

**Meeting Minutes  
Public Meeting  
Former Schenectady Army Depot – Voorheesville Area (FSADVA)  
December 9, 2008  
Lynnwood Reformed Church  
Schenectady, New York**

**Attendees and Affiliations:**

Ted Ausfeld, FSADVA Restoration Advisory Board Alternate Acting Community Co-Chairman  
Heather Bishop, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)  
Joan Burns, FSADVA Restoration Advisory Board  
Bridget Callaghan, New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)  
Gregory J. Goepfert, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, FSADVA Restoration Advisory Board  
Army Co-Chair  
George Moreau and David Babcock, Parsons  
Hamid Rafiee, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District  
Charles Rielly, FSADVA Restoration Advisory Board Acting Community Co-Chairman  
Saranac Hale Spencer, Altamont "Enterprise" newspaper  
John Swartwout, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)  
Deb Volkmer, Weston Solutions, Inc.

**Introductions**

G. Goepfert called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. and welcomed everyone for coming to the meeting. Meeting attendees and the project staff introduced themselves. G. Goepfert provided a fact sheet entitled *Corps Cleans Up One Area and Proposes Actions at Three More* that summarized the Proposed Plan for AOC 2 and the Focused Feasibility Studies for AOCs 1, 7 and 8. The fact sheet can be accessed on the FSADVA Website ([www.fsadva.com](http://www.fsadva.com)). G. Goepfert said the reason for the public meeting is to discuss the documents for the four AOCs:

- Proposed Plan — AOC 2 – Former Bivouac Area/Post Commander's Landfill
- Focused Feasibility Study — AOC 1 – U.S. Army Southern Landfill and AOC 7 – Triangular Disposal Area
- Focused Feasibility Study — AOC 8 – Black Creek

He said the objective for AOC 2 is to reach a decision for no further action required at the site. The objective for AOC 1, AOC 7, and AOC 8 is to evaluate remedial alternatives.

G. Goepfert said public comments will be compiled with the Corps' responses in a document known as a Responsiveness Summary.

**Area of Concern 2 – Former Bivouac Area/Post Commander's Landfill**

G. Goepfert said there was no news for AOC 2 and recapped the site's most recent environmental actions:

- Completed cleanup action in September 2006.
- After the cleanup work was completed, the Corps conducted two rounds of groundwater sampling six months apart. State of New York requested a third round of sampling and analysis, which was subsequently completed.
- Post cleanup sampling results indicated no contamination associated with items disposed at the site remained in the soil or groundwater.

G. Goepfert added that other than closing groundwater monitoring wells, the Corps proposes that no further work is required. He said the Corps will issue a decision document and will work with the State of New York to conclude work at AOC 2.

G. Goepfert said if any new findings of site impacts are evidenced from the Department of Defense use of the property designated as AOC 2, the Corps would address the issue.

C. Rielly asked if the solvents were related to the Depot's operation of cleaning parts.

G. Goepfert said he couldn't be sure of which operations the material came from, but material was removed from all source areas identified.

C. Rielly said he was curious and asked where the mercury could have come from.

T. Ausfeld said it all boils down to the contamination was there, the Corps cleaned it up, AOC 2 is no longer contaminated.

T. Ausfeld said at the very beginning the State of New York and the Corps said nothing was there.

### **Area of Concern 1 – U.S. Army Southern Landfill and Area of Concern 7 – Triangular Disposal Area**

G. Moreau said concentrations of contamination have decreased over time at AOC 1 and AOC 7.

C. Rielly asked where the contamination is going as it decreases.

G. Moreau responded the contamination is breaking down into other substances.

G. Moreau said issues with these two areas are the groundwater plume and BEHP – bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate, a semivolatile organic compound – in surface water. He added the contaminated soils are not a risk to humans; however, AOC 1 has a health risk related to the use of groundwater at the site, if it was to be used as a drinking water source (which it presently is not).

G. Moreau said there are four remedial alternatives for consideration for AOC 1 and AOC 7:

1. No action. Cost - \$0.

2. Groundwater monitored natural attenuation, Land use controls. Cost - \$300,000.
3. Groundwater monitored natural attenuation, Landfill cap, Cover, Ex-situ carbon treatment of surface water, Land use controls. Cost - \$2.7 million.
4. Chemical oxidation of groundwater, Landfill cap, Cover, Carbon treatment of surface water, Land use controls. Cost - \$3 million.

