



# BRAC Talk

## Environmental Base Realignment and Closure News

Spring 1997

### Partnering Success at Naval Air Warfare Center Warminster

By Lonnie Monaco

Raised eyebrows and skeptical looks were the order of the day from managers, fellow workers and concerned spouses. They were watching the recent departure of the Naval Air Warfare Center (NAWC) Warminster BRAC Cleanup Team (BCT) to a Partnering/Strategic Planning Retreat. The retreat was also attended by support personnel from Naval Facilities Engineering Command's Northern Division (NORTHDIV) and EPA Region III. The retreat was held in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains.

The NAWC BCT has been together since 1993, and some doubted that a partnering session would be a good use of time. However, in the spirit of teamwork, the BCT encouraged support people,

including many of NORTHDIV's environmental supervisors, to participate in the facilitated two-day retreat.

The group of 40 met in small groups and as a whole team. Focusing on improving the BCT implementation of cleanup at NAWC, several process improvements were identified. Most related to improving communications between the BCT and support personnel. One result of the retreat is a change in the normal meeting location for the weekly BCT meetings. Prior to the retreat, the BCT met at NAWC Warminster. Now, the BCT meets at NORTHDIV headquarters in Lester, Pennsylvania, which allows the BCT to communicate directly with all support personnel (con-

tract specialists, remedial project managers, technical specialists, and counsel).

The session showed it is never too late to partner, and the participants agreed it was a very worthwhile effort.

Also at NAWC, the BCT has recently overseen the start up of a state of the art pump and treat system and a soils removal action near the now closed runway. Both actions have received positive community feedback. This is an improvement in relations from several years ago when the public suspected that the Navy's move of the NAWC to Patuxent River, Maryland, would leave them with the responsibility for the environmental restoration. The BCT has worked hard to insure that the community participates in decision-making for the investigative and restoration work underway and for future planning.

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## In a Scarred Land, the Healing has Begun

*Midway Atoll has been used and abused, but a \$43 million cleanup promises new life*

By Joan Conrow, Honolulu Star-Bulletin

*Editor's Note: Naval Air Facility Midway was designated for closure by the Base Realignment and Closure Commission in 1993.*

Sand Island, Midway Atoll - Although it's one of the most remote places on Earth, Midway Atoll has not escaped the ravages of human junk and pollution.

Albatross chicks, their bellies filled with floating plastic sea trash that their parents mistake for squid, die of dehydration because they cannot eat enough food to produce the fluids they need.

Jet fuel leaked from underground storage tanks taints much of the atoll's groundwater. Old buildings contain asbestos and lead paint, while utility transformers harbor toxic PCBs. And in some places, the banned pesticide DDT and other chemicals have leached into the soil.

Still, some 2 million sea birds continue to nest and rear their young on Midway, prompting federal officials to believe the naval air field warrants a \$43 million cleanup to find new life as a wildlife refuge.

"The conditions of these islands are a measure of health of the whole north Pacific area," said Kenneth Niethammer, who manages the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Midway refuge. "The Earth has the ability to heal itself if we stop doing to it what we are."

Midway Atoll's landscape of shifting sand dunes and beach-hugging native plants has changed dramatically since 1903, when workers with the Commercial Pacific Cable Co. brought in tons of topsoil, ironwoods and other exotic vegetation. Pan American World Airways later built facilities for its Flying Clipper seaplane operation, along with a 45-room hotel and swimming pool.

Alterations accelerated when the U.S. Navy took over, dredging a channel through the reef in 1938 and constructing an air station and submarine bases on Sand and Eastern Islands. Intense World War II battles and years of military use took a heavy toll, and federal contractors faced a daunting task as they prepared to clean up the atoll prior to the Navy's June 30, 1997 departure.

"We didn't know what to expect when we started this (cleanup) process," said John Naughton, a biologist with the national Marine Fisheries Service. "We didn't know what was dumped. We spent a year just identifying the potential contaminants."

