

Environmental Justice Advisory Board
June 30, 2022 Board Meeting
Meeting Notes

Board Member Attendees: Lanessa Owens-Chaplin, Jeremy Orr, Gerald Torres, Stacey Halliday, Seema Kakade, Pat Timmons-Goodson, Perry Charley

Multistate Trust Attendees: Cindy Brooks, Christine Amrhine, Claire Woods, Ngozi Ibe, Anna Novikova

Beneficiary Attendees:

- Alan Tenenbaum, DOJ
- Nat Douglas, EPA
- David Mattison, NCDEQ
- Taaka Scott-Bailey, MDEQ
- Erik Spalvins, EPA

Meeting Notes

Introductions

- Brief intros and agenda review

EJ Program Overview

- Kerr-McGee legacy of environmental injustice
- Operated creosote wood-treating sites. Creosote exposure linked to serious health issues
- Three sites in Multistate Trust's EJ Program – each site has different residents/communities with different priorities
 - o Columbus, MS
 - o Navassa, NC
 - o Bossier City, LA – state-led site, so community involvement program has been a bit different (community outreach started more recently).
- Three pillars of EJ Program: community engagement, local contracting, community-supported redevelopment planning
- Future EJ Program goals
 - o Prepare site-specific strategies, provide EJ-related training to staff, potentially expand EJ Program to include additional sites, support EJ Advisory Board and implement recommendations

Multistate Trust Approach to Community Engagement

Community engagement overview and goals

- Listening is crucial → actively and respectfully listening to concerns and suggestions, even when those contrast with our current plans
- Encourage broad participation and community leadership roles, without creating additional burden
- Recognize we sometimes need to slow down
- Community Meetings
 - Regularly scheduled, now usually in-person and virtual
 - Drop-in sessions → navigating how (and when) is the best time
- Small group meetings
- Access to real people – phone numbers, email, in-person

Written materials

- Requesting input from Board on what can be done better with fact sheets, flyers, other written communications?
- Sharing written materials
 - Email and physical mail distributions
 - On-site message boards (Bossier City)
 - Door-to-door canvassing and posting materials at frequented locations
 - Websites
 - Not all residents are tech-savvy, though we are exploring text alerts and QR codes, looking for input from the Board on any additional ideas

Partnerships – Local government and community/stakeholders

- Strong relationships with local stakeholders and community orgs → can help navigate questions and concerns from community members
- Community events
 - NAACP Pre-Juneteenth celebration in Bossier City
 - COVID-19 vaccine event in Navassa
 - Community fish-fry in Columbus

Ongoing challenges: increasing turnout and interest (currently Bossier City), earning trust, conveying information clearly and accurately, managing frustrations with Tronox Tort Trust, supporting government and community groups, working with divergent interests

- Tronox Tort Trust and health claims specifically continues to be an issue and source of frustration. Encouraging residents to reach out to the Tort Trust feels like an inadequate response when Tort Trust has been so unresponsive
- Some residents lose interest and trust when hearing that we cannot support health claims

Presentation from Chris Graham, Navassa Community Economic and Environmental Redevelopment Corporation (NCEERC)

- Grew up in Navassa, lived in Navassa and surrounding areas for majority of life
- Had a grandparent and family who worked at Kerr-McGee Site

- Was working on historical restoration project when started learning about Navassa Site from Mayor Willis. Learned about the cleanup efforts, realized many were not aware of what was going on
 - o When residents thought that funding was available, there was high attendance
 - o As time passed, there was a lot of turnover in people working at the Site, and residents lost interest, etc
 - o Process took quite some time, and that's to be expected
- As staff turns over, its important to set up transitional meetings to help build trust with community members and individuals.
- Importance of listening to the community:
 - o Scenarios developed during redevelopment planning – have since gone back to the drawing board to listen to the community
 - o Determining the type of use and cleanup
 - Initial remedy – community did not agree with it. Residents then voiced concerns, and Trust/regulators went back to the drawing board to do more research and modifications to develop a more community-supported remedy
- In the beginning, it was difficult to understand difference between EPA and Multistate Trust. Now seems that both the Trust and EPA are working well together
- Residents receive a lot of material in the mail.
- Suggestion: social media can be a good way to share information and engage different community groups
 - o As well as a way to get involved with businesses and organizations

