

Camp Bonneville Citizens Advisory Group
Meeting #3 – Summary
6-8 p.m. Wednesday, August 15, 2007
Public Works Operations Center 4700 NE 78th St., Conference Rm. B1

Group Members:

Dennis Benson
Rand Harris
Dave Hurt
Richard Kolb
Nathan Reynolds
Pam Rigby
Bud Van Cleve
Jan Wojeichowski

Staff Members:

Jerry Barnett
Ben Forsen
Mike Gage
Jim Gladson
Jeroen Kok
Jeanne Lawson
Greg Schaffer
Kalin Schmoltdt

Members Absent

Debbie Abraham
George Brereton
Bob Pitman
Don Wastler

Purpose of Meeting:

- Discuss current cleanup efforts and findings
- Discuss and provide advice on outreach efforts

Welcome & Committee Business

Agenda Review – Jeanne explained that the meeting would focus on bringing the committee up-to-speed with recent developments affecting the cleanup, as well as discussing outreach opportunities.

5/16/07 Meeting Summary – There were no changes to the meeting summary.

Overall Status

Jerry distributed a copy of the acronym list that was requested at the 5/16 meeting. He noted that the document would be updated as necessary.

Jerry said that although he is the project manager, the cleanup process primarily involves BCRRT and Ecology. The county is staying interested and involved in protecting their interests. Jerry continues to attend coordination meetings and travel to the site every two weeks or so. Jerry also attends the Anomaly Selection Board that discusses the MEC and munitions debris and includes Cliff Gray with MKM, Greg Johnson, Ecology, and Mike Gage as formal observer.

Ben noted that although they had told the CAG to expect the Cleanup Action Plan (CAP) for the small arms ranges with the CAP for the munitions ranges to follow, the CAP for the small arms range is not yet available. He said that BCRRT has submitted a draft RI/FS, and while Ecology has decided to finalize the document, they have decided that more data is necessary in order to accurately reflect the conditions onsite. He explained that the data collection would include clearances along roads and trails, the buffer around the boundary, and the valley floor. These areas cover more than 40% of the area and will allow for the development of a more comprehensive action plan. In the meantime, the CAP for the munitions ranges will not be finished until the data collection is complete. Ben said that decision is recent enough that they still need to communicate with BCRRT to determine a revised schedule for when the CAP is expected. Mike emphasized that while BCRRT had not yet agreed to these changes, only the order of tasks was proposed to be changed, and not the overall duration of the cleanup. Ben indicated that the

changes could expedite the work in the long run, though Mike noted that there were several issues that BCRRT needed to resolve with Ecology in that regard.

Report on Cleanup

Mike noted that they were not finding anything new onsite, just more of it. He thanked Tom Yssel for his help with the presentation.

- Weather related problems have given way to increased dust and related issues. Mike acknowledged that they were creating dust, but said they were trying to be conscientious.
- A vehicle fire was quickly and effectively contained until the Vancouver Fire Department could arrive. A fire watch made sure that there was no opportunity for the fire to spread. Vehicles are equipped with a wide array of tools for safety and productivity and a fire suppression vehicle is used onsite. Vehicles are checked regularly and are not operated on Red Flag days when there is low humidity and/or high wind. They are currently operating at Level 2 onsite, which means that mechanical equipment is shut down at 1:00pm and vehicles/work sites are monitored for at least one hour after shutdown to make sure there is no fire danger.
- Neighboring residents within a Safety Zone were asked to leave their homes for a few hours during MEC clearance near their homes. Aside from a small belt of M14 blanks located within 15 feet of the fence, nothing else was found. Mike thanked Rand Harris for identifying two homeowners who were not on the original list, as well as a construction crew that needed to be cleared for the sweep. Mike said that they cleared 100 feet from the fence along the southwestern boundary on the sweeps instead of the normal 40 feet so as to minimize the need to disturb those residents in the future.
- Hydro axes and brush hogs are being used to clear and mulch brush on roads and trails. Mike noted that 70% of the roads and trails have been cleared. The roads also function as firebreaks where possible. A progress map for roads and trails depicted a grid of the surface-cleared areas. Ecology randomly checks at least 10% of the finished grids and hasn't failed one yet.
- There have been a large number of finds at the 2.36 rocket range. They expect to find 100-200 munitions items in the area. So far they have found only training rounds, though they treat every round as potentially live. There have also been a large number of finds at the Landfill 4/Demolition 1 area, where 362 pieces of munitions debris were found on August 14, alone. These pieces of debris were kicked out of the demolition area when munitions were blown up there. The debris was expected, though the quantity was larger and being found at a farther distance than anticipated. Debris includes primarily shrapnel found during the roads and trails work, with some MEC findings as well. The vast majority of MEC items on the site have been found in Landfill 4 and the 2.36 rocket range.
- One thousand feet from the northern boundary of the CITA they have found 105mm and 155mm fragments which has caused Ecology some concern. The findings may indicate a previously unknown target area located outside of the CITA. There will be a new investigation of this area to determine whether it will be a problem.
- There has been a total of 165 acres of brush clearance.
- The county has made some changes to the reuse plans based upon prior uses. One area that was intended for use by tents had been a grenade range, while another was to be used for timber and would have been too close to the CITA.
- Discussing the M203 Range Nathan asked whether the area will need to be cleared in parcels. Greg responded that the M203 range will have 20% of the anomalies investigated as a Quality Assurance effort prior to making a final decision on the M203 range.
- An undocumented munitions debris pit was uncovered near to the 2.36 range. Though the pit was undocumented, Mike said he would have been more surprised if they had found none.