Refuge manager Niethammer said that although the scope of the cleanup was largely dictated by human health concerns and environmental laws, the Navy has "gone further and responded to wildlife concerns."

Naughton agreed.

"I've been extremely pleased with their actions, and we're actually up there on the scene, keeping an eye on things, so we know it's not just lip service."

Most of the work has been done by OHM Corp., a Navy contractor that began cleaning up Midway in 1994, said Kevin Miller, who coordinates the firm's activities there. Its biggest job has been removing jet fuel from the atoll's groundwater, which lies 5 to 8 feet below the surface. Although Island residents use catchment systems, the brackish groundwater is being

cleaned to protect wildlife and the ocean from pollution.

OHM developed a Fluid Injection Vapor Extraction system for such projects, Miller said, and for the past nine months has been running the world's largest such system on Midway. Fluids are extracted from 300 wells drilled around the island and run through tanks, where the vapor is burned off and the fuel is collected. The water is then purified and returned to the ground through one of 200 injection wells.

More than 33,000 gallons of jet fuel - and a much higher quantity of vapor - already have been recovered and used to power the two 16-cylinder generators that run the system around the clock.

"The beauty of this is that it's a totally closed system," Miller said. "No leftover fuel will have to be shipped off."

The firm brought in the first mobile laboratory to be certified by the Navy so it can monitor water samples and quickly test for the presence of pesticides and other chemicals, Miller said.

OHM crews also have removed more than 100 underground jet fuel tanks, including two with a capacity of 2 million gallons each, and they've excavated some 7,000 yards of soil contaminated with petroleum, Miller said.

About half of that soil may be reclassified as clean under newly revised Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards, Miller said, while the rest may be used in road repairs, shipped off-island or run through a pug mill, where it is mixed with cement to trap the

contaminants and then added to the landfill.

That process, known as stabilization, already has been used on Midway to dispose of soil containing DDT, asbestos and lead-based paint residues. Although the process is approved by the EPA, Naughton said he and other scientists worry that the materials may one day break down and leach into the water.

"We need some kind of long-term monitoring," Naughton said, "but we're still working on that. Time will tell, but I feel very encouraged."



OHM has conducted the marine salvage efforts as well, removing more than 68 vehicles and 300 batteries from the lagoon. Navy divers detonated 23 gas cylinders in the harbor, while other contractors have sampled water quality and sediment and analyzed algae and reef fish tissue in search of toxic wastes that may have entered the food chain.

So far, Naughton and Niethammer said, tests show that initial concerns about extensive marine pollution have not been borne out.

"It's looking pretty good," Naughton said. "I think we'll be in good shape by the time of the pullout. I just hope we don't run into anything from out in left field."

Lt. Bill Shoemaker, officer in charge of Midway, said the Navy also will repair roads and seawalls, remove

stockpiled debris and materials, cap landfills and complete other housekeeping tasks before it leaves.

Sea birds and monk seals already are responding. As areas are cleared of brush and buildings, albatrosses move in and make nests. Monk seals lounge on beaches closed to humans.

"Once man has made his imprint here, it's gonna be changed," said Bob Diele, an outdoor recreation planner with the Midway refuge. "We're just trying to tip the balance more in favor of the wildlife."

Antennas and overhead wires have been removed, saving birds from having their wings sheared and plunging to their deaths. Outdoor lights that disorient night flying bonin petrels (ocean birds) will be lowered or shielded.

Black plastic has been installed around areas still being cleaned to protect birds from contaminants in the soil, and old landfills have been covered with 4 feet of sand to make them attractive nesting sites for burrowing birds.

The Fish and Wildlife Service plans to remove more of the ironwood trees that snare albatrosses in flight and still faces the awesome task of eradicating acres of invasive weeds. It also will continue to fight the rats that prey on ground-nesting birds. The rodents have been eliminated from Eastern and Spit Islands, but the battle continues on Midway.

