

Draft Meeting Minutes
Umiat Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS)
Restoration Advisory Board meeting
Kisik Community Center, Nuiqsut, Alaska
7 February 2023

I. Attendees

Meeting Attendees Present in Kisik Community Center:

Andy Sorum, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) - Alaska District
Melissa Scully, USACE - Alaska District
Lance Hathaway, Jr., Conoco Phillips Alaska, Inc.
Joe Barron, Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation
Todd Kasteler, Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation
Trevor Crosby, UMIAQ Environmental
Dora Leavitt, Kuukpik Corporation Board
George Sielak, Kuukpik Corporation Board
Eli Nukapigak, Kuukpik Corporation Board
Carl S. Brower, Kuukpik Corporation Board
Jamie Kasak, Bureau of Land Management
Bryan Nukapigak
Jerry Brower
Mark C. Wiggin, Kuukpik Oilfield Services
Chastity Olemaun, North Slope Borough Planning & Community Services Director
Peter Tagarook, Jr., City of Nuiqsut, Cultural Coordinator
Patrick Easterday, Nuiqsut resident
Tasha Michael, AECOM
Jackie Donley, AECOM

Meeting Attendees Virtually:

Kendall Campbell, USACE - Alaska District
Lisa Geist, USACE - Alaska District
Richard Reich, Kuukpik Corporation Board
Bryan Lund
Kodi Long, Qayaq Construction
Kelly Walker, ADEC
Tara Bellion, AECOM

Meeting Attendees via Telephone Call In:

Bernice Kaigeluk, Kuukpik Corporation Board

Leonard Lampe, Kuukpik Corporation Board

Isaac Nukapigak, Kuukpik Corporation Board

Joe Evans

Unidentified participant, identified as a representative from the City of Nuiqsut Council

RAB Members from 2019 list not in attendance:

Eunice Mary Brower, Native Village of Nuiqsut

Monica Burnell, City of Nuiqsut

Rosemary Ahtuanguaruak, City of Nuiqsut

Robert Nukapigak, Nuiqsut resident

Katherine Brower, North Slope Borough

Raphaela Stimmelmayer, North Slope Borough

Erik Kenning, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation

Melody Debenham, Bureau of Land Management

II. Welcome

The meeting was called to order by Andy Sorum at 5:30 PM. Mr. Sorum stated that the purpose of the meeting is to provide an update on Umiat Landfill (dump) since the last meeting held in June 2022.

III. Invocation

Mr. Eli Nukapigak provided the invocation in Inupiat.

IV. Safety Moment

Mr. Sorum provided the safety moment topics which included the locations of the Community Center fire exits and restroom locations.

V. Introductions

Mr. Sorum introduced himself as the USACE project manager and invited other in-person attendees to introduce themselves and to provide the organization that they are representing or affiliated with. Online attendees were requested to sign in on the online chat feature and to also provide their respective organization or affiliation or announce themselves.

Question (Q): Ms. Dora Leavitt asked if the City and Native Village of Nuiqsut were notified of the meeting?

Answer (A): Mr. Sorum responded that yes, they both were notified and invited to the meeting.

Mr. Sorum began the presentation by discussing the topics presented in the PowerPoint presentation which was available and visible to in person attendees and Teams meeting attendees. *Presentation slides are provided in Attachment 1.*

VI. Umiat Dump Update (Slide 3)

Mr. Sorum provided the Umiat Landfill Update. He stated the remedial design for the Umiat Landfill Dump is underway and the contract is expected to be awarded to a removal contractor by the end of June 2023. Contract has work planning and remedial design, design, and designation of monofill location, surveys, limited investigations, site operation and analysis. The remedial design involves landowners and stakeholder coordination meetings.

Q: Mr. Mark Wiggin asked how the legal decision is made.

A: Mr. Sorum stated that the legal decision selects the remedy and the remedy selected is total removal. Mr. Sorum continued explaining that the remedy implementation and construction would start in 2027. Mobilization of infrastructure to occur in 2026 and removal will occur in 2027.

Q: Mr. Mark Wiggin asked what is the difference of the structure of funding this time versus past decades? Is it moving forward?

A: Mr. Sorum responded that funding is different now. There is a legal decision so advocacy is being provided from the Office of the Secretary of Defense at that level for funding. FUDS funding has been appropriated from Department of Defense under a continuous resolution that maintains funding unless specifically removed by Congress. There is \$275 M in the FUDS program.

