

Camp Bonneville Citizens Advisory Group
Meeting #4 – Summary
6-8 p.m. Wednesday, November 14, 2007
Frontier Middle School, 7600 NE 166th Ave., Vancouver

Group Members:

Dennis Benson
Don Chapman
Rand F. Harris
David Hurt
Richard Kolb
Bob Pitman
Nathan Reynolds
Pam Rigby
Bud VanCleve
Don Wastler
Jan Wojciechowski

Staff Members:

Mike Gage
Jeanne Lawson
Ben Forson
Jerry Barnett
Jeroen Kok

Members Absent:

Debbie Abraham
George Brereton

Purpose of Meeting:

- Discuss current cleanup efforts and findings
- Compile questions for FAQ mailer

Welcome and Committee Business

Agenda Review - Jeanne welcomed the committee. The next meeting, in February, will be held at the firehouse. Tonight's meeting is oriented towards the cleanup updates and discussing the public outreach efforts.

8/15/07 Meeting Summary - There were no comments.

Group comments - There were no comments.

Overall Project Status

Jerry gave a brief project status overview. As of the last meeting, surface clearance was completed at the property boundary with roads and trails 90% complete. Work has now begun on the environmental study area and clearance of the valley floor will continue until the end of the summer.

The Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry (ATSDR), part of the CDC, was petitioned to review various elements at Camp Bonneville. A draft report will be out for comment in 2-3 weeks and appears favorable. A draft will be made available to the CAG.

BCRRT's reports will continue and Ecology will begin to take a larger role in discussing the regulatory aspects of the project. There has been an internal discussion about the appropriate point to introduce the reuse plan and it will be introduced at the next CAG meeting for committee feedback. Information about past uses will be presented and input will be sought for the next steps.

Report on MEC, Small Arms Range, and groundwater monitoring work

Ben noted that the public comment period for the Small Arms Range Action Plan recently ended. Only two comments were received, indicating that the plan can be finalized. Because of weather, the plan will be postponed until May.

Ben noted the presence of groundwater contamination by ammonium perchlorate with other explosive chemicals (HMX and RDX) in relatively low concentrations. Ben explained that the perchlorate comes from rockets and fireworks buried at Landfill 4. In late 2004, Landfill 4 was excavated with the goal of removing the chemical source. Groundwater contamination was then to be monitored over a period of time to assess the effectiveness of the source removal and to determine if additional active remediation is required. Considering the soil type and geology, expectations were for the contamination level to increase to a point and then decrease. That trend appears sound, though there have been quarterly up and down swings in contamination for the monitored wells in the area. While the contamination is statistically following the expected profile, other wells did not demonstrate the same level of variation and the swings will require further analysis in the context of seasonal water table elevations, and chemical concentrations, to determine their cause.

David asked about the direction of groundwater flow. Ben noted the landfill in the north central part of the site with flow towards the SW where monitoring wells check for contaminant concentrations and plume movement.

Bob asked whether the swing-like behavior is typical based on observations of similar sites. Ben explained that the swings have to do with soil type and hydrogeology. The clay nature of the soil can cause swings. The relatively tight formation inhibits groundwater flow, which results in contamination varying with changes in water table elevations caused by rain water infiltration. Thus, contaminant concentrations may vary due to simple dilution from rainfall infiltration or the water table rising to a level where there is residual soil contamination. Looking at information about the water table and seasonal information will give a sense of what is causing the swings.

Dennis asked whether contamination levels were high enough to pose a concern to surrounding properties and well owners. Ben said that the highest concentrations are near to the landfill itself, and that downgradient wells, as well as the sentry wells do not show contamination. Dennis requested further information on the contamination to publish in community newsletters. Mike offered to work with Ben to create a descriptive paragraph.

Bud asked for an explanation of the fireworks. Ben said that the fireworks were unknown before the excavation. He noted that the initial shallow excavation failed to reveal the contamination that was subsequently discovered when the sampling depth was increased to eight feet. Bud added that the site had been used to dispose of confiscated fireworks. Ben noted diesel contamination as well.

Greg noted that he has been receiving requests to receive UXO (Unexploded Ordnance) training. He said that he would bring a UXO information board to the next meeting, answer questions, and give a brief orientation on what's being found. Rand confirmed that a 155mm frag had been found. Greg said it had, and further noted a 105mm and 155mm tail boom on a road in the NE quadrant. He said they would be performing transects to determine the extent of the frag field, and whether to extend the Central Impact Target Area (CITA) to include that region. Greg explained that they had not expected to find 155mm frags, but their use has now been confirmed. The CITA will be fenced off and that area should be known within the next 3-4 months. Rand questioned the utility of fencing off the CITA if the range of rounds being discovered can reach 15 miles. Greg agreed that every ordinance fired onsite could exceed the property boundary, and noted that the range safety fans were no indication of how far munitions actually went.

