



# Report to STAKEHOLDERS

April 2007

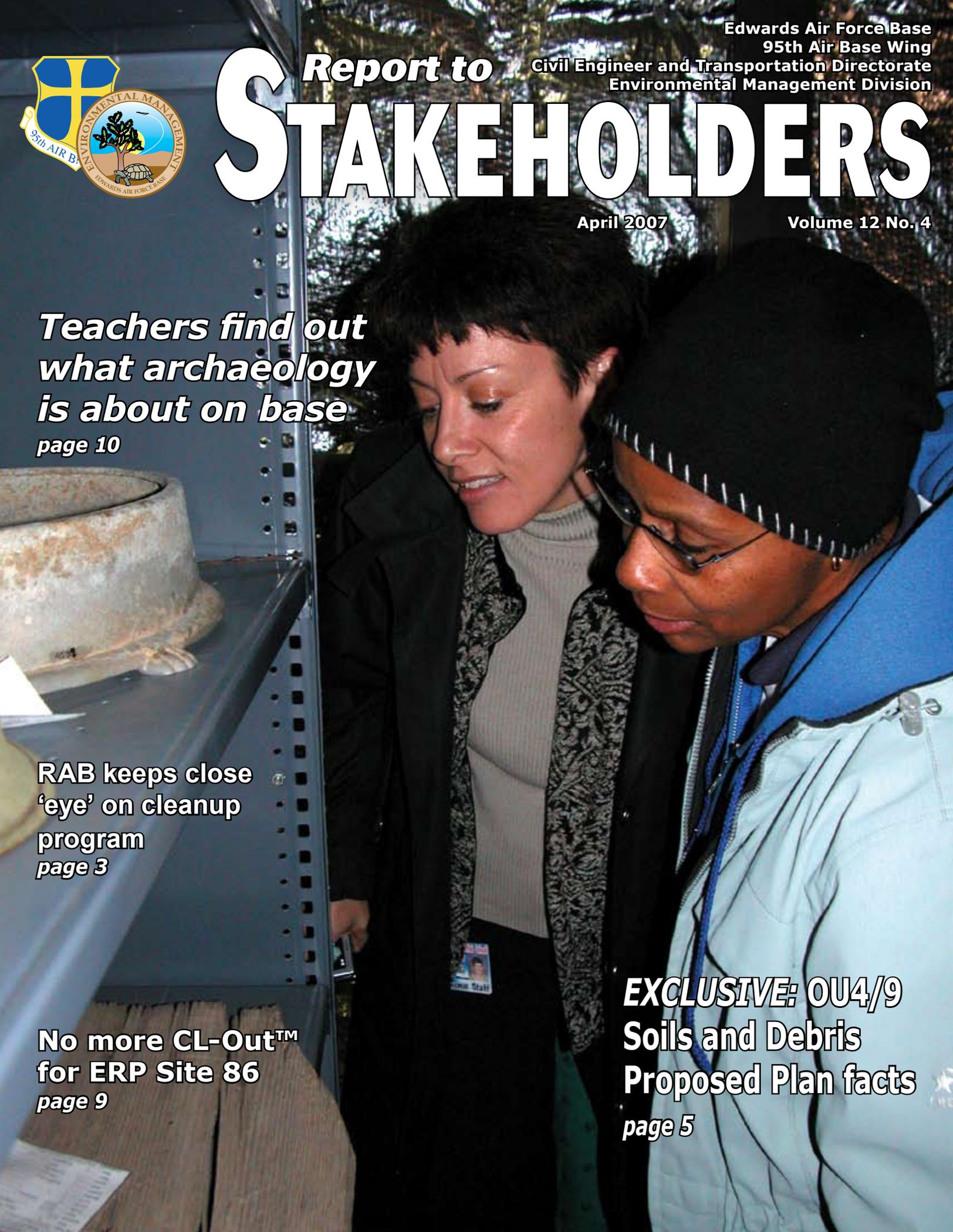
Volume 12 No. 4

**Teachers find out  
what archaeology  
is about on base**  
page 10

**RAB keeps close  
'eye' on cleanup  
program**  
page 3

**No more CL-Out™  
for ERP Site 86**  
page 9

**EXCLUSIVE: OU4/9  
Soils and Debris  
Proposed Plan facts**  
page 5



## *Report to* **STAKEHOLDERS**

*Report to Stakeholders* is a publication of the Edwards Air Force Base Environmental Management Division. Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing Environmental Management efforts on base. 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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Comments or questions should be directed to: Gary Hatch, 95 ABW/PAE, 5 E. Popson Ave., Bldg. 2650A, Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060, (661) 277-1454.

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**Branch Chief,  
Environmental Quality**  
*Robert Shirley*

### Next RAB Meeting

**May 17, 2007**

**5:30 p.m.**

**Boron, Calif.**

**Senior Citizen Center**

**27177 Twenty Mule Team Road**

**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 E. Popson Ave., Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060, or send e-mail to: [95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil](mailto:95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil)

#### ON THE COVER:

*Two teachers take a look at artifacts that are stored at the Curation Facility. Edwards Air Force Base hosted teachers for a Mojave Environmental Education Consortium tour Feb. 22.*



# Restoration Advisory Board follows base cleanup closely

**R**AB – no it’s not the name of the latest craze in dance music. Rather, the Restoration Advisory Board is a group of individuals organized under federal guidelines to offer public feedback and advice on environmental cleanup efforts at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB).

“Our purpose is to keep an eye on the base’s cleanup projects,” said Ruby Messersmith, the North Edwards representative and RAB public co-chair. “All of these communities are interested and we don’t want our drinking water contaminated.”

By attending regular RAB meetings, Messersmith and the other board members have learned that while the base has 471 cleanup sites, about 80 percent of those have already met cleanup guidelines and none of the sites threatens any drinking water source – either on base or off.

