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## McClellan Air Force Base

### Environmental Update Community Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 27, 2000 — 6:30 p.m.

Fred C. Joyce School — 6050 Watt Avenue, North Highlands

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#### Meeting Attendees:

Patricia Axelrod, Desert Storm Think Tank  
G. Blauth, Community Member  
Merianne Briggs, McClellan AFB  
Doug Christensen, Community Member  
David Cooper, U.S. EPA  
Judy Doyle, Community Member  
Aaron Ferguson, Rep. Ose's Office  
Jane Field, Community Member  
Lt. Firman, McClellan AFB  
Paul Gaspard, ACORN  
Linda Geissinger, AFBCA  
Sheila Guerra, Community Member  
Sarah Hansen, SHRA  
Ellen Hemmert, Community Member  
Don Jones, HGC  
Gary Luciani, Desert Storm Think Tank  
Bill Lubinsky, Community Member  
Bill Maynard, ACORN  
Donna McBane, Community Member

Phil Mook, McClellan AFB  
Kenneth Peachey, Community Member  
Linda Piercy, Community Member  
Cortez Quinn, Supervisor Dickinson's Office  
Sylvia Ruiz, Senator Ortiz' Office  
Gary Sawyer, Community Member  
Nathan Schumacher, DTSC  
Cheryl Stokely, Community Member  
Burl Taylor, Community Member  
Jillian Tullis, Rep. Matsui's Office  
Lt Col Walmsley, McClellan AFB  
Phillip Winters, NCTAT  
Charles Yarbrough, Community Member  
Roxanne Yonn, URS Corp  
Dawn Young, McClellan AFB  
Steve Young, SHRA  
Imogene Zander, Community Member  
John Zwinski, Community Member

#### Welcome and Introduction

Roxanne Yonn opened the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m. She introduced Aaron Ferguson of Congressman Ose's office, Jillian Tullis of Congressman Matsui's office, Sylvia Ruiz of State Senator Ortiz' office, and Cortez Quinn of Sacramento County Supervisor Dickinson's office.

Ms. Yonn stated that the public comment period for the proposed removal action for PRL S-033 and proposed Non-VOC Containment Unit at McClellan Air Force Base (AFB) would end on July 11, 2000. She said comments could also be submitted in writing through the public meeting contact sheets, which were made available.

Ms. Yonn announced that on May 10, 2000, the McClellan AFB Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) was dissolved. In order to keep the public informed on cleanup and restoration actions on McClellan AFB, a series of Environmental Update Community Meetings sponsored by the Air Force will take place. Ms. Yonn stated that these meetings will take place until a new advisory board is formed. This meeting is the first of the series and the next Environmental Update Community Meeting will be on July 25, 2000, at Vineland School in Rio Linda. The July 25 meeting will be a poster board session regarding environmental cleanup and reuse issues and will allow the public to talk one-on-one with the experts.

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## Overview and Current Status of the McClellan Environmental Program

Phil Mook, Environmental Restoration Division Chief at McClellan AFB, gave an overview of the current status of the base's environmental program. Mr. Mook stated that the following regulatory agencies are involved with the oversight of the cleanup efforts at McClellan AFB:

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA);
- California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC);
- California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB);
- Sacramento Metropolitan Air Quality Management District (SMAQMD);
- Congressional Representatives from Congressman Ose's office and Congressman Matsui's office;
- City and public offices; and
- U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances Disease Registry (ATSDR).

### Location of Contamination and Actions Taken

Mr. Mook stated that contamination was found on McClellan AFB in 1979, when environmental awareness and issues about the protection of the public health became prominent. The contamination was the result of accepted past disposal practices such as dumping in unlined ditches and disposal of hazardous materials and waste in landfills. McClellan AFB has 319 contaminated sites. The prime contaminants are organics (solvents, gasoline, and fuels). As of December 1999, 897,803 pounds of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) have been removed and destroyed.

McClellan AFB is on the National Priority List (NPL). Mr. Mook stated that the base has been recognized as being the most contaminated Air Force base in the nation. However, McClellan AFB recently went through a five-year protectiveness review, through which the state and federal EPAs found the base to be protective.

