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Report to

STAKEHOLDERS

<http://www.edwards.af.mil/penvmng/index.html>

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Environmental Management contractors earn Team of the Year award for 2005.

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The Restoration Advisory Board isn't the only effort Master Sgt. Julie Newton gives her time to outside of work. Since December 2004 Newton has been the South Base RAB representative and is a volunteer at a local therapeutic facility for handicapped children.



HOME SWEET HOME — This juvenile great-horned owl was released at Branch Memorial Park, which is located at Edwards Air Force Base. The owl was found at base housing.

Edwards takes environmental stewardship one step further

As a part of their duty, Environmental Management (EM) Natural Resources biologists at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) will often respond to sightings of animal injuries, assess and evaluate the animal then release it back into the wild.

The EM office, however, does not have a permit to rehabilitate wildlife. If necessary, sick and injured wildlife that are brought back to EM with treatable

injuries are transferred to rehabilitation centers scattered throughout Southern California.

Many of these centers are nonprofit organizations that rely on donations to operate. The animals are held at EM until a suitable center is contacted and the animal is transported to the facility. If the injury is irreparable, the animal is euthanized by a veterinarian.

See Responses, page 6

RAB Meeting Highlights

The following report highlights the latest quarterly meeting of the Restoraton Advisory Board (RAB) held Feb. 16 at North Edwards, Calif.

/// **Update of Operable Units 4/9 South Air Force Research Laboratory Proposed Plan** — The Proposed Plan for sites being considered for a technical impracticability waiver in Operable Units 4 and 9 at South Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) is scheduled to be available for public review at the end of March, according to a presentation by Patrice Hallman, Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) manager. The Proposed Plan describes alternatives being considered to address contamination in the groundwater beneath four sites. Fractured granite bedrock prevents the Air Force from treating the chlorinated solvent contamination in an efficient, cost-effective manner. The preferred alternative includes land-use controls and the monitoring of groundwater movement. A public comment period is tentatively scheduled for April. *The Proposed Plan release date and public comment period are subject to change.*

/// **Final Federal Facility Agreement Schedule** — Environmental Restoration Program manager Kathryn Curtis announced the expected release dates for the Proposed Plans of 10 cleanup areas. The Air Force intends to release the last Proposed Plan by the end of calendar year 2008. Five Proposed Plans are expected in 2006; two in 2007; and three in 2008. *The release dates are subject to change.*

/// **RAB Training Agenda** — Gary Hatch, Environmental Public Affairs, presented training topics to the RAB members. The cleanup subjects ranged from Proposed Plans and Records of Decision to new chemicals of concern. Given the maturity of the ERP, which began in the early 1990s, the training would focus more on the processes that occur toward the end of the cleanup program than earlier field investigation techniques. The RAB's Public co-chair, Ruby Messersmith, suggested that the training include a teambuilding session. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for early June.

The next meeting of the RAB will be at 5:30 p.m. in May 25, 2006 in Mojave, Calif., at the Veteran's Building. The public is invited to attend.

RTS

Next RAB Meeting

May 25, 2006
5:30 p.m.
Mojave

Mojave Veteran's Building
15580 "O" Street

The public is invited.

If you have a question about the Edwards Air Force Base Environmental Management program, you may address it to Stakeholders Forum, Attn: Gary Hatch or Miriam Horning, 5 East Popson Ave., Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060, or send e-mail to: 95 ABW/PAE@edwards.af.mil

Report to Stakeholders is a publication of the Edwards AFB Environmental Management Division. Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing Environmental Management efforts at Edwards AFB. It currently has a circulation of 6,000, including about 2,000 subscribers.

Contents of the *Report to Stakeholders* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.

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Report to STAKEHOLDERS



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- Base Civil Engineer..... James Judkins
- Division Chief Environmental Management..... Robert Wood
- Branch Chief Environmental Restoration..... Ai Duong
- Branch Chief Environmental Conservation..... Gerald Callahan
- Branch Chief Environmental Quality..... Robert Shirley



Hazardous waste employees get Team of the Year award for 2005



JOB WELL DONE

JT3/CH2M HILL employees working at Edwards Air Force Base's hazardous waste support facility won recognition as JT3's Team of the Year for 2005 after twelve consecutive years of maintaining the facility free from compliance violations. Pictured following a ceremony honoring their achievement are, from left, Dave Parker, Ruben Soliz, Sharon Soliz, Cat McDonald, Julian Gumayagay, Glenn Beshara and Jeff Shastid. Not pictured is Tim Lacey. As the team's JT3/CH2M HILL section manager, Gumayagay was part of the nominating process and excluded from the award.