Restoration Advisory Boards are a key component of public involvement for military installations. The beginnings of that public involvement is decades old.

It was the Love Canal tragedy of 1978 that set the stage for a change in national attitude toward unrestricted toxic dumping. In the late 1950s, approximately 100 homes and a school were built on top of the cover of a previous municipal and industrial chemical dumpsite, creating a small neighborhood that covered 36 square blocks in the southeastern corner of Niagara Falls, New York.

By Aug. 7, 1978, President Jimmy Carter had declared a federal emergency for the town. Eventually, hundreds of families were relocated and their homes purchased by the government. Unfortunately, the result of exposure to those chemicals followed the residents to their new homes in the forms of birth defects, cancer and significant health problems.

Two years later, the U.S. Congress passed legislation that gave the government a way to assign responsibility and exact payment for the cleanup of



**A FEW MEMBERS OF THE BOARD** — Restoration Advisory Board Co-chair Ruby Messersmith, left, along with Ai Duong, ERP Branch Chief, John Harris, Department of Toxic Substances Control project manager and Bill Brandweiner, the alternate member for NASA-Dryden.

contaminated sites. This legislation, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), also known as Superfund, formed the foundation for the RAB process – two-way communication between the public and the officials responsible for the cleanup.

Today, there are more than 250 installations across the United States and its territories with participating RABs. The RAB at Edwards AFB consists of community or public representatives, representatives from federal and state environmental regulatory agencies, the 95th Air Base Wing vice commander, and the base Environmental Restoration Branch Chief.

RAB meetings at Edwards AFB are held

quarterly and are open to the public. A recess during the meeting allows members of the public an opportunity to bring concerns or questions to the attention of one of the community representatives.

The Edwards RAB was originally formed in 1992 as a Technical Review Committee, and changed its name two years later. Members do not have to be experts in environmental restoration, but they do need to live or work in the community they represent and be sponsored by a community organization.