Mr. Mook said McClellan AFB has an extensive groundwater cleanup system in place, which has been successful in preventing the plumes from spreading and/or migrating off base and from impacting the drinking water. McClellan AFB also uses soil vapor extraction (SVE) systems that vacuum the soil and remove the contamination before it gets to the groundwater. (It is more economical and efficient to remove contaminants from the soil than the groundwater.) SVE systems have been operational at McClellan AFB since 1992. There are 11 SVE systems operating on the base. Eventually there will be a total of 26 systems in operation.

In answering questions from the audience, Mr. Mook stated that there are no SVE systems at Capehart housing or the golf course. He said there is one bioventing system (a commonly used treatment technology for gas stations) at the Capehart gas station. The Capehart gas station had tanks from the 1960s and '70s that did leak and would have impacted the groundwater if nothing was done. The old tanks were replaced with new compliant tanks. The groundwater has been tested and there is no groundwater contamination in the Capehart area.

Mr. Mook reported the base has 81 non-VOC sites. Non-VOCs include metals, fuels, pesticides, dioxins/furans, polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), and radionuclides. These sites include landfills, burn pits, tank farms, surface spills, surface waters, and industrial lines.

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The non-VOC cleanup strategy is as follows and is in the public comment stage:

- Reduce the risk by removing and properly disposing of highly contaminated hot spots and treatment residuals.
- Reduce long-term liability by treating the waste to the maximum extent possible to reduce volume, toxicity, and mobility.
- Implement treatment and optimization studies to reduce cost and increase treatment efficiency.
- Reduce long-term monitoring and maintenance by consolidating waste that can not be treated to cleanup standards into a stockpile facility; and
- Implement interim removal actions to support reuse activities.

### Recent Cleanup Activities

Mr. Mook stated that the soils and groundwater monitoring programs will continue to ensure that McClellan AFB is protective of human health and the environment. Within the SVE operations, 10 of 11 sites are operational and one site has been shut down for a study of its effectiveness.

Mr. Mook said, during the last quarter, SVE systems were installed at three locations in the south portion of the base; Tank Farm 7 was removed; and a site security inspection was conducted. Mr. Mook stated that as of October 1, 2000 the base will be open to the public. The Air Force is determining what type of necessary physical measures should be taken to ensure that no one could enter into the contaminated sites.

For the next quarter, McClellan AFB will continue to install SVE systems; conduct an independent comprehensive evaluation of remedial systems operations, maintenance, and design; and decommission Base Wells 18 and 29.

Mr. Mook said the following documents were submitted last quarter:

- *VOC Feasibility Study*;
- *VOC Proposed Plan Draft Final* — statement by the Air Force of what will be done in the Record of Decision (ROD). This document was submitted to the agencies and McClellan AFB is now in alternative dispute resolution with the agencies. The agencies did not agree with the Air Force's proposed cleanup levels; and
- Design documents for SVE systems.

Mr. Mook said the following documents will be submitted next quarter:

- *PRL S-033 Action Memo* — currently in public comment stage;
- SVE Action memorandums and design documents;
- *VOC Proposed Plan Final*; and
- *VOC ROD Draft*.

Mr. Mook stressed that the Air Force is committed to cleaning McClellan AFB. Significant progress has been made and there is still more to do. Several final cleanup decisions will be made during the next two years and the Air Force wants community advice during the decision making process.

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Judy Doyle asked if there will be land use controls in the VOC ROD and who will monitor the land use controls. Mr. Mook answered yes and the Air Force is responsible for monitoring and maintaining land use controls along with enforcement.

Dana Mar, Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), asked where the various reports along with a list of applicable documents can be obtained for public review. Mr. Mook answered that the public can obtain historic documents and documents under review from the base's Web site ([www.McClellan.AF.mil/EM/](http://www.McClellan.AF.mil/EM/)). The public may also contact Merianne Briggs to visit the administrative record on base and review hard copies of the reports.

Sheila Guerra asked if the Air Force will respond to the outside contractor's presentation under the Technical Assistance for Public Participation program on the groundwater cleanup and the *Five-Year Review*. Mr. Mook stated that the Air Force has prepared a response to the comments and it will be presented to the new advisory board if requested.