Fish and Wildlife spokeswoman Barbara Maxfield said the agency anticipates that improving wildlife

*(continued on page 4)*

## Link Up to Information on Federal Facility Cleanups

By Deborah Tremblay

Government reinvention is at work in U.S. EPA's Federal Facilities Restoration and Reuse Office (FFRRO). Contaminated federal facilities are now being cleaned up in a more effective and timely manner that saves taxpayer dollars. Information on these activities and other issues related to federal facilities is available at your fingertips through FFRRO's home page, located on the Internet at:

*<http://www.epa.gov/swerffrr>*

FFRRO is a leader in the federal government in building partnerships which facilitate the cleanup and reuse of federal facilities. One way in which FFRRO builds partnerships is by promoting the involvement of all stakeholders (those people who are affected by or concerned about decision-making at federal facilities). FFRRO staff designed the home page to help facilitate such involvement by offering users access to the most current information on program activities.



The FFRRO home page includes information on:

- Upcoming meetings and events
- Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) activities
- Partnerships with DOD, DOE, and other stakeholders
- Remedy selection and cleanup technologies
- Headquarters and regional contacts
- Success stories

The home page also provides users with an interactive directory of personnel and a calendar of conferences, workshops, and meetings. Users are invited to E-mail EPA personnel directly with questions, to register for events posted on the home page, and to submit information to be added to the calendar of events. FFRRO also encourages users to provide feedback on the home page on-line.

If you would like to learn more about FFRRO, but do not have access to the Internet, you can contact Michelle Morris at (202) 260-9924.

*Deborah Tremblay is an environmental engineer at EPA. Her phone number is (202) 260-8302.*

### **Scarred Land**

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habitat and revegetating areas with native plants will be a long process.

"We don't have all the answers, either," she said.

Agency partner Midway Phoenix Corp., which handles tourism and infrastructure, has its own challenges. The firm must maintain new fuel storage tanks, construct a trash incinerator and build a septic

system to replace the current practice of releasing untreated sewage into the lagoon.

Those projects are expensive and difficult, given Midway's remote location, said Mike Gautreaux, the firm's island manager.

"We call it the Midway way. Everything is hard."

The Fish and Wildlife Service doesn't intend to remove all traces of the atoll's human history. Historic buildings and military

memorials and artifacts will remain alongside buildings that serve visitors.

"Midway will never be taken back to what it was before man got here," Niethammer said. "But this is an example of humans cleaning up and giving back to the wildlife. And with the world's population expanding, there are not many places like that."

*This article was reprinted by permission from the Honolulu Star-Bulletin, 07 January 1997.*



## Navy Issues Record of Decision for Reuse of Naval Civil Engineering Laboratory, Port Hueneme, California

*News Release - Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)*

*January 24, 1997*

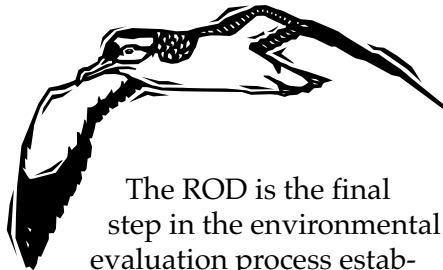
The Department of the Navy presented the Record of Decision (ROD) concerning the disposal and reuse of Naval Civil Engineering Laboratory (NCEL), Port Hueneme, California, to the city of Port Hueneme in a ceremony at the Navy's Construction Battalion Center in Port Hueneme on January 24, 1997. On behalf of Secretary of the Navy John H. Dalton, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy, William J. Cassidy Jr., presented the environmental document to Mayor Anthony Volante of the city of Port Hueneme and Jess Ramirez, president of the Oxnard Harbor District Board of Commissioners.