“RAB members need to interact with the residents in their communities, attend the meetings, become involved and

See RAB, page 4

## RAB

### From page 3

listen,” said Messersmith, who has been involved with the board for more than 11 years. “The Air Force uses so many acronyms that there needs to be a time element for new members to understand their meanings and the ongoing cleanup

efforts.”

Messersmith, who worked at Edwards AFB for 12 years starting in 1958, was well aware of the fuels, solvents and other chemicals used on base. She decided to become involved with the RAB after reading about possible contamination in a local newspaper. According to Messersmith, the RAB process is definitely working at Edwards AFB.

“When I started, there were potentially over 500 hot spots on the base,” Messersmith said, “now, all have been analyzed and Records of Decision are in process.”

Messersmith said she feels her work to keep the contamination on record has been one of her greatest contributions to the RAB and the base.

RTS



#### PRESENTER

*Kathryn Curtis, left, a program manager for the Environmental Restoration Program at Edwards Air Force Base, talks with John Harris, Remedial Project Manager for the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.*

## Restoration Advisory Board Meeting Highlights

The following report highlights the latest quarterly meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) held Feb. 8, 2007, in California City, Calif.

/// **Soil Flushing at Site 285 North Base, Operable Unit 5/10** – A recent treatability study demonstrated the effectiveness of soil flushing to extract perchlorate from soil at Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) Site 285, located at North Base. Soil flushing uses a buried sprinkler system to inject clean water over a patch of soil contaminated with perchlorate. The water dissolves the perchlorate, much like salt dissolves in water, and moves it through the soil into the groundwater below. An existing groundwater extraction and treatment system, known as selective ion exchange, then removes the flushed contaminant from the groundwater.

Kathryn Curtis, program manager with the ERP, said the soil flushing caused a spike of perchlorate in the groundwater, showing that perchlorate was effectively moved from the soil into the groundwater. The ion-exchange system then removed the perchlorate from the groundwater. Soil testing after the soil flushing was completed also confirmed a significant decrease in the soil-perchlorate concentration. Data from the soil-flushing study will be used to compare this remedial alternative to other cleanup solutions for application at other sites that have perchlorate-contaminated soil.

The next meeting of the RAB will be May 17, 2007, at 5:30 p.m. at the Senior Citizens Center, 27177 Twenty Mule Team Road in Boron, Calif.

# ERP Fact Sheet



April 2007



## Air Force Seeks Public Comment on Laboratory Soil and Debris Cleanup Plan

**AIR FORCE TESTS MOON ROCKET MOTOR AT AFRL -** Deluge water turns to steam during a 1960s test of a Saturn V rocket engine at Test Stand 1-B. Test Stand 1-B is Site 318 in the Air Force's cleanup program at Edwards Air Force Base.

**T**he Air Force is asking the public to comment on proposed cleanup plans for 18 sites with contaminated soil and debris at the Air Force Research Laboratory at Edwards Air Force Base. The Air Force Research Laboratory is in the eastern half of the base, south of the off-base community of Boron. None of these sites can be accessed by the public without permission from the Air Force.

An Air Force report entitled *CERCLA Proposed Plan for Cleanup at the Soil and Debris Sites, Operable Units 4 and 9*,

*Air Force Research Laboratory, Edwards AFB, California* describes plans for the environmental cleanup at the sites.

**Public comments will be accepted on the plan until May 15, 2007.**

This document describes and compares cleanup or restoration alternatives proposed by the Air Force in agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Printed copies of the Proposed Plan are available at the four information repositories listed on page 4. The document is also available to the public on the internet at <http://bsx.edwards.af.mil/environmental/>. Choose the **Documents for Public Review** folder and download **CERCLA Proposed Plan for Cleanup at the Soil and Debris Sites, Operable Units 4 and 9, AFRL, Edwards AFB.**

This Fact Sheet describes how Edwards Air Force Base is proposing to deal with soil and debris contamination at 18 Air Force Research Laboratory sites.