Ms. Guerra asked about the outstanding RAB worksheet addressing Camp Kohler. (*The worksheet was completed and presented to the Reuse/Relative Risk Ranking committee and given to the full RAB before they were dissolved.*)

Paul Gaspard asked what kind of testing has been conducted in areas that are not on McClellan AFB property since the direction of the runoff indicates that VOCs and non-VOCs can migrate off the base into property southwest of base. He asked if both the groundwater and soil have been tested. Mr. Mook answered that the majority of the sampling and network of ongoing wells are in the aquifer. Sampling has been conducted in the creek beds and along the streams of Magpie and Don Julio creeks leading off the base. The Air Force and ATSDR have conducted extensive testing at creeks off base also and there has been sampling in the drainage ditches that detected nothing. Mr. Mook said the records for what has been tested and sites that have been tested are in the administrative record on base.

Mr. Gaspard read a note from his neighbor, Ron Widdle of 3940 Dayton Street, stating, "I am sorry that I can't be at the meeting today but would like to give my support to my friends and neighbors in our effort to making a better and safer community. We must do this and wish to thank everyone for his or her help and support."

### **Regulatory Roles**

#### United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)

David Cooper, U.S. EPA's Community Involvement Coordinator, gave an overview of the type of work that the U.S. EPA performs as a regulator of McClellan AFB. He gave general information on the responsibilities of the remedial project manager (RPM), Joe Healy, and then described his own tasks as the community involvement coordinator.

- The RPM provides regulatory oversight and enforcement. U.S. EPA has the lead responsibility for the Federal Facility Agreement (FFA) enforcement (also known as an interagency agreement); radiation outside of buildings; SVE peer review; and quality assurance/quality control oversight.
- The U.S. EPA shares responsibilities with the state agencies. U.S. EPA supports the California Department of Toxic Substances Control when the state takes the lead in groundwater or radiation inside buildings.

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- In addition, U.S. EPA independently tracks the progress of cleanup for Congress; is a member of the Base Realignment and Closure Cleanup Team; and provides training on federal guidelines, issues, and regulations.
- The U.S. EPA provides a national perspective and guidance on technical and policy issues, such as institutional controls; and
- The U.S. EPA technical staff is currently overseeing the SVE technical review and installation program and the remedial investigation for Operable Units A, C and E through H at McClellan AFB.

Mr. Cooper explained that his role entails providing regulatory oversight for the Superfund aspects of community involvement. Mr. Cooper's responsibilities includes providing oversight on the advisory board process, reviewing fact sheets, attending meetings and keeping his management informed. Mr. Cooper is also part of the advisory board transition team, which is instrumental in setting up the new McClellan environmental restoration advisory board.

Ms. Mar asked if there was a way to distinguish the differences of opinions between U.S. EPA and the Air Force if she were to review documents. Ms. Yonn stated there is a response to comments table included with the documents that are out for public review, in order for the reviewer to see who had what concerns.

### California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)

Nathan Schumacher, Public Participation Specialist for DTSC, gave a presentation on his agency's oversight of McClellan AFB.

Mr. Schumacher stated that in 1986, the State of California Department of Health Services took McClellan AFB to court because the state wanted to know how many and what kinds of hazardous materials and substances were being discharged. The court ordered the Air Force to reveal to the state government what hazardous materials were handled at the base and what materials were spilled or discharged to the environment. This was the first in a series of events that lead to the Federal Facilities Agreement. The agreement was signed in 1990 between DTSC, U.S. EPA, and the Air Force.

The DTSC's primary functions are to:

- Establish regulations and requirements for the safe storage, transport, treatment, and disposal of hazardous waste.
- Oversee the investigation and remediation of sites that have been contaminated by hazardous substances; and
- Work with industry to reduce the amount of hazardous waste that is created in California.

He said DTSC is part of the California EPA (Cal/EPA). Other Cal/EPA departments and boards regulate air quality, surface water, groundwater, solid waste, and pesticides.

The DTSC's four major roles are compliance (investigating any complaints that have enough information); inspections of permitted facilities; permitting facilities; and reviewing clean up efforts.