The ROD is the Navy's decision to dispose of the NCEL property in a manner that is consistent with the NCEL community reuse plan prepared by the Port Hueneme Surplus Property Authority (SPA), which was established by the city of Port Hueneme to plan future uses of the closed facility. The Department of the Navy has concluded that SPA's proposed redevelopment of the Navy property responds to local economic

conditions, promotes rapid economic recovery from the impact of closure, and is consistent with President Clinton's five-part plan for revitalizing base closure communities.

*Editor's Note:*

*Reuse plans include expansion of the harbor, aqua-culture facilities by the lighthouse, and a landscaped public access beach path.*



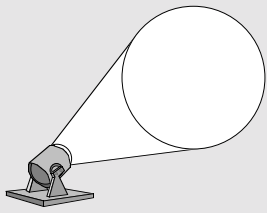
The ROD is the final step in the environmental evaluation process established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. NEPA requires federal agencies such as the Department of the Navy to consider the impact that major federal actions, such as disposal and reuse of the NCEL Port Hueneme property, may have on the environment.

The ROD is an environmental document. It does not convey the NCEL property. Conveyance, or

transfer of title, of the NCEL property is a separate matter that will be undertaken later in discussions among the Department of the Navy, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration, the city of Port Hueneme, and the Oxnard Harbor District.

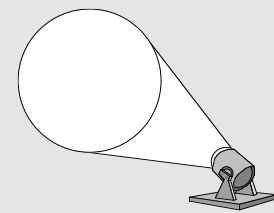
The NCEL Port Hueneme Record of Decision represents the highly successful and well coordinated efforts of the city of Port Hueneme, the Oxnard Harbor District, the Port Hueneme Surplus Property Authority, and the Department of the Navy. It is a significant step in the base closure process because it allows the local community to begin long term redevelopment and highlights the Navy's commitment to economic property at base closure sites.

*Internet Availability: This document is available on DefenseLINK, a World Wide Web Server on the Internet at <http://www.dtic.mil/defenselink/>*



# HIGHLIGHTS

SPRING 1997



## What's Happening?

A lot of things are happening in the BRAC world and particularly with respect to our Environmental Program. Our BRAC Cleanup Teams (BCTs) and support staff are working hard to implement an aggressive environmental program that is truly on the fast track. This is a very big year for our BRAC Environmental Program and a significant number of projects are underway to cleanup property in support of transfer for reuse by the local communities. Progress is being made in making property environmentally suitable for transfer and we are in fact seeing this property being transferred.

In November 1996, we received the initial BRAC Cleanup Plans for our BRAC-95 bases, which were built upon our previous lessons learned and successes associated with prior BRAC rounds. All the teams did an excellent job of putting together these roadmaps for their program. Our other Department of the Navy BRAC Cleanup Teams (BRAC-88, 91, and 93) are in the process of submitting their updated BRAC Cleanup Plans, Business Plans and Abstracts. The quality of these documents continue to improve upon what we think is an already excellent product.

It's also that time of year again when we are planning for this summer's East and West Coast BRAC Cleanup Team Seminars. This year, we are planning to combine the seminars with a DOD effort to conduct joint Service BRAC Cleanup Team Workshops around the country in the May-July timeframe. Dates, locations and agenda are still being developed and your input is important to development of an agenda that meets the needs of the BCTs at this critical point in our program. It is requested that any input or ideas for the workshops/seminars be provided at the earliest possible time so that they can be incorporated during planning of the workshops (provide input to Mr. Joe Graf, NAVFACHQ, 703 325-6431, DSN 221-6431).