## Soil and Debris Sites at the Air Force Research Laboratory

Site	Description	Proposed Alternative
<b>Operable Unit 4</b>		
Site 7	Test Area 1-46 Beryllium-Contaminated Earth Piles	No Further Action
Site 13	Closed AFRL Landfill	Further Monitoring with Land Use Controls
Site 26	Former Fire Training Area	No Further Action
Site 36	Test Area 1-21 Former Wastewater Evaporation Tank	Land Use Controls
Site 150	Building 8451 Former Waste Evaporation Ponds	No Further Action
Sites 153 and 396	Dry Wells Associated with Buildings 8419, 8421, 8425, and 8431	No Further Action
Site 166	Building 8240 Former Waste Discharge Area and Removed Waste Oil	No Further Action
Site 167	Test Area 1-46 Beryllium Firing Range	Land Use Controls
Areas of Concern 170 and 171	Building 8595 Indoor Vapor Degreaser Pit and Indoor Sump	No Further Action
Site 172	Building 8595 Outdoor Waste Sump	No Further Action
Site 312	Test Area 1-14 Poly-chlorinated Bi-Phenyls (PCB) Spill Area	Clean Closure Through Excavation
Site 318	Test Area 1-120 Catch Basin and Evaporation Pond	Land Use Controls
Site 329	Test Area 1-46 Former Wash Rack and Oxidation Pond	No Further Action
<b>Operable Unit 9</b>		
Sites 6 and 113	Abandoned Mine Shafts 1 and 2	Land Use Controls
Site 115	Test Area 1-100 Missile Silos 1 and 2	Capping with Land Use Controls

The 18 sites are identified in the table on page 2 and shown in the map on page 3. Most of these areas are close to the active part of the Air Force Research Laboratory. Each of them is described in detail within the *Proposed Plan*.

The contaminated soil and debris at the 18 areas are related to rocket engine and flight testing. Two of the areas are abandoned mine shafts that predate the Air Force. The mine shafts were used by the Air Force for hazardous waste disposal between 1959 and 1967.

The soil contamination ranges from petroleum and solvents to exotic rocket fuels like perchlorate and beryllium. Hazardous buried debris was found at four sites. Plans for monitoring or cleaning up contaminated groundwater beneath the soil are being addressed in several other *Proposed Plans*.

