purchase bid is received, NMDGF may consider donation of the herd to other interested organizations. The herd has been tested to be free of brucellosis.

Preliminary Results of Summer '98 Field Investigation:

Mr. Bob Gregory, Program Management Company, provided a summary of the 1998 Field Program. The summary consisted of a review of the 1997 field investigation program, objectives of the 1998 field investigation program, and the findings to date of the 1998 field program.

Ground Water Contamination at TNT Leaching Beds: The 1997 program was designed to define the vertical and horizontal extent of ground water contamination by explosives, nitrates and metals. A total of 23 soil borings were completed, and 52 soils samples and 47 ground water grab samples were collected. The 1997 field program delineated the extent of the explosives contamination in ground water (both for the first and second zones), and delineated the extent of nitrate contamination in all directions except to the north. It was noted that all ground water samples were grab samples from the soil borings, and that samples from fixed monitoring wells will be required to confirm the zones of contamination.

The objectives of the 1998 program were to define the northern extent of nitrate contamination in the ground water, install a new background monitoring well and measure the hydrogeologic properties of the moisture-bearing geologic units. The field results to date have successfully delineated the northern extent of the nitrate contamination. Nitrate concentrations greater than the state standard do not extend farther north than the administration area; therefore discharge of nitrates into the sediments of the Puerco River is unlikely. In addition, the extent of explosives contamination as defined by the 1997 field program was confirmed by the 1998 program. The remaining efforts consist of the installation and sampling of fixed monitoring wells to confirm the extent of the contamination indicated by grab sampling and the conduct of single well tests to measure the hydraulic conductivity of the moisture-bearing sediments.

Ground Water Contamination at Open Burning/Open Detonation (OB/OD) Area: The 1997 program was designed to define the vertical and horizontal extent of ground water contamination by explosives, nitrates and metals. Fourteen soil borings were completed, 14 soil samples and nine ground water samples were collected; geophysical surveys to determine geologic structures were performed, geophysical downhole logging was conducted; and surface geologic mapping and fracture trace analysis were completed. These efforts helped to refine a geologic conceptual model for the OB/OD Area and identified optimal monitoring well locations for the 1998 field program.

The objectives of the 1998 field program were to collect rock core samples to further refine the conceptual geologic model and to install additional monitoring wells to map the extent of ground water contamination by explosives, nitrates and metals in two separate sandstone units in the subsurface. The results of the 1998 field program to date include the delineation of the northern extent of explosives contamination in the Sonsela Sandstone Member, an aquifer of regional extent and importance. In addition, the northern extent of explosives contamination in a sandstone lens within the Painted Desert Member was being tracked to the north, and the extent of explosives contamination in the Mancos Shale and Dakota Sandstone were being tracked in the Closed OB/OD Area to the west of the Hogback.

The 1998 field program in the TNT Leaching Bed Area confirmed the extent of explosives contamination and identified the area within which nitrate concentrations are greater than the drinking water standard. For the OB/OD Area, the 1998 field program has confirmed the conceptual geologic model for the shallow ground water. However, the complex geology of the Hogback area will require additional assessment with regard to interconnection of shallow and deeper water-bearing zones.

Mr. Ford explained that many of the environmental characterization monitoring wells currently being installed may become part of an environmental compliance monitoring network that will be developed in response to specific requirements to be detailed in the Post Closure Care Permit (PCCP) for FWDA. This permit will define the duration of required monitoring, the chemicals of concern to be monitored and the frequency of monitoring. The Army is projecting that an application for the PCCP will be prepared next year for submittal to the state. The permit application will be subject to an extensive review process with a formal public comment period. Although a public hearing is not mandatory, all parties agreed it may be advisable for this project. A possibility was discussed that a scheduled RAB meeting may be used as the forum for this public hearing. The Army stated that a meeting can be structured to accommodate the desire for public involvement.

BRAC at Other Army Installations:

In response to a request from RAB members at the June 3, 1998, RAB meeting, the Army included an agenda item for the current meeting regarding the conduct of base realignment and closure (BRAC) projects and the ultimate end uses of other Army properties which have undergone the BRAC process. However, Dr. Chuck Lechner of the U.S. Army Environmental Center, who was to present a summary of case histories on this topic, was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Ford presented three general policies of the Department of the Army regarding BRAC as follows:

- A risk assessment must be conducted to determine the need for and specific goal(s) of any remedy.
- The Army cannot expend public funds to remedy a site to standards beyond those required for the realistic future intended use.
- With respect to potential land reuse, the Army is trying to match the former general category of land use with the future use. In other words, if an area was previously used for light industry and/or commercial purposes, a realistic future use would be light industrial/commercial, not a wildlife sanctuary or day care center.

Mr. Ford stated that Dr. Lechner has been rescheduled for the next RAB meeting.

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Calendar of Events:

Mr. Ford indicated that the following events have been scheduled for the FWDA project:

4-5 Nov 1998 In Progress Review Meeting for Ballistic Missile
Defense Organization (BMDO) operations.

