

Restoration Advisory Board Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 1995

Introduction

The Department of Defense (DoD) is pleased to provide the Congress with a report on the status and accomplishments of DoD's restoration advisory board (RAB) initiative for fiscal year (FY) 1995. The information in this report is provided in response to the *National Defense Authorization Act for FY95*, which requires that DoD submit, by May 1996, a report on the status of the RAB initiative. For FY94, the progress of DoD's RAB initiative was summarized in the community involvement chapter of the *Defense Environmental Restoration Program Annual Report to Congress for FY94*. With the FY95 report, DoD has expanded the discussion of its RAB initiative to satisfy the additional reporting requirements.

During FY95, DoD implemented several activities to support the RAB initiative. Key activities included:

- Developing the *Directory of Restoration Advisory Boards (RAB)*
- Beginning the collection of material for a RAB resource book
- Publishing in the *Federal Register* a notice of request for comments about various funding options for technical assistance for public participation and beginning the development of a proposed rule based on the comments received

"I am proud of the teamwork and partnerships that RABs have helped build among the Department, EPA, citizens, and the states. Promoting citizen involvement is not always easy, but the positive impact on the program is well worth the effort. Not only are we listening to citizens, we are using their input to improve the environmental restoration program."

--*Sherri W. Goodman*, Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environmental Security)

These activities, coupled with strong working relationships with the states, the public, and other Federal agencies, are advancing DoD's goal of involving communities early and often in decisions about environmental restoration.

"Government's responsibility today is to create opportunities, to provide flexibility, so that the best answers can emerge. There is no doubt in my mind that informed, involved industries, communities, citizens, will always do a better job than some distant bureaucracy."

--*Carol Browner*, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

DoD remains committed to involving communities neighboring its installations in environmental restoration decisions that may affect human health and the environment. RABs, which have become a significant component of DoD's community involvement

activities, provide a forum through which members of affected communities can provide input to an installation's ongoing environmental restoration activities.

DoD believes that working in partnership with local communities and addressing the concerns of those communities early in the cleanup process will enhance its efforts under, and increase the credibility of, the environmental restoration program.

Through the RAB initiative, DoD will continue to seek new ways to involve the public in its ongoing effort to improve and accelerate its environmental restoration program.

Understanding the RAB Initiative

RABs embody the philosophy that teamwork is the key to success.

It is DoD policy to involve local communities as early as possible in decisions about environmental restoration activities at installations. RABs, which have become a significant component of DoD's community involvement activities, embody the philosophy that teamwork is the key to success.

Legislative, Policy, and Other Drivers

The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act of 1986 (SARA) requires DoD to establish technical review committees (TRC) at installations with environmental restoration programs. TRCs review technical documents and discuss progress in implementing and completing environmental restoration activities. By the end of FY94, TRCs had been formed at most installations with environmental restoration programs, and at nearly all installations listed on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Priorities List (NPL) a list of priority sites for hazardous waste cleanup under Superfund. The development of TRCs was an important step in the evolution of community involvement in DoD's environmental restoration program.

RAB members provide individual advice on an installation's cleanup plan.

DoD Policy

DoD policy requires that RABs be established at installations where there is "sufficient, sustained community interest" in the environmental restoration program. One of the following criteria must be met to determine that community interest is sufficient and sustained:

- Closure of the installation involves transfer of property to the community
- At least 50 citizens petition for an advisory board
- The Federal, state, or local government requests formation of an advisory board
- The installation determines the need for an advisory board

For the past several years, DoD has participated on the Federal Facilities Environmental Restoration Dialogue Committee (FFERDC). After examining how priorities should be set for restoration at Federal facilities and who should set them, the FFERDC recommended that the community role be expanded. This expanded role would ensure that decisions about environmental restoration reflect the concerns of all parties who are stakeholders to such decisions. DoD carefully considered the recommendations of the FFERDC and, in response, strengthened its community involvement efforts by including the RAB initiative under its environmental restoration program.

In 1993, President Clinton announced his Five-Part Plan to speed the economic recovery of communities in which bases are scheduled to close. Part of the Fast-Track Cleanup Program, which sprang from the President's plan, emphasized early community involvement in the environmental restoration process as an important element of the program.

On September 9, 1993, the Deputy Secretary of Defense issued a memorandum that outlined the policies for implementation of the Fast-Track Cleanup Program. One of the policies mandated the establishment of RABs at closing installations where excess property was available for transfer to communities for reuse. The RAB initiative, subsequently applied to operating installations, gives an opportunity for citizens living near military installations to obtain information about, and provide input to, the environmental restoration program.

