

**FORMER SCHENECTADY ARMY DEPOT, VOORHEESVILLE**

**RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

*September 30, 1999, 6:30 – 8:30 P.M.  
Voorheesville Library*

**I. INTRODUCTIONS**

**II. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**III. GENERAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

**IV. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

**V. DEFENSE LOGISTICS AND CORPS ACTIVITIES**

**WORK PLAN FOR SITE INVESTIGATION  
ARCHIVE SEARCH SUMMARY**

**VI. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

MEETING MINUTES  
RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 30, 1999, 6:30 P.M.  
VOORHEESVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY  
FORMER SCHENECTADY ARMY DEPOT – VOORHEESVILLE  
GUILDERLAND, NEW YORK

RAB Members and Project Staff:

Ted Ausfield  
Peter Buttner  
Joan P. Kappel  
Charles Reilly  
Kenneth R. Rivers  
Joan W. Burns  
Steven Porter  
Dan Geraghty, NYSDOH  
Jeff McCullough, NYSDEC  
Dennis Weselowski, Defense Logistics Agency, Scotia Depot  
F. Kevin Reilly, Environmental Protection Specialist, Defense Logistics Agency  
Dave Brouwer, USACE  
Joan Becker, Roy F. Weston, Inc.  
Chris Carlton, NEA, Inc.  
Tara Sexton, EA Engineering, Inc.  
George Moreau, Parsons Engineering, Inc.

*September Agenda and Minutes of June Meeting*

Dave Brouwer called the meeting to order at about 6:30 p.m. The agenda was reviewed and changes were solicited. None were offered, and the agenda was accepted as submitted, Attachment 1. The summary of the previous meeting was considered next. No comments or revisions were offered, and the minutes were accepted as submitted.

*General Issues and Concerns*

In response to D. Brouwer's suggestion, it was agreed that the public be provided with an opportunity to ask questions t both the beginning and end of this meeting. In the future, the RAB could select a time that it feels might more appropriate to provide other interested parties with an opportunity to ask questions or to participate in the discussions.

J. McCullough was introduced as the new case manager from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), replacing Victor Cardona. D. Geraghty was introduced as the representative from the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) who would be working with J. McCullough to oversee Corps activities at the site.

P. Buttner offered a map he had prepared to indicate the watershed of the Black Creek area, Attachment 2.

A RAB member asked if the City of Watervliet had been contacted regarding this project. D. Brouwer replied that the City had not been contacted. He stated that based on the current knowledge of the former Depot, and the results of past investigations, there has been no reason to contact the City. The RAB member requested that the RAB contact the City of Watervliet, and suggest that they become involved in this RAB, because they control the Watervliet Reservoir and have regulations regarding the use of the watershed feeding the reservoir, including Black Creek.

#### *Site Tour*

A RAB member requested a site tour or slideshow of the Former Schenectady Army Depot site within the Northeastern Industrial Park (NIP) so the RAB members could visualize the areas discussed at future meetings. They are particularly interested in the location of the site relative to Black Creek. D. Brouwer responded that a site tour might be more useful after the work plan is issued in December. Alternatively, the tour could be scheduled after implementation of the plan, which could help the RAB to better understand the results of the sampling. A RAB member responded that it might be more useful to see the site earlier, to connect the site to the discussions of the RAB. D. Brouwer responded that logistically it might be difficult to coordinate access with the property owners and schedule an acceptable meeting time prior to snowfall this winter.

A RAB member suggested that it would be useful to see the site earlier than next spring, because it would clarify the difference between the past and present site uses, and might prevent issues from arising in the RAB that the RAB is not intended to address. D. Brouwer responded that only three areas of study have been identified within the current NIP boundaries. Additional areas may be identified after an in-depth review of the archival search. D. Brouwer stated that the RAB only should be concerned with the activities that are related to past or current Department of Defense activities. He then negatively responded to a question whether the Corps is trying to hide something regarding the site. Equally sound arguments can be made for scheduling a site visit now or in the future. D. Brouwer stated that he would work with the property owners to set a site visit for the earliest possible date.

#### *Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Activities*

A RAB member asked if the DLA would be making any significant site management decision concerning the site in the near future. K. Reilly responded that DLA needs to address the drainage problems at their part of the site and whether to construct retention ponds or detention ponds. The DLA is trying to change the design of the discharge from the DLA site, so that it will not discharge to Black Creek. Since metals have been stored at the site, the DLA wants to keep the water on site as long as necessary for any sediment to settle out. K. Reilly agreed to provide the RAB with information concerning this matter