A team of seven JT3/CH2M HILL Hazardous Waste Support Facility (HWSF) employees and their supervisors at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) were selected as JT3's Team of the Year. The honor marks the first time JT3/CH2M HILL employees have received the Team of the Year award since the J-TECH Range Support Contract was awarded in 2002 and JT3's partnership with CH2M HILL for environmental technical services at Edwards AFB began.

The role of the HWSF is to manage paint wastes, oil, jet fuel residual and used cleaning solutions, and other types of hazardous waste materials generated at Edwards AFB. Nomination of the HWSF team for the JT3 award followed the 12th consecutive successful annual audit by the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Each year the state audits the facility to gauge compliance with regulations. The Air Force might have faced significant fines over the past dozen years had the HWSF not passed all inspections with flying colors.

The HWSF Team of the Year includes JT3/CH2M HILL employees Dave Parker, Jeff Shastid, Glenn Beshara, Ruben Soliz and Tim Lacey. The group's technical lead is Sharon Soliz. Cat McDonald, also a JT3/CH2M HILL employee, is a technical advisor to the group, along with Mark Taberner, a manager employed by JT3.

"Our team works really well together," Sharon Soliz said. "Dedication to keeping the base in compliance is bred into each of us and

there's not a team member who would not step in to do whatever is needed."

"The JT3 Team of the Year Award honors the top team from among the year's quarterly winners selected from 850 employees at the JT3 Edwards AFB annex," said JT3 Program Manager Jim Tedeschi, speaking at a quarterly awards ceremony where the HWSF team's achievement was recognized.

"It's a tough competition to pull off and a great honor and achievement for the team that wins. This was the first time we had a clean sweep by environmental and it stands as a reminder that environmental compliance is as important to the Air Force mission as the other things we do," Tedeschi said. (Former JT3/CH2M HILL employee Andrea CurryLow, a biologist, also was recognized in the same time period with an Employee of the Quarter award by JT3).

The centralized hazardous waste facility at Edwards AFB has been in continuous operation since 1993. The facility processes about 220,000 pounds of bulk or solid hazardous waste each month. Edwards is committed to providing cost-effective hazardous waste management. To ensure that federal, state and local laws and Air Force regulations are followed, HWSF staff members provide training to base personnel on safe handling of hazardous waste. They also procure waste disposal contracts, perform self-inspections, and track the disposal of all hazardous waste from the point where it is generated to a safe, permanent storage facility.

Base bomber technician actively participates in local community

As a Master Sgt. in the United States Air Force, Julie Newton takes service to her country seriously. But she also understands the value of giving back to the community on a personal level. She routinely volunteers at a local therapeutic facility for handicapped children and acts as the South Base representative to the Edwards Air Force Base Restoration Advisory Board (RAB).

Newton has a history of helping others. Her current position has her managing 21 people in the Support Section at South Base. Her section provides the supplies and equipment used for airplane repair and maintenance. Although her job requires her to spend much of her time behind a desk, Newton tries to work in the field as much as possible. "It's hard for me to help anyone if I'm sitting in an office all day," Newton said. "I've been working Avionics for a long time. I know from experience how to solve problems and can help when others get stuck finding a solution."

Newton joined the Air Force in 1988 to pursue a career in photography. But things didn't work out as she expected. "There was a mix-up with my recruitment," Newton said. "I enlisted to become a photographer but my test scores got me assigned to Bomber Avionics."

Not that she's complaining about the placement. As an electrical technician, Newton has worked on three bombers. "My career in the Air Force has been amazing. Where else would I have been able to work on these cool planes?"

Newton says her favorite was the B-52. "It was like working on a classic car versus the newer models. The B-52 was a classic. You could get under the hood and fix the problem manually. The B-1 and B-2 models are controlled by computers. You need to use diagrams in a technical manual to locate the problem."

Newton was assigned to the B-52 in Guam, where she met her husband of 16 years – Dave. She then traveled to South Dakota to work on the B-1 and finally ar-



VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE — Master Sgt. Julie Newton is no stranger to the time she volunteers to the community. Being a Restoration Advisory Board member is just one of the many ways she gives back.

rived at Edwards in 2001 for the B-2.

Avionics involves troubleshooting problems, something Newton enjoys. "Troubleshooting is fun," Newton said. "Everything is interlinked and depends on one another to work correctly. You test the connections to see where the breakdown occurred." During her 18-year career, she has worked on computer, communications, navigation and mission systems.

