

Transcript of Jana Elementary School town-hall meeting Q-and-A session 111722

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Time marker 30:35

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

1. This individual would like to know – their house is five miles north of Jana (Elementary School) on Coldwater Creek. It was flooded by four inches (four feet is correct) of creek water around and about July 26. Is the house safe from radiation and/or lead-contaminated material?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: OK, so my understanding the question, five miles from Coldwater Creek? Is that the question?

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: five miles north of Jana Elementary, north.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Whoever asked that question, if you're still in the room, hopefully, I'm just going to suggest you come find me personally, and we'll go back to a map. You could show me exactly where your house is, and we could talk about the origin of floodwater and what potential risk there is or isn't. It will be a lot easier to answer directly and spend some time talking about it.

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: Thank you, Robin. Next question:

Time marker 31:41

2. I'm making improvements on my home. Am I in a safe area? Can't get a price of home to relocate, or can I get a price of home to relocate if there's a problem? What is your suggestion if my home is not in a safe area?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: So, the answer to that is really probably the same: Come find me. Let's look at a map, figure out where your house is. If you have some improvements to make and it's an area of concern, we'll certainly walk you through that, explain to you how you can safely do your improvements and go from there.

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: Just to follow suit, a couple of questions from specific landowners on their homes specifically: We're happy to answer those questions and address your property specifically. Robin (and) Jon Rankins will be happy to answer those questions. Just find them at the end, and they will talk to you.

Time marker 32:41

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: OK, this question – we actually have four of them.

Voice in the audience: (Unintelligible)

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: Ma'am, we're answering questions from comment cards specifically, right now.

Voice in the audience: (Unintelligible)

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: We're going to have an opportunity to engage all the panel and all the folk at the table right after the conclusion of the formal Q-and-A (session).

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: So, we have four questions from one individual.

Time marker 33:02

3. Did FUSRAP have to divert resources and funds from the rest of the community for Jana (additional) testing? Did FUSRAP have to divert resources and funds from the rest of the community to test Jana Elementary (recently)?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: So the Jana Elementary testing definitely did take up some of our resources from sampling on the creek, but I would say that it was definitely part of our mission and it was needed to make sure that we were responsive to the community and make sure that we gave the Hazelwood School District the best information moving forward. To answer the question, yes, it definitely did take some time and resources away from the other missions that we were currently doing.

Time marker 33:53

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

4. OK, and then how does this affect the overall timeline and annual budget for remediation?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: It's difficult to say that right now because we're still in the midst of the process of doing the documentation, but I can't say that it did not have an effect. Hopefully, at the end of the day, we're able to focus our resources as much as we can to make sure that we continue on the mission and remove the contamination as expeditiously as possible. As mentioned earlier, we were already – I may not have mentioned this earlier, we were already planning on doing remediation at Jana Elementary. This really vaulted us into that aspect of it – making sure, once again, that we were responsive to the community, the Hazelwood School District and for that aspect of it. Once again, this is a point in time where we're doing the Jana Elementary and then the remediation aspect of it. That is going to continue. We are not done. We will continue to stay in this community, too, until the job is finished.

Time marker 35:02

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

5. And did this negatively impact the rest of the community?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: I would say, yes, the events that have transpired over the past month are very troubling to me. I want to reassure the community of our commitment – everything that this team ... The Army Corps of Engineers – part of the fabric of the St. Louis community – has been here, will be here and is not going away, even after the FUSRAP mission is done. Army Corps of Engineers is committed to this community whether it's cleaning up contamination or doing its other civil-works projects.

Time marker 35:45

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

6. Does FUSRAP have any jurisdiction over health outcomes, or is this the responsibility of other agencies?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: We get this question a lot and wanted to make sure – that was part of the very beginning of the (presentation) slides. We have a specific mission per our Record of Decision. FUSRAP, given the authority to go and find and remediate radioactive contamination. Yes, our remediation goals are health-based. That is our commitment to this community. Our primary mission is protecting human health and the environment. However, health issues that do come up, we want to make sure that every individual is aware – Make sure you have those conversations with your primary-care doctor. If there are health agencies that can help out with that, I recommend going to those resources as well. This team and the Army Corps of Engineers, once again, is committed to that long-term aspect – removing the contamination so that we can find some solidarity with this community, so that we can remove that and give this community that aspect moving forward, so that they can feel confident in Coldwater Creek and with our mission of removing that contamination moving forward.