G. Moreau said the Corps evaluated each alternative and proposes Alternative 4.

C. Rielly asked if the land use controls permitted building on the AOCs.

G. Goepfert noted that, typically, building on a landfill cap would be precluded.

T. Ausfeld asked about the warrantee of the cap.

G. Moreau responded warrantee of the cap should last 30 years.

J. Swartwout added that the cap should last 30 to 50 years with the monitoring that the Corps will perform throughout the years.

T. Ausfeld asked when the monitoring will be determined.

G. Goepfert said monitoring will be part of the remedial action and will be scheduled on a regular basis.

C. Rielly asked about the railroad and how its operations may affect the cap and cover.

G. Goepfert said the railroad tracks are outside of the area of concern, however, any potential impact of railroad use will be evaluated in the design of the cap and cover.

J. Swartwout said the railroad operations may vibrate the area.

G. Goepfert said the cap will be designed to drain rain water away from the contamination and the cover consists of clean fill material.

J. Swartwout said there are state requirements to design a landfill cap.

T. Ausfeld asked what if the Northeast Industrial Park (NEIP) wants to build on the area of concern.

G. Goepfert said the Corps will meet with NEIP to determine what can be done.

B. Callaghan added that the land use controls would be in effect.

J. Swartwout added if NEIP wants to build over the landfill, then NEIP would have to remove the waste.

T. Ausfeld said that would be one big cleanup.

G. Goepfert said the Corps cannot determine what will happen in 50 years; however, the Corps will be responsible for the cleanup linked to Department of Defense operations. He added that the responsibilities of the Corps and NEIP will be determined when the Record of Decision document is developed.

C. Rielly asked why there wasn't a fifth remedial alternative to remove all of the wastes.

G. Goepfert said it is the Corps policy to follow a presumed remedy to cap landfills.

C. Rielly asked how much it would cost to remove the wastes.

G. Goepfert said the removal cost can not be estimated with certainty since we have no documentation of the volume of waste buried there.

J. Swartwout said a cap is a standard cleanup action with State of New York and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency programs.

J. Swartwout provided a brief overview of NYSDEC's Environmental Easements policy. He said the state Superfund law may impose on a site's cleanup remedy to include engineering controls (i.e., landfill cap) and institutional controls where the state has ownership of the easement. This is so the state can enforce the engineering controls. An Environmental Easement would list the controls and gives the state the right to inspect the property during the remedial action. At FSADVA the Corps would continue the monitoring and maintenance of the site and certify to the state that all controls are being followed and adhered to.

G. Goepfert said there is a difference between an environmental easement and deed restriction.

J. Swartwout said yes, deed restriction language – restricted covenant – is printed on the deed and recorded at the county office. However, a deed restriction does not provide the state access to the site for its work as the Environmental Easement does.

G. Rielly asked if there was degradation of metals.

G. Moreau responded no.

C. Rielly asked if the metals would then stay forever.

G. Moreau said there would be institutional controls to prohibit the use of the site groundwater as drinking water, etc.

G. Goepfert said metals generally cling to soil and do not move.

C. Rielly said the area is in a flood plain and eventually the metals could enter the Black Creek.

J. Swartwout said the metals could move if they were adhered to soil on the surface during a rainstorm.

B. Callaghan said that is where the cap and cover come into play.

G. Moreau said there is no easy treatment for metals in groundwater and the volatile organic compounds are more of a concern/risk than metals.

C. Rielly said what happens when the current standards change and what is currently acceptable will no longer be acceptable.

G. Goepfert said the five year reviews will check on the effectiveness of the cleanup and change in the standards.

C. Rielly said we do not want to change or upgrade the local treatment plant to address the Army's contamination.

G. Goepfert said the cap is shaped for water to drain away from the waste.

T. Ausfeld asked if there is a drainage system for the surface water to go.

G. Moreau said a drainage system will be designed.

T. Ausfeld said the town has a capped landfill. He asked what a capped landfill would look like after 50 years.

H. Bishop said it would look the same because it holds up with maintenance.

C. Rielly asked who is responsible for the maintenance and mowing of the landfill cap.

G. Goepfert said the design plan includes the responsibilities of maintenance and mowing.

T. Ausfeld asked if a SPDES (State Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit would be needed for the cover.

G. Goepfert said no, the waste will remain in place.

G. Moreau added that the oxidation treatment of volatile organic compounds in groundwater will be completed before the cap is installed.