Questions from Board Members for Chris Graham

Gerald Torres – How can the Trust clearly communicate the essential information in a way that will enhance community participation? A lot of the information (fact sheets, etc) seemed very busy to me. Important that community can get information in a way they can use.

- Chris Graham: Agree that material can be too busy. It's tough because you're sending out mass communication to fit every audience. Professor Roger Shew does a great job of breaking down a lot of the technical information. There are people out there who want to know the technical jargon, but some people just want the nuts and bolts.
 - o If you leave some things out, some may feel misled
 - o However, sometimes, no news is good news
 - o Personally, don't always go through all the papers but don't want to speak on behalf of others on what they should or shouldn't know
- Social media will be great because people don't always have time to go through all the information sent at once
- Consider making fact sheets subject-driven; broken up into different subjects
- Roger Shew (technical advisor) puts together reels to explain subjects

Question about NCEERC goal and mission

- Chris Graham: Look at different ways to improve the community economically, take advantage of redevelopment.
- A lot of growth going on in and around Navassa, Navassa residents want to make sure we don't get left behind

Gerald Torres: What strategies can we employ to maximize community participation?

- Chris Graham: the Trust should use social media to let people know what's going on.
 - o Everybody is not necessarily concerned about the environment until there's an issue – should create stories to engage people
 - o Have a marketing plan, marketing consultant to figure out how to build up influence online
 - o Show up in different events going on in town, not just community meetings

Claire Woods: what are the challenges that community groups like NCEERC face? In terms of meeting, continuing to work towards goals and implement objectives? How can Trust support you?

- Chris Graham: self-development classes would be good for the community and organizations. We find ourselves in situations and not having the background to deal with issues like paperwork, grants, etc.
 - o Administrative support, grant writing, funding research, etc
 - o Applying for a grant was a lot of work for only a small amount of money
 - o Having a consultant to help direct organization can be useful
- For contractors → put out education and support to develop residents skills

Stacey Halliday: Marketing is a good point. People are overwhelmed with information these days already. What's the best way to find out about community events that Trust can join?

- Chris Graham: joining social groups on Facebook can be helpful to know about events going on

Discussion – Best Practices for Community Engagement, facilitated by Ngozi Ibe

Keep in mind – goal of community engagement for Trust is to work collaboratively

Question: What other outreach tools should we explore using to improve community engagement?

Heard from Chris Graham earlier about impact of social media. Are there other ways we should be packaging or using our tools?

- Gerald Torres: pay attention to the ways that different people receive information? When working with farmers, realized that radio was a big way people got information.
 - o What information do people *trust*?
 - o How to communicate across all those dimensions?

- Claire Woods: We've asked the questions in surveys and at meetings about communication preferences. The challenge is that people tell us all different perspectives. Some are tech-savvy, some are not at all.
- Perry Charley: Community engagement is so critical, especially in communities with minority and low-income populations, which bear a higher environmental risk burden.
 - o Found that face-to-face meetings have been very critical
 - o Identify partners – specific groups that have a vital interest in issues you're trying to address. Can be spokesperson for you.
 - o Radio communication can be very important in the Navajo Nation
 - o Public health systems – people congregate there for medical needs; while they're waiting, we have a captive audience. Video messages for community engagement can work well.
 - Strategic to seize opportunity while have a captive audience

Question: How do we communicate in a way that's informative and accurate but also straightforward and non-technical? We're communicating to people with various levels of understanding

Perry Charley: our partners (govt and outside entities) often fail to understand that they are giving a lot of technical/scientific knowledge to a community who may not have background needed to understand all elements:

- Up to us to step in and explain
- Use interpreters (different from translators) – have necessary background and also know the cultural values and norms, as well as the native dialects.
- Bring these technical terms in a straightforward way for laypeople
- Create glossaries to translate technical scientific and medical terms
- Taking these steps can make material more meaningful to the population

Gerald Torres: Its important to ask where people get their technical information from, and what information they trust. Can use that to do what Perry Charley recommended. It is important to break it down in a digestible way.

