

SECTION 6 MAY 2005 STATUS OF COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS

This update of the CSSA CRP is intended to continue maintaining effective communication between the post and the community. Interviews of local residents were held to gauge effectiveness of the CRP through May 2005 and to determine if the public had suggestions to improve communication and dissemination of information. These interview discussions with state and local officials, community leaders, area residents/landowners, and interested citizens, identified public information needs as well as the most effective method for disseminating this information. Input from the community provides information that maximizes efforts and provides effective management of the ongoing CRP. As part of CSSA's community relations efforts, 60 people were contacted in May 2005. Results from 15 of the 60 people contacted who agreed to be interviewed are presented below.

6.1 INTERVIEW POPULATION

To represent the diverse interests of the community and receive feedback on the CSSA environmental program to date, a list of 73 potential interviewees was established by CSSA. The list included 12 federal, state, county, city, or civic organization officials, 19 individuals whose wells are currently sampled by CSSA, 26 individuals whose wells are not currently sampled, and 16 other area residents. The 12 local government officials were contacted by telephone and then mailed a copy of the interview questions and requested to return them to Parsons. The officials who agreed to participate in the survey returned their response sheets by facsimile. Other officials who did not return messages or did not commit to answering them were provided a self-addressed, stamped envelope to facilitate return of the answer sheets. All other local residents were contacted by telephone. Of the potential interviewees remaining, eight telephone numbers were disconnected or incorrect. The remaining 53 interviewees were left a message concerning the interview if an answering machine picked up, or their numbers were called at least twice if there were repeated rings with no answer. Of the 53 potential interviewees with valid telephone numbers, 15 agreed to participate. Fourteen interviewees agreed to either answer the questions at the time they were contacted or give general comments, and one interviewee returned the telephone call at a more convenient time. As shown in Table 6.1, interviewees were assigned to one of four categories.

Table 6.1 Interview Categories

Category	Number of Interviews
Federal, State, County, and City Officials	3
Well Owners whose wells are sampled by CSSA	6
Residents or Landowners near CSSA	6
Total	15

6.2 RESULTS SUMMARY

The principal finding of past interviews revealed that CSSA did not have a large community presence prior to initiation of community mailouts in December 1999. Many people were unaware of the installation's mission as well as its environmental program until the CRP of August 1999 was implemented. Due to its relative size and purpose, CSSA is overshadowed by the other five military installations in the San Antonio area. In the first CRP interviews in 1999, 8 percent of those interviewed stated they were familiar with environmental program at CSSA. For the interviews conducted in the 2002 CRP Update, 94 percent of the interviewees were familiar with the program. The interviews conducted for the 2005 CRP revealed that 86 percent of the interviewees were familiar with the environmental program at CSSA. Though this percentage appears to have dropped since the 2002 interviews, CSSA made an effort in 2005 to contact local residents who were not on the existing mailing list to interview a better cross-section of local residents. Additionally, a new resident had moved into the CSSA area who was not familiar with CSSA's environmental program.

Some respondents indicated they did not have time to answer each question individually and, instead gave general comments about their impressions of CSSA. Where possible, those general comments are categorized and included in responses to the applicable question, below. The summary below may indicate that some respondents did not answer a question when the respondent either did not complete the question on a mailed-in submittal or did not directly answer a question during a telephone interview. In some cases respondents gave general comments about CSSA and failed to answer specific questions.

The environmental program concerns at CSSA which affect groundwater quality were foremost in the communities' concerns about CSSA. Specific concerns included safety of the drinking water and noise levels generated at CSSA. There was an overall impression that CSSA has maintained effective communications for informing the public. A majority of people interviewed stated they felt that CSSA has been very effective in informing the public. The rating of "very effective" was given by 64 percent of those interviewed, followed by 14 percent rating CSSA as "somewhat effective," and 21 percent giving a rating of "effective." No ratings of "not very effective" or "not effective at all" were given.

In general, perception of the post and the manner in which CSSA addresses the environmental issues and keeps the public informed is predominantly positive. There is a continued need for CSSA to assure citizens it is completely forthcoming about the post in general, and about groundwater monitoring activities specifically. Response to the idea of future dissemination of information about CSSA was positive, with 100 percent of those interviewed wanting to remain on or be added to the mailing list.

6.3 COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions were formulated to elicit information on any issues CSSA may need to address, the current perception of the environmental program by the neighboring residents, and any new and additional citizen concerns. The following summarizes the questions asked and responses given during the interviews.