Time marker 37:08

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

7. Would it be overly cautious to consider putting together a study that builds data about how young children who are exposed to a range of radiation levels not limited to background. The idea is to keep track of their development and health records until adulthood.

Jonathan Rankins, health physicist: It would certainly be recommended for any community situation. That, unfortunately, is not part of our mission. That would be a long-term epidemiological study that would need to be conducted and led by state authorities or ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry), etc., but, yeah, it would be definitely recommended for this community.

Time marker 38:10

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: All right, we have five questions (from the same individual).

Time marker 38:11

8. Was Boston Chemical (Data) Corp. wrong with their results?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: As we have talked about with others as well, we don't comment on the Boston Chemical (Data Corp.) report. We want to make sure that, tonight, the focus is on our results – our tried-and-true processes that we follow in accordance with our Record of Decision and in accordance with CERCLA to make sure that if any area that we find is contaminated we address that. (The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 is the main law governing cleanup of FUSRAP sites).

Time marker 38:46

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

9. And, in that vein, how accurate is the SCI report?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: I was saying (that this is in) the same light. SCI did their own independent test. That is theirs. This is ours. We wanted to make sure that this community has our results, and, as part of this community and as we are committed to this mission in St. Louis as the Army Corps of Engineers, I think it's important that there are independent aspects to each one. Ours is independent as well.

Time marker 39:19

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

10. This is a two-parter: Explain preliminary results, and is Jana still closed? We can't speak on behalf of the (Hazelwood) School District or their decisions. I'll let Phil explain preliminary results, if the presentation did not cover that.

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: (Unintelligible)

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: Explain preliminary results, and is Jana still closed or empty?

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: So that everybody is aware of this, this is a difficult situation, of course, We understand that. We wanted to make sure that the (Hazelwood) School District had the best information available, so that's why we went ahead and provided these preliminary results. "Preliminary" just means we haven't gone through the entire process of evaluating and validating the data yet. The data itself does not change. The aspect that will get clearer is our reports and when they do come out. So, we wanted to give the school district the best information that we have available at the time. I understand it's difficult when we don't have a final report yet. The team will probably say this, and that this is like we've been pushing very hard to try to make sure and a lot of individuals have been working around the clock on this. I'm not going to lie. It's been very trying on the team, and I want to make sure that everybody understands

that aspect of it. This data and this report will come, but preliminary results are that, and that, once again, doesn't mean that they're not valid. It just means that they haven't gone through the entire process yet.

Time marker 41:05

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

11. OK, the next question kind of speaks to that as well: Where are results posted of testing sites? And that's generalized.

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: That's a great question. We do get that from time to time. When we finalize reports for properties, whether it needs remediation or not, those reports are publicly available information. We give those to property owners. If anybody else would like to see those results, that's publicly available information as well. Part of the CERCLA process is to maintain a permanent record. I mentioned the Administrative Record; that is everything that builds up to the ROD (Record of Decision), so that's publicly available. When we finalize a document and the data associated with that document, those reports are available as well. I would say, contact us so we can see if it's (from) a property owner, we're going to give you that document if you don't have it already. If it's a different aspect of the public, those, once again, are available as well. So I'd say, contact us, and we can definitely look to see what we can do.

Time marker 42:17

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

12. Was Wedgwood Park tested, and, if so, how often?

Jonathan Rankins, health physicist: Yes, Wedgwood Park was tested in accordance with our scope of work. We do an extremely high amount of due diligence on every property along Coldwater Creek that is within a starting point of the 10-year floodplain (from Banshee Road to the Missouri River). We lay out a systematic grid. We systematically sample the property. We do gamma-walkover measurements. I can't speak to the number of samples specifically to Wedgwood Park, but it has been tested.