One of the most significant developments related to the BRAC Environmental Program is the recent passage of legislation that provides an opportunity for the Department of Defense to assist communities in expediting reuse of closing military installations. With approval of the FY97 National Defense Authorization Act and the provisions of Section 334, that modifies CERCLA 120(h)(3) to allow the transfer of contaminated federal property before completion of required response actions, the Department

of the Navy is looking at areas where we can utilize the new authority to create a win-win situation for the federal government and the local community in expediting property transfer for reuse and economic revitalization, while continuing to be protective of human health and the environment. This presents a great opportunity and also a great challenge to implement this authority in a timely and effective manner that meets the needs of the various stakeholders involved in the BRAC process. While formal guidance on implementing the new provisions has yet to be finalized, each of the DOD Components has been encouraged to implement the new authority in consultation with the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environmental Security). Subsequently, we have encouraged the BCTs to explore the use of this new authority where it makes sense to do so. We will continue to work with them and support the BCTs in this endeavor to ensure that we utilize the new authority effectively and address the issues regarding our long term liability and in meeting our environmental responsibilities at Department of the Navy BRAC Installations.



## Basic and Advanced Health and Environmental Risk Communication Training

The Navy Environmental Health Center, US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, and US Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine are pleased to offer the *Health and Environmental Risk Communication Workshop* and the *Advanced Health and Environmental Risk Communication Workshop*.

Both 3 day workshops are led by Vincent Covello, Ph. D., who has a world-wide reputation for teaching environmental risk communication. Dr. Covello has authored or edited over 25 books and over 100 published articles on risk assessment, management, and communication and chaired over 30 conferences on risk assessment and communication.

The *Health and Environmental Risk Communication Workshop* helps participants:

- Learn how to have open discussion on environmental restoration issues
- Establish confidence in communicating key messages
- Develop effective media and public meeting techniques
- Improve verbal and non-verbal communication skills
- Revitalize open dialogue with community stakeholders

The *Advanced Health and Environmental Risk Communication Workshop* is designed to build upon the skills developed in the introductory 3-day workshop when dealing with low trust, high concern audiences encountered during public communication of health and environmental issues.

FY97 Schedule for Introductory Workshop:  
 7-9 April Silverdale, WA  
 10-11 April Seattle, WA  
 13-15 May Honolulu, HI  
 20-22 May Guam  
 28-30 May Dallas, TX  
 23-25 June New Orleans, LA  
 9-11 July Kansas City, MO  
 9-11 Sept San Francisco, CA

FY97 Schedule for Advanced Workshop:  
 6-8 May Seattle, WA  
 26-28 Aug San Antonio, TX

For course information, please call Heidi Maupin, Navy Environmental Health Center at (757) 363-5562, Fax (757) 444-7261. For student reservations, please call Carl Davis at (757) 363-5542, Fax (757) 444-7261. Deadline for quota requests is 30 days prior to start of the workshop.

## Having Trouble with Regulations? Help is Available\*

You can receive a free, 55-page handbook explaining, in lay terms, the many laws and regulations which govern the redevelopment of closing military bases and other federal facilities. Each chapter of the handbook was previously published in national journals.

To receive a free copy, call or fax Ray Swenson, head of the base reuse practice at Ballard, Spahr, Andrews and Ingersoll, at (801) 531-3024, fax (801) 531-3001.

\* Taken from *International City/County Management Association's Base Reuse Consortium Bulletin of December 1996*.

## Reminder - Article Submission Deadlines

### Issue

### Articles Due

Summer 1997 (30 June 1997)

29 April 1997

Fall/Winter 1997 (01 October 1997)

21 July 1997

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## SuperBRAC

The San Diego Superbowl '98 Task Force will move into building #202 at the Naval Training Center San Diego. The Navy gave the city a temporary license for the property until a one-year lease is ready. Initially, about 10 employees will occupy the top floor of the building. Employment will expand gradually as the event draws nearer. By January 25, 1998, a team of 2,000 volunteers will have been mobilized to assist the Task Force. Building #202 is located in the training center's proposed historic district.

*Reprinted from California Base Closure News, February 1997, a bi-monthly publication of the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, State of California*



## BRAC Talk Available on the World Wide Web

BRAC Talk issues are posted on the Internet at

[www.navy.mil/homepage/navfac\\_es](http://www.navy.mil/homepage/navfac_es)

From the homepage, click "Newsletter" on the "Base Realignment and Closure" line under the "Programs" section.



# NFESC

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