

**VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE  
INSTALLATION RESTORATION PROGRAM  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
10 June 2004**

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Mr. Tom Churan, Environmental Flight Chief, in place of Ms. Bea Kephart, called the Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB) Community Advisory Board (CAB) meeting to order at 1010 hours. Mr. Churan welcomed the CAB members and individual introductions were made.

Mr. Churan outlined the meeting's agenda:

- IRP Program Update
- Vandenberg Encroachment Issue
- Site 9 Horizontal Well Update
- Hot Shot Presentation
- New Member
- Member Questions/Comments
- Closing Remarks: Col David Thompson and Dr. Roger Welt

*IRP Program Update*

Mr. Churan provided an overview of funding for fiscal year 2004 (FY04). Currently the program includes the completion of Remedial Investigation (RI) Reports and Feasibility Studies at various sites, as well as pilot testing of innovative remediation technologies. Delays are being experienced however, in RI Reports due to DTSC review of human and ecological risk assessments. An expedited schedule is being developed with DTSC and DTSC/HERD is reassessing workloads and priorities in order to complete timely reviews.

*Vandenberg AFB Encroachment Overview*

Mr. Jim Rohr briefed the CAB on actions or constraints that cause or may cause the loss of, or restrictions to, the use of land, air, frequency, or sea maneuver areas required or planned by the DoD to maintain readiness. He began with a statement from the Secretary of Defense recognizing encroachment as a problem that is real and serious.

One of the encroachment issues faced by DoD is the designation of critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act. Over 300 special-status species reside on military installations. Another issue is the growing competition for frequency spectrum especially intended for airspace. In the last 10 years, DoD has lost 27 percent of frequency for aircraft to technologies such as cellular phones. Urban growth is a critical issue along with marine regulatory laws, competition for airspace, Clean Air Act requirements, and laws/regulations mandating noise abatement. These factors have contributed to operations being pushed off-base since growth around military installations is higher than the national average.

Federal and state initiatives have culminated in the 2003 Defense Authorization Bill, which authorized buffer zone initiatives with government and non-government organizations. In this way, DoD is partnering with outside agencies for future development of plans such as easement roads outside of bases to fend off encroachment. Furthermore, both California Senate Bill (SB) 1468 and California Assembly Bill (AB) 1108 have become laws as of 2002 and are being implemented. AB 1108 allows military installations to define boundaries of low-level flight paths, military impact zones, or special use airspace.

This bill also imposes additional requirements on community projects that would be within those boundaries.

SB 1468 amends California General Plan Law (GPL) and requires local governments to protect the military mission as part of long-term growth regulation. The military must provide required information to community planners. As of March 2004, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research has completed 75 percent of an Advisory Planning Handbook explaining how to reduce land use conflicts with the military. Cities and counties are encouraged to implement advisory guidelines but are not actually required to do so until the city or county undertakes its next general plan revision and an agreement is in place for the federal government to reimburse certain expenses.

California is taking such interest in encroachment issues largely because the military is the largest sector of the state's economy. California has more military installations than any other state in addition to the most closures taking place in 2005. By 2020, it is estimated that California's population will reach 45 million; equal to today's population plus that of Florida.

Encroachment pressures for VAFB include air space, sea space, and land space. VAFB Areas of Interest (AOIs) reflect a proactive approach to encroachment. Although VAFB does not own the AOIs outside the base, this policy goes hand in hand with AB 1108, SB 1468 and 2003 Defense Authorization Bill. AOIs allow VAFB to quickly respond to proposed community projects and conservation assessment proposals similar and not limited to urban development, wind turbines, and buffer zone acquisition proposals. AOI considerations lend themselves to launch hazards restricted areas and airfield takeoff/landing corridors. Maps of AOIs are estimated to be available for viewing in fall of 2004.

#### *IRP Site 9/SLC-4 West*

Ms. Amena Atta presented a briefing about the Interim Remedial Action (IRA) System. The 23 dual phase (groundwater and soil vapor) vertical extraction well system is located at the contamination source area of SLC-4W. A downgradient horizontal well barrier (plume control) system runs along Surf Road. Both horizontal and vertical extraction wells are equipped with groundwater pumps and underground conveyance piping to the main treatment pad for treatment of contaminated groundwater and vapor. Groundwater is treated with carbon adsorption for trichloroethylene (TCE) and ion exchange for perchlorate; soil vapor is treated with carbon adsorption for TCE and degradation products.