G. Goepfert said other sites used existing monitoring wells to inject the oxidation compound.

T. Ausfeld said that volatile organic compounds could come back into the pond after cleanup.

G. Moreau said it is possible; however, it is only an issue if someone uses the pond water for drinking water.

J. Swartwout asked what the pond sediment is like.

G. Moreau said the benthic macroinvertebrate organism study indicated no impacts.

H. Bishop said the state Fish and Wildlife Division reviewed the report.

### **Area of Concern 8 – Black Creek**

G. Moreau provided a brief overview of the AOC 8 history. He said the Western Ditch is usually dry. He said Black Creek and AOC 1 pond are Class C waters. He added the human health risk assessment used criteria from Texas for sediment because no other sediment criteria for protection of human health are available.

C. Rielly asked when Texas developed the criteria.

G. Moreau said he did not know but could look that up [the Texas sediment criteria were last updated March 31, 2006].

B. Callaghan said NYSDOH uses soil cleanup standards for sediment.

T. Ausfeld why there wasn't input from NYSDOH and the City of Watervliet water department. He noted that no one representing Albany County was in attendance at the meeting.

C. Rielly requested more information on the Texas criteria [additional information can be found at [http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/assets/public/remediation/trrp/sedpcls\\_2006.pdf](http://www.tceq.state.tx.us/assets/public/remediation/trrp/sedpcls_2006.pdf)].

B. Callaghan said the NYSDOH will look at the feasibility study and sediment risk assessment independently from the Corps. She added that New York State does not use other state's guidance, but does use New York State soil standards for sediment. She said if there is no exposure then there is no risk.

G. Goepfert said the Corps will revise the reports to include New York State's soil criteria in comparison to the sediment results.

T. Ausfeld asked what the State of New York is going to do to protect the watershed and Black Creek now and into the future.

G. Goepfert said the purpose of this public meeting was to discuss the one specific segment of Black Creek that the Corps is addressing.

C. Rielly said the alternatives are not removing the wastes and fishing is prohibited because of the concern of bioaccumulation in humans.

B. Callaghan said there are no fish advisories in that area.

H. Bishop agreed that fish advisories do not exist; however, she said she will compare the data.

C. Rielly asked if there are no risks to human health then why limit fishing and swimming.

T. Ausfeld said he did not understand why close off a public stream.

G. Moreau said some samples showed contamination infrequently and to be safe it is recommended not to fish or swim. He added that canoeing down the creek would not be restricted for health-risk purposes.

T. Ausfeld asked how much testing was done in that area and the ponds.

G. Moreau said the AOC 1 pond was tested (surface water and sediment samples were collected and a biological risk assessment was performed).

T. Ausfeld said he wants to hear from representatives of Albany County about this and what they think of the recommended cleanup alternative.

C. Rielly said he was concerned about the fish advisory, reservoir, and fish bioaccumulation. He added that he was concerned about the watershed and creek. He said he was concerned that the Cities of Guilderland and Watervliet were not participating in this meeting and what measures needed to be taken to protect the water.

Both C. Rielly and T. Ausfeld said they were not happy with the recommended alternatives [namely, restricting access to the AOC 8 site to prevent recreational or other use of the Black Creek (including fishing), and the Western ditch. Access would be restricted only within the Northeastern Industrial Park (NEIP) fence line, and posting “no trespassing” signs to minimize/prevent unauthorized access to the site].

T. Ausfeld said more input from the right people is needed for Black Creek.

G. Goepfert said the Corps provided documentation, informed them of the public meeting, and announced the public meeting in three area newspapers (*Altamont Enterprise*, *Albany Times-Union*, and *Schenectady Gazette*).

Both H. Bishop and B. Callaghan said the state has not yet determined their recommendation for the AOC 8 focused feasibility study.

T. Ausfeld asked if the government is selling the DLA – Voorheesville depot property.

J. Swartwout said the state is reviewing that and setting up deed restrictions for the transfer of property.

G. Goepfert said the deadline for submitting comments on the proposed plan and two focused feasibility studies is January 9, 2009. He added that the Corps will respond to all public comments regarding the proposals discussed this evening in a *Responsiveness Summary*.

## **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:22 p.m.