Ngozi Ibe: Subject-specific communication and information

Question: What are some ways to encourage more community members to attend our meetings, learn about work, ask questions, make suggestions?

Seema Kakade:

- Instead of extending the invitation myself – have a particular community group that is really interested in that topic do the inviting for nearby surrounding communities.
- How much do different communities (geographic, religious, community issues, orgs, etc) communicate with one another?

- Claire Woods: Every site is different. Our relationship with NAACP in Bossier City has been invaluable, because when we send out an invite, they will send it out to their list as well. It does help people attend when they're getting invited from within the community by someone that they trust and respect.
 - o In Columbus – Lauri Gorton has done incredible job of reaching out to local leaders, especially a group of local pastors. Columbus has also historically had a very active community action group (CAG).

Seema Kakade: facilitating conversations between different community groups can be helpful, and often not enough of that is done. Once you have residents talking to each other and inviting each other, it builds trust and encourages participation.

- Find other groups that are community-focused and sponsoring or co-hosting forums
- Community events have increased participation due to co-sponsoring with different organizations
- Get others to invite instead of just the Trust

Lanessa Owens-Chaplin: The NYCLU has found creating a credible messenger system to be helpful:

- Engage residents (not necessarily leaders), just typical resident who lives in the area who knows a lot of people → train them for a few hours and do paid kitchen style interviews and discussions with local community
- Example: heard a family was having a family reunion and asked if we could help provide some materials, without being intrusive
- Local daycare center – provide play areas and daycare areas for our meetings → you can bring your kids and have them be supervised
 - o Engaging the family as a family unit – but what do family units need?
- Bonding exercises, committing resources to communities that we want to engage
 - o Had free haircut day before first day of school, engaged local businesses
 - o Try to be mindful of not being too formal

Perry Charley: many times, it's not the politician or leaders that need to be engaged

- Need to find people that are trusted, not just elected → mistrust in community delays and impedes collaboration
- Talking circle – community forum
 - o Select a topic and only discuss that one topic
 - o Bring someone who has experience in analyzing that specific topic

Stacey Halliday: Sometimes the self-appointed leaders or largest organizations are not the leaders you need to reach out to.

- What is the Trust's process of identifying community partners – what's the research process, etc?
- Claire Woods: Identifying partners

- In Columbus and Navassa we have been working in communities for 7+ years. In Navassa we've been there every 4 months for the last few years, along with our beneficiaries. Just by being there, the relationships have occurred naturally
- There's always more we can do to identify new partners
- Recently engaged in a process that Chris Graham touched on called the Reuse Advisory Council – invited stakeholders to join this council and reexamine redevelopment concepts.
- In communities where we had no presence, this is a lot more challenging
 - Bossier City – when we were able to begin community engagement work, it was around the same time we were trying to identify local contractors.
 - Reached out to chamber of commerce, African American chamber of commerce, tried to find active community groups, create relationships with reporters, reached out to local chapter of NAACP, reached out to housing authority to see if they could help us reach residents
 - So many of these organizations and people are strapped for resources that it's hard to get continued engagement.
 - Volunteers of America has a building right next to our site
 - New leadership and staff; hopeful that's an opportunity to re-engage

Lanessa Owens-Chaplin: is there room for capacity building in terms of hiring a full-time organizer in an area where you do not have relationships?

