

Camp Bonneville Citizens Advisory Group
Meeting #7 - **DRAFT** Summary
6-8 p.m. Wednesday, September 10, 2008
Fire Station 88, 6701 NE 147th Ave.

Group Members:

Dennis Benson
Don Chapman
Bob Dingethal
David Hurt
Bob Pitman
Pam Rigby
Nathan Reynolds
Don Wastler
Jan Wojciehowski

Members Absent:

Bud Van Cleve
Rand Harris

Staff Members:

Jerry Barnett
Ben Forson
Mike Gage
Greg Johnson
Jeroen Kok
Jeanne Lawson
Kalin Schmoltd

Others:

Jim Anderson
Ric Bishop
Gary Collins

Welcome and Committee Business

Jeanne Lawson introduced Ric Bishop who is visiting from the Clark County Sheriff's office

Agenda review – The meeting will provide further information on the Cleanup Action Plan and potential future site uses.

Meeting #6 summary – There were no comments.

Report on Cleanup

Jerry Barnett noted that conversations between Ecology and the Army regarding the Additional Areas of Concern (AAOCs) have been proceeding slowly. The Army has indicated that they do not feel responsible for providing more funding to address the AAOCs with some exceptions. A meeting between the Army, the County, and BCRRT is scheduled for Sept. 24.

Part of Camp Bonneville consists of land held by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Since the last meeting, DNR has transferred 640 acres to the County. Jeroen Kok added that an additional 120 acres is set to be transferred from DNR to the County at the end of the year pending an evaluation of the land value.

Don Wastler noted that the Conservation Conveyance doesn't allow mining on the Army land, and asked whether it was permitted on the DNR land. Jeroen said that while DNR does retain mineral rights on transferred property, the chance of extracting those minerals is small.

Nathan Reynolds asked whether any costs would be associated with the land transfers. Jeroen said there would be no costs to the County. DNR will be reimbursed out of the state budget so they may purchase replacement property elsewhere in the state.

Sheriff's interim use proposal

Jerry explained that the FBI had been leasing the firing range at Camp Bonneville but that lease has now expired. The County Sheriff is now seeking use of the facility.

Ric Bishop explained that he has been tasked with finding a new firing range for the Sheriff's office. The Sheriff's office currently uses the English Pit range located near Harmony Sports Center. The English Pit range is the only such range in southwest Washington. Ric noted that the area is currently part of City's annexation plan and consequently the use of the range is not likely to be renewed. Ric asked the CAG for feedback on the possibility of using the former FBI facility at Camp Bonneville.

Don said that his neighborhood had been glad to accommodate the FBI presence and would likely welcome the Sheriff. Don invited Ric to attend the upcoming neighborhood briefing on the Reuse Plan on Sept. 16.

David Hurt asked how much land would be used for the range. Mike Gage estimated five acres. Jerry noted that no other uses had been slated for the firing range area. David asked whether the facility would be open to the public. Ric said that they have not usually opened the range to the public because of liability issues and the high frequency of range use. David asked whether State Troopers currently use the English Pit range. Jan Wojchowski suggested that they do.

George Brereton asked about the budget for procuring use of a range. Ric said he could get specific figures if needed.

Nathan Reynolds asked who would address repairs and maintenance on the range. Jerry said that the County would retain ownership. Jerry also noted that the FBI is currently accountable for cleanup of the range and the County will seek reimbursement for their use.

Jeroen asked whether the Sheriff would still seek use of Camp Bonneville if the English Pit range remained open. Ric said that the growth and density around the English Pit range make it likely that the Sheriff would seek another site anyway. Ric suggested that a move to Camp Bonneville would be permanent and not a temporary relocation.

David asked whether other police would have free use of the facility. Ric said that there would be fees for use that would go into the general fund. Jan noted the advantage of a police presence in the park. Ric confirmed that the Sheriff's office would be available and responsive if they were able to use the site.

Dennis Benson questioned the need to clean the firing range if use will continue. Jerry said that the option of continued use is still preliminary and that the range could be moved to another area. Jeanne asked whether use as a firing range was compatible with the site use. Jerry said that it seemed appropriate. Mike said he had no objections to the use as the interim owner and questioned whether Ecology could release BCRRT from responsibility for cleanup of the range if the use is to continue. Nathan suggested that the necessary cleanup might not need to be as extensive.

Nathan confirmed that the Sheriff's office would use the existing range for now and then move if required by the Reuse Plan. Jerry agreed. Nathan asked whether a formal recommendation was needed from the group. Jerry suggested that the committee keep the potential use in mind as the Reuse Plan is revisited. Ben Forson reiterated that regardless of whether the site is retained or moved, the FBI would be held accountable for the cleanup.

Dennis noted concerns about recreational use close to the firing range. He suggested that hours of use for the range be clearly posted so that people are not surprised by gunfire.