Newton normally works behind the scenes. Getting the chance to watch the planes in action was a memorable moment for her. "I did a short tour in Bahrain [near Saudi Arabia] and saw what was really need-

ed on the front line," Newton said. "Working here at Edwards, we're a little removed from the action. Bahrain showed me that what we do here supports our troops in the field. And we need to keep them in mind when we're working on projects."

Newton may work behind the scenes at South Base but on her personal time Newton works as a front-line volunteer at Saddle Up. This nonprofit organization uses horses to provide therapeutic riding for handicapped children. "The muscles used to ride a horse are the same ones used for walking," Newton said. "Some of these children have difficulty walking, so the riding helps them

exercise their muscles. The activity makes the muscles stronger, which can help the children progress to walkers or even walk without assistance."

Newton first heard about Saddle Up on the radio two years ago. She signed up right away and hasn't looked back. "I cannot describe how rewarding it is to see the joy on the kids' faces," Newton said. "I get so much out of watching them have fun and helping them achieve their goals."

Last year, Newton logged over 200 volunteer hours. She plans to attend a workshop later this year to become a certified instructor. "Saddle Up is a nationally accredited riding center for the handicapped," Newton said. "Two instructors are leaving and we need to fill the space. As a lesson assistant, I get to work alongside the children. But as an instructor, I'll be even more involved."

In addition to working as a lesson assistant, Newton also takes pictures for the Saddle Up website. "Founder Lisa DeJaynes relies on volunteers and donations to keep her camp running," Newton said. "I try to do as much as possible to help out." Currently the Palmdale, Calif., camp has 50 children and 10 horses.

Saddle Up is getting website photos from an award-winning photographer. When she

was younger, Newton won the 4-H Trading Exhibit two years in a row. Only two pictures from each state win the honor of being in the Trading Exhibit. 4-H is a nationwide organization that teaches young Americans leadership, citizenship and life skills.

When she's not snapping pictures for Saddle Up, Newton loves to capture landscapes in the early morning or twilight hours. "I may not have been able to make photography into a career," Newton said. "But I have developed it into a very nice hobby."

Newton has a natural love of the environment and being outdoors. She grew up in the small farming town of Peosta, Iowa. They did not own a farm, but her grandfather maintained a good-sized vegetable garden. He would take his grandchildren to the park to teach them the names of trees and plants.

Growing up in a farming town has made Newton aware of environmental issues. "I still remember when dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane, or DDT, became a concern," Newton said. "Farms had been using it to keep the crops healthy. Now that the public is aware of how pesticides affect the environment, we are much more careful with what we use."

Her agricultural background prompted

Newton to apply for the South Base position on the RAB, which provides two-way communication between the public and the Air Force about the hazardous waste cleanup at Edwards AFB. "My supervisor, Senior Master Sgt. Michael Gillette, was leaving and asked me if I was interested in taking his place on the RAB. It sounded like a great opportunity to learn more about Edwards and be a spokesperson for concerns from South Base."

Newton became a RAB member in December 2004. She was unable to attend the 2004 RAB training, but feels future training will benefit her as a representative. "I'm a little lost when the cleanup technology is discussed at the RAB meetings. Hopefully, the training will fill in some of the holes." The RAB plans to hold another training session in the coming months.

So far, Newton has not received any urgent questions or concerns from her coworkers. "I distribute the *Report to Stakeholders*, which explains what is happening on the environmental front at Edwards," Newton said. "I hope my coworkers know they can ask me to pass along questions or concerns to the RAB. I'm always here to help."

RTS



REPRESENTATIVES

South Base Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) member, Julie Newton, left, listens intently along with Mojave RAB member Victor Yaw at a meeting held in Boron, Calif.

RESPONSES: Part of their day-to-day duties, biologists often respond, evaluate injured animals

From page 1

“Edwards AFB is a steward of the environment,” says Robert Wood, division chief of EM. “We are responsible for taking care of the land and animals that may be disturbed by our activity.”

During the period of July to December 2005, the Natural Resources Section rescued 13 animals – 5 barn owls, 1 american kestrel, 3 red-tailed hawks, 1 turkey vulture, 2 ravens and 1 great-horned owl. Hooty, a great-horned owl, was found in one of the housing areas in early July 2005. He was released back into the wild a few weeks later near his original capture site by a biologist and Adopt a Pet (APET), a volunteer organization on base formed to save or improve the lives of pets and other animals. Hooty’s rehabilitation took place at the Ojai Raptor Center.

Although birds make up the majority of animals rescued on base, contract biologists respond to calls for all types of animals. These include desert tortoises, coyotes and snakes.

“Not all animals need to be rescued,” JT3/CH2M HILL biologist Felicia Griego said. “In some cases, we leave the animal alone or return it to its natural environment.”