Patricia Axelrod requested Mr. Schumacher have his office investigate the status of the various contaminated sites and potential release locations location on base that are covered over with

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plastic sheeting and sandbags. Ms. Axelrod indicated that she could submit photographs of these sites. Mr. Schumacher stated that he would take the photographs and respond to Ms. Axelrod after the Independence Day holiday.

Gary Luciani, Desert Storm Think Tank, asked if there has been a wildlife study conducted on the west side of McClellan AFB. Mr. Schumacher stated that there has been a study done in this area of the base. He said he is not up to date on the study, however, he will respond after the holiday.

Ms. Axelrod asked when DTSC is going to follow up on ATSDR's initial investigation and conduct urinalysis of individuals in the region. Mr. Schumacher stated that the ATSDR has done an extensive study of health in this area and referred Ms. Axelrod to the ATSDR Study of McClellan AFB performed in 1987.

### **Community Outreach**

Ms. Yonn noted that Merianne Briggs is the main point of contact for the public if they have questions or desire information on environmental issues at McClellan AFB.

Ms. Briggs stated that she is an employee of the Air Force Base Conversion Agency detailed to Environmental Management to work on the community relations program.

Ms. Briggs stated that the base has an active community relations program. The goals of this program are to have open communications, have a free flow of information to promote community involvement, and to be responsive to community needs and concerns. To reach these goals, the Air Force sponsors public meetings, encourages one-on-one discussions, and is available for speaking engagements. Public outreach is also obtained through newsletters, fact sheets on specific sites and/or processes, the base's Web site, and the information repository.

If the public would like to set up a speaking engagement, visit the information repository, or make an appointment for a one-on-one discussion, Ms. Briggs should be contacted.

Ms. Axelrod asked if the Judge Advocate General's order not to speak to her has been rescinded. Ms. Briggs stated that she can make appointments for Ms. Axelrod if she would like to visit the administrative records or if there is a general information question. There will not be any in-depth discussions. If Ms. Axelrod has any specific questions, she should submit those questions in writing to the Environmental Management office.

Lt. Robert Firman, the base's Deputy Director of Public Affairs, stated that the Air Force is committed to cleaning up McClellan AFB and committed to involving the community in this process. He addressed the following items:

#### ➤ **Purpose of the new environmental restoration advisory board**

From the Department of Defense (DoD) and Air Force perspective, the new board's purpose is to advise the Air Force on cleanup priorities and to disseminate this information to the community-at-large.

#### ➤ **Goals for the new board**

The first goal is for the Air Force to be open, cooperative, and as forthright as possible on the environmental process by providing the opportunity for the public to have input. The second goal is for the advisory board to provide opportunity for dialogue, represent a wide range of stakeholders, and provide thoughtful and constructive input on the cleanup process.

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Lt. Firman stated that the cleanup process at McClellan AFB is very large and very complicated and will take time to complete. There are many decisions to make in the coming years about the various cleanup projects and how they will be addressed. The advisory board will play a key role in involving the public in this process. The Air Force desires to have individuals on the board who will represent a wide range of stakeholders from the community. Lt. Firman defined stakeholders as being specifically those individuals, groups, and organizations who have a vested interest in the cleanup process. As the base is closing, the nature of the community's involvement is changing.

He said the Air Force is in the process of recruiting members for the new board. This application process will continue from June through August 2000. The board is tentatively scheduled to be in operation by early Fall 2000. (Applications were made available to meeting attendees.)

He said a new selection committee is being formed to assist in making the decision of who will be on the new board. This committee will be composed of high level representatives of various community organizations. The Air Force also requested the public for their input on who could be part of the selection committee. (Members on the selection committee will not be on the board.)

He described the new board will have a minimum of three meetings a year. A professional facilitator who will ensure that the meetings are efficient, orderly, and respectful will conduct these meetings. The meetings will be open to the public. The Air Force will provide training and tours to familiarize the new board members.

Lt. Firman invited the members of the former McClellan RAB to be involved in this process by submitting their application for membership.

Lt. Firman stressed that the Air Force is committed to the environmental restoration of McClellan AFB and will be present for as long as it takes to complete the job. Working together with the community can leave a legacy of a clean base for the future of Sacramento.