- Mike noted several instances of munitions debris being discovered in different parts of the country including areas that have never had military bases. Munitions are the most dangerous thing that the cleanup team has to deal with. The team is also working on cleaning the sewage lagoons, small arms ranges, and conducting groundwater sampling. Mike noted that the work on the small arms range is behind.
- Road maintenance is a big issue. Work is being performed to restore roads that were damaged during the winter. Grass next to roads and trails is mowed regularly to create firebreaks. Debris created by the brush clearance is shredded as part of the clear up work. Cleared areas are being seeded with rye which tends to germinate faster than most weeds.
- A building inventory has been completed for every building on site. The report will be passed to the county's head of facilities on August 16, and there will be an evaluation of the buildings.
- There are a number of state sensitive species onsite, including the Red-Legged Frog, "Hairy Stemmed Checker Mallow" and the Small Flowered Trillium. Sensitive areas are being marked and cleared differently than other areas. There are also a number of invasive species to deal with and bio-controls are being used with general success. For example, weevils are being used to kill knapweed. The County has indicated that the weevils should die out after the knapweed disappears. Blackberries are also a noxious weed which invade waterways on the site. The County uses Garlon 3A to kill the berries, which is followed by anomaly avoidance and clearance.

Rand asked whether there would be more searching for 155mm rounds. Mike said that they would be looking at the areas just north of the CITA, in the areas where Ecology has requested further reconnaissance. Rand asked about firing points. Mike indicated several general areas along the perimeter and Greg noted that there were four artillery firing points and three mortar firing points. Dennis confirmed that the discovery of the first 155mm shell was unexpected. Mike said it was unexpected, but located in the best place it could be found (in the CITA), and its discovery made subsequent finds unsurprising. He noted that the debris finds outside of the CITA are less than ideal.

Jeroen asked about the possibility that the CITA will expand. Mike said that it was too soon to say whether the findings outside the CITA were the result of a few overshots, or if other targets existed. In the latter case, those targets might need to be fenced. Mike noted that they still have relatively little information. He added that the team feels good about what's been found, and is pleased that the bulk of the discoveries are in the 2.36 range or in Landfill 4 where expected.

Rand asked how long it would be before there is enough confidence to allow the public free access to the site. Mike explained that when a MEC is found, they step out to determine whether it's a one-off or part of something larger. He said it would be easy to say that much of the site is safe, but they will still consider it to be dangerous until it is proved otherwise. Jerry said that the county will be using the gathered information to make the assessment and noted that the public will be educated about the park and its history. He said they will not know until they are done. Mike estimated 3-4 years until completion, barring any big surprises. Rand asked whether it creates pause when a 155mm round is discovered. Ben said it does not because of the nature of the cleanup, which is designed to include investigation and adjustments as necessary. He said that by the end of the cleanup they will either be convinced of the character of the site or they will conclude that there are still many questions and the site may not be advisable for the intended use.

Nathan said that while he was pleased that things are being found, he was concerned at the discovery of objects like the 155mm round or objects outside of the CITA that even the army has failed to account for. Mike said that much is already known, and the presence of the 155mm rounds doesn't change much about the clean up, aside from the number of sandbags used during detonation and the safety zones used.

Bud asked whether Mike was comfortable with progress made to this point. Mike said he was comfortable despite some surprises. He said that not finding anything would have been more concerning. Bud said that he felt that a lot of money had been wasted with previous efforts, and that he felt that much has already been accomplished and progress is being made. Jeanne noted that Commissioner Boldt had

also expressed good feelings about the process. Mike added that his “surprises” should not be construed negatively, noting that there is no question about the work. He said that they were behind on only one item beyond the RI/FS, and that is the CAP for lead removal from the berms. He said that they will be back on track in two weeks and the delay hasn’t slowed down work onsite.

Public Outreach

Jim noted that the CAG was charged with thinking of tools for outreach and serving as a link to each member’s networks and constituencies. Jim noted that the neighborhood newsletter network is huge, though they are looking for other vehicles to leverage information. Jim noted that they had touched on the fact that they will not have a park that puts people at risk, but neither will visitors be uninformed. He said that as the reuse discussion begins, so too will an educational effort that builds an informed public by the time the park opens.

