

RAB Involvement Fosters Community Spirit at NWS

By John Koliclus

Remedial Project Manager

The Naval Weapons Station Earle NJ had been a part of Monmouth County for over 50 years by the time an Environmental Restoration Board (RAB) was established in 1995.

NWS was commissioned in 1943 to receive and store ammunition for issuance to the U.S. Atlantic Fleet. Its mission has remained relatively unchanged since then. The 10,248-acre main station is connected to a 706-acre waterfront area by a Navy controlled right-of-way containing a private Navy road and two railroad lines. Ammunition and other supplies are transported by truck and rail to and from Navy vessels berthed at the 2.6-mile long pier complex. The rural, agricultural nature of the area has changed somewhat due to residential development but significant open space remains.

Most local towns had environmental commissions that were loosely aligned under the aus-



Lester Jargowsky, Monmouth County health officer observes rapid bioassessment training in Hockhockson Brook at NWS Earle.

pices of the county health department. The Navy contacted these commissions to solicit RAB members. While membership was not limited to members of these groups, many of them did nominate representatives to the RAB. This helped insure input from various surrounding com-

munities. It has also served as a way to distribute information.

During an initial site tour many RAB members were surprised at the large area of open space on the station. The county health officer asked if a community college class, *(Cont. on page 7)*

NorthDiv and EPA Region I Partner at South Weymouth

By Dave Barclift

Risk Assessor

Partnering with regulatory agencies can sometimes have it ups and downs. In the case of the former Naval Air Station South Weymouth, MA both types of partnering experiences took place. The final outcome of partnering with EPA Region I not only saved the Navy approximately \$80,000 (\$65,000 in lab costs and \$15,000 in labor), but also spared the lives of an estimated 25 small mammals (mice and shrews), 300 earthworms, 200 fish, and 30 frogs.

Initially, EPA Region I's previous technical support commented on our scope of work

asking for several more biological sample stations at each of the seven IR sites on the base. NorthDiv, along with our contractor, ENSR, put together a technical argument to support our sampling position and set up a conference call to defend our position.

Not only did the conference call not go well, we needed five more technical meetings and conference calls to try to resolve this issue. Eventually, we decided to table the issue for about one week until the chemical sampling data was available from the Phase II remedial investigation. Armed with additional information NorthDiv and ENSR

were able to prove their point with EPA. Agreement was reached and the sampling effort was decreased.

Are You An Environmental Whiz?

How do you fare? To test your environmental knowledge here is one of ENN's Environmental IQ Test questions, and no, you can't call a friend.

1.) What is generally agreed upon as being the greatest threat to our wildlife resources? Is your final answer:

- A. Pollution
- B. Global warming
- C. Habitat loss
- D. Ozone depletion

(Answer: C)

Employees Safe After Missing the Point at IR Site

By Anneke Bush
Environmental Risk Assessor

Recently, a construction company was contracted to install a chain link security fence on the south side of Taxiway J at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Basin (NASJRB), Willow Grove, PA. Little did the crew know, however, that their starting point was off and that they were actually beginning to install the fence through IR Site 5—the former fire fighting training area.

The crew began site preparation and started to dig holes for fence posts before the error was discovered. Due to this encroachment, the crew and equipment were inadvertently exposed to low concentrations of dioxins, metals, and PAHs. Fortunately, their activities were not deep enough to come into contact with contaminated groundwater, which is the more important medium of concern at the site.

After being informed of the situation by NASJRB's environmental department, NorthDiv's Office of Counsel, Activity Manager, and Environmental personnel quickly decided that the right thing to do was to inform the contractor that this work did bring the crew within the boundaries of a contaminated site and to also alleviate any concerns they might have regarding possible risks from chemicals at the site. To that end, Jim Colter,



NorthDiv Remedial Project Manager (RPM) and Anneke Bush, NorthDiv Risk Assessor, met with the contractor representative. They explained the ramifications of (and the lack of human health risks associated with) the exposure. Also participating were LCDR Rick Taylor and Dana Jones from the ROICC office.

Results of a draft risk assessment performed in 1997 indicated that there are no unacceptable cancer or noncancer risks to construction workers, the scenario that most closely approximates the worker's exposure parameters.

While this scenario assumes that workers are exposed for 30 days, the crew at NASJRB was only on site for a few days, thus reducing the risk numbers even further. While several exposure pathways were examined in the risk assessment, the risk numbers were largely driven by the ingestion route of exposure to surface soils. In discussing the risk calculations, we were asked of what "480 milligrams" of soil really amounts to. We used the analogy of 1 or 2 raisins. We also explained that a worker would have to consume several times that amount (e.g., ingest dirt by the handful) to significantly increase the probability of cancer or noncancer health effects. *(Continued on page 15)*

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(Continued from front page)

which was studying bio-assessment techniques, could use the streams on the station for their field studies. The Navy agreed. Data collected station-wide for academic purposes have also benefited the Navy and community.

RAB members agreed with the Navy's risk-based cleanup approach principle but felt that a number of small sites could easily be eliminated. They suggested that fewer studies should be conducted in favor of more actual remediation. The Navy has acted on this recommendation by initiating several source area removal actions. Video presentations are routinely shown at RAB meetings

to show community members the progress of work underway.

The RAB has undoubtedly been a catalyst for progress at NWS Earle. Since it was formed in 1995, the Navy and EPA have signed four Records of Decision (RODs) covering 12 sites. The most recent ROD concluded that no further action was necessary at eight sites where removal actions had been conducted. Favorable articles have been published following several RAB meetings and upon the completion of a major landfill-capping project. In 1998, the Commanding Officer of NWS Earle received an award from the Monmouth County government for his personal commitment to Installation Restoration activities.