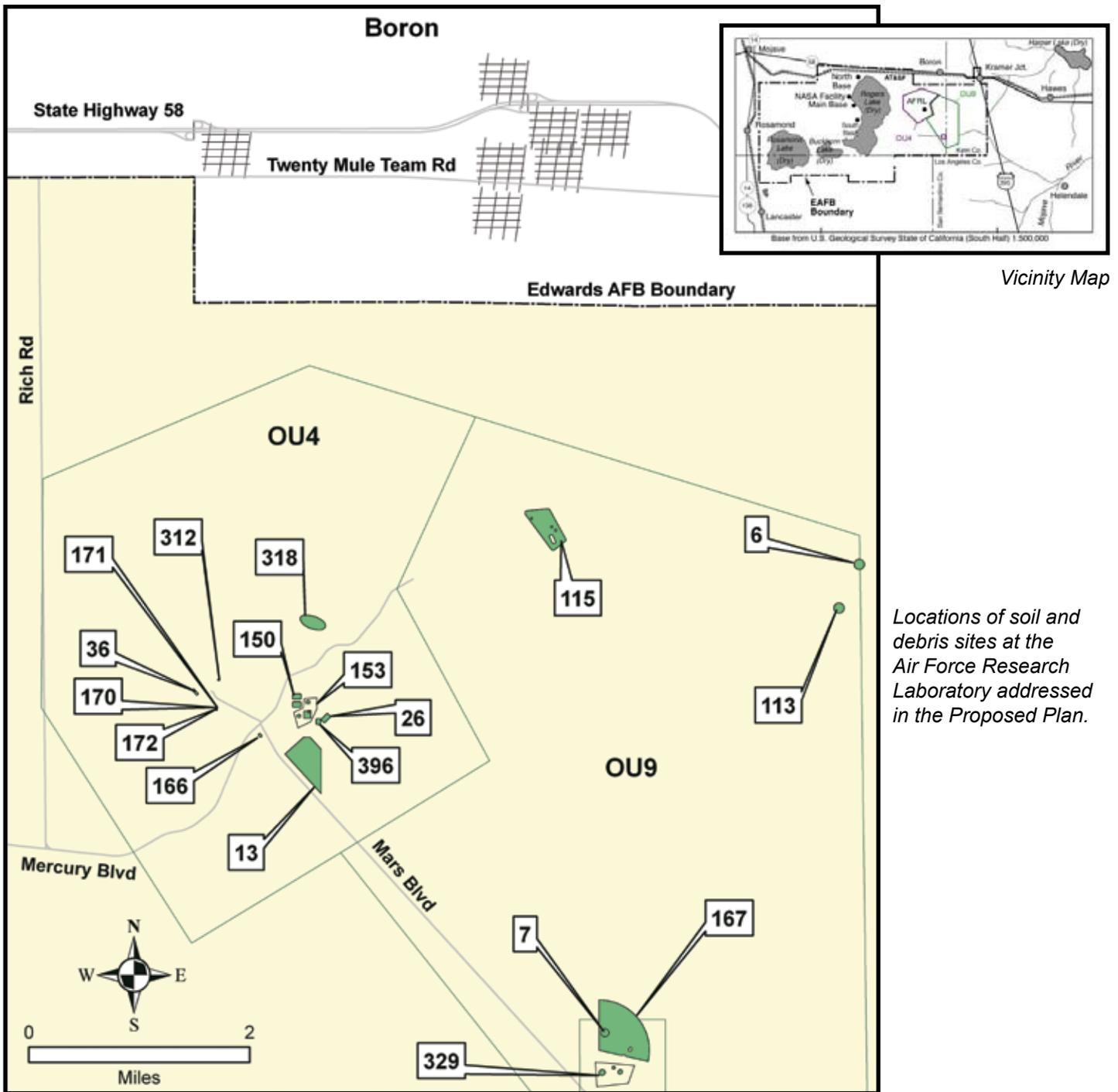
The Air Force is dividing the 18 areas into two categories: eight *further action* sites and 10 *no further action sites*. The further action sites are hazardous enough that cleanup or future land use controls are required to protect people and the environment. The no further action sites are areas that have already been cleaned up or where tests show so little contamination that they are not hazardous to people or the environment.

### Alternatives

Alternatives for cleaning up the further action sites include excavation and disposal off-site; capping sites (putting a cover over them); land farming; and no action. (No action is always included to compare against the other alternatives.)

Many of the alternatives include land use controls. Land use control means the Air Force will restrict future use of the areas.

The costs of alternatives for cleanup



Locations of soil and debris sites at the Air Force Research Laboratory addressed in the Proposed Plan.

and future control of the land range from zero dollars (Alternative 1 - No action) to \$278 million (over 30 years; Alternative 3 for Site 318).

The *Proposed Plan* evaluates all of the alternatives against nine criteria, or standards, set up in the federal environmental regulation called the *Comprehensive Environmental Response and Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980* (CERCLA),

or Superfund law. Table 5 of the *Proposed Plan* compares the alternatives to the nine criteria.

**Public Participation and Comments**

The Air Force is providing information regarding the cleanup of these soil and debris areas to the public through the Restoration Advisory Board, four information

repositories, the administrative record file for the site, and the monthly publication *Report to Stakeholders*.

Meetings for the public and laboratory workers will also be held on May 1, 2007. The off-base public meeting/availability session will be held at West Boron Elementary, 12300 Del Oro Street, in Boron, starting at 5:30 p.m.

