



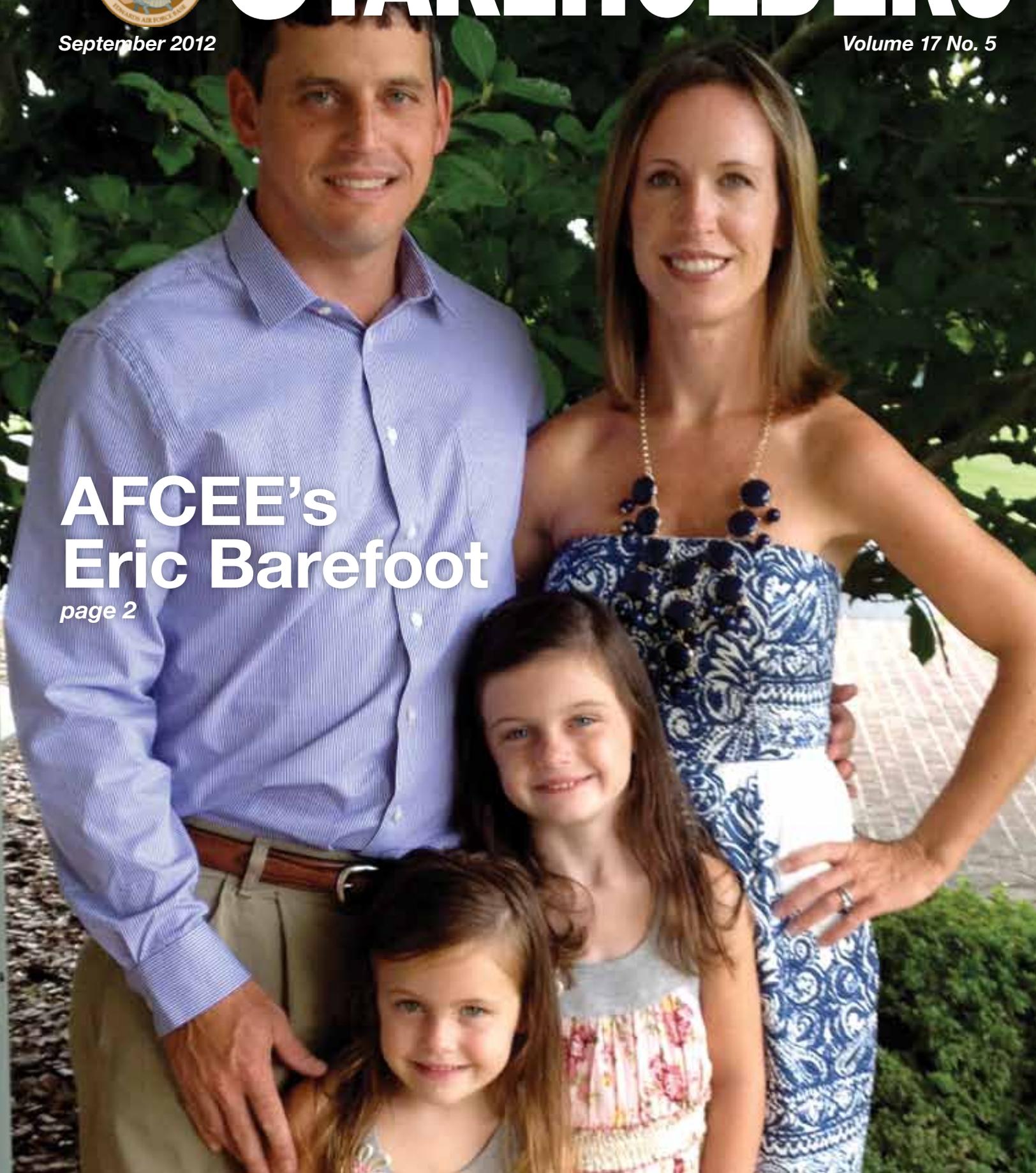
September 2012

Report to **STAKEHOLDERS**

Volume 17 No. 5

AFCEE's Eric Barefoot

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BREAK TIME — From left, Edwards AFB Restoration program managers Paul Schiff and Tom Merendini take a break and talk with AFCEC program managers Eric Barefoot and Adria Bodour during one of the Restoration Advisory Board meetings.