J. McCullough stated that the NYSDEC wants the site investigated to determine whether any metals are moving off-site. K. Reilly stated that the lead on the site is not soluble and should only be present in sediment of the Creek, not in the water. T. Ausfield stated that any soil or sediment containing metals should stay on-site. A RAB member asked what would happen when the DLA

portion of the former Depot closes. K. Reilly stated that the DLA would assume responsibility for remediating any contaminated soil that is present and offered to take the RAB on a tour of the DLA portion of the site at any time. Once the RAB selects a date, it should inform D. Weselowski. If the time is either at the beginning or the end of the workday, K. Reilly will try to attend. J. Becker suggested that the RAB postpone discussion of the date for the site tour (DLA) until the end of the RAB meeting.  
*(Action Item 1 – RAB establish a date for visit the DLA site).*

#### *Election of Chair*

The RAB considered selection of a Chairperson. T. Ausfield nominated P. Buttner. C. Reilly and K. Rivers seconded the nomination. No other nominations were offered. P. Buttner was selected as the RAB Chairperson.

#### *Corps Activities at the Former Depot*

D. Brouwer offered an update of the status of Corps activities at the site. He stated that a comprehensive site work plan, based on the results of the archival search, was being developed. It should be completed in December 1999. Copies would be available in the project repositories, and it could be posted on the Internet.

A RAB member asked how the RAB would be informed about what is happening during the sampling and fieldwork. D. Brouwer replied that the RAB would be provided with periodic information using newsletters, report summaries, and meetings. A RAB member asked who insures the workers at the site, the property owner or the Corps. D. Brouwer replied that normally employers insure their workers. In response to another question, D. Brouwer indicated that citizens would not be able to watch the site investigation, because special health and safety training is required. A RAB member asked who would perform work at the site. D. Brouwer replied that sometimes the Corps performs the work, but in the near term Parsons would perform the work at the Depot.

An audience member asked if there is a schedule for the project. D. Brouwer replied that a revised timeline has not yet been developed, since the Corps and DLA agreed to work together. In the short-term, a comprehensive work plan should be developed in December and field work to implement it should begin next spring. The scheduling of the actual cleanup is subject to budgetary constraints, because a large portion of the \$8 million cost estimate for the site is earmarked for the capping of the Southern Landfill.

A RAB member asked if sampling was conducted in the area of the original path of Black Creek. D. Brouwer replied that sampling had not been conducted in this area. In response to another question, D. Brouwer replied that there are sites where the best solution is to leave the site undisturbed and to cap it to prevent direct contact. The Corps must abide by state guidelines when determining levels and methods of cleanup. These guidelines are very conservative and are designed to indicate the levels that are most protective of human and environmental health. If a contaminant is discovered above state guidelines, there is not necessarily a risk associated with it, but that further investigation would be conducted.

In response to another question, D. Brouwer stated that the Depot is a Formerly Used Defense Site. J. McCullough asked if there is a forum for the RAB to review the Work Plan before it is finished. D. Brouwer responded that summaries of the plan would be distributed and that the entire document may be available online on the Internet. J. McCullough stated that he would need an extra copy for D. Geraghty to review.

### *Investigation Report – Archival Search*

Ms. Tara Sexton presented a history of the Former Schenectady Army Depot - Voorheesville Area (Depot). To develop an overall ownership and operational history of the Depot, Federal, state, and local records were reviewed and aerial photographs were interpreted. Over 15,500 pages of information were reviewed.

The property acquired for the Depot included 650.53 acres fee, 1.72 acres easement, a No-Area lease, 0.1 acre license, 37 “area not determinable” licenses along Black Creek, and six structures. The initial construction of the site occurred between 1941 and 1942 by Duffy and Carleton Construction Companies and the Work Projects Administration. The construction involved the relocation of Black Creek, the construction of six warehouses, open storage areas, fencing, railroad extensions, roads, utilities, and general improvements. The mission of the Depot during the period 1941 – 1945 included receipt, storage, maintenance, and distribution of supplies for the Department of the Army and the Transportation Corps. During the second period, from 1946 – 1952, the mission of the Depot was to store and distribute supplies to U.S. Army and overseas Commands, and to process and store supplies returned from overseas. During the third and final period of the Depot’s activities, from 1953 – 1969, the mission of the Depot changed slightly. In 1962, the mission of the Depot changed to that of the U.S. Army Maintenance Shop. In 1966, the Depot was turned over to the control of the Tobyhanna Army Depot, and operations began to decline. In 1969, Army activities at the Depot ceased.

Throughout the entire period of DoD use, the main operations at the Depot included receipt, storage, and distribution of materials, maintenance and dispensing of materials, salvage and disposal, fire fighting, and security.