## More Information Available

The Air Force encourages the public to learn more about these 18 areas and cleanup activities already completed and proposed for the future. All documents that the base used to make decisions about the cleanup for these soil and debris sites at the Air Force Research Laboratory are in the base's administrative record. To view the full administrative record, contact Gary Hatch during regular business hours at:

**95 ABW/PAE**

**Attn: Gary Hatch**

**5 E. Popson Ave., Bldg. 2650A  
Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060**

**Phone: (661) 277-1454**

**Fax: (661) 277-6145**

**E-mail: [95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil](mailto:95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil)**

**Hours: By appointment only,  
Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

A subset of decision documents is available at the four Information Repository locations listed in the green box above.

## To Make a Comment

Comments on the *Proposed Plan* may be made at the public meetings or by mail, e-mail, or fax your comments. Send comments to Gary Hatch using the contact information above. A form is provided at the end of the *Proposed Plan*, but written comments are accepted in any form. Comments must be received no later than May 15, 2007.

## How to Get More Information

For more information on the soils and debris contamination at the AFRL, technical documents may be reviewed at the following Information Repositories.

Edwards AFB Library  
5 W. Yeager Blvd.  
Building 2665  
Edwards AFB, Calif.  
(661) 275-2665

Los Angeles County Public Library  
601 W. Lancaster Blvd.  
Lancaster, Calif.  
(661) 948-5029

Kern County Public Library  
Wanda Kirk Branch  
3611 Rosamond Blvd.  
Rosamond, Calif.  
(661) 256-3236

Col. Vernon P. Saxon, Jr.  
Aerospace Museum  
26922 Twenty Mule Team Road  
Boron, Calif.  
(760) 762-6600

Please join us for a  
**Public Meeting/Public Availability Session**  
to discuss the

**CERCLA Proposed Plan for Cleanup at the  
Soil and Debris Sites, Operable Units 4 and 9,  
Air Force Research Laboratory,  
Edwards AFB, California**

**May 1, 2007 • 5:30 p.m.**

West Boron Elementary School  
12300 Del Oro Street  
Boron, California

For more information on the meeting, please contact Gary Hatch at (661) 277-1454 or e-mail [95abw.pae@edwards.af.mil](mailto:95abw.pae@edwards.af.mil).

Printed copies of the Proposed Plan are available at the four information repositories listed above. The document is also available to the public on the internet at <http://bsx.edwards.af.mil/environmental/>. Choose the **Documents for Public Review** folder and download **CERCLA Proposed Plan for Cleanup at the Soil and Debris Sites, Operable Units 4 and 9, AFRL, Edwards AFB.**

# “Hungry Bacteria®” injected at Site 86 has small appetite

In February 2006, Environmental Restoration Program employees started a pilot study at Operable Unit 2, Site 86, to test the effectiveness of a commercial bioremediation product, CL-Out™, in breaking down trichloroethene contamination quickly. In the lab, CL-Out™ showed that it should have worked at Site 86, but more than one year later, employees are finding that it was not successful.

The product, made up of “hungry bacteria®,” was mixed with a food source and injected at the site for three months, to neutralize or remove the contamination in the groundwater by eating, or breaking down the trichloroethene. Employees sampled the groundwater before each injection to check on the trichloroethene concentrations, population of “hungry bacteria®” and presence of breakdown products. When the bacterial population began dropping, employees decided to add dissolved oxygen to the groundwater in efforts to revive the bacteria.

After three monthly injections of dissolved oxygen, with calcium peroxide as the source, and one final injection of

CL-Out™, the bacteria showed a lack of appetite and trichloroethene concentrations did not reduce substantially.

The concentration of CL-Out™ in the groundwater at Site 86 was strong enough to remove or neutralize the contamination, but did not. Groundwater samples showed slight changes in the trichloroethene concentrations but did not confirm any notable reduction in the contamination. The exact reason why the pilot study was unsuccessful is unknown, but employees are planning to implement a different technology to remove the contamination at Site 86.