David asked about public use of the range. Jerry said that public firing ranges have been included in the draft Reuse Plan though they have not had much recent support. Jeroen pointed out that the range at English Pit may not close, though it is likely. Don noted that public use of a firing range will result in less organized and predictable use. He suggested that neighbors in the area would be more accommodating of organized exercises during predictable hours as long as there are periods of quiet. Jerry offered to discuss the issue at the neighborhood briefing on Sept. 16.

Overall Status

Ben said that nine ranges had been identified with impacted soils above the cleanup level. Soil removal was scheduled to begin in June although wetland permit issues delayed the process. Permits were finally issued in August requiring detailed archaeological monitoring to avoid removing significant objects. Soil excavation work will begin on Monday.

Hot spots were determined by averaging the concentrations of lead. The areas for excavation were delineated by an iterative process of sampling soil until the scope of the area to be excavated was identified. Range berms were not initially sampled because they were assumed to have higher concentrations. Berms will be excavated in six inch layers and sampled. If required, additional layers will be removed and the berm will be sampled again. This process will begin Monday. An archaeologist will be onsite to examine the soil to make sure no archaeological items are removed.

Cleanup Action Plan / Supplemental RIFS - brief update on status

The draft MEC CAP scheduled for September did not come through. A Supplemental RI/FS will summarize findings from the interim actions on roads, trails, and the Central Valley Floor (CVF). The RI/FS will help give a better understanding of the concentrations onsite. The RI/FS must be completed and the recommendations incorporated into the CAP. A draft CAP should reach Ecology by October and be available for public review and comment by winter. The CAG will have the opportunity to comment.

Ben described the contents and purpose of the CAP. The document is intended to provide a summary of all investigations showing levels of contamination on the property. The document will also include risk analysis for the contaminated areas. The CAP identifies proposed cleanup actions to address the contamination and it is the task of reviewers to assess whether the risks are commensurate with the level of contamination in each area and whether the cleanup actions are adequate.

Jerry offered to notify the group when the document is ready for review. He encouraged the committee to recruit additional reviewers and help them to understand the nature of the document.

Bob Dingethal noted that it would be challenging for the public to understand some of the concepts in the CAP. Ben said that there would be an informational meeting to help explain the contents.

Don asked whether the lead is likely to leach into the soil. Ben noted that lead tends to oxidize quickly which prevents it from leaching into soil or water. Ingestion poses the greatest danger.

Ben concluded by noting that there have been no changes in the groundwater monitoring. The monitoring wells closest to landfill continue to show large swings in perchlorate levels, the down-gradient wells remain stable, and no contaminants have been noted in the sentry wells.

Activities

Mike said that an outline of the CAP for RAU 3 should be completed by the end of September. No further actions are required for RAU 1 or RAU 2B. Work is underway on RAU 2A and RAU 3 final actions fall under the CAP.

Mike noted interim actions including clearance of the 2.36 range and ongoing MEC clearance. Findings in the CVF continue to be more than expected.

Mike noted some labor issues onsite involving a subcontractor and LNI. Steps are being taken to avoid subsequent lost work.

New MEC findings continue. AAOC 5 and AAOC 7 are yielding more than anticipated and munitions debris is typically found in similar areas as the MEC. Mike noted that this area was being expanded by what he believed to be consensus agreement to merge AAOC's 3, 5 and 7 across the valley floor into a new expanded AAOC 7.

Transects have been carried out through vegetated sloping areas to confirm that those areas were used only for maneuvers. Most of those areas have been clean.

RAU 3 covers the entire site. A draft CAP will be submitted on Sept. 30 to Ecology and the Army and will include actions for the nine AAOCs. Forty-three pages of supporting evidence were provided to the Army regarding the AAOCs and discussions are slated for Sept. 24.

The nine AAOCs are identified in the Supplemental RI/FS and are tentatively considered as the responsibility of the Army. BCRRT is responsible for addressing disclosed ranges and the Army is responsible for any unknown conditions and ranges that were not disclosed or identified. The Supplemental RI/FS will look at data from the past two years and lay out options for assessment.

Mike explained that the CAP provides for different levels of cleanup. Standard Target Area Treatment (STAT) includes anomaly avoidance, brush clearance, MEC subsurface clearance to frost depth, removal if necessary, and step outs as needed. Mike summarized the level of cleanup actions recommended for the different areas of previous use on the site. Mike offered to make the information available to the CAG for review. Jerry suggested that the summary would help clarify the contents of the CAP.

Don asked about poison oak removal on the site. Jerry said that public works weed management was working with Mike. Mike noted that while poison oak is not considered an invasive species, he would look out for areas that may need to be addressed.

