

THE TWEAK – 2010

November 3-5, Missoula, MT

“Training Our Future Environmental Professionals”

The Purpose

The Environmental Challenge gives student teams the opportunity to develop solutions to a mock environmental problem and have the experience of presenting their solution to a panel of environmental professionals. We do not give you a lot of numbers to crunch. We are more interested in hearing about the issues involved, how you interpreted the problem, how you got to your conclusions, and how well you can communicate your thoughts. We want you to have fun! This exercise gives us all a chance to participate and gets the professionals of tomorrow to interact with the professionals of today.

Fun Facts in Coal Gas History

As the dawn of the 20th century began to brighten, innovations in the use of coal gas by-products began to spring up, often times leading to a new manufacturing/industrial user setting up shop next to a coal gas generator. Uses for coal gas by-products included roofing shingles, synthetic dyes, a key ingredient in road materials, as well as medicated shampoos, soaps, and ointments (to kill lice, treat dandruff, and ease psoriasis). In the late 1800's, German chemists had been having great success in deriving color dyes from various coal gas by-products, though few outside Germany could break into the market as Germany was considered a dye producing powerhouse. That was until 1914, when World War I forced Germany to abandon dye production in lieu of less colorful and more destructive chemicals. With the German dye monopoly now a bust, the American dye industry was free to flourish.

The Tweak

New Geotechnical Data Shows Larger Contamination Footprint

The High in the Saddle Consulting Group has recently made a discovery that may influence the liability picture of this site cleanup. An ambitious summer intern stumbled upon an inconsistency in several of the old site maps from the company's 1993 screening event. The source of the ambiguity was on the exact

location of the northern perimeter of R-MOP's original plot of land. Upon learning of the inconsistency, R-MOP commissioned a new land survey. Surprisingly, the top quarter of the contaminated zone was actually railroad land that was not officially part of the original R-MOP 1945 acquisition of the Gassy Cowboy Luminance Co. As it turns out, the site is owned by the railroad and had been leased by the Live Free and Dye Hard synthetic dye manufacturing plant from 1915 until 1945, making red and blue chemical dyes out of coal gas byproducts for dyeing American flag material (which were in high demand due to WWI and WWII). This is an important discovery for R-MOP; however, the railroad is known for being a tough customer and will not easily be persuaded to share any cost burden.

“How can we be expected to pay for something that was done by someone else who had leased land from us such a long time ago. We are not responsible, end of story. (Puff's from his large cigar and slowly blows a smoke ring.) Do you know who we are? We're the railroad, that's who. And this is not our first rodeo, not by a long shot.”

~Hue Briss **Railroad Representative**

Potential Lawsuit by Mr. Younger

Neil Younger is not a happy camper. Up until now his business has been booming, his rutabaga crop had been flourishing, and he was ready to expand. The fountain of youth was supposed to add a new Eastern medicine angle to his business and he had high hopes of increasing the footprint of his organic garden and incorporating other tasty plants. He had even been talking to community leaders about his property be a potential site for a weekend farmers market. Now Mr. Younger is being informed that there may be several institutional controls levied on his land during and after any cleanup. He is hearing that this could mean anything from construction and digging moratoriums to having to move off the land entirely.

“I'll admit I'm getting real paranoid, man. I've been here a long time and now it's like this isn't my property any more. I hear they can tell me how to conduct my business, even kick me off if they want. Well I know my rights and I'm not going to take this sitting down. I'm going to sue, that's what I'm going to do. All I wanted was to make a decent living and give back to the community.”

~Neil Younger **R & R's Proprietor**

Memo From R-MOP

(Insert Your Consulting Group's Name Here),

It is our understanding that the feasibility study is coming along nicely. We look forward to your proposal/presentation and appreciate the work you are putting towards our project. There are a few points of concern that have recently surfaced that we need your help in addressing. Your company's reputation for mitigating agreements between conflicting parties precedes you.

Along with your FS, we will need you to work out a cost sharing agreement with the railroad, as a quarter of this contamination is on land that in our assesment leaves them liable for a fraction of the cost. It is our understanding that your company has worked with the railroad in the past, and we trust that this will not be a problem. We suggest that you make a strong case prior to approaching a representative of the railroad. We do not want to have any legal conflict with them; they are the railroad after all. It would be best if you could convince them it would be in their best interest.

We also are having some trouble with the current land owner. It appears that he is ready to sue if this effort conflicts with his business more than his liking. Please work out the institutional controls that will be required under your current treatment strategy, keeping in mind his businesses viability. Perhaps there is a middle road that will keep him happy and not compromise the integrity of the cleanup efforts. We understand that this will depend on your proposed solution.

We look forward to evaluating your proposed strategy.

Kindest Regards,

Electra “Sparky” Powers **R-MOP Representative**

The Expectation

Detailed calculations are not the most important part of this challenge; logic train, process, conceptualizations, and creativity and **integration of the Tweak** are most important to the presentation composition. Logic of your vision and clarity in your presentation are critical. Remember you can come up with assumptions, but they will need to pass the “straight-face” test. This is like the real world!

This year you will only have one night to interact with the role players, which will be on Wednesday night. There will be three players, Electra “Sparky” Powers, Neil Younger, and Hue Briss. Not all the players will be in one place at the same time, and there may be a need to split your group up to interact with everyone. We will have each players evening schedule nailed down as best we can and it will be up to you to track each down. There will most likely be a need to go back and talk to players more than once, so be ready. More detailed information will be handed out at the meeting on Wednesday afternoon.