1. Would you like your results to be submitted anonymously?

Yes No

Four of the 15 (26 percent) interviewees elected to submit anonymous results to CSSA.

Federal, State, County and City Officials

One of the three officials interviewed elected to submit anonymous results.

Well Owners

Two of the six persons interviewed asked to submit anonymous results to CSSA.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

One of the six persons interviewed asked to submit anonymous results to CSSA.

2. How long have you lived or worked in the CSSA area?

The majority of those interviewed were long-term residents of the CSSA area, with the average time living or working in the area being 22.2 years. Durations ranged from less than 5-1/2 years to 60 years.

Federal, State, County and City Officials

One official answered “not applicable” to this question, and the average for the remaining officials was 15 years in the area.

Well Owners

Well owners interviewed have lived an average of 40 years in the CSSA area.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Residents and landowners interviewed near CSSA have lived an average of 19.4 years in the CSSA area.

3. Are there any specific environmental projects or concerns at CSSA that you can remember since you have been living in this area?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

Two officials answered “No” or not applicable, and the third listed the explosion noise level and the ongoing groundwater sampling.

Well Owners

Two of the well owners mentioned the explosion noise level from CSSA. One well owner indicated that she is at a lower elevation than CSSA and after heavy rains her well water becomes dark and murky and this concerns her. Three residents mentioned the groundwater sampling.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Two residents mentioned the groundwater sampling. One resident mentioned both the groundwater sampling and the explosions. One resident mentioned some highway construction excavations that were left exposed, some concerns that were related to the McDonalds that was recently constructed and expressed concern whether certain wooded areas were being “environmentally protected.” The interviewer explained that these items were not related to CSSA activities.

4. Are you aware of the environmental program/activities at CSSA?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

The three officials were aware of the environmental program.

Well Owners

All well owners were aware of the environmental program.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Two residents maintained they were not very familiar with the environmental program, but the other four were familiar with the environmental program.

5. How did you learn about the environmental program ongoing at CSSA?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

One official was informed by TCEQ and the two remaining officials were informed by contact with CSSA.

Well Owners

Two of the residents responded that they were contacted by CSSA, and the remaining four well owners did not respond.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Two residents indicated they learned about the environmental program through the media, one through radio, and one through the newspaper. Two residents indicated they learned of the program from CSSA fact sheets, and two residents did not respond.

6. Have you received information in the mail from CSSA concerning its environmental activities?

Thirteen of the 15 respondents answered that they do receive mailings from CSSA. One respondent did not answer the question and one respondent was not sure.

7. If you received a post-card mailout, did you elect to remain on the mailing list for future informational mailouts?

Five of the 15 respondents remembered utilizing the postcard to remain on the mailing list. The remaining respondents did not answer the question, or did not remember the postcard mailout. One respondent requested that he be added to the mailing list, if he was not already on the list.

8. Did you attend one or both of the Public Meetings that CSSA held in October 2001 to inform the public about its environmental activities?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

One of the officials had attended a public meeting, the other two had not attended.

Well Owners

One of the six well owners had attended the public meeting.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Five of the six residents had attended the public meeting.

9. Did you feel your questions/concerns were answered/responded to by the information presented at the October 2001 public meeting?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

The one official who attended a meeting answered yes, his concerns were responded to.

Well Owners

The one well owner who attended a meeting answered yes, his concerns were responded to.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Four of the five residents who attended a meeting answered yes, their concerns were responded to, and the remaining resident did not respond to this question.

10. Have you ever contacted any officials about questions/concerns that you have regarding environmental conditions at CSSA? If so, who did you contact?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

Two of the officials answered “Yes” that they had contacted TCEQ and/or CSSA.

Well Owners

Four of the six well owners answered “No” and the remaining two did not respond.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Three of the six residents answered “Yes,” and two indicated they had contacted CSSA. One indicated he contacted CSSA concerning the noise levels, and another did not indicate why he contacted CSSA. One resident indicated that they contacted CSSA concerning smoke from burning, etc., but learned that it was Camp Bullis, not CSSA causing the issue.

11. Do you believe your concerns have been accurately reflected in the media coverage?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

All three officials responded “Yes.”

Well Owners

One well owner responded “Yes” that coverage at the very beginning was accurate; one responded that he had not seen any media coverage. The remaining four well owners did not respond.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

All six residents reported they did not remember seeing any recent coverage and/or did not remember seeing coverage at any time.

12. What is the best way to provide you with information about the post?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

All three officials answered the U.S. mail.

Well Owners

Three of the well owners responded U.S. mail and three did not respond.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

All six residents answered U.S. mail. One resident added that they can be contacted by telephone for urgent matters. One added that CSSA should continue exactly as they are currently contacting citizens.