- Ngozi Ibe: trying to hire a community liaison part-time at Bossier City and wanted to get some ideas and insight from the Board.
- We are limited in terms of what we can do with the Trust's Settlement Agreement
 - The work that we spend money on has to be an environmental action – community engagement can often count as environmental action
- Claire Woods: For Bossier City community liaison, we want them to be directly from the community. We're going to be starting interviews soon (have 14 candidates currently).

Overview of Communications Program – Christine Amrhine

- Intersection of communications program with environmental justice program

Written materials

- Collaboration with beneficiaries/agencies. Beneficiary approval is needed
- Can work on making less intimidating, more relevant

Site-specific websites for Navassa, Columbus, and Bossier City

- Try to have personal contact information easily available and accessible

Press releases and advisories – also coordinate with beneficiaries

- Goal to get advanced coverage of community meeting as a way to get the word out, and also hoping for coverage of the meeting

Working with media

- Coverage can vary. Good to create ongoing awareness with news media, even if we don't always get coverage
- Recognize news media's ability to influence community awareness and understanding of our work → would like more regular coverage but recognize challenges

Multistate Trust 2021 Annual Report

- Section on each site. Historical information and highlighting recent work as well as upcoming and ongoing work in 2022
- Environmental justice section

Communications - Questions and Discussion

What are some methods for centering the voices of affected residents and community members in our communications materials?

- Claire Woods: thinking about leading our communications with resident focus (who is affected, etc) instead of leading with who we are and what type of organization we are
- Stacey Halliday: use social media and sounds/reels to amplify voices
- Gerald Torres: would it be useful to start to think about having a continuing feedback loop from community? Not only things about the Trust and technical info, but as the community is periodically addressed you can literally feature some voices, quotes, thoughts from the community in written materials.
 - o Becomes a feedback loop and reinforces notion that community is being heard and listened to, which can increase trust over time
- Seema Kakade: capture the voice (literally) of individuals and community members
 - o Clinical students did a series of interviews and cited a recorded interview, with recipients able to access a transcript of that whole interview.
 - o Really important to focus on IF affected residents want their voices featured. There are people that don't want to be front and center and we need to honor that.

What is the role of news media in sharing information about our work? Should we continue to invite media to our community meetings? How can we avoid self-promotion, while sharing critical information, especially in instances when accomplishment or milestone is the focus?

- Lanessa Owens-Chaplin: media is important but sometimes can focus on the wrong things. Will assist members of the community writing op-eds and letters to the editors to getting their perspectives out there, use our contacts with local media
 - o NYCLU doesn't usually do interviews unless we can bring impacted residents with us; try to avoid telling their stories ourselves
 - o It's not always easy because we want to refer reporters to people that are prepped/aligned with our thinking, but it's so important when building trust to allow residents to tell their stories
 - Be open to the idea that if we're giving community a voice, the voice may not always agree with us. Can build consensus over time when you allow a variety of opinions/voice to be heard.

How can we improve our approach to fact sheets, flyers, materials to make them more relevant, meaningful, or informative to community members?
Different colors, less text, more pictures? More digestible?

Lanessa Owens-Chaplin: they are very text heavy. Can add a QR code, so folks that want to read more text can scan a code.

Gerald Torres: Agree that materials are text heavy. It has to be welcoming to the reader, have enough information that it's not misleading but can also lead you to additional info if needed.

- Are there opportunities in the meetings to engage people in the technical/environmental literacy they may need to interpret the data?
- Christine Amrhine: so many of our materials could benefit from a glossary, can see an opportunity on our websites to pull up a page with terms and definitions

Perry Charley: Important to always think about - who will I be providing this fact sheet to? And for what purpose? What sort of reaction do I want my audience to have?