Nathan asked about tail booms. Greg explained that the tail boom is the fin part of a mortar. Detonation usually means the tail boom flies off. To date, only 10-20 have been found along roads and trails. Those numbers will increase as the CITA is cleared.

Jeanne suggested making the UXO board and explanation available ½ hour before the next meeting.

Cleanup activity update

Mike noted that BCRRT is now one year into the cleanup. The cleanup approach takes initial, interim, and final actions. The final actions capture the cleanup action plan and the final onsite phase. Mike noted 42

different reports available on the website. Initial actions have been completed and interim actions have seen progress.

Signage and fences have been repaired. Ninety-five percent of roads and trails have undergone anomaly avoidance, with 89% of roads and trails MEC cleared. All firing ranges have been anomaly avoided. The valley floor has been added to the interim actions and anomaly avoidance while MEC clearance has been partially performed.

Mike explained the different zones and the extent to which they have been anomaly avoided and/or brush cleared. He noted areas along the perimeter that were completely cleared so as to avoid the need to disturb neighbors again.

The valley floor has been MEC cleared for 27 acres. Mike showed an example of a cleared section of the valley floor to show the brush-cut level before it is cleared. Rand asked about the cleared brush. Mike explained that it is shredded and left behind.

Ninety-three munitions of concern have been discovered on the site including 155s and Stokes mortars which have been detonated onsite. Munitions debris is being set aside and will be heated in a flash furnace before being taken offsite and recycled.

Greg explained that a MEC, a "Munition of Explosive Concern," still has energetic compounds. A UXO is a fused item that has been fired but not detonated. Only five or six UXOs have been found. A "frag" is considered munitions debris (MD). Jim noted that Greg would provide more details in February.

Mike noted the 2.36 rocket range and the Landfill 4/Demo area as the areas where the vast majority of MEC had been found. He noted that every MEC has been mapped and assured the CAG that they will produce a solid site history by the time the cleanup finishes.

Mike explained the soil sampling process and testing at the storage lagoons. After testing, sludge was removed and the lagoons breached to prevent water collection. Various alternatives for reducing groundwater infiltration have been explored.

Deer hunting activity is increasing and fence cutting and poaching are problematic. Security has been dramatically increased. Four sites on the southern boundary have seen multiple incursions. Rand noted that the Autumn Hills trail committee had not heard anything about poaching. Mike said that the increase is recent. Don Wastler noted some neighborhood reports regarding trespassing, dirt bike use, and automatic firearm use nearby the property. Mike noted that they have used dirt bike patrols as part of site security and maintenance and they do monitor firearm activity.

Mike noted that they have been working with the county and have sprayed about 150 acres of Himalayan blackberries. Normally, they distribute grass seed following clearance of the site. However, seeding this time of year could cause the seed to rot so areas cleared in October will be seeded in the spring.

Work around wetlands and other sensitive areas involves hand-clearing. Beavers have been active this fall-possibly because of an abundance of ready-made brush-and there are more beaver ponds than at any other time in the past three years.

Mike noted the presence of several state and federally protected species, as well as the autumn activities of other onsite wildlife.

Mike reported an incident involving a small bridge collapse. There were no injuries or damage to equipment. Mike said the incident was regrettable and many measures are taken to maintain a safe work environment on site. Thus far, there have only been two, very minor accidents with no lost work time: One person with a twisted ankle and one person stung by wasps.

Mike noted regular interaction with stakeholders and the County, Ecology and the Army through regular meetings and special planning meetings as needed. Jerry reviews the work level regularly and the Army also receives information. Insurers also insist on being notified about the work on a regular basis.

Mike noted the recent public involvement activities, notices on demolitions, press releases, the open house, and sacred site outreach to the Cowlitz.

David Hurt asked about the sacred site. Nathan explained that there is a site in the area that has been identified by the Cowlitz tribal council as sacred for the ancestors. The Cowlitz are coordinating with BCRRT to ensure that the site is protected during the cleanup. He noted that information about such archeological sites is exempt from state law and the Freedom of Information Act. Jeanne explained that the intention is to keep the sites from being vandalized. David asked how the site will be protected after the cleanup if there is no security. Nathan said that the issue will be raised during the scoping phase of the reuse plan.

Jim reminded the group that attendance needs to be consistent so the group can remain informed.

Develop FAQ list for mailer and web

Jim noted the discussion of issuing an October newsletter at the last meeting. Jim thanked Mike for hosting the open house and noted that the decision was reached that the open house was adequate as an outreach tool and that a newsletter wasn't necessary. A newsletter in January is now being considered. The newsletter would be an 11x17 tabloid piece with information on the front and a Q&A section on the inside. The information will also be available online. Jim asked the group to brainstorm a list of questions that should be addressed in the newsletter.

