

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

SESSION 4

Public/Community Involvement and Participation

**PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN SELECTING THE
REMEDY AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS
FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**



Agenda: Public/Community Involvement and Participation

- ▶ Overview
- ▶ RCRA Regulatory Requirements
- ▶ Identifying the Audience
- ▶ Identifying the stakeholders
- ▶ Methods for collecting information
- ▶ Best practices for communicating with the public
 - Lessons learned from EPA outreach efforts
 - Lessons learned from Army and Air Force outreach efforts



Guidelines for a Successful Public Participation Program

- ▶ Create a dialogue that provides opportunities for feedback
- ▶ Establish trust and credibility in the community through honesty and openness
- ▶ Foster an informed and active community that understands the RCRA process, provides input to other concerned stakeholders, and openly discusses RCRA-related issues

What is Public Participation?



Public participation is any stakeholder activity conducted to increase public input or understanding of the RCRA permitting process.

Source: RCRA Public Participation Manual, Chapter 2



Guidelines for a Successful Public Participation Program

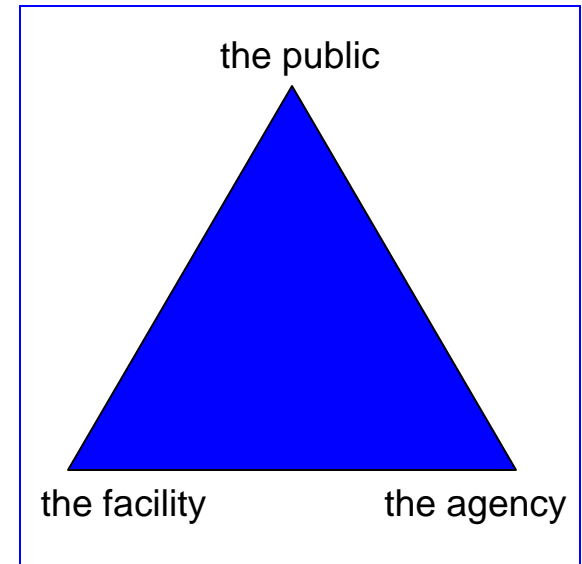
- ▶ Ensure that public officials meet their obligations to the public
- ▶ Involve the public early in the RCRA process, receive feedback, and address public concerns before making decisions
- ▶ Assess the community to find out from citizens what types of activities would best allow them to participate



Guidelines for a Successful Public Participation Program (cont.)

- ▶ Plan public participation activities ahead of time, allowing flexibility for changing interest levels in the community
- ▶ Understand and respect the values and limitations of other stakeholders
- ▶ Take steps, such as issuing multilingual fact sheets or encouraging the formation of citizen advisory groups, to ensure that all segments of the interested community have an equal opportunity to receive information and participate in the process

Public Participation Triangle



This graphic illustrates how information should flow back and forth among parties involved in the RCRA process.

Guidelines for a Successful Public Participation Program (cont.)

- ▶ Support efforts to solve environmental problems in the context of the community in which they occur
- ▶ Periodically evaluate the program's effectiveness in the community and make adjustments as community attitudes and interest levels evolve



Public Involvement Requirements for Selecting a Final Cleanup Remedy

- ▶ General guidelines for public participation during the remedy selection phase of the corrective action process require (or recommend) that the agency:
 - For agency-initiated permit modifications: follow 40 CFR 124 procedures, which include publishing a public notice, holding a public comment period, and holding a hearing (if requested)
 - For corrective action under an order: publish a notice and a statement of basis, take public comments, hold a public hearing/meeting (if requested by the public or determined necessary by the overseeing agency), prepare and publish responses to comments, and publish the final remedy decision (making supporting information available)
 - Hold a workshop or informal meeting on the proposed remedy (recommended)
 - Send out a notice of decision once the final remedy has been selected
 - Issue a response to public comments
 - Hold workshops or informal meetings on the final remedy (recommended)

Source: RCRA Public Participation Manual, Chapter 4

http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/pubpart/chp_4.pdf



Identifying the Stakeholders

- ▶ Stakeholder Assessments
 - What are stakeholders concerned about or interested in?
 - Where do stakeholders get their information?
 - How and when do they want to get the information?
 - How do they want to be involved in the process?

Identifying the Stakeholders (cont.)