- Example: businesspeople like numbers, general public may be more interested in human side of a story or benefits of a certain projects
- Less technicality is important, along with images

Seema Kakade: Echoing Mr. Charley – important to think about audience and purpose

- Learning style – people learn and receive information in various ways
 - o Hands-on learning, sensory learners, classroom learners, readers, etc. Same can be true with community outreach → Share information in multiple ways to get at multiple learning styles

We typically avoid showing residents' faces in photos. Are there any additional recommendations for sharing photos of community members in our materials? Avoid photos of children? Prioritize group photos over individual photos? When should we seek a person's consent to be photographed at public events?

- Perry Charley: sometimes need to do questionnaires and human subject research, and children are considered a sensitive population → Students go through a research training and certification so they know at what point you are encountering sensitive and private information

Seema Kakade: typically, more cautious about how/where using photos vs photos being taken

- If using on a website or newsletter, typically use photos where there are fewer people so I can get their consent, ask if can use name, see if they have any suggestions to change description of photo
- Take photos of situations instead of focusing on people
- Photos are message dependent and use-dependent

Claire Woods: can be difficult to keep track of individuals, don't want to compromise our ability to focus on our work.

Presentation from Lee Jeter, Sr., Bossier Parrish NAACP President

Background – Initially, when work started at the Bossier City site, we were contacted by Claire, and she brought us up to date about the remediation. Have since worked together to try and get the word out to the community about what is going on.

- There was a lot of community support but misunderstanding about what the Multistate Trust remediation process would involve
- A lot of members still had anger and frustration about their claims not being processed by Tronox Tort Trust
 - o Had to work to ensure them that this process was about remediation and cleanup, and that they would have input on the future use of the site
 - o But people were still angry at the Housing Authority for allowing a housing site to be built on a site that was clearly contaminated.
 - o Developed and drafted a letter to the Tronox Tort Trust to be part of the partnership and come into the Scott-Dickerson community
- Important to stress to the community that the claims and the Multistate Trust are two different processes. Many community concerns are about medical issues as opposed to cleanup. Trying to educate the community that cleanup part is important and will affect the future.
- Residents have also shared information about additional contamination
- Because of the time lapse, many residents harbor feelings of mistrust. Due to this were hesitant to get involved with Multistate Trust meetings at first.
 - o Multistate Trust team has been open and transparent. But when you're dealing with individuals who are focused on things that happened 25 years ago and on financial compensation, hard to move forward from that.
- Difference between Multistate Trust cleanup and Tort Trust claims
 - o Claire and Trust team explains to Lee and his team so that they can in turn work to help explain to community

- Also run a nonprofit Fuller Center to provide and build homes; some plots are in the Scott-Dickerson neighborhood as well.

Questions for Lee Jeter

Seema Kakade: For those that can think towards the future, what are community members saying about future redevelopment?

- Lee Jeter: One of the things they want to find out – whatever comes, are there going to be employment opportunities for people that live in the area?
- Some interest in a medical facility

- We need to stress to the community that voice needs to be heard to figure out what should happen to the Site and the community.

Gerald Torres: Dealing with unemployment is a critical part of environmental justice.

Claire Woods: the nature of work has been challenging to Scott-Dickerson residents

- Extremely invasive to people's day to day lives, excavation areas right next to homes
- Lee Jeter: one of the concerns is whether work is going to affect foundation of their homes, cause future issues, etc
 - o One resident – work is right up against foundation of their house
 - o Other issues with people who have grown vegetables in their home gardens and are worried about eating from the contaminated soil
- Claire Woods: A lot of these issues intersect with Tort Trust's lack of responsiveness because they are responsible for property damage claims as well

Perry Charley: compensation plays a major role in communities that have experienced suffering

- Have been part of studies to examine psycho-social impacts of disasters. One of the keys to restoration and acceptance has been compensation
- Navajo tribe was successful in implementing compensation program and has been revised several times; was due to expire in July but congress has continued paying out remedies and compensation damages to people affected

Closing notes from Claire Woods and Cindy Brooks