The horizontal well was installed in June 2000 at approximately 180 feet below ground. Due to mission launch activities, the well was redeveloped in September 2003 and April 2004. Groundwater extraction at the horizontal barrier well started in late April 2004. Groundwater and soil vapor extraction at the source area vertical wells has continued since late October 2003. Nearly 350,000 gallons of groundwater have been extracted through January 30, 2004. Approximately 445 pounds of volatile organic compound mass have been removed from soil vapor as of January 29, 2004. Treated water is recharged to the aquifer through three infiltration borings near the intersection of Surf and Dix Roads.

#### *Hot Shot Crew Presentation*

Col. Headley, filling in for Mark T. Smith, gave a briefing of the unique VAFB Fire Protection Flight Hot Shot Crew. Several other military bases have Hot Shots but characteristics of the one at VAFB, from its structure to training, set it apart from others. The term "Hot Shot" was coined from the actual equipment used to ignite backfires for control. VAFB has 98,000 burnable acres; 51,000 of those acres contain chaparral/coastal sage scrub vegetation types. This year there is a high risk for fires at an early time of year. Most of these fires will be manmade incidents. The history of major fires begins in 1977 when the Harris Fire burned 10,000 acres and there were four fatalities. In 1978 specially trained cadres of Vandenberg fire fighters were formed to improve the base wild land firefighting posture. The Hot Shots were formed in the following year with 13 members. In 2003, the crew was realigned to one GS-09

Superintendent, two GS-07 Captains, two GS-06 Squad Bosses, six GS-05 Senior Crew Members, and ten GS-04 or GS-0304 Crew Members. Established under an environmental variance, Hot Shots are funded by the Wing Civilian Pay.

The Hot Shot crew mission is to execute the Vegetation Management Program, provide fire suppression and mutual aid, and deliver disaster assistance. The Vegetation Management Program established the defensive measures of firebreaks, fuel breaks, and access roads. Canyons provide natural firebreaks while crewmembers utilize three self-contained bulldozers to create fuel breaks and maintain access roads. Prescribed burns, or defuels, are on a five to six year plan to maintain areas such as launch boundaries and power lines. Wind, humidity, and crew size along with other conditions must all be in place prior to beginning prescribed burns. Hot Shot's proactive approaches are key to the success of the Vegetation Management Plan. Recently the Global Information System was incorporated into the program.

Working together, the VAFB Hot Shot and fire crews are a professional, highly mobile, self-contained fire suppression and fuel management resource. The crewmembers have combined training of over 1,500 hours. From hands-on learning to intense classroom instruction, the VAFB fire squad actually backs up the Lompoc Fire Department when the city's fire fighters are called to duty; VAFB will send a crew to the city station to better manage the need for fire safety. Furthermore, the 76th Fire Brigade provides helicopters to assist in search and recovery. VAFB has numerous mutual aid agreements with local fire agencies and is reimbursed for its expenses on these incidents. A direct correlation is obvious between VAFB Fire and the community, which mirrors an efficient military civil service. Overall benefits of the Hot Shot Crew and the Fuel Management Program are preventive maintenance of national defense assets, safety of personnel, and environmental protection.

#### *Member Questions/Comments*

New member, Mr. Leo Havener, from Vandenberg Village Community Services District (CSD), was not available to be introduced at the time of the meeting.

#### *Closing Remarks*

Col. Thompson mentioned his retirement June 30 and acceptance to a new working experience. He also expressed VAFB's desire to provide good stewardship to the environment and the purpose for the committee to aid VAFB in advising and informing the community of such efforts.

Dr. Welt also forwarded his appreciation for the community and thanked the Hot Shot Crew and 76th Brigade for their services to VAFB and the community.

Other committee members added positive comments to the presentations delivered and the services provided. Community appreciation and involvement were highly regarded. Mr. Churan adjourned the meeting at 1120 hours and announced the next CAB meeting to be September 16, 2004, at the 30 MSG Conference Room, Bldg. 11777, VAFB.