Ms. Axelrod asked what law the Air Force exercised to shut down the RAB. Lt. Firman stated it is the Installation Commander's responsibilities to make sure that the community is involved in the process. Ms. Axelrod asked why McClellan AFB is changing its board. Lt. Firman answered in order to include more stakeholders in the process and have effective communication between the members.

### **Public Comment**

Ms. Yonn stated that the public comment period is limited to three minutes per speaker and each speaker will get a signal when 30-seconds are left.

Ms. Yonn requested several times that everyone respect each other and not interrupt other community members when they made their comments.

Linda Piercy commented that she still considers herself a RAB member. She said if the new RAB asks too many questions about the toxic waste and the pollution, the by-laws will be changed again and that RAB will also be dissolved.

Ms. Guerra stated that she, as well as other people, spent many years on the McClellan RAB. She said what the Air Force has done is not going to help this community. She said the RAB was very close to giving input on several final documents. She said the Air Force did not want to

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answer their inputs and decided to get rid of the RAB. She said the RAB are stakeholders and the Air Force is bringing in people who are not going to review documents.

Gary Sawyer commended the DoD for the steps it has taken. Mr. Sawyer cautioned DoD that it should retain some of the former RAB members to preserve their continuity and historical knowledge. He also asked that the future RAB be aware of taxpayers' dollars when hiring technical advisors and require full disclosure and evaluation of the advisor's technical and scholastic qualifications. Mr. Sawyer expressed concerns that the Air Force only challenged two aspects of Ms. Axelrod's April 2000 RAB meeting presentation.

Ms. Axelrod commented that she did a presentation at the April 2000 RAB meeting on an assessment of the handling of potential release location 32 and contaminated site 10. She said there are now plans to abate the radioactive contamination. She said she attacked the premise on which the statistical computations were made. She said she was cut off before she could complete her presentation. Ms. Axelrod distributed photos to the audience.

Chuck Yarbrough stated that he has served as the community co-chair of the McClellan RAB and has served on the RAB in some capacity for approximately 20 years. Mr. Yarbrough explained that the public fought to get on the committee in 1984. Mr. Yarbrough displayed four certificates of appreciation that he has received during his tenure on the RAB. Mr. Yarbrough stated that the colonel threw away the RAB rules of order and by-laws, then modified the charter without conferring with the RAB. When the RAB did not agree with the changes, the colonel shut down the RAB. It is Mr. Yarbrough's opinion that the Air Force (the polluter) should not have had the authority to shut down the RAB; it should have been the regulators. Otherwise the Air Force should have told the RAB what it was doing wrong and those who did not want to cooperate could leave. He said there will no longer be a vote on the RAB and comments will have to be submitted in writing. He said the people that will be on the new board will have no say at all.

Jane Field commented that she was not on the RAB but has attended many of their meetings. She suggested that the new committee not be called the RAB so that it will not be associated with the former RAB and its non-productivity. She stated that she is a 35-year employee of McClellan AFB and a North Highlands resident. She attends the planning, redevelopment, and RAB meetings in order to find out about the cleanup on McClellan AFB. It has been her observance that the former RAB members disrupted the agenda. She is concerned about the environmental issues on and surrounding McClellan AFB. She has witnessed inappropriate behavior by RAB members at the RAB and other community meetings. She stated that she understands the frustration about the various issues and is interested in finding out more about them. She hopes that the next committee will handle themselves appropriately.

Bill Maynard, who represents ACORN, stated that the new RAB should keep some of the former members. He said some of the redevelopment funds should be spent in the city limits to improve the interior roads that lead to the west end of the base (Bell Avenue, Main Avenue, Winter Street, North Avenue, and Pinal Street). He has observed the change in traffic, streets are in disrepair, and the wells have been pumped dry and possibly have contaminated the neighbors' homes. He said there is a high rate of cancer in this area. He said he would like to review the ATSDR report.

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Mr. Luciani stated that he has a deep concern for the community. He understands what is going on because he was part of the Love Canal study. It is his personal feeling that the west area should just remain as is and not be developed at all.

### **Wrap up and Announcement of Next Meeting**

The next Environmental Update Community Meeting will be held on July 25, 2000, at Vineland school from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. This will be a poster board meeting with technical experts and regulatory experts available to answer questions.