Badlands Bombing Range Newsletter

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Omaha District

July 2003

The Badlands Bombing Range Newsletter is produced by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District to present current information about environmental cleanup programs underway at the former Badlands Bombing Range (BBR). Many state, federal, and tribal agencies are involved in the project including the Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) and its BBR Project Office, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Air Force, and the National Park Service.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER, READ ABOUT...

Native American Environmental, a 100 percent Native American owned company.....pg 1

Classroom presentations provided by the BBR Project Office to teach kids about the former bombing range .....pg 3

The current and ongoing investigations and plans for removal actions...pgs 1&3

And, the next Restoration Advisory Board meeting.....pg 4

Badlands Bombing Range Project Office Prepares to Investigate Homesteads

Twelve access agreements have been signed and returned by landowners granting right-of-entry to BBR Project Team members to perform homestead investigations. The homestead investigations will be conducted this summer and will help to ensure the safety of the residents living on these properties (see March 2003 Newsletter).

There are approximately 50 homesteads within the boundaries of the former Badlands Bombing Range. The BBR Team hopes to be able to gain permission to investigate all of the homesteads. If you own a homestead and would like to permit the investigation, please call the BBR Project Office at (605) 867-1271.

The homesteads are livable but may contain scraps of ordnance or explosives (OE) on the surface or buried in the land. If you encounter OE on your property, please notify the BBR Project Office. A Team member will come to your property to identify and characterize it so that it may be safely removed or detonated.

Success Story: Native American Environmental Hits the Ground Running

Cleanup of the former Badlands Bombing Range on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation began with funding and support from the Department of Defense Native American Lands Environmental Mitigation Program (NALEMP). The Badlands Bombing Range Project (BBRP) was created in 1995 under the leadership of Program Director, Emma Featherman-Sam. The Oglala Sioux Tribe decided to develop the capacity to conduct the cleanup with its members. As such, employees of the BBRP were trained and certified as Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Technicians-Level 1 and UXO Sweep Team Personnel. This unique civilian training opportunity provided the BBRP employees with valuable training and work

(continued on page 2)

Partners in Progress

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(continued from page 1)
experience to move forward in establishing a UXO cleanup business. In May 2002, former employees of the BBRP set out to form a company that would utilize their UXO training and work experience to provide UXO, de-mining, environmental cleanup and restoration services. They sought the assistance of MATRIX Consulting Group, Inc., Rapid City, South Dakota, in developing the concept and the business.

Based on the Department of Defense's identified need to cleanup more than 16,000 military installations containing UXO at sites throughout the U.S., including off-shore in Hawaii and Puerto Rico, and a shortage of UXO Technicians both internationally and domestically, Native American Environmental, LLC (NAE) was incorporated in July 2002.

Native American Environmental is a solely employee owned company with 100 percent Native American ownership and nearly two-thirds of whom are also veterans of various U.S. Military services. There are 20 employee-owners, with five serving as the Board of Managers. The company is managed by Steve Shassetz, CEO, with an administrative office in Rapid City, South Dakota and a field office in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

As a 100 percent Native American owned company, nearly two-thirds of whom are also military veterans, NAE will have some decided advantages in federal contracting. Additionally, the company is located in a Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Zone on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, and thus qualifies for HUB Zone designation. This designation provides any federal contractor a 10 percent rating bonus in competitive federal contracts. NAE is also in the process of becoming certified as a Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB). This provides an additional 10 percent competitive advantage. After NAE has sufficient experience, it will apply for SBA 8(a) status which will enable it to qualify for 8(a) set aside contracts, which are 10 percent of all federal program contracts, throughout the U.S. and internationally.

Currently, teams of employees are moving from contract to contract as the work demands. NAE has subcontracts on projects in Colorado, Maryland and South Dakota throughout the summer months. NAE continues to establish business relationships with the larger UXO firms and is working towards a mentor-protégé relationship with Tetra Tech/Foster Wheeler, Inc.

For more information about Native American Environmental, please contact:

Steve Shassetz, CEO
Native American Environmental, LLC (NAE)
2650 Jackson Boulevard
Rapid City, SD 57702
(605) 716-4888