▶ Stakeholder Assessments

- What are the best forums for discussing the issues and what are the best times to schedule meetings or activities?
- What else is going on in the community that the facility and regulator needs to be aware of and sensitive to?
- Who does the community consider to be credible sources of information? The answer to the question varies greatly between stakeholder groups, so it is crucial to identify who/what organizations each group respects?

Identifying the Stakeholders (cont.)

- ▶ Stakeholder Group Identification
 - Who has previously expressed interest in or been involved with the issue?
 - Which groups are likely to be affected by the operation?
 - Which groups are likely to be upset if they are not consulted or alerted to the issue by the facility before they see media coverage on it?
 - Which groups should be consulted because they have information that could be useful to the project?

Identifying the Stakeholders (cont.)

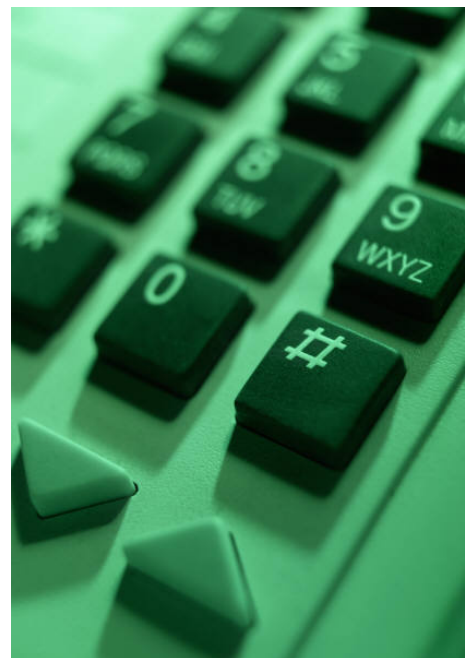
- ▶ Stakeholder Group Identification
 - Which groups would provide a balance of opinions?
 - Which groups may not want to provide input but need to be aware of the investigation and remediation activities?
 - Are facility employees well informed about the issue?
 - Are local, regional, and/or national activist groups involved with the program?

Commonly Affected Stakeholders

- ▶ Federal and state regulators
- ▶ Elected officials
- ▶ Employees and Unions
- ▶ Religious/civil organizations
- ▶ Ethnic and national origin/heritage associations
- ▶ Residential/business neighbors
- ▶ Public interest/activists groups
- ▶ Emergency response organizations
- ▶ Civic organizations
- ▶ Recreational/youth groups
- ▶ News media
- ▶ Professional or trade associations

Methods for Collecting Information

- ▶ Community Interviews
 - Elected officials
 - Civic association members
 - Neighborhood association members
 - Environmental advocacy groups
 - Municipal officials
- ▶ Telephone Surveys
- ▶ Focus Groups



