



Report to

STAKEHOLDERS

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**Edwards AFB program manager
retires with 42 years in
federal service** page 2

Report to Stakeholders is a publication of the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, Installation Support Section at Edwards AFB (AFCEC/CZOW). Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing Environmental Restoration Program efforts on base. It currently has a circulation of 4,000, including about 1,100 subscribers.

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Any comments or questions about the contents of the Report to Stakeholders may be directed to: Gary Hatch, 412 TW/PA, 305 E. Popson Ave., Edwards AFB, CA 93524, (661) 277-8707.

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WHAT'S ON THE COVER?

Craig Nathe can be seen sitting on a riding lawnmower he bought in 2020. Nathe oversaw a multitude of cleanup areas and said he enjoyed his seven years at Edwards Air Force Base, expressing how thankful he was to work with an outstanding team that was both hardworking and friendly.

Photo provided by Craig Nathe

Accomplished Edwards AFB PM retires after dedicating almost two decades to environmental restoration

Craig Nathe, a cowboy at heart since his earliest days punching cattle on the Northern Montana ranch where he grew up, effectively rode off into the sunset in March when he retired from his position as an environmental restoration program manager at Edwards, after reigning in a wide-ranging 42-year federal career.

A roundup of Nathe's federal service features work in the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service and the Department of Justice along with a couple of stints as a firefighter, including time as a crew boss and a strike team leader.

Nathe's desire for a new challenge spurred him on to Edwards from Vandenberg Space Force Base, where he had been a restoration program manager since 2002. At Edwards he managed 18 active sites in six Operable Units, including a few that have proven to be particularly hard to wrangle.

"Remediation in fractured bedrock is challenging!" he said with the good-natured directness his co-workers have come to expect from him.

Ever a straight shooter, his summation of his career – which sent him all over most of the western states logging more than 27,000 miles and fighting 84 fires – was equally succinct. "I've felt very fortunate to have enjoyed an exciting career!" he said.

Nathe was born and raised in Redstone, Montana, a town small enough that there were only three other students in his grade. After grade school, he and other students from his part of Sheridan County were relocated to Outlook High School, where his graduating class consisted of only 10 other students.

"To this day, we still only have one stoplight in Sheridan County, Montana," Nathe said, "the county seat sits in Plentywood, and in 2019, the population only reached 1,825."

From his early childhood, and until he left for college, Nathe grew up on the Five Bar Diamond Ranch, where he began working as soon as he was old enough. Nathe's mother and father sharecropped until 1943, which allowed them to buy both their home and the surrounding ranch. Nathe said that he and his siblings were all raised on the land, and that his niece and nephew currently run the ranch. He spent most of his time branding cattle for the ranch, riding and breaking in horses, moving cattle on roundups between pastures for branding or shipping and from the Canadian border to the southern side of the ranch for winter feeding. Nathe also learned to operate tractors, combines, swathers, balers, cattle and grain trucks and pickups.

All of Nathe's siblings are college graduates, having attended schools such as College of St. Benedict, University of Notre Dame, Creighton University, Harvard University, The University of Providence (formerly University of Great Falls), Carroll College, The U.S. Military Academy at West Point and Montana State University.

Nathe graduated from Montana State with a bachelor's degree in range management and biology, accepted many positions involved with environmental work and moved across several states for new government jobs. Leaving Montana State, Nathe found a position as a range conservationist with the Bureau of Land Management, in Elko, Nevada. Conducting vegetation species composition and production transects on bureau managed land for livestock and wildlife, Nathe often performed these duties from helicopters, horseback and pickups. Nathe worked as a firefighter in Nevada before finding another position as a range conservationist with the Forest Service on the Council Ranger District of the Payette National Forest in Idaho.



Photos provided by Craig Nathe

WINTER WONDERLAND: (Left) Nathe poses with a close friend and his Edwards AFB colleagues just outside Yellowstone National Park after a snowmobile ride in February 2018. (Right) In December 2021, a snowstorm swept through Bear Valley Springs, coating the area in nine inches of snow in just nine hours. The morning after the snowstorm Nathe took advantage of the weather and went snowmobiling, stopping to take a photo of his home in Bear Valley Springs amid the picturesque landscape.