VII. Action Items from June 2022 (Slide 4)

Mr. Sorum stated that there were some action items from June 2022. During the June 2022 meeting, Ms. Rosemary Ahtuanguaruk had requested information on historic remediation results. Mr. Sorum added that those are summarized in the Decision Document and in the meeting minutes from June 2022. The Umiat FUDS Decision Document is publicly available at <https://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Library/Reports-and->

[Studies](#). The stakeholder contact list was provided in August 2022. Current project information was emailed in August 2022 and January 2023. Newsletters have been distributed one time per year and will continue to be developed one time per year or as conditions change.

Q: A participant in the room at the meeting asked whether a tribal risk assessment has been conducted.

A: Ms. Kendall Campbell, the USACE Tribal Liaison, responded that a tribal risk assessment was not conducted. The Umiat FUDS project is following the CERCLA process which assures that tribal concerns are considered in the Proposed Plan phase. Mr. Sorum added that the remedy selected is the most conservative and no additional protection is necessary.

C: Mr. Carl Brower asked whether PCBs would continue to be in fish and whether there will be any more studies? There are drums in creeks and the participant wondered what about those? North Slope Borough have told people not to eat more than six fish livers per year.

C: Ms. Dora Leavitt added there are drums six to seven miles from Umiat. The creeks have drums in them. They can be seen everywhere, around lakes south of here and there are other contaminants. They were very careless in the 1940's. There are drums in lakes up and down the Colville River. Drums in lakes need to be looked into also. They are a quarter to half the way to Umiat. There is more to cleanup after Umiat.

A: Mr. Sorum responded that the Umiat selected remedy is not covering those other sites. USACE is looking at Puviqsuuq Creek. He requested that as people encounter debris, please take a picture with location, and notify USACE so USACE can evaluate whether it is eligible for cleanup under FUDS.

Q: Mr. Carl Brower added that they do not go fishing at Puviqsuuq Creek because of contaminants and asked whether USACE is conducting fish studies at the Umiat site.

A: Mr. Sorum responded that USACE does not conduct fish studies and added that once the contamination is removed, the fish won't be affected, and so there is no reason to do studies.

C: Mr. Carl Bower stated that arsenic is making his family sick and that he does not eat fish and that they are no longer using that fishing area. It is very serious topic when you can't eat fish, a very big deal when you can't eat.

C: Ms. Dora Leavitt added that she stopped fishing in the Itkillik River, near the mouth of the Colville River due to moldy and deformed fish. They have been there every year for the past five years and they have sent these to the Borough but have not gotten any information back.

Q: Mr. George Sielak asked whether there will be any employment for community members and local contractors? We need people to go to work.

A: Mr. Sorum indicated they will encourage local hire for the remedial design. Funding is 8(a) set-aside.

C: Mr. Carl Brower was glad to hear about the cleanup. Global warming is making the rivers higher.

C: Ms. Kelly Walker stated that USACE does not have a fall RAB scheduled. Will there will be funding for an April 2024 meeting?

Q: Mr. Leonard Lampe made a reference to a plugged and abandoned well that never has changed. He noted that there is some contamination from that well, and asked whether that is going to be cleaned up? He also asked whether subsistence lands are going to get priority? Private hunters will be attracted to the area once it is cleaned up.

A: Mr. Sorum responded that there are wells but they are not eligible for USACE FUDS funding and that subsistence lands do get priority and that is reflected in the remedy that was selected. He added that the wells might be cleaned up by a different agency. The Department of the Interior or the BLM are likely responsible for it.

C: Ms. Dora Leavitt stated that communication is a priority. Once per year RAB meetings are not enough and should happen at least twice per year and needs to happen more than once a year. Travel budget should not be an issue. It is important to know contractors.

Q: Ms. Bernice Kaigeluk stated that the remedy work will create an impact on caribou migration, subsistence, and active hunting. The migration of caribou and moose in the Anaktuvuk Pass area is already impacted. She is grateful for the cleanup projects.

A: Mr. Sorum thanked Ms. Kaigeluk and stated that USACE acknowledges that there will be a short-term effect with heavy equipment use. USACE will mitigate impact in the work plan document and will minimize impact on users and wildlife. USACE will continue to look at that.

VIII. Partnering April 2024 (purpose, attendees, logistical planning) (Slide 5)

Discussion of another RAB meeting in 2023. Mr. Sorum opened discussion regarding how best to communicate developments with the community and solicited attendee's input. Mr. Sorum suggested a RAB meeting in October/November 2023. Two people were in favor of that. Mr. George Sielak was okay with whatever is decided.