Center manager tweaks restoration balance to give taxpayers more ‘bang for their buck’

Striking a balance between two opposing responsibilities is an art form, one that poses a constant challenge to Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC) program manager Eric Barefoot. It’s not work-life balance he’s after, but a formula that funds restoration projects in the best interest of the American taxpayers.

“I’m committed to addressing contamination issues at Edwards in such a way that the Air Force is responsible as a steward to the environment as well as taxpayers’ money,” Barefoot said. “Edwards is the second most expensive base in terms of Air Force restoration funds. While the program at Edwards covers a large area, it is also remote compared to other sites AFCEC manages across the country. Contamination at Edwards is not impacting private citizens’ property, off base, like a lot of other bases. I have to take those issues into consideration when managing this site.”

Based in San Antonio, Texas, Barefoot relies on those managing the day-to-day operations at Edwards to help determine priorities for cleanup. “Edwards takes a collaborative approach to restoration,” he said. “The regulators have one viewpoint, the base restoration team and AFCEC its own viewpoint. We have to come together, discuss the issues and compromise to move the program forward.”

One challenging issue the base faces is the transition to performance-based remediation or PBR. Currently, multiple contractors are responsible for various site cleanup projects. Under PBR, one contractor will be responsible for cleaning up the major-

ity of the base at a set price. Despite the cost and time savings PBR will create, Barefoot knows the impending transition has raised concerns, especially among the regulatory agencies.

“I want to convey that their roles are not changing,” Barefoot said. “The regulators will not lose any control with regard to enforcement. The only thing that is changing is the way

the cleanup work is contracted. The Air Force will not be locked into anything. If site conditions or regulations change, then the cleanup approach will change.”

For Barefoot, the move to PBR signals a desire for the Air Force to operate more like a private business. His experience at

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AFCEC
Program Manager

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companies such as Exxon Mobil Corporation, Parsons Corporation and Booz Allen Hamilton contrasts drastically compared to the Air Force's approach to cleanup, he said. "Working for private-sector companies, restoration budgets were very tight and you were expected to show consistent progress or you were out," Barefoot said. "It was a stressful and demanding job with a very small margin for error."

Placing more stringent demands on the contractor can only help to support the balance Barefoot seeks between environmental stewardship and taxpayer accountability. Plus, the process leading up to PBR will net the Air Force a side benefit.

"Industry experts will study the contamination sites at Edwards and propose different goals based on 'X' amount of money and 'X' amount of years," Barefoot said. "This will help us prioritize projects. The Air Force does not receive an unlimited amount of funds and there is only one pot of money for all Air Force and Air National Guard bases."

The competition for limited restoration dollars means that Barefoot also has to weigh the prioritization of each site against regulatory demands for cleanup to unrestricted use.

"Having worked in the restoration field, I understand it is important to protect human health and the environment but up to a point," Barefoot said. "Even the worst places for contamination will pose no threat if properly secured and monitored; and when you reach a point of diminishing return, any continued cleanup and study effort results in very limited benefits."

Making a case against costly cleanup where it poses no threat to human health or the environment is an attitude Barefoot does not come by naturally. Now a married father of two little girls, he grew up in rural Pennsylvania fishing, hunting and working on his families' farms. He held a youthful idealization of cleanup until college and field work in different parts of the country opened his eyes.

"My education and experience have taught me that natural resources do recover," said Barefoot, who holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Geoscience from Slippery Rock University, Pa. "Through chemical or biological processes, the contamination degrades naturally and dilutes over time."

Known as natural attenuation, this degradation process is not effortlessly approved by California and USEPA Region 9 regulators as a cleanup solution even though other parts of the country do. The differences in cleanup regulations interest Barefoot, who has performed restoration work in many other states. "Other states readily accept natural attenuation as a cleanup remedy and only require the contamination be monitored once every five years," he said.