Time marker 43:05

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

13. Were the homes in Wedgwood tested?

Jonathan Rankins, health physicist: If there are any homes within the 10-year floodplain, they were definitely tested. Like Robin (Parks) said earlier, if there's a specific subdivision or home, please go talk to us after the Q-and-A session, and we can nail down exact points and properties with our contractors and give you more specific answers.

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: I will add that I think it's a great tool that we have at the back of the room there. It has a map, has Coldwater Creek and the 10-year floodplain – areas that is part of the start of our investigation. As we move down the

creek, we want to make sure that any area within that floodplain that we tested, such as the Jana Elementary situation. We tested the 10-year floodplain and, because of the information, went beyond. There are areas where we have gone – I just muted myself -- There are areas where we have gone *beyond* the 10-year floodplain. St. Cin Park is an example. We reacted to the contamination that was there and the potential for access to that material. St. Cin Park is the area that we remediated. We talked to the property owners. We talked to the residents. We got indication that there was more flooding that went up into that subdivision. We reacted to that, and we sampled those yards *outside* the 10-year floodplain. I want to make sure that everybody is clear that the 10-year floodplain – hey, that's the start of our investigation. If we have information that we need to go farther, we definitely do.

UPDATE: Does the FUSRAP team test inside homes or just outside?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Any structure surface within the 10-year floodplain does get tested. This includes pavement, sheds, home exteriors, etc. We do have a decision plan that could end in the result of a home interior being tested as well.

Time marker 45:04

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

All right, forgive me if I butcher this next one. It's a couple of statements, so I'm going to try to cobble them together in a question. If I get that wrong, I apologize. Please approach the team following the formal Q-and-A (session), and they will be happy to answer:

14. What is the expected range for radioactive material? Lead comes from uranium.

Maybe if you could explain the process of how lead is derived from uranium.

Jonathan Rankins, health physicist: The health physicist gets to answer all these fun questions. No, lead-210 is a decay product of uranium. As uranium emits radiation, it decays. We call it a decay chain. There are 17 primary radionuclides in the decay chain. All of which we account for in our cleanup process. Lead-210 is a daughter/decay product of radon gas. Radon gas is everywhere in nature. As radon gas decays and falls out of the atmosphere, back down to the surface that it came from, it decays to lead-210. As storm events happen over time, air pressure, charged particles interact with one another with ionizing radiation, you have a buildup of lead-210 being washed out of radon gas. In areas like a school playground, like pavement areas, parking lots, low-lying areas and collection of sediment-type materials will naturally have a buildup of lead-210 on their surfaces. I will add, we have some beautiful diagrams and posters in the back that explain this much better than I am right now. We could talk all night about lead-210 and radon gas, but that's the short answer to the question.

UPDATE: How do we know it's from natural radon and not from radioactive contamination generated by the activities of the Manhattan Engineer District/Atomic Energy Commission?

Jonathan Rankins, health physicist: Radon is part of the uranium decay chain; however, due to the absence of FUSRAP primary contaminants of concern (COCs) -- radium, thorium or uranium -- the lead-210 is a result of natural environmental accumulation of radon-gas decay products (pavement sedimentation) in low-lying areas, such as storm drains and pavement edges. You can think of the primary COCs as surrogates for all other decay-product COCs.

Read the FUSRAP fact sheet on Pb-210, "Natural Lead-210 at Jana Elementary," at [https://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Portals/54/docs/fusrap/Coldwater%20Creek/Fact%20Sheet%20\(8.5%20x11\)%20-%20Lead-210%20-%2016%20NOV%202022.pdf](https://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Portals/54/docs/fusrap/Coldwater%20Creek/Fact%20Sheet%20(8.5%20x11)%20-%20Lead-210%20-%2016%20NOV%202022.pdf).

Time marker 47:55

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

Apparently, we need to enlarge our comment cards. There is more on the back.

15. Why were creekbeds not marked? I think this is delving into signage. Why were creekbeds not marked? and then, Warnings, question mark.