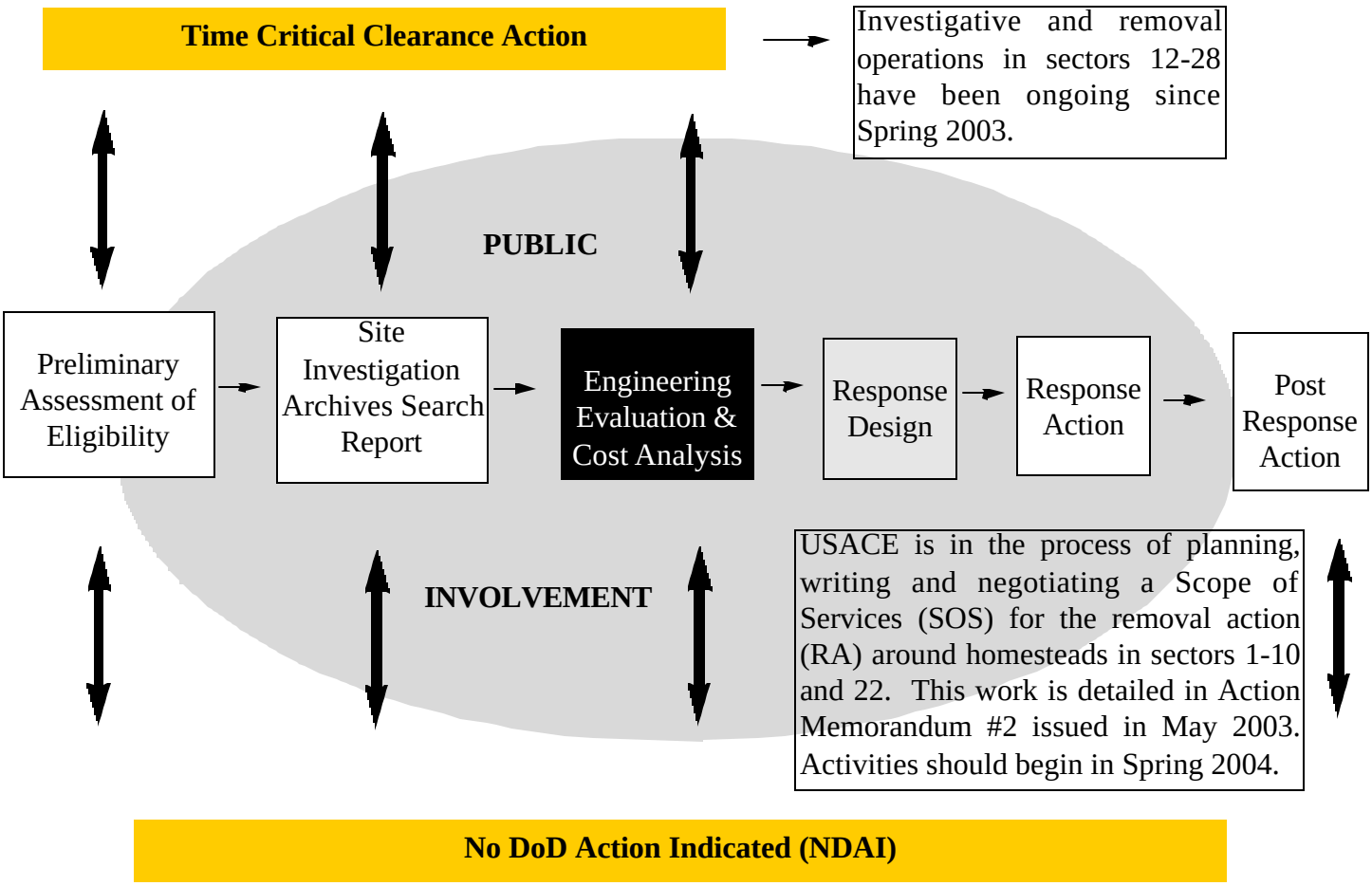
Ellsworth AFB Awaits Funding for Cleanup

The High Impact Area, an area within the former Badlands Bombing Range retained by the U.S. Air Force, may have to wait to be cleaned until 2005. When the area was surveyed in September 2002 using the Multiple Towed Array Detection System (MTADS), a list of approximately 900 targets was compiled.

Although the Air Force retains this land, the High Impact Area was actually used by the South Dakota National Guard as a mobile artillery range. Because of this, the area has a very high density of artillery shells and other anomolies and is a high priority for cleanup.

Dell Petersen, Badlands Bombing Range Project Co-Chair and Ellsworth AFB representative says that, "All of the funding request documents have been submitted, but ultimately the approval for funds has to be made by the Pentagon."

ORDNANCE AND EXPLOSIVES PROCESS



Presentations Provide Valuable Knowledge to Children

Teaching the younger generation about the former Badlands Bombing Range has been an important aspect in the work of the Badlands Bombing Range (BBR) Project Office. Bernadine Tallman, Head of Public Outreach efforts, schedules visits to classrooms to teach children at the area schools about the project and what to do if they ever find unexploded ordnance (UXO). Her presentations consist of posters depicting the different types of UXO, maps of the area, and informational brochures. As a special treat, Ms. Tallman often hands out T-shirts, pens, and pencils with the BBR Project Office contact information on them.

Getting the information out to the children is important for many reasons. Ms. Tallman says that the children take the issue very seriously and look at it from many different angles. "The older kids seem to take a lot of interest in the fact that there is a job market out there for this kind of work," Ms. Tallman says. "They ask questions about how they can get into this type of training."

The parents of the children who get to hear Ms. Tallman's presentations are very happy, too. "It makes their children more aware of the former bombing range and the things they may still find out there," Ms. Tallman says. "A lot of [children] don't realize that some of these things are still dangerous." Most of all, Ms. Tallman and the whole BBR Team are glad to know that the children, and the communities as a whole, are retaining the information and reacting positively to the presentations.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Ms. Tallman notes that although the presentations always went well, during the past year she experienced scheduling difficulties with the schools. "I am hoping that this next year will be a better time for me to go out to do the visits and presentations," she says. Schools can schedule a classroom presentation by contacting Ms. Bernadine Tallman at (605) 867-1271.

Join us for the Restoration Advisory Board Meeting on September 11, 2003 at Porcupine Village

WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BBR PROJECT?

Visit one of the BBR Project Document Repositories:

Badlands Bombing Range Project Office
Pine Ridge, South Dakota

Oglala Lakota College
Kyle, South Dakota

Rapid City Public Library
Rapid City, South Dakota

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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