

N62661.AR.002457
NS NEWPORT
5090.3a

LETTER AND COMMENTS FROM U S DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE REGARDING PHASE
2 REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION AND BASELINE RISK ASSESSMENT SITE 17 NS NEWPORT

RI
02/01/2011
NAVFAC MIDLANT

C: Wagner
Bernhardt
000944-3.1



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin.
National Ocean Service
Office of Ocean Resource Conservation and Assessment
Hazardous Materials Response and Assessment Division
c/o EPA Office of Site Remediation and Restoration (HIO))
5 Post Office Square, OSRR-07-1
Boston, MA 02109
1 February 2011

Ms. Maritza Montegross
NAVFAC MIDLANT (Code OPNEEV)
Environmental Restoration
Building Z-144, Room 109
9742 Maryland Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23511-3095

Dear Maritiza:

Thank you for the Phase 2 Remedial Investigation and Baseline Ecological Risk Assessment for Site 17, Gould Island, Naval Station Newport, Newport, RI, dated December 2010. These comment duplicate those sent via EMAIL and discussed during our conference call of 31 January 2011. I have added a few more. As discussed, the data does not clearly link sediment chemistry and toxicity although some decisions may be reached that best utilize the data. It is hoped that future data analysis and subsequent meetings among the Navy, regulators and trustees will provide a scientifically defensible remedial decision. Some of my comments were addressed during the conference call but still included below.

1. Tables 6-12 and 6-13 shows survival often well below 80%, yet not significantly different from the Reference. This deserves further discussion. Of particular note is Station SD509 showing 63% survival and labeled as toxic when compared to the lab control yet station SD519 showing the same percentage of survival is not.
2. The concentrations of COCs sometimes do not match the locations where most/least toxicity is found; either based on individual sample concentration or ERM-Q. See Tables 6-12, 13, 14 and 6-16. Note stations SD520 and SD566.
3. The duplicate sample of SD509 (SD DUP01-043010) is shown on the new Figure 6-3 (1/28/11) along with the original SD 509, however both samples are labeled the same. I would prefer to see the duplicate sample labeled correctly on the map (hence, the upper left one is the duplicate)
4. I understand how Table 6-29 can show no LOECs at all for survival related to any chemical despite showing such toxicity at three locations (509, 520, 566); this given your Footnote 3 in the Summary of NOECs and LOECs but I would like further discussion. Could one not argue that if a station is toxic then the chemicals found at those toxic concentrations are also toxic? What has been done elsewhere? Can we use the ERM-Q against toxicity to see if there is an agreeable cutoff where above a certain value most samples are toxic? That I have done elsewhere.

5. How we will rank the toxicity test endpoints - Survival, growth, and reproduction?

6. Given #2 above, the entire NOEC and LOEC analysis is put into some doubt although the data presentation in Tables 6-17 - 6-29 is fine.

7. Please note the difficulty of using the Tables and Figures. Most Tables are shown with Stillwater Basin Samples at top but not all of them, making comparisons by the reader difficult (e.g. using Tables 6-14 with 6-16). In addition, the Figures were hard to use when trying to find specific chemical concentrations by locations. One must first use Figures 4-1 to 4-29 to find a location of interest (likely a red dot) then go to Figure 2-2 to find out the Station number/code and then move into the Tables to learn the exact chemical concentration. Its torture! Rather, the concentrations of key chemicals should be placed in boxes around the station locations on Figure 2-2. Lastly, the station location with the highest chemical concentrations from the most recent sampling- SD501 - is not found on Figure 2-2. Most of us usually look for the potentially worst location, and it isn't recorded in the Figure!

Please contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Kenneth Finkelstein, Ph.D

CC: Winoma Johnson (Navy)
Stephen Parker (Tetra Tech)
Kymberlee Keckler (EPA)
Bart Hoskins (EPA)
Gary Jablonski (RIDEM)
Ken Munney (USF&WS)