Phil Moser, FUSRAP program manager: As far as signage goes, that's an aspect that we have looked at, for sure. Part of the challenge is that we are the federal government. We are dealing with a lot of property owners. That's one aspect of it. The other part of it is, there are signs on Coldwater Creek. That is for E. coli (Escherichia coli bacterium) contamination, and we would not advise anyone to go in the creek probably because of that. The other aspect of it is that the contamination that we have found, also, mostly subsurface. That area, and that we are making sure that we keep eyes on that. Whether it's the crews going out and doing sampling, we also want to make sure that any utility companies that are out there, doing work around there. We have what called the Utility Support Procedure, where we work with all the local utility companies. If there are any property owners where we know there is contamination, we want to maintain contact with them. The sampling process that we go through if we do find contamination maintain that individual coordination with those property owners so that they're aware of those areas if there are potential contamination. The reality is that not all of Coldwater Creek is (radiological) contamination. We have found (radiological) contamination in spotty areas all along the creek (downstream from Banshee Road). That individual coordination with property owners, we want to make sure we keep up, so that they are aware of. As far as the actual signage goes, we want to keep that aspect with that individual coordination with those property owners.

Time marker 50:21

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

One more comment/question from the audience.

16. What is the status of the QA/QC (Quality Assurance/Quality Control) report from Jana School? Please describe the steps taken in the QA/QC process.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Our report is not called a QA/QC report. I'll just speak to what our report actually would be, our report of results. It's called a Final Status Survey Evaluation report. I'm going to make the assumption that that's what the question is about. The status of the report for the structures itself, we're somewhere in the neighborhood of a couple months before that's made public – two to three months. The actual status of it is 80 percent complete for internal review by the Corps (of Engineers). Once we do our internal review and comment period, we'll make revisions as we see necessary, then that will be republished for peer review – review by our regulators and partners, such as DNR (Missouri Department of Natural Resources), EPA (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency), etc. Once all of their comments are incorporated, changes made, then it will be published as a final. It will be given to the school, made public, etc. Of course, if there are any significant comments from the school – the property owner – we would take those comments, make a response to their comments and make revisions, if necessary to turn that into a new revision – a Revision 1. So that's the report. What was the second part of the question?

Time marker 52:04

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

One more comment/question from the audience.

16 a. Please describe the steps taken in the QA/QC process.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: I think I probably outlined that and answered that. If I didn't answer that completely, certainly, come find me. There's an awful lot to talk about in terms of quality control, quality assurance, that I'd be holding the mic (microphone) till the end of the night if I were to go through every step related to our sampling all the way through lab analysis and documentation. I'm not going to try to guess exactly what that's answering. I'm going to hope that I answered the question. Jon (Rankins) says that he'd like to add some.

Jonathan Rankins, health physicist: I was just going to add, well, you kind of beat me to it, but the laboratory QA/QC process, the validation process that we keep talking about a lot because this is all preliminary data, it needs to be validated thoroughly. That QA/QC process is going to ensure the accuracy, precision and quality of the data, and there are many statistical tests that have to be done *on* the data *with* separates, different standards, blanks, spikes, separate laboratory all together. Those types of steps are what it takes to fully validate the data before we can finalize the report. That takes time. All of the detection methods that are used, they have their own QA/QC process – their own validation process. In this case, we use multiple types of field detection equipment that have their own validation process. We use multiple laboratory methods to analyze for lead-210 in separate manners. We analyzed uranium, thorium and radium in many different methods. Those all have their individual validation processes that take time. We are all done with the validation of the structure survey

data. The soil data is still outstanding. That validation process is going to take a few more weeks to complete, and we'll be done.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: One last point to add to that. Jon started to say it out loud, didn't quite finish. It is worth mentioning that 5 percent of our samples are split for QA/QC purposes and sent to an entirely separate lab so that we can do a check on our own lab results and make sure that the results that we get from our lab match up to an independent lab.

Time marker 55:03

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for your formally submitted questions. Again, if there are ...

Ashley Bernaugh, Jana Elementary School PTA president: Working on some more. Thanks.