While RABs represent DoD's implementation of the FFERDC concept of site-specific advisory boards (SSAB), it should be noted that RABs differ significantly from SSABs. SSABs are independent citizen boards that develop consensus recommendations for government decision makers. In contrast, RABs promote cooperation between the government and the community by sharing chairmanship of the board between the installation and the community; and seeking advice from each member, rather than forcing a consensus. It is DoD's intent that this partnership approach will be more effective than other approaches in enhancing and accelerating DoD's environmental restoration program.

How the RAB Initiative has Matured

"I used to say, 'It's us against the U.S. Army, and we're holding our own,' but now I talk of working with the installation officials and the Army, to ensure the proper cleanup of the Arsenal. There was much mutual mistrust to overcome, but we've made a lot of progress. Isn't that how peace begins?"

--Susan Falkoff, RAB Member, Watertown Arsenal

Prior to 1995

Under DoD's early efforts to increase the involvement of communities, installations informed nearby communities of plans for, and the status of, environmental restoration projects. In 1994, DoD recognized the need to refine its basic community involvement policy. In its management guidance for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, DoD set forth policy on enhancing community involvement. DoD also recognized the need to quickly communicate the new policy and procedures to the people charged with its implementation at the installation level.

To facilitate those efforts and to foster coordination among the DoD Components, an interservice and interagency working group was formed to oversee implementation of the RAB initiative. In September 1994, DoD and EPA jointly issued guidelines for implementing the policy and identifying the role each stakeholder would play in a RAB. These joint guidelines serve as a model of interagency cooperation.

Once policy had been issued and training conducted, many installations reviewed their community involvement programs to determine whether there was interest in the community in forming a RAB. To determine the level of interest within the community, installation officials interviewed community members and placed notices in newspapers.

At many installations, TRCs are being converted to RABs to include more local citizens.

At many of the installations at which TRC's had become a trusted sounding board, the TRC was converted to a RAB by expanding the number of members representing the community, selecting a community co-chair, and integrating procedures to seek, and respond to, input from the community early in the decision-making process. At the installations at which TRCs were not converted, TRCs continue to provide forums for the transfer of information.

During Fiscal Year 1995

During FY95, focus has shifted from establishing RABs to operating them.

During FY95, the focus of the RAB initiative shifted from establishing RABs to operating RABs. Installation efforts now address how to balance an ideal concept of public participation with the reality of incorporating participation into environmental restoration programs.

Installations Participating in a RAB

DoD Component	No.
ARMY	28
NAVY	101
MARINE CORPS	3
AIR FORCE	107
DLA	5

NGB	1
FUDS	6
TOTAL	251

At closing bases, installation officials began addressing the role of the RAB in relation to the reuse process. In addition, installation officials and Federal and state regulatory agencies continued to address how to quickly educate RAB members to promote the rapid formation of a fully functioning RAB.

More RABs are being established at FUDS locations. Nine are in the planning stages for FY96.

At many RABs, installation officials began working in concert with the local community and the Federal and state regulatory agencies to develop procedures to manage the operation of the RAB. DoD policy on RABs (and subsequent guidelines) was developed to maximize flexibility for RAB members and military installations. Many RABs are establishing basic procedures that address such issues as reviewing and responding to public comment, keeping the community informed, and determining methods for resolution of disputes.

At the end of FY95, RABs had been formed at more than 250 operational and closing installations located in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Guam--representing the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, the Air Force, the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), the National Guard Bureau (NGB), and formerly used defense sites (FUDS).

New RABs continued to be formed. Among the numerous RABs established at Army, Navy, and Air Force installations, the RAB formed at the Los Alamitos Armed Forces Reserve Center, California marked the first Army National Guard facility to establish a RAB. It is hoped that this RAB will serve as a model for RABs at other national guard installations.

DoD recognizes that increased public involvement may require some adjustment in how stakeholders view their respective roles in the environmental restoration program. Historically, installation officials were concerned that the intricacies of technical issues related to contamination and the risk posed would hamper the public's ability to participate effectively in the environmental restoration process. Regulatory officials had similar concerns. In some communities, residents hesitated to trust an installation that the community perceived to be less than candid about its environmental restoration program. Old biases must be discarded and a new partnership formed to embrace all stakeholders on an equal footing.

The RAB initiative is helping to build trust among community members, installation officials, and Federal and state regulatory personnel.