Program managers for the Environmental Restoration Program test a number of solutions and technologies at cleanup sites governed by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980.

“When one solution doesn’t prove effective at one site, another solution that we are testing at a different site might,” said Rebecca Hobbs, program manager for Operable Unit 2.

A technology used at Site 14 — a site with conditions similar to Site 86 — will be next in line for Site 86. “Gaseous phase

nutrient injection was successful at Site 14 in biodegrading dissolved trichloroethene concentrations, which decreased between 86.6 percent and 99.8 percent during the three-month pilot study,” Hobbs said.

Gaseous phase nutrient injection involves the injection of air, methane and nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, in gaseous form. The injection is successful at spurring the growth of naturally occurring bacterial populations in the groundwater. These bacterial populations speed up the breakdown of contaminants like trichloroethene into nontoxic products.

Site 86 is one of the smaller contamination sites at Edwards AFB. It has a localized plume with trichloroethene concentrations above the maximum contamination level set by the state of California. The plume measures 200 feet by 750 feet and contains an estimated 2.7 million gallons of contaminated groundwater.

The site is located southeast of Building 300, Engine Test Cell, and the contamination was the result of the disposal of fuels, solvents and oils, often used in engine test cells, through unlined surface channels.

RTS

## Edwards AFB Consolidated Support Facility Earns Silver Rating award

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers earned a silver rating in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ for their design of the Consolidated Support Facility (Building 3000) and its drought-resistant landscape.

Sponsored by the U.S. Green Building Council, the LEED Green Building Rating System™ focuses on sustainability and performance while considering areas of human and environmental health. The Edwards AFB building and landscape feature met the standards for a silver rating. According to the LEEDs rating system, building green has many benefits such as improving air and water quality, conserving natural resources and reducing operating costs.

RTS

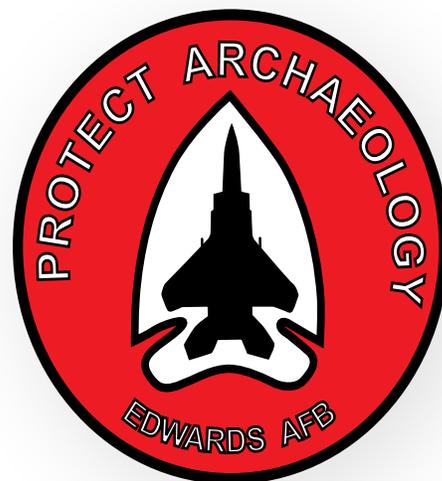


# Local teachers learn about the cultural aspects of the base

Teachers get the chance to find out more about local archaeology



**CURATION TOUR** — A teacher from Branch Elementary, takes a look at what the Edwards Air Force Base Curation Facility holds. Participating Mojave Environmental Education Consortium teachers were given a tour of the facility along with a tour of the remains of Pancho Barnes' "Happy Bottom Riding Club."



**E**lementary and middle school teachers had the opportunity to play archaeologists during a recent Mojave Environmental Education Consortium (MEEC) event sponsored by Environmental Management at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) in February.

History came to life as the educators made a sunset visit to the legendary Pancho Barnes' "Happy Bottom Riding Club" archaeological site. They also toured the Edwards AFB Curation Facility where base artifacts are cleaned, preserved and stored for historical purposes.

"Our goal is to preserve items in their present state for a minimum of 300 years, and then the process continues," said Debi Crosby, archaeologist, who works at the Curation Facility, a special temperature- and light-controlled building located near the Air Force Flight Test Center Museum. "We have evidence of 10,000 years of life here on base."

Part of a statewide network with the California Department of Education, MEEC was created by the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD) as a means to bring educational opportunities to local area teachers. With the participation of 40 sponsoring agencies including Edwards AFB, MEEC hosts a variety of activities for teachers

throughout the year.