Pam Rigby asked about clearance on the cemetery site. Mike said that BCRRT's contract is to clean the site based on the reuse plan which does not include the cemetery. A cemetery would require a level of clearance which is not currently part of the BCRRT role.

The Supplemental RI/FS would include a summary of the nine AAOCs not included previously. Appropriate cleanup for each area will be included. Mike showed an overlay of the AAOCs superimposed on the proposed reuse areas. He reminded the group that the tent and yurt camping area was originally placed on top of the stokes mortar range in AAOC 7. Mike summarized the nature of each AAOC site and the recommended cleanup. Treatments varied from STAT and excavation to institutional controls such as posting signs and flyers.

Site maintenance continues along with wetland and habitat restoration. Fences have been put in place to prevent deer from eating the endangered species "Checkered Mallow." Active reseeding is being used to repair vehicle rut damage caused during the wet season. The dry weather is also allowing proactive repair and construction of roads and drainage ditches.

BCRRT will take over weed control work from Clark County this month. Clark County has been pleased with progress thus far. Mike showed examples of several invasive species and the before and after effect of herbicidal treatments. Mike noted that they hope to use biological controls when practical. Mike also noted the challenge of preserving threatened species that damage other endangered species as in the case of a weevil species that harms the Checkered Mallow.

Mike concluded his presentation with recent photographs of bull elk and bear taken onsite.

Bob suggested that a summary of Mike's presentation would be helpful in soliciting comments on the CAP. He emphasized that people need to understand that specific solutions are being sought on a site-by-site basis. He added that people also need to be aware of the invasive species controls and other environmental considerations. Bob noted excitement from Gifford Pinchot regarding the presence of bears on the site.

Don noted the presence of less noticeable wildlife such as cougars, bobcats, and great horned owls. He expressed disappointment in the previous EIS for Camp Bonneville which seemed to miss quite a bit.

Nathan noted articles in the Oregonian regarding the upcoming conversations with the Army and asked whether Ecology would participate in the Sept. 24 discussions. Mike said that the discussion will be between the County, BCRRT, and the Army. Greg Johnson noted that Ecology would be onsite if needed.

Nathan asked about an additional cost figure reported in the Oregonian. Mike said the figure was not accurate.

George asked whether the Army needed to review the CAP before it can be released for review. Mike said that the Army according to the ESCA had two weeks to review the CAP before the final draft would be released to Ecology.

Update on Reuse Plan

Jerry noted that Commissioner Marc Boldt had written a letter to the Army inquiring about the feasibility of siting a veterans' cemetery at Camp Bonneville. The Army responded that the use wasn't envisioned under the conservation conveyance and that use as a cemetery would need a different conveyance that is not currently funded with this ESCA. The County is currently a proponent of the cemetery concept and is working towards the possibility. While they can offer support, they are constrained by the initial "no" from the Army. Other solutions may still exist. Bob noted that Bill Barron was trying to promote the option before resistance to the idea takes hold. He noted that the state and federal agencies also think the idea has merit, but they will only pursue the option if it is deemed easily feasible.

Don asked whether the Department of the Interior had issued any response to the potential use as a cemetery. Jerry said that they had not. Bob suggested that once the use is approved, then further exploration of funding can move forward. He said that DOI was not likely to interfere with the existing process.

Bob Pitman asked whether there was a deadline for modifications to the contract that would make additional funding impossible. Jerry said there was none that he was aware of.

Greg noted that the national cemetery would not clear the entire site at once. Rather, they would clear 20 acre parcels at a time. Construction support and monitoring would likely be adequate for preparing the potential areas. Hardly anything has been found in the proposed cemetery area yet. Jeanne suggested deferring further discussion of the cemetery until the next meeting.

Jeroen noted the previous discussion of AAOC 7 which was previously slated for tent and yurt camping. As of the last meeting, other potential tent and yurt sites were being explored. Relocating the site would have to address constraints imposed by the creek, riparian areas, wetlands, and steep topography while attempting to avoid the property line. The new potential site places the tent and yurt area closer to the RV area. Jeroen noted that the proposed cemetery area would have been considered as a possible camping location if the cemetery were not being considered. George noted that the new site appeared to overlap with AAOC 1 and 2. Jeroen said that the exact dimensions would be refined as the reuse plan moves forward.

George noted a recent article on Camp Bonneville in The Reflector. Nathan said that the article expressed concerns and questions about what is being planned and how the county will pay for it.

Next Steps

Jeanne noted that the fact sheet had been mailed to the interested parties list and copies were available at the meeting for the group to take and distribute. Nathan asked about the origin of the interested parties list. Jeanne suggested that the question be directed to Jim Gladson.

Don invited the group to attend the upcoming presentation by the County on the Reuse Plan at Proebstel Church on Tuesday Sept. 16 at 7:00 p.m.

- Next meeting: December 10, 2008.

Close