In this position, Nathe set up environmentally friendly livestock grazing systems and conducted a wide range of wildlife surveys. Nathe also found more work as a firefighter on fire crews traveling across the western portion of the United States. Working again as a range conservationist, this time with the Forest Service on the Evanston Ranger District of the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Wyoming and Utah, Nathe set up grazing systems for livestock, conducted wildlife surveys and managed dispersed and developed recreation for wilderness and non-wilderness areas.

Traveling across the western United States, Nathe worked as a crew boss and strike team leader for firefighting hand crews. He then came to California to work at Vandenberg Air Force Base, the Lompoc Federal Penitentiary and the Department of Justice setting up and running an environmentally friendly 800-head cow- and calf-grazing operation. The penitentiary owned the cattle and the operation was set up and run on over 25,000 acres of grassland across the entirety of Vandenberg. Nathe also set up the 30th Space Wing Security Forces with a mounted horse patrol to act as base game wardens to patrol over 40 miles of ocean beaches and Vandenberg's backcountry.

While still performing his range conservationist duties, Nathe began working as an environmental restoration program manager at Vandenberg for the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, which later changed its name to the Air Force Civil Engineer Center. As a program manager, he worked with state and federal agencies to perform soil and groundwater contamination cleanup.

Finally, Nathe accepted a higher-level position to manage environmental restoration at Edwards AFB.

When reminiscing on his time at Edwards, Nathe said: "I've really enjoyed working with outstanding people who are hardworking, with a sense of humor and easy to get along with. Not only within the office, but also the regulators and contractors. I'm glad they are all so good natured! It's been a pleasure and a privilege."

Nathe said that both bases have their individual remedial and cleanup issues to overcome; however, the one constant was that everyone was a pleasure to work with. Nathe said he enjoyed participating in Restoration Advisory Board meetings and prepping and discussing presentation slides regarding his sites. He has always found the RAB to be knowledgeable and supportive of moving forward with remediation and cleanup.

Nathe hasn't decided where he'll move to next, but he wants to have plenty of public land in order to continue his outdoor hobbies of hunting, fishing, camping and horseback riding.

Nathe's tasks are being taken over by new PM, Gregory Neate, who joined the Edwards team in September 2021. Neate was able to attend the virtual November 2021 RAB meeting to learn more about the cleanup areas he will be managing.

The next RAB meeting will take place in Mojave, California, on May 19. The venue will be advertised in local newspapers and posted on the RAB's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RAB.Edwards. The public is welcome to attend.

Where to find more INFORMATION



Published data and documents related to the Environmental Restoration Program at Edwards are available for public review at three Information Repositories and online at <https://ar.afcec-cloud.af.mil>. The Information Repositories are located at:

Edwards AFB Main Library

5 W. Yeager Blvd.
Edwards AFB, California
(661) 275-2665
www.edwardsfss.com/library

Kern County Public Library

Wanda Kirk Branch
3611 Rosamond Blvd.
Rosamond, California
(661) 256-3236
www.kerncountylibrary.org/find-hours-locations


Los Angeles County Public Library

601 W. Lancaster Blvd.
Lancaster, California
(661) 948-5029
www.lacountylibrary.org/lancaster-library

For questions about documents in the repositories, you may contact Gary Hatch, 412th Test Wing Public Affairs, at (661) 277-8707 or by e-mail at 412tw.pae@us.af.mil.

General information about the environmental program at Edwards can be found at the following websites:

www.edwards.af.mil/About/Environment
www.facebook.com/EdwardsEnvMgt

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Restoration Advisory Board Information

The RAB is made up of appointed representatives from communities on and around Edwards AFB, regulators from federal and state agencies, and base officials. The board's purpose is to provide a forum for two-way communication between the public and those responsible for environmental cleanup at the base.

The board meets semiannually, rotating meeting locations among communities surrounding the base. The public is welcome to attend. Those who have questions or concerns about cleanup activities at Edwards may contact any RAB member or Gary

Hatch, 412th Test Wing Public Affairs, at (661) 277-8707.

The RAB also has its own Facebook site: www.facebook.com/RAB.Edwards. "Like" us on Facebook today!

NEXT BOARD MEETING

November 17, 2022
5:30 p.m.
Lancaster

RAB Members

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North Edwards

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NASA Armstrong

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North Base

Vacant — If you work at North Base, you may apply to be a public representative.

South Base

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