



Report to

STAKEHOLDERS

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**Edwards Air Force Base
welcomes new remedial
project manager** 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?

ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS:

Dante Rodriguez, newly appointed by the U.S. EPA as a remedial project manager assigned to Edwards AFB, snaps a selfie as he hikes the American Discovery Trail crossing from Nevada into Utah. Rodriguez brings a wealth of new experience to his position.

New RPM talks pursuing paths in life and Superfund cleanup

At work or at play, Dante Rodriguez spends considerable time and effort following paths. As an avid outdoor enthusiast and hiker, he has followed paths through several states for fitness and enjoyment.

Rodriguez exercises daily, often walking or cycling, and does his best to instill in both his children, a 19-year-old son and 21-year-old daughter, a love for the outdoors and the importance of getting out and being active. In his free time, Rodriguez acts as an assistant scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America.

One path he started down many years ago at Stanford University landed him in Edwards AFB's Environmental Restoration Program in July 2021, where he has been assigned as the U.S. EPA's latest remedial project manager. An Oakland, California native and Stanford alum, Rodriguez officially replaced Judy Huang in October 2021 and began participating in virtual meetings and calls alongside fellow EPA RPM Ethan Finkel.

During the November 18, 2021, Virtual Restoration Advisory Board Meeting, Rodriguez was formally introduced by Huang, who offered praise to both regulators and the base cleanup team for the monumental efforts and progress made recently in Edwards AFB's cleanup activities.

"It's incredible how much was accomplished," Huang said. "Despite issues presented during COVID-19, the U.S. EPA maintained great working relationships with the Air Force and state regulatory agencies to move the cleanup program forward." She told RAB members of the years of expertise Rodriguez has working with Superfund sites, and that Edwards AFB would be left in good hands.

"For me coming out of college," Rodriguez said, "the optimal job was to work for the EPA."

The EPA's Region 9, which covers the Pacific Southwest, implements and enforces federal environmental laws. Rodriguez has worked with Superfund all the years he has been employed at the EPA.

Superfund, a nickname for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, was signed into law December 11, 1980. The law gave the EPA the authority to clean up contaminated land, uncontrolled hazardous waste sites and spills and respond to environmental emergencies deemed a danger to human health and the environment.

From an early age, Rodriguez said he held an interest in how water systems, roads and buildings were built and designed. He also learned that engineers design those systems.

"I had become interested in the subject at a high school career day," Rodriguez said. As a junior in high school, he didn't know much about engineering as a career field. "While in high school," Rodriguez said, "there's a subject that interests you, but once you get into college, that's when you begin pursuing it."

He said that the path he chose was something that interested him and continued to hold his attention; he was fortunate that, despite not knowing where his path would lead him, he kept pursuing it.

Rodriguez received both a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Civil Engineering from Stanford. Although he enjoyed all his classes at Stanford, classes that dealt with environmental policy were his favorites. After graduating with a bachelor's degree, Rodriguez would go on to pursue a master's with a focus in environmental planning and policy, which allowed him to begin studying the different environmental laws. These classes would go into greater detail on environmental issues from a technical perspective, such as working with stakeholders.

While attending Stanford, Rodriguez studied abroad in both Florence, Italy and Krakow, Poland – just two of many opportunities available to him. He remembers his time at Stanford fondly, stating that he found the campus beautiful and that his professors, as well as his peers, were all extremely motivated and talented. Many of his peers at the EPA are fellow alumni from Stanford.



STAYING ACTIVE: In his free time, Rodriguez acts as an assistant scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts of America. Rodriguez taught his children, a 19-year-old son and 21-year-old daughter, the importance of getting outside and being active.

"There were many familiar faces all around," Rodriguez said. He noted that the master's program had been small, around 40 or so candidates, but he recognized quite a few faces at the EPA from past labs and classrooms.

Rodriguez said that Superfund, or CERCLA, cleanup efforts usually apply to activities that are in the past rather than at facilities that continue to operate. However, military bases can fall under Superfund investigation and cleanup even when they aren't abandoned. Many military bases have large-scale operations within older facilities that have used hazardous substances for decades. Over time, those facilities experienced spills and leaks.

The CERCLA cleanup process begins with a site discovery and a notification sent to the EPA of a possible release of hazardous substances. Sites can be discovered by citizens, state agencies, or any of the EPA's regional offices.

The law lists each step of the process in terms of discovery, assessment, investigation, feasibility studies, what decisions should be made and what grants can be given. The law authorizes two kinds of responses: short-term removals, which allow prompt response to address releases or threatened releases; and long-term remedial response actions that permanently and significantly reduce the dangers associated with releases or threats of releases of hazardous substances that are serious but not immediately life threatening.

Unlike short-term removals, long-term remedial response actions are only authorized at sites listed on the EPA's National Priorities List. Partnering with the Air Force, regulatory RPMs act as part of a team to shepherd each site or project through the Superfund process.

Rodriguez's role as an RPM is to help oversee each project or site. He explained that while he provides oversight at military sites, the law specifies that at federal facilities, the respective federal agency oversees and manages the facility and the EPA concurs on actions performed.

Superfund cleanup efforts consist of nine phases with multiple opportunities for the public to get involved:

- Preliminary Assessment and Site Inspection – Identification – Discover and verify potentially hazardous waste sites and contaminants of concern or COCs; the most serious hazardous waste sites identified for long-term remedial response actions are generally authorized only at the sites listed on the EPA's National Priorities List;
- Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study – Investigation – Gather extensive COC data, conduct site studies and develop possible cleanup solutions;
- Proposed Plan and Record of Decision – Selection – Present remedial alternatives for public review and comment and then document selected alternatives;
- Remedial Design/Remedial Action – Cleanup – Select, design, construct and remediate COCs identified in the Record of Decision;
- Construction Completion – This occurs when all physical construction required for the site has been completed, even if final cleanup levels may not have been achieved;
- Post-Construction Completion – This phase helps ensure that cleanup work at a site continues to protect human health and the environment. Work can include routine monitoring of a site; routine reviews of the site to ensure cleanup continues to be effective; and enforcing any long-term site restrictions;
- Closeout – Cease remediation after all COCs have been cleaned up as described in the Record of Decision;
- NPL Deletion – When all the goals have been achieved and sites are fully protective of human health and the environment, the EPA deletes them from the NPL;
- Site Reuse and Redevelopment – Consideration of reuse of a site can occur at any point during the cleanup process; the EPA works with communities to ensure sites are used safely.

The next RAB Meeting is expected to be held in person at Mojave, California on May 19, 2022. 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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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

May. 19, 2022
5:30 p.m.
Mojave

RAB Members

OFF-BASE COMMUNITIES

Boron

Vacant — If you live or work in Boron, you may apply to be a public representative.

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North Edwards

Vacant — If you live or work in North Edwards, you may apply to be a public representative.

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NASA Armstrong

Vacant — If you work at NASA Armstrong, you may apply to be a public representative.

North Base

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

South Base

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Air Force Research Laboratory

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Report to STAKEHOLDERS

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