Bud noted the importance of providing press releases that will reach unincorporated areas. He noted that there were also 62 neighborhood associations within Vancouver and that Judy Bailey was a good contact.

Dave noted that hiking clubs often attend and table at public events. He noted that such groups would likely be interested in the reuse or cleanup phase and what the property will become. He suggested Rick Marshal as a contact for the Sierra Club who often conducts hikes in the region.

Jeanne asked whether there were any perceived expectations regarding the reuse plan and whether the public should be getting more information about the process. Dave noted that there isn’t much information available beyond the website.

Rand suggested that Mike give a presentation on Comcast Channel 23. The recording would be shown multiple times and would be free. He suggested that the public would feel good about the cleanup process. Bud recommended contacting Donna Mason at CVTV. Dave suggested that if the presentation were incorporated into a county commissioners meeting there might be more viewers.

Bud noted that Friends of Clark County and the Hazel Dell/Salmon Creek Business Association also have newsletters.

Jim agreed that coverage of the project has been quiet, and noted that the last real information was made available in October. He noted that he has started drafting a project newsletter and Ecology will be issuing a fact sheet for the RI/FS. He offered to email a PDF (portable document format) of the files to the group that could then be forwarded to interested parties.

Greg noted the possibility of including information in a regional interest guide. He noted that some magazines already indicate Camp Bonneville on their regional maps. Bud suggested contacting the Clark County Visitors Association. Jeanne asked what sort of information would be appropriate for such a publication. Jan said it should be minimal, including mostly facts and pictures. Bud suggested including a teaser about what the ultimate goal is. Jerry said that it needs to be clear that the area is not open to the public yet. Jan suggested a timeline. Dave said that people will want to know when they can go there.

Jerry noted that when Mike is done, the park isn’t going to open right away. He said that funding is still an issue. He proposed holding the next CAG meeting in a venue where CVTV could provide coverage.

Pam suggested contacting groups such as the Boy Scouts and ATV users.

Dennis said that he had been taking minutes for their newsletters and that people get excited when he brings back actual numbers. He suggested that Mike make his presentation at other committee meetings.

Mike suggested that because there are about three years of clearance left, and because the county won’t be opening the area as soon as BCRRT leaves, it might be prudent to wait until next summer before

conducting extensive outreach. Greg added that a lot could happen over the next year that could throw cold water on any positive spin.

Nathan said that because they are still gathering information, he did not think they should be discussing reuse just yet. He suggested that if anything, the message should cover only what has already been learned, what is going well, and what future steps may be. Pam said that she liked the idea of using a picture. Bud reiterated the need to present truth and facts in a timely manner. Jim suggested taking the same approach to the public as to the CAG, making it clear that if the public wants to talk about reuse, they will need to wait.

Rand noted that a tremendous amount of work has been accomplished in the past 10 months. He suggested that it would be beneficial to draw some attention to the process. Bud noted that the public must be somewhat disillusioned and said it was a big story that progress is being made. Jan suggested making information available in picture form, citing a few statistics, indicating where we were, where we are, and what's left.

Mike said that they had spoken internally about the possibility of holding a private open house for the various players involved in the process, possibly even extending to the RAB. He said that there is still the question of whether to have the event in the fall or June 2008. Mike said he doesn't have a strong inclination one way or the other.

Jim said that they would use the CAG suggestions for the newsletter. He said that the message will be crafted so as to avoid building up expectations, but will be open, honest, and transparent. The newsletter will remind people of the potential uses at the end of the process. Jim assured the group that he would submit information to the media.

Nathan encouraged that the focus remain on the cleanup. He asked whether Mike was uncomfortable with the publicity. Mike said that he was not sure whether they had assembled enough information to share a complete picture. He cautioned that they could end up giving people the impression that the site is problematic. He noted that information distributed during the RAB process was distorted. Rand noted that presentations like the ones Mike has given to the CAG are useful. Bud noted that it was important to create and revive public interest. Dave noted that if funding becomes a future issue, then it is important to start talking and building support groups now.

Don had several questions: 1) Will the site be safe? 2) Will there be a name change? 3) Will there be tours? 4) Will the buildings be kept? Mike said that he believes the site will be safe, though some people think it can't be. He noted that they don't want to create a public forum without preparing adequate background information. Jeanne noted that the message is not to claim that the site will be safe, but rather to ask whether it can be safe. She noted that progress is being made as to how confidently they can answer that question.

Nathan said that he was fine with waiting until there is adequate information available to make a solid statement. Jim noted that there is a need to indicate progress in some form. He reiterated the need for a message that is factual but does not promise where we'll be in the future or put more pressure on Mike. Jeanne added that a void of information can often lead people to make inaccurate assumptions.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public.

Next Steps

Next meeting is TBA. Jim suggested the first week of November so as to avoid Thanksgiving. Jim said he would pass along several possible dates to the group.

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