But whether or not Barefoot agrees with California regulations is not an issue. As with all aspects of the program, Barefoot strives to strike a balance that benefits all involved. "I understand the regulators' position," he said. "They are trying to be as protective as possible and California cleanup levels are the lowest in the nation."

Stringent California laws, combined with the remote location of the base, may explain why Edwards does not receive much public attention about its cleanup program. For Barefoot, the lack of concern indicates community members understand the Air Force is safely and responsibly handling the contamination.

To promote communication about the contamination, the Air Force supports and co-chairs an advisory board of public representatives and regulators who meet semiannually. Known as a Restoration Advisory Board or RAB, meetings are open to the public and act as a forum for the exchange of information between the public and those responsible for cleanup at Edwards.

"The Air Force wants to listen to the community and appropriately address any concerns or questions," Barefoot said. "If there are no concerns, then our goal is to spread awareness. That's exactly why RABs are worth the effort."

"The RAB at Edwards is typical of most RABs. The board members are supportive and involved, and they do a good job of educating and alleviating concerns. The members understand the Air Force is working to address the situation," he said.

Barefoot plans to maintain this forward progress when the Air Force and regulators meet in the near future to establish cleanup goals for each of the base sites slated for the 2014 PBR contract. "I think it's good that Edwards is one of the last bases transitioning to PBR," Barefoot said. "AFCEC will be able to apply lessons learned with previous bases that have already transitioned."

More information about AFCEC and PBR can be found in the July 2010 and March 2012 issues of *Report to Stakeholders*, respectively. Visit <https://eafb.mojave->

Report to STAKEHOLDERS

Report to Stakeholders is a publication of Edwards Air Force Base, 412th Test Wing, Civil Engineer Division, Environmental Management. Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing environmental and safety 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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Any comments or questions about the contents of the *Report to Stakeholders* may be directed to: Gary Hatch, 412 TW/PA, 305 E. Popson Ave., Edwards AFB, CA 93524, (661) 277-8707.

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WHAT'S ON THE COVER?



Eric Barefoot is the Air Force Civil Engineer Center and the Environment program manager responsible for restoration activities at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. He is pictured here with his wife and children.

Where to find more INFORMATION



Published data and documents relating to Environmental Management are available for public review at three information repositories. They are updated when new documents are released. Here is a list of our current information repositories:

Edwards Air Force Base Library

5 W. Yeager Blvd.
Edwards AFB, Calif.
(661) 275-2665
Hours of operation: Mon-Thu 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
Hours of operation: Wed 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Fri-Sat 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Los Angeles County Public Library

601 W. Lancaster Blvd.
Lancaster, Calif.
(661) 948-5029
Hours of operation: Mon-Wed 10 a.m. – 8 p.m.
Thu-Fri 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Sat 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

For questions about information in the repositories, you may contact Gary Hatch, Public Affairs chief of Current Operations, at (661) 277-4127 or by e-mail at 412tw.pae@edwards.af.mil.

For general information about Edwards or other documents of public interest, you may visit the following link:
www.edwards.af.mil/library/environment.

Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Information

The RAB is made up of appointed representatives from communities in and around Edwards Air Force Base, regulators from federal and state agencies and base officials. The board's purpose is to provide a forum for two-way communication among base restoration officials, regulators and the community representatives regarding the cleanup of contamination from past military activities.

The board meets quarterly, rotating meeting locations in communities surrounding the base. The public is welcome to attend. Those who have questions

or concerns about cleanup activities at Edwards may contact any RAB member or Gary Hatch, Public Affairs chief of Current Operations, at (661) 277-8707.

NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING

Date: November

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Location: Boron

Venue to be determined

RAB Members

OFF-BASE COMMUNITIES

Boron

Vacant — If you live or work in Boron, you can apply to be a public representative.

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ON-BASE COMMUNITIES

Housing

Amy Driscoll (719) 659-9362 Cell
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Main Base Test Wing

Vacant — If you work for the 412th Test Wing, you can apply to be a public representative.

NASA Dryden

Jessy Gray (661) 276-2784
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North Base

Vacant — If you work for the 412th Test Wing, you can apply to be a public representative.

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