9 Dec 1998 Next Quarterly RAB Meeting

Ms. Sharlene Begay-Platero, Navajo Nation, Division of Economic Development, indicated that the tribes will meet Sept. 11, 1998, regarding the following FWDA-specific topics:

- Presentation and review of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) report regarding the Southern Properties
- Report from Ms. Rose Duwyenie, RAB community co-chair, regarding the current RAB meeting
- Status report on TPL, Inc., contracts
- Development of a resolution with respect to BMDO boundary issues.

Miscellaneous:

The following comments, questions, or suggestions were discussed at various times during the current RAB meeting:

- RAB members need the preliminary data used to support technical proposals/decisions in advance of RAB meetings in order to be able to perform their designated advisory function. It was agreed that the Army needs to find a way to make this happen.
- The current status of archeological work at FWDA is limited to oversight/support during intrusive sampling efforts in areas of FWDA previously noted as containing artifacts. In addition, the EA for the bison removal action is focusing on archeological issues, and an Army Corps of Engineers (Albuquerque District) archeologist will be involved in the trapping effort.
- The Army restated its open request for additional RAB topics that can be included in future RAB meetings.
- In the event that off-site investigation becomes necessary on land controlled by the tribes, the Army was directed to be sensitive to the two types of land holding mechanisms: Trust lands or Allotment lands. In the case of Trust lands, any activity would require compliance with all provisions of the National Environmental Protection Act, including review periods of up to 60 days before approval of any off-site activities. Activities on Allotment lands would not require formal NEPA compliance.

Closing Comments:

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 pm.

Request for Proposals for the Purchase of Bison

On or about October 15, 1998 the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish will begin taking proposals for the purchase of bison from Fort Wingate Army Depot.

Background

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) maintains the state's only wild bison population at Fort Wingate Army Depot near Gallup, New Mexico. In 1990 the Depot was identified for closure under the federal Military Base Closure and Realignment Act and was subsequently closed in 1993. As of June 1998, the Depot property is expected to transfer to the Navajo Nation and Zuni Tribe by the middle or late 1999. The Navajo Nation and Zuni Tribe have expressed a desire to develop the area for industrial and residential purposes. Under these circumstances, it will not be possible to maintain the bison herd on Fort Wingate.

On August 20, 1998 the New Mexico State Game Commission gave the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish permission to sell the bison from Fort Wingate. The bison are expected to be captured and available for transfer to the new owners in January 1999.

Current Bison Herd Status

As of April 18, 1998 there were 63 bison counted on the Depot. There were 24 mature bulls, 25 mature cows, 4 calves and 10 unclassified yearlings. During the spring of 1998 approximately 12-15 calves were born. The current population totals approximately 75 animals.

Procedures

To meet New Mexico Department of Finance Administration rules and regulations it is necessary for prospective buyers to make a formal offer to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. On or about October 15, 1998 the Department will issue a Request for Proposals. This will open the period for formal proposals to be made.

If you are interested on receiving a copy of the Request for Proposals, or would like more information of the purchase process, please contact:

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Northwest Area Office
3841 Midway Pl. NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109

Environmental Assessment for the Removal of Bison from Fort Wingate

On September 15, 1998 the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is planning to release a draft environmental assessment for the removal of bison from Fort Wingate. Following is a description of the purpose of the EA and a summary of the proposed alternatives.

Purpose and need for action

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) maintains the state's only wild bison population at Fort Wingate Army Depot near Gallup, New Mexico. In 1990 the Depot was identified for closure under the federal Military Base Closure and Realignment Act and was subsequently closed in 1993. As of June 1998, the Depot property is expected to transfer to the Navajo Nation and Zuni Tribe by the middle or late 1999. The Navajo Nation and Zuni Tribe have expressed a desire to develop the area for industrial and residential purposes. Under these circumstances, it will not be possible to maintain the bison herd on Fort Wingate.

The Department is proposing to remove live bison from Fort Wingate before the property is transferred to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The action is expected to take place in January 1999, but will need to be coordinated with Depot activities. To facilitate the proposed transfer timelines all actions involving the bison herd on Fort Wingate must be completed by March 1999.

Current Bison Herd Status

As of April 18, 1998 there were 63 bison counted on the Depot. There were 24 mature bulls, 25 mature cows, 4 calves and 10 unclassified yearlings. During the spring of 1998 approximately 12-15 calves were born. The current population totals approximately 75 animals.

Proposed Alternatives

Alternative 1. No Action

Alternative 2. Remove All Animals Alive – Trap cows, calves and young bulls, tranquilize mature males.

Alternative 3. Remove All Animals Alive – Trap cows, calves and young bulls, net gun mature males.

Public Input

To receive a copy of the environmental assessment or to provide input, please contact:

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
Northwest Area Office
3841 Midway Pl. NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109