**Receipt, Storage, and Distribution of Materials:** The Depot was one of five main Army supply centers and had open, shed, and warehouse storage. Equipment stored at the site included: heavy equipment (trucks, bulldozers, tanks, boats, bridges, etc.); strategic materials (zinc, copper, aluminum, etc.); warehouse equipment (pallets, cargo nets, rope/cable, etc.); and, miscellaneous supplies (clothing, furniture, food, metal, etc.). In 1942, over 13,000 carloads of materials were received and 10,000 were shipped. In 1946, the Depot handled 50 carloads of property daily. In 1962, 421,000 tons were stored at the Depot (81% in open storage, 17% in warehouse storage, and 2% in shed storage).

**Maintenance and Dispensing:** Equipment maintenance facilities at the Depot included: motor repair; engine repair; crane repair; depot maintenance division; engineer base maintenance; engineer heavy maintenance; and care and preservation. Equipment maintained included engineer, rail, materials handling, and nonstandard equipment. Site maintenance at the Depot included carpentry, plumbing, painting, welding, tin smithing, and electrical work. Dispensing systems at the Depot consisted of two gasoline stations and petroleum, kerosene,

solvent, and diesel dispensing stations. Regulations were in place to regulate maintenance operations, dispensing of gasoline, and handling of petroleum, oils, lubricants, and other materials.

**Salvage and Disposal:** Salvage/surplus materials were separated and stored to later be reissued, donated, or sold. Sales of materials ranging from screws to locomotives were handled by a contractor. Salvage and surplus structures at the Depot consisted of buildings, an oil house, and burning pits. Surplus materials were stored in warehouses or OSAs. Waste materials at the Depot were delivered to “disposal areas.” Some waste materials, such as paper, were delivered directly to the burning pits. Waste gasoline, oil, and solvents were collected for disposal (not dumped). The salvage yard at the Depot closed in 1958. Sheet metal and band iron continued to be accepted in back of Building 77. Other salvage items were then delivered to Schenectady Depot.

Several potential disposal areas have been identified based on EA’s aerial photograph analysis and Albany County’s Closed Landfill Study. These areas include the following:

- A Burn Pit area with depressions, containing piles of material, which was later overgrown;
- A sewage disposal/treatment area, containing small, disturbed areas, with no storage containers (drums). This area was also later overgrown;
- A bivouac area containing small excavations, scarred and ponded areas, and no storage containers. This area was later overgrown;
- An offsite storage area, containing disturbed areas with ponding and evidence of borrow pits. This area was later used for storage;
- A construction and demolition landfill, with disposal visible in the late 1960s;
- A triangular RR track and oval disposal area, containing disturbed areas with ponding and evidence of backfilling, which was later overgrown; and,
- An area named the U.S. Army Southern Landfill, consisting of a large disposal area with ponding. Containers (drums) were visible at the site. Two borrow pits, a refuse disposal area, Duffy’s Dump, and lumber storage have all been identified in this vicinity.

#### *Questions Regarding the Presentation*

A RAB member commended T. Sexton’s presentation and requested copies of the slides from the presentation, Attachment 3.

A RAB member asked if there were any underground storage tanks at the site. D. Brouwer stated that all identified underground storage tanks have been removed. Any tanks currently located at the site were probably installed subsequent to DoD use of the property, and are regulated by NYSDEC. S. Porter agreed. J. McCullough stated that he would check on the registration of all tanks located at the site.

*(Action Item 3 – J. McCullough to obtain listing of underground storage tanks and if any oils spills have occurred at the property).*

D. Geraghty then asked if any munitions had been stored at the site. T. Sexton replied that small caliber munitions had been stored at the site. A RAB member asked if a product named Cosmoline had ever been used to preserve equipment stored at the Depot, and if so what was

done with the Cosmoline afterwards. T. Sexton responded that EA had obtained no information regarding the use of Cosmoline specifically, but that activities at the Depot included the storage and preservation of equipment. Another member of the RAB asked if the Albany County Health Department's Closed Landfill Study had been examined, and if it could be checked for references to buried iodine or iodine vials.

*(Action Item 4 – T. Sexton to see if there are any references to buried iodine vials at the site).*

A RAB member asked if there are current aerial photographs of the site. D. Brouwer responded that the Corps is primarily concerned with the past DoD uses of the facility, and all historical photos that could be obtained were reviewed. A RAB member stated that the Town of Guilderland possesses recent high-resolution (600 dpi) aerial photos, and that these photos could be made available for the Corps to review.

In response to a question, T. Sexton responded that Duffy's Dump was located around the northern end of the Southern Landfill. D. Geraghty asked if fire training took place on the property, and if so was the location known. T. Sexton responded that there was no information to indicate that fire training occurred on the property. In response to another question concerning AOI4, T. Sexton replied that the area might have been used for a radio station antenna. The RAB member stated that the question was asked because the soil maps of the area indicate that the soil in the area of AOI4 matches that of the soil at the other end of the Depot.