The most common calls are for young birds that have fallen from their nests. The biologists recommend that the bird either be returned to the nest or left alone.

“Unless the bird is in immediate danger from a pet, predator or vehicle traffic, the best thing to do is nothing,” Griego said. “The parents will continue to feed and protect their young, even if your scent is transferred to the bird.”

During the summer, Natural Resources will respond to calls about dehydrated birds. “When in doubt about an animal’s health or condition, do not hesitate to contact EM,” Griego said, “we’re qualified to assess the animals and it’s a part of everyday work duties.”

Animals sent to rehabilitation centers are normally released back into the wild. A few are trained to be education animals. “An education animal cannot survive in the wild on its own,” Bratton said. “These animals are not releasable and that makes them ideal as teaching tools for the public.”

If a sick or injured animal is seen off base, contact a local veteri-



IN HARM'S WAY — A desert tortoise is seen next to railroad tracks. It is highly recommended that Desert Tortoises be left alone unless they are in harm's way.

narian, animal control shelter, wildlife waystation or fish and game for assistance.

“Sick or injured animals are easy to spot,” Griego said. “They won’t run or fly away when you approach. Normally, this signals that something is wrong with the animal.”

Environmental Management also responds to calls of dead birds. The birds are evaluated for diseases, such as West Nile Virus, and are disposed of properly. The Natural Resources Section does not recommend that you handle the animal yourself. Please contact the EM customer service desk at 277-1401 for assistance. For all desert tortoise sightings, you are urged to contact EM immediately.



CATCH AND RELEASE — JT3/CH2M HILL biologist Mark Bratton, left, prepares to release a juvenile great-horned owl into the wild, while James Johannesmeyer looks on. Above, colleague Eric Peffer evaluates an American Kestrel to make sure it is OK before its release.

Frequently Asked Animal Rescue Questions:

A wild animal is trapped in my house/yard. How do I get it out?

- If the animal is in your house, open the closest door and close off as many rooms as possible that do not lead outdoors. Turn off the lights and leave the animal alone. It should find its way out.
- If the animal is a bird, open all possible windows and doors to the outside (again, close off as many rooms as possible) and turn off the lights. Cover any windows that are not open so the bird won't try to fly out through them.
- If the animal is in your yard, do not chase it out because this can stress the animal and make it defensive. Leave the gates open and it will find its own way out.



BACK IN THE WILD — Biologists found this bat, a western pipistrelle, in an outside corner of someone's house on base. It was captured and evaluated before being transferred to an open area on base.



A-OK — A Cooper's Hawk rescued by biologists and released back into the wild.

I found a baby bird. What do I do?

- If possible, don't do anything. If the baby has a full set of feathers and is hopping around on the ground, it is probably healthy and learning to fly. The parents continue to feed the baby during this period and keep a close watch over it. The best thing to do is to keep pets away from the baby and leave it alone. If it appears to be in danger from people, animals or cars, move it to a safe location within 50 feet.
- If the baby does not have all its feathers yet, it probably fell out of its nest. If you know where the nest is and can replace it, do so. The mother will return; it is a myth that birds will not return if you touch the baby.
- If you cannot reach the nest, a substitute can be made from a strawberry box or shoebox. Attach the substitute nest as close as possible to the old nest. If the baby is cold, warm it before returning it to the nest by placing it in a towel-lined box with a hot water bottle filled with warm water.

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Published data and documents relating to the Environmental Restoration Program are available for public review in information repositories at four locations. The current information repositories are located in the cities of Boron, Lancaster and Rosamond, as well as Edwards AFB. They are updated when new documents are released.

If you have any questions about information in the repositories, please contact Gary Hatch, Environmental Public Affairs at (661) 277-1454 or through e-mail at 95 ABW/PAE@edwards.af.mil.

**Location Days and Hours of Operation**

Location	Days and Hours of Operation
Edwards AFB Library 5 W. Yeager Blvd. Building 2665 Edwards AFB, Calif. (661) 275-2665	Mon-Thurs 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fri 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat & Sun 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Kern County Public Library Wanda Kirk Branch 3611 Rosamond Blvd. Rosamond, Calif. (661) 256-3236	Tue & Wed Noon - 8 p.m. Thurs-Sat 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Los Angeles County Public Library 601 W. Lancaster Blvd. Lancaster, Calif. (661) 948-5029	Mon-Wed 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Thurs & Fri 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sat 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Col. Vernon P. Saxon, Jr. Aerospace Museum 26962 Twenty Mule Team Road Boron, Calif. (760) 762-6600	Mon-Sun 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.



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