“Edwards AFB is one of our most passionate partners, always excited to bring people to the base,” Violette Roberts told the group of more than 30 educators who attended the February tour. Roberts is the Community Relations and Education Manager for MDAQMD and MEEC.

The event was hosted by Cole Parker, who has spent 13 years as an archaeologist contractor at Edwards AFB. “Archaeology is a look at people’s lives as it relates to the stuff they leave behind,” Parker said. “Archaeology is a forensic science. We gather evidence and deduce to reconstruct past behavior, just like the police.”

Parker surprised the group of educators by the number of artifacts that can be recovered at one location. The last excavation at the historic town of Muroc, he said, recovered 113,682 artifacts.

The teachers came from schools both on and off base. The majority had never been on a tour like this.

“I’ve always wanted to see Pancho’s site and get an explanation of the archaeological significance, more than what you can get in a book,” said Steve Abele, who has taught at Branch Elementary School for 30 years and currently teaches a fifth- and sixth-grade combined class.

Another Branch Elementary School teacher, Karla Olsen, who teaches a fourth- and fifth-grade combined class, focuses a lot on science and the history of this area’s former inhabitants. “I have a lot of fossils and artifacts in my classroom,” said Olsen. “I want to get some more information that I can take back to my students to support what the textbooks say. It’s especially nice for the kids who live on base to see the history of the area, and something like this can help cross that bridge between what’s in the textbooks and what’s real.”

The evening event concluded with the teachers trying to deduce the origins of several artifacts actually found on base. While some of the items were obvious, others posed quite a challenge, proof that archaeologists have to do a tremendous amount of research to understand what they find.

“Archaeologists are responsible for relocating, recording and evaluating sites to determine if they are eligible under



**WHAT AN ARCHAEOLOGIST DOES** — *Two teachers encounter archaeology with a hands-on project. They had to identify artifacts that were provided to them.*

“

Archaeology is a look at people’s lives as it relates to the stuff they leave behind

**Cole Parker**  
Archaeologist Contractor

”

federal and state laws to be registered as historical sites,” said Parker. “Pancho Barnes’ site and the old town of Muroc are both protected as National Register eligible sites.”

“I felt the best part of the tour was learning about the preservation of the

desert and its history,” said Dian Hare, a fifth grade teacher from Barstow Intermediate School.

“The work of historians and archaeologists many times overlap,” Parker said, “however, they differ in that historians study persons, places and events. Archaeologists study people, culture and adaptation.”

In addition to the free workshop and tour, attendees were provided curriculum developed by the Smithsonian Institute with lesson plans that meet the national standards for science and history to help students explore the past through archaeology.

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 Vacant

**South Base**  
 Vacant

**AF Research Lab/Propulsion Directorate**  
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**Where to Find More INFORMATION**



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.

For questions about information in the repositories, you may contact Gary Hatch, Environmental Public Affairs at (661) 277-1454 or by e-mail at [95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil](mailto:95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil).

Location	Days	Hours
<b>Edwards AFB Library</b> 5 W. Yeager Blvd. Building 2665 Edwards AFB, Calif. (661) 275-2665	Mon-Thu Fri Sat & Sun	9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
<b>Kern County Public Library Wanda Kirk Branch</b> 3611 Rosamond Blvd. Rosamond, Calif. (661) 256-3236	Tue & Wed Thu-Sat	Noon - 8 p.m. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
<b>Los Angeles County Public Library</b> 601 W. Lancaster Blvd. Lancaster, Calif. (661) 948-5029	Mon-Wed Thu & Fri Sat	10 a.m. - 8 p.m. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
<b>Col. Vernon P. Saxon, Jr. Aerospace Museum</b> 26922 Twenty Mule Team Road Boron, Calif. (760) 762-6600	Mon-Sun	10 a.m. - 4 p.m.



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