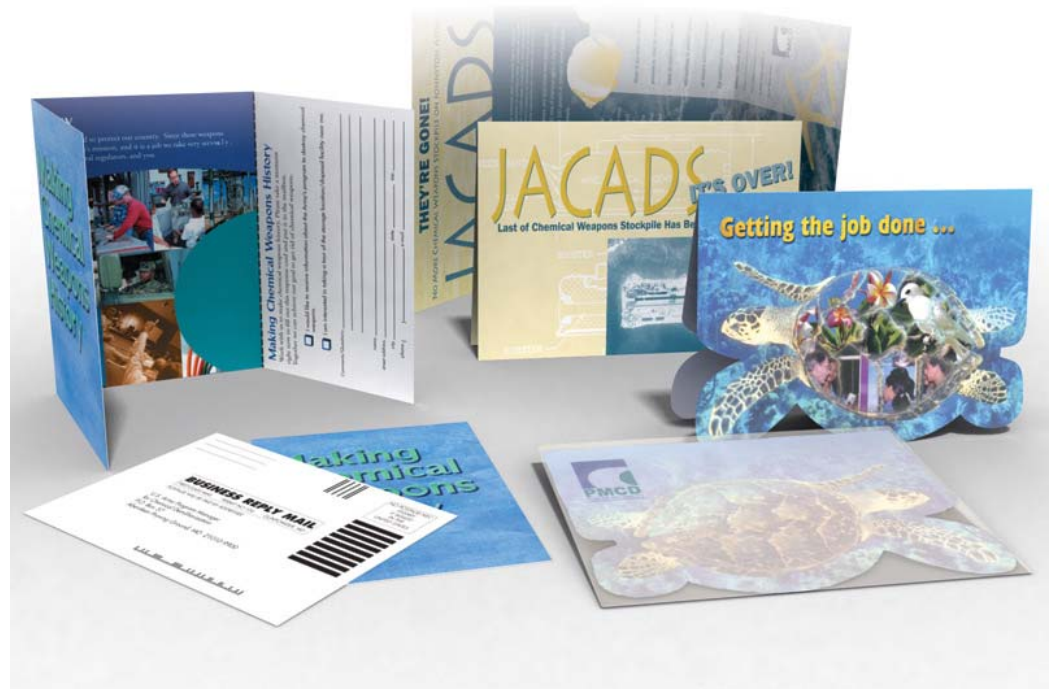
Telephone Surveys

Pros ☐	Cons ☐
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantitative, statistically valid data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opinions obtained from a cross-section of the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide opportunity to form relationships with stakeholders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data allows generalization about wider community values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limits the number of questions that can be asked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick completion of the interview process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides no opportunity for feedback or discussion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline results can be used for future comparisons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires experts to design the questionnaires and interpret the data
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People generally avoid telemarketers



Best Practices for Communicating with the Public *Lessons Learned from Army and Air Force Outreach Efforts*

- ▶ Public involvement initiatives should be strategic and follow a distinct timeline
- ▶ Information campaigns and other outreach efforts should follow a well thought-out plan that clearly identifies the target audience
- ▶ Outreach materials should use a journalistic writing style, be geared to an appropriate level for the audience, and avoid technical jargon



The Army used direct mail pieces, among other outreach strategies, to communicate the closure of a chemical weapons disposal facility on Johnston Island to the public.

Best Practices for Communicating with the Public

Lessons Learned from Army and Air Force Outreach Efforts (cont.)

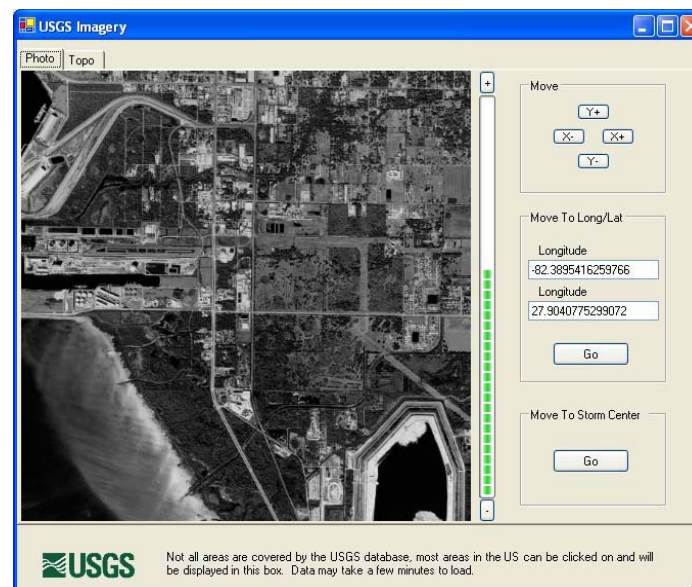
- ▶ Effective communication channels include:
 - Face-to-face meetings with opinion leaders
 - Personalized letters sent to select audiences
 - Informational open houses, public availability sessions, and poster sessions
 - Speaker's Bureau events and base/site tours for key community groups
 - Product templates developed/branded by headquarters, which regional offices can cater to specific audiences
 - News updates via the installation's Web site



The Air Force conducted site tours to educate community groups about the installation of permeable reactive barriers to treat contamination at the former Kelly AFB.

Best Practices for Communicating with the Public *Lessons Learned from EPA Outreach Efforts*