13. CSSA’s goal is to complete its mission while minimizing adverse impacts on the civilian sector. Munitions testing is part of CSSA’s mission and generates noise. Are you aware of the noise related to munitions explosions generated at CSSA?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

One official reported he was aware of noise impacts at CSSA, and the remaining two officials answered “No.”

Well Owners

Five well owners were aware of noise impacts generating at CSSA, and the sixth was aware of the noise but considered it “no big deal.” One of the well owners aware of the noise noted that one “gets used to the sound of freedom.”

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Five of the residents were aware of the noise generated at CSSA, and one thought it was Camp Bullis generating noise. Several residents mentioned the traffic increases over recent years.

If yes, did you contact anyone to complain about the noise? If so, who?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

The one official who answered “yes” stated that he contacted CSSA.

Well Owners

One well owner stated she had not contacted anyone to complain because she did not know whom to contact. The remaining well owners had not contacted anyone about the noise.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

One resident contacted CSSA about the noise and stated that they “took care of it.” The remaining residents had not contacted CSSA.

14. Were you aware that Camp Stanley created an Environmental Noise Management Plan to limit noise impacts to the area?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

Two officials answered “No” and one answered “Yes.”

Well Owners

Five well owners were not aware of the plan and one did not respond.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

None of the residents were aware of the noise management plan.

15. Were you aware that Camp Stanley will review the Environmental Noise Management Plan periodically to ensure its effectiveness?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

Two officials answered “No” and one answered “Yes.”

Well Owners

Four well owners answered “No” and two did not respond.

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

All six residents answered “No.”

16. Are there any environmental projects or initiatives for which you would like more information?

Federal, State, County and City Officials

The officials answered “No.”

Well Owners

The well owners answered “No.”

Residents or Landowners near CSSA

Four residents answered “No.” One resident answered that she used to hear lots of machine guns on Saturday mornings along with explosions and she does not like it. One resident stated he recently moved in with his widowed mother and this information was new to him. He requested to be added to the mailing list.

17. In what manner would you like to be involved with future environmental work at CSSA?

Five respondents answered that the mailings should continue. One respondent added she would like to help if she could with research, or any way that she can. One stated she would like the traffic on Ralph Fair Road to slow down and, specifically, she wants her neighborhood to be “nice and quiet.” One resident stated she would like a tour of CSSA. One respondent suggested meetings.

18. Would you like to remain on or be added to the mailing list and receive future publications covering environmental activities at CSSA?

All 15 respondents indicated they would like to remain on the mailing list.

19. If CSSA holds future public meetings informing the public about its environmental activities, would you be interested in attending?

Nine responded “Yes” and five answered maybe.

20. Based on what you know and/or may have learned today, rate the post’s efforts to-date to inform the public:

One respondent did not answer this question. The majority of the remaining 14 rated CSSA’s efforts to-date a “1” (Very Effective), with the breakdown of answers as follows:

	Gov't officials	Well Owners	Local Residents	Total
1-Very effective	1	4	4	9
2-Somewhat effective	1	1		2
3-Effective	1	1	1	3
4-Not very effective				
5-Not effective at all				

21. Do you have any suggestions for ways the post can continue to inform the public in the future?

One well owner stated that “any part of the government” is “responsible for the pollution that it creates” and CSSA “should continue what they’re doing.” Another well owner had several suggestions “at night, at the southwest corner, there should be another light. There’s a gas meter there and a concrete wall where people park causing dogs to bark.” The well owner was “concerned about someone hopping the fence in the dark, so maybe another light would be effective.” This well owner stated that his daughter would be moving into a residence on his land and would be drinking water from the well CSSA identifies as LS-5. He also stated that there has been increased traffic lately and “around 4:00 am it can get pretty loud.”

One well owner stated, “he’s retired from CSSA, but still does contract work.” He stated that he knows what’s going on most of the time, and even talks to CSSA folks.” He added, “CSSA is doing a good job,” and he has no complaints. One resident was unfamiliar with the information being discussed because he had just moved into his mother’s home following his father’s death. He stated it was important that he receive any additional information whenever it is sent, because he is assisting his mother now.

One resident stated that when her power goes out, she’s comforted by the generators being turned on at CSSA, because she knows it’s not only her house that has lost power. Another well owner stated he would like his well to be sampled and added “CSSA is doing a good job with the plume and is keeping everyone up to date regarding the progress.” Another well owner also insisted that her well be sampled again and periodically.