C: Mr. Leonard Lampe noted that the RAB needs to meet more than once a year.

C: Mr. Sorum discussed October or early November 2023 to hold a virtual RAB meeting and that USACE will check calendars and communicate with community on this.

IX. Communication Planning (Slide 6)

Mr. Sorum reiterated that community input is needed. A discussion ensued regarding that a RAB meeting should not be held during AFN. The 2022 AFN meeting was held in October (*later determined dates held as October 20, 21, and 22, 2022 and forthcoming 2023 meeting will be held October 19 through 21, 2023*). By the end of the discussion, it appeared that the next RAB meeting will be a virtual only meeting potentially held the last week of October or the first week of November 2023.

Q: A participant in the room at the meeting asked if you are executing a remedy, how do you prevent spills when conducting the cleanup? How to protect the work area during spring flood?

A: Mr. Sorum responded that this is why it is taking so long, we are managing that risk, total removal of contaminants. USACE is being safe and thoughtful in the design and execution.

Q: Ms. Dora Leavitt asked if USACE knew what is in the dump site? At the first RAB meeting elders said what was out there. Dynamite found along the Itkillik River is documented by elders in the community. She mentioned the need to find out what is out there and there may be casings.

A: Mr. Sorum said that was a good point and that USACE has a good understanding of the contaminants. Part of the work plan process is worker safety and stray munitions will be considered.

C: Mr. Carl Brower mentioned a person could be kicking things around out there and the threat of being blown up. His comments were a continuation of Dora Leavitt's comments.

Q: Mr. Mark Wiggin stated that lots of lessons have been learned and provided the example of duck pond usage under vehicles and wondered where that came from?

A: Mr. Sorum responded that OSHA requirements, ADEC requirements, federal and state laws are being followed. Different companies have different internal policies, but USACE hires experienced contractors.

Q: Mr. Richard Reich asked a question regarding USACE consultation and engagement. How can best practices from industry be used on the project regarding consultation, engagement, and cultural knowledge? How can USACE incorporate these? At the demand of the community, consultation with community. Residents can help with and then be trained.

A: Mr. Sorum stated good point. USACE will have to take it up a notch. USACE will meet with RAB and come up with how to do best practices. It may entail spending a week in the community in meetings or workshops, or meeting with a community member that the RAB designates. Mr. Sorum asked for RAB input for them to tell him what they want.

ACTION ITEM: have the RAB members and community work with USACE to develop best practices and commit these to the design team.

Q: Mr. Richard Reich suggested that USACE reach out to Kuukpik Corporation. They have been doing this for 30-40 years.

A: Ms. Kendall Campbell added that USACE has responsibility to learn from and participate with the community. This is not a one and done event, we can continually learn and share and get feedback. Design phase is 2 years long. This is another opportunity to incorporate best practices.

C: Ms. Kelly Walker with ADEC introduced herself over the telephone and stated that if there are any other State Regulatory comments you can contact her.

ACTION ITEM: Add Mr. Richard Reich to stakeholder list: rreich@kuukpik.com

Q: Mr. Leonard Lampe stated that contaminated lands and rivers have been identified as a priority for and by community members. How can the contaminated lands and rivers be investigated and be made a priority? He wondered how Project Chariot became a priority.

A: Mr. Sorum stated that his knowledge is with the FUDS program. For FUDS the priority is set by state and other partner entities in an annual exercise. The community can bring issues to his and Ms. Campbell's attention to advocate for them or to their congressional delegation.

Q: Mr. Leonard Lampe stated that an abandoned well is now under the river. They can't eat burbot fish more than 3 to 6 per year because they are contaminated and cause cancer. How can you advocate for us for that?

A: Mr. Sorum responded that responsibility falls under the Department of the Interior and that he can't advocate. If it is eligible for FUDS work, then he can help.

A: Ms. Kendall Campbell stated that Mr. Lampe can email her a tribal community concern. The administration is interested in helping disadvantaged communities. The EPA has a new grant program for contaminated lands conveyed by ANCSA. Department of Interior has some new information since late December that we can communicate with the RAB.

ACTION ITEM: USACE distribute contact information for the grant program for contaminated lands conveyed by ANCSA to RAB members.

C: Ms. Bernice Kaigeluk stated that this project will affect the subsistence migration of caribou and moose. Post cleanup private hunters will fly into Umiat.