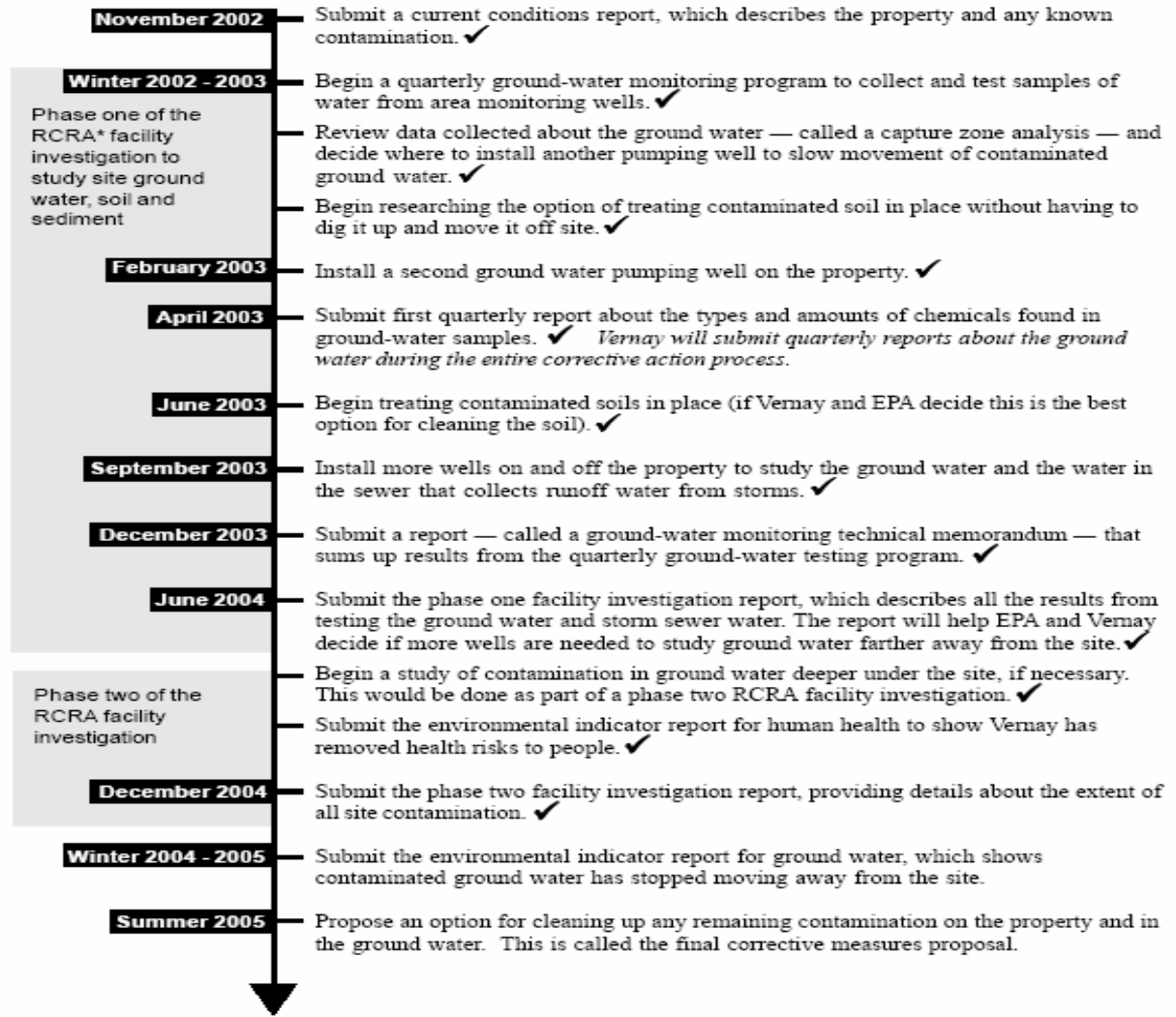
- ▶ Effective communication channels include:
 - Informational open houses with poster presentations
 - Time line mailers/fact sheets
 - Site tours
 - Information booths at remediation sites
 - Informational web sites
 - Cross-cultural/bilingual signage/meetings
 - Site update mailers
 - Videos
 - Maps/GIS



Time Line Example

Timeline of Vernay's corrective action activities

Following are dates for key activities Vernay agreed to conduct as part of the legal agreement with EPA. Completed activities are noted with a ✓.



EPA holds a comment period and public meeting for the public to comment on cleanup options.

Vernay begins cleanup.

** Resource Conservation and Recovery Act*



Public Participation Programs are Moving

▶ FROM:

- Including everybody
- Large public meetings/events
- Involving the public at the end
- “Being heard”



▶ TO:

- Targeting most interested
- Small activities and more innovative communications
- Involving the public at the beginning and throughout process
- Actively influencing decisions



References/Resources

- ▶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Public Involvement Policy. (EPA 233-B-03-002). <http://www.epa.gov/policy2003>
- ▶ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. RCRA Public Participation Manual. 1996. <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/hazwaste/permit/pubpart/manual.htm>
- ▶ U.S. Army. Final Leader's Public Involvement Guide. Army Involvement Toolbox. February 2005. https://www.asaie.army.mil/Public/IE/Toolbox/tool_guides.html