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: We'll be answering these on our website, Ms. Bernaugh.

Ashley Bernaugh, Jana Elementary School PTA president: These are more questions. Do you not have time to answer them?

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: We'll be absolutely happy to take them, and we will post them on our website. We were taking questions from 5 o'clock until 5:50.

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: We're incredibly happy to have you. Thank you for being here. We have an entire hour left in the (accessibility) session.

John Peukert, director of Programs and Project Management Directorate or Colonel Kevin Golinghorst, commander of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District: Let's go ahead.

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist: We'll take this one.

Time marker 55:57

J.P. Rebello, St. Louis District public affairs specialist:

17. Please explain how parents will be invited to review, contribute to the report prior to finalization as parents/taxpayers are the property owners. Please explain how parents will be invited to review or contribute to the report prior to finalization as parents/taxpayers are the property owners.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: So I think I just answered that a second ago. I'm not sure if you were in the room. No big deal. I'll just go over it again

quickly. I went through all the stages of our documentation. The stage you're asking about is "When can the public see it and contribute?" My answer was we're going to go to a final Rev 0 (Revision Zero) that's when we will hand it to the school, also to the public. Any significant comments will get addressed, and, if any changes are needed to the document, we will revise the document and change it to a Rev 1 (Revision 1), so it'll be final. A final document is Rev 0. When we change that document for any reason at all, -- it could be a work plan that is a final Rev 0 (and) we need to add an area, so that's a significant change -- we change it to a Rev 1. It just keeps going up in numbers. That's just a way to keep track of what version you are looking at.

Ashley Bernaugh, Jana Elementary School PTA president: Will there be a public review?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: I'm thinking, I just want to take a minute to think about the right answer. I don't want to give you incorrect information. Our primary documents (such as the Record of Decision) require public review and comment. Our Final Status Surveys do not. What I'm explaining to you is, when we publish the Final Status Survey Evaluation for the school, if a member of the public finds something wrong with the document and submits that to us in writing, we will make the change accordingly and issue a new revision. There will not be a formal comment period for the public.

Questions not covered in the time allotted:

UPDATE: 18. Emphasize and note the remediation effort that has been completed at the original site at the airport and transfer site.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: The areas that were the sources of radiological contamination to CWC have been remediated completely. Those sources were storage areas known as SLAPS and HISS. More than 820,000 cubic yards of contaminated material was removed and disposed of, from those sources. This means that there is no new radiological contamination being introduced to CWC.

UPDATE: 19. Removing residuals is the ongoing action, yes?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Correct. With no new sources of radiological contamination being introduced to CWC, the task is now to find and remediate residual contamination in CWC and surrounding areas.

UPDATE: 20. How are the three contaminants related to radon? Radium, thorium and uranium.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Uranium-238 decays to thorium-234, which decays eventually to uranium-234, which decays to thorium-230, which decays to radium-226, which then decays to radon-222 (Radon gas).

UPDATE: 21. In terms of health, quantify the level that presents risks vs. the results obtained at the school.

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Assuming this question is about Pb-210 results that USACE obtained at Jana School: The results at the school represent the normal range of levels that occur naturally and do not pose a health risk. Quantifying a number that represents a risk is complex, but it would be orders of magnitude higher than the results from Jana.

UPDATE: 22. Are the results at Jana Elementary School representative of the surrounding areas?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: Yes. Similar results would likely be found anywhere within North St. Louis County and the general mid-Missouri area, if the same sampling were done.

UPDATE: 23. Is there any impact to drinking water systems?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: No impact.

UPDATE: 24. When will this remediation occur for levels above the RG remediation goals?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer: The remediation of the small area of soil exceeding our cleanup goals within the creek bank at the edge of the school property will begin in summer 2023.

UPDATE: 25. How long is the public review period?

Robin Parks, FUSRAP technical lead/civil engineer, and Susan Adams, senior project engineer: As stated earlier, there is no public review period for the Final Status Survey Evaluation document in accordance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980. (CERCLA is the main law governing cleanup of FUSRAP sites.)

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