Don noted the recurring questions regarding what the ground contaminants are and where they came from, as well as questions about the different types of unexploded ordinance that have been found. He also suggested addressing the reuse plan and providing a reference to where people can find it.

Richard suggested listing upcoming milestones. David suggested including a best guess for schedule. Jim noted that any schedule will have to be vague because of the many unknowns.

Jan suggested noting which parts of the camp will be open after cleanup. Jim said such information would need to be vague as well, and would become clearer during the reuse discussion in February.

Pam suggested addressing spending. Jim said that no county money was being spent on the cleanup.

Richard suggested addressing the presence of the security fence and why people shouldn't trespass for their own safety's sake. Rand cautioned that such a warning could serve as an invitation to some people.

Dennis suggested listing who is involved in determining the reuse.

Don Chapman noted the question of whether there will be some type of safety training within schools to teach people what to do if something is found. Jerry noted that there will be trainings associated with being in the park itself.

Don Wastler said that the open house was excellent, but asked that future events be more considerate of accessibility for seniors and those who can't walk long distances.

Jan asked for a section with contact information and info about where to send further questions. Jim added that they were hoping to make the website more interactive over time.

David noted that including highlights of the reuse plan would be useful, as would questions about user fees or onsite activities. Jim said that much will depend on the discussions of the CAG and that he was somewhat reluctant to discuss uses because it might imply that minds have already been made up. Lawson suggested focusing on the principles of the reuse plan and on the previous public process.

Jeroen said that the current reuse plan contemplates certain uses, but will depend on other factors like budget. Jerry suggested using the newsletter to introduce the CAG. Mike noted that the site is currently being cleared for a specific purpose and at specific levels in accordance with the reuse plan. Greg noted that while there is some flexibility about uses for safety reasons, the uses outlined in the reuse plan are generally clear. Jerry clarified that there is flexibility in that less intrusive uses would be allowable under the plan, but not more intrusive uses. He noted how a tent site was originally placed over what was found to be a grenade range and subsequently moved. Rand asked whether such sites would be cleared anyway. Mike said that while they would clear until nothing is discovered, they won't clear some areas to the point where they are completely safe for all activities. Jim said that there will be more discussion of how the reuse plan relates to the cleanup in February.

Jeanne reminded the group that the cleanup and reuse plan will overlap as the reuse plan begins and the cleanup winds down. She noted that there was always the expectation that there would be changes to the reuse plan based on the cleanup findings. Mike added that because most activities will be in the central valley, clearance in that area will likely be finished by May or June of 2008. He noted that they will know a great deal about the area where the public will spend most of their time.

Rand asked where the money comes from if an area is not able to be used for its originally desired purpose or if other factors lead to cost increases. Jerry explained that there is a fixed price contract for the cleanup. Dennis suggested addressing the question of where post-cleanup funding will come from, such as the addition of fire-rings.

Public Comment

Chuck Mason – Veterans of Foreign Wars. Chuck explained that he was the lead for finding new land for Willamette National Cemetery in Portland. He said he had spoken to Governor Gregoire who indicated that the Veterans' request be a part of the reuse discussion. Jerry noted that they would introduce the subject of reuse but wouldn't have any details at the next meeting or involve specific decisions. Lawson encouraged further offline discussion of the cemetery issue. Chuck said he would be testifying to the Washington State Legislature about the issue. Bob noted that Roger Huntley had attended the first CAG meeting and addressed the cemetery issue. Jerry said that they would be working with Chuck and others, but noted that they only have a certain amount of resources and have not been clearing to the depth required for reuse as a cemetery.

Next steps

Jeanne noted that the next meeting would address UXO, more on the cleanup, and a high level process discussion of the reuse plan. Mike asked whether the level of detail in his reports was appropriate. The committee felt it was.

Rand asked whether there was any possibility of Mike giving a presentation on Channel 23. Mike said he was open to it. Jim noted that CVTV had covered the hand-over of the camp and he offered to follow up about building on the story. David suggested holding the CAG at a venue that would be easy to film in. Jeanne encouraged that any such presentation should have subsequent follow-up with the public.

Richard suggested working with the Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding the poaching issue.

Jim encouraged that any further questions for or about the newsletter be directed to him.

- Next meeting: February 20, 2007, Firehouse.

Close

Camp Bonneville
November 14, 2007
Flipchart Notes Regarding FAQ

- Types of contamination
- Types of UXO
- Reuse Plan
- Milestones – Timeline target
- What part of camp will be open
- What is it costing County and how is budget doing
- Security, safety
- Who and process to determine reuse
- Safety training? In schools?
- Think about seniors and handicap
- Highlights of reuse plan – fees? Connection to cleanup
- Feedback opportunity
- Funding for development