A RAB member asked if there are any landfills on the site that have been closed according to NYSDEC procedures. J. McCullough responded that he was not sure. The RAB member suggested that the NYSDOH has a list of landfills around and on the site, which might prove useful during the investigation. The RAB member stated that an 8' x 8' x 8' landfill was encountered during excavations for the current water and sewage treatment facilities at the site and that upon review with the NYSDOH other landfills were identified in the area. The RAB member asked if this list had been consulted for the completion of the Investigation Report – Archival Search. T. Sexton stated that EA contacted the NYSDOH, and that they provided materials to EA about the site.

A RAB member asked if the data for the Investigation Report – Archival Search was based upon a 1995 study. D. Brouwer replied that the data is based on a summary of all studies conducted at the site. In response to another question, D. Brouwer stated that the testing generally is done according to a standard process. If initial tests reveal limited areas of interest, then further testing might deviate from the standard process.

### *General Discussion*

A RAB member asked if the ditches along the road adjacent to the site could be kept open, because they have filled in and pose flooding issues for the local roads and residents. He stated that the Corps originally constructed the ditches approximately 30 years ago. D. Brouwer stated that this was not the appropriate forum for addressing such issues, since it is a current maintenance problem and is not associated with past Depot activities.

A RAB member asked if it is possible that the sediment in the Watervliet Reservoir has been contaminated. He also asked if core samples could be taken. D. Brouwer replied that the

sediment has not been tested, because there has not been any evidence of need for the Corps to test it as part of the investigation of the former Depot. He stated that the highest concentrations of metals have been noted on the upstream section of Black Creek, and the lowest at the downstream end. If the metals in the sediment are not coming from the site, the Corps cannot assume responsibility for the contamination and any remediation associated with it.

A RAB member asked who owns the site, the Corps or the Galesi Group. D. Brouwer stated that the Corps owns no property on the site and that the only property owned by the Federal government is the 35.5 acres owned by the General Services Administration (GSA), and used by the DLA. In response to another question, D. Brouwer replied that the Corps will not make future land use decisions at the site, but will work with the local community and the property owner to ensure that the site is safe for the land use planned. D. Geraghty stated that the Department of Health also would work closely with any developer to resolve any legal or land use issues.

D. Geraghty asked if EA interviewed past employees at the site when conducting the archival search. T. Sexton replied that interviews with former employees had not been part of the scope for the report. D. Geraghty stated that on other sites with which he has been involved, interviews have been helpful in preliminarily identifying potential areas of interest.

An audience member asked if the archival search is complete. D. Brouwer replied that the document is essentially complete, except for some minor revisions. In response to another question about the document's availability, D. Brouwer replied that the cost for reproduction would be high, and that the document may soon be available on the Web. The audience member stated that it would be nice to have a copy anyway because of all the local historical information it includes. A RAB member offered to purchase a copy of the document and donate it to the Town of Guilderland.

#### *Technical Assistance for Public Participation*

D. Brouwer summarized the Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) funds that are available to provide the RAB with third party oversight and technical assistance to interpret documents and addressing issues associated with the remediation at the site. The process begins with the RAB identifying a scope of work for the technical assistance. Then the Corps Contracting Office is used to retain the third party for technical assistance. The amount of funds available under the TAPP program ranges from \$25,000 to \$100,000 depending on the total cost of the project. Since the total cost for this project is currently estimated at \$8,000,000, between \$25,000 and \$80,000 could be available to the RAB for technical assistance.

D. Geraghty stated that the New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation are already providing technical assistance and oversight on the project, and urged caution before spending the money on an outside expert. He stated that the NYSDOH has time and resources to scrutinize the technical documents of the Corps, and offer comments and evaluations regarding the technical quality of the reports. A RAB member asked if the Federal government pays the state for this service. J. McCullough stated that there is an agreement between the state and the Federal government for the reimbursement of state expenses associated with the project.



### *New Business*

A RAB member asked if the RAB could discuss the memo offered by P. Buttner. (See Attachment 4). The RAB member stated that the first priority is the protection of the watershed. He would like the RAB to contact the City of Watervliet, and suggested that if the Corps would not like to do this then the RAB member would contact the City independently.

### *Next Meeting*

S. Porter suggested that the RAB get together in January. A RAB member asked if the Corps could get together with the RAB Chairman to keep him informed of progress on the site in the interim. D. Brouwer replied that the Corps could publish and distribute a newsletter to keep the RAB updated. The RAB member responded that a newsletter would be a good idea. (*Action Item 6 – Provide Newsletter to RAB before January Meeting*).

P. Buttner suggested that the next RAB meeting be scheduled for the second Thursday in January. The date was set for Thursday, January 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Voorheesville Public Library. P. Buttner asked if it would be possible for the RAB to appoint a Vice-Chairperson, because he (P. Buttner) occasionally has obligations that require him to be out of the country. He stated that he does not expect these obligations to interfere with his commitment to chairing the RAB.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.