C: Mr. Leonard Lampe shared the same concern made by Ms. Kaigeluk about subsistence migration. Big game hunters are a concern and are affecting the migration of caribou. This concern should not be shoved under the rug.

Q: Ms. Dora Leavitt expressed concern about opening another landfill and that USACE is just moving materials from one dump site to another dump site. She is concerned about future generations. She stated that she wants the contaminants gone and stated to get rid of it. She wondered how do we know it is totally gone; how does it get separated? How can it not re-contaminate? She does not approve of the selected remedy. This should be a priority.

A: Mr. Sorum reiterated that USACE will follow laws of remediation and will have regulation oversight. They will have delegates from Native Village of Nuiqsut, Kuukpik Corporation and the City.

C: Ms. Dora Leavitt added that there are elders with stomach cancer. Materials have been weathered for decades. It is in the rivers and ponds. Our fish and wildlife need to be studied. We are subsistence hunters. This needs to be looked into further. She restated that she does not agree with another landfill. She restated that this needs to be a priority.

Q: Mr. Isaac Nukapigak that he was happy that USACE is doing reclamation of Umiat. Once all contaminants are found will those be disposed of at a hazardous materials site?

A: Mr. Sorum responded that hazardous waste materials will be disposed of out of state. Petroleum contaminated soils may be treated on site.

Q: An attendee asked if USACE has checked contaminant levels recently.

A: Mr. Sorum responded that they have not been checked in a decade or so, but USACE will be doing sampling as part of the remedy.

C: Mr. Carl Brower stated PCBs exist in the area.

Q: Ms. Dora Leavitt asked have you checked the river for testing?

A: Mr. Sorum remarked that the site has been tested. An important part of the remedy will be doing a lot of sampling.

Q: A woman who identified herself as a representative from the City of Nuiqsut Council on the phone stated that with the cleanup and with permafrost melting, springtime runoff into water, she is worried about fish and sea mammals also. Are you going to have sea mammals tested or are other agencies looking into this?

A: Mr. Sorum stated that USACE does not study or test wildlife. He reiterated that risk has been evaluated and total removal has been selected so contaminants will not harm animals once removed.

Q: A woman who identified herself as a representative from the City of Nuiqsut Council on the phone stated that they should look into the permafrost. Even after the contaminants are removed, you should look into the effects the contaminants have on permafrost. This should be a USACE concern also. The longer you wait, the more contaminants go into soil and permafrost melting gets worse.

A: Ms. Kendall Campbell added that this is a FUDS project and FUDS site. The site never goes out of our FUDS records. Even if USACE finishes this FUDS project, it stays on our FUDS list and can be revisited if more is found.

X. Closing Questions/Comments

C: Mr. Sorum asked if there were any more questions or comments? USACE will reach out before the next meeting is scheduled. Anticipated timeframe is October 2023.

C: Ms. Kelly Walker thanked everybody for the open lines of communication.

C: Ms. Kendall Campbell solicited for interest if anybody is interested in being a new RAB member.

Q: Mr. Leonard Lampe asked that current RAB members be identified.

A: Ms. Melissa Scully with USACE ran down the names list of current RAB members and identified those RAB members that could not be reached due to outdated contact information.

C: Mr. Leonard Lampe stated that that is a very outdated RAB member list and other attendees agreed. He stated that Clarence Ahnupkana was deceased. He added that he thinks community leaders and subsistence users should be involved. Communication is important, once a year meeting is not enough and the outdated RAB member list is evidence. Nuiqsut is a very active community.

A: Mr. Sorum stated that he is excited to have new members and he hopes that the community will reach out.

C: Ms. Bernice Kaigeluk nominated Ms. Dora Leavitt to be a new RAB member.

A: Ms. Dora Leavitt accepted RAB membership nomination.

C: An attendee stated that the tribal city council has a new member.

C: Ms. Kelly Walker requested that people could contact her if there are other sites with contamination or drums. ADEC can and will respond.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Kelly Walker's contact information can be shared with attendees.
kelly.walker@alaska.gov, 907-451-2166

The meeting concluded at 7:28 p.m.

ATTACHMENT 2

MEETING ACTION ITEMS

Meeting Action Items
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Action Item: RAB members and community work with USACE to develop best practices and commit these to the design team

Action Item: USACE distribute contact information for the grant program for contaminated lands conveyed by ANCSA to RAB members

Action Item: Add Mr. Richard Reich to stakeholder list, rreich@kuukpik.com

Action Item: Ms. Walker's contact information can be shared with attendees, kelly.walker@alaska.gov, 907-451-2166