The RAB initiative has helped to bridge this gap of mistrust among community members, installation officials, and Federal and state regulatory personnel. At many operational DoD installations, and at most closing installations, RABs now provide the primary forum in which the public participates in their environmental restoration program. It is important to note that the RAB is not a replacement for other types of community outreach and participation activities required by law, regulation, or policy.

"DoD recognizes that public involvement focuses on providing communities access to information on, and participation in, matters related to human health and the environment. To that end, DoD will continue to promote RABs and TRCs as forums for discussion about environmental cleanup activities at DoD installations.

DoD Strategy on Environmental Justice, March 1995

The guidelines issued in September 1994 require that each RAB reflect the diversity of the communities in which RABs operate. In addition, the guidelines state that every effort should be made to ensure that a broad spectrum of individuals or groups (including those groups traditionally underrepresented in the decision-making process) be included. By bringing together people who reflect the many diverse interests within the community, a RAB helps identify issues of concern and reduce potential communication problems that could result in needless delays. It is DoD's intent that this partnering approach will be effective in incorporating the diverse needs and concerns of the communities affected by environmental restoration activities.

Lessons Learned

The examples discussed below illustrate several lessons that have been learned through the experiences of RABs that were formed during the first two years of the initiative.

Selection Of Members Is Crucial To The Success Of The RAB

The selection of RAB members is perhaps one of the most sensitive issues facing an installation that establishes a RAB. When members of the community feel that the process for selecting members of the RAB is conducted in a fair and unbiased manner, they are more likely to accept the RAB as a credible forum for the discussion of issues or concerns. Conversely, if the selection of members, particularly of community members, is not handled carefully, loss of trust can occur, with a subsequent failure to achieve dialogue.

The RAB at **Hill Air Force Base** (AFB), Utah, demonstrates true initiative and innovation in reaching as many members of the community as possible. Six small communities, ranging in size from 2,000 to 30,000 residents, lie in the vicinity of Hill AFB. After conducting a wide-ranging outreach project to inform the communities about the RAB, installation officials received 155 applications for membership.

To ensure adequate representation of all the communities, the installation asked each of the town and city councils to help select RAB members from the pool of applicants. Special emphasis was placed on selecting individuals who would represent the interests of the communities rather than the interests of local governments. In addition, each council was asked to appoint a RAB member who would represent the interests of that local government. Open and honest communication between the installation and the local communities resulted in the establishment of a RAB whose 27 members participate actively in meetings and provide advice from the various communities.

The active participation of the RAB in the review of relative risk evaluations for 80 sites at Hill AFB resulted in revisions to the installation's plan for sequencing projects for cleanup.

Training For Community Members Of The RAB Benefits All

Training members of the RAB about an installation's environmental restoration program increases their understanding of the process and objectives of the RAB and the installation's environmental restoration program. Training for RABs has ranged from a simple introduction to the installation to detailed instruction in technical issues, including workshops on relative risk site evaluations, briefings on regulatory requirements, site tours, and comparisons of environmental technologies.

Through an extensive educational process that is ongoing, the RAB at **Fort Carson**, Colorado, has gained a better understanding of the "what and why" of the installation's environmental restoration program. When the RAB was formed in April 1995, installation officials decided that a strong training program was needed to assist the RAB members in providing informed input to decisions about environmental restoration activities on sites located throughout the more than 350,000 acre facility.

Although DoD policy states that RABs are not in the business of determining reuse options, the RAB should address reuse as it relates to environmental restoration priorities and levels of cleanup.

One of the key training activities was the development of a RAB Education Book that includes descriptions of each of the installation's 167 sites, and a brief history of the installation and its operations. In addition, the book features a description of the environmental restoration process, which summarizes the key elements of the study, interim action, design, and cleanup phases of the program.

The education book supplemented presentations by various guest speakers who provided additional details about the environmental restoration program. Guest speakers included the cleanup contractor and personnel from the installation's legal and natural resources staffs.

Installation officials credit the ongoing training of RAB members as an invaluable tool to getting and keeping the community involved early in the environmental restoration

process. They point to efforts by all stakeholders that emphasize communication, coordination, and cooperation--efforts which have enhanced relations with the community.

Agreement About The Mission And Scope Of Activities Of The RAB Is Crucial In Developing And Reaching Common Goals

When members of the RAB agree early on about their mission, there is a framework for discussions. Without that framework, discussions may become bogged down with issues that are not relevant to the installation's environmental restoration program.

This framework is particularly important when addressing reuse issues affecting a closing installation. Although DoD policy states that RABs are not in the business of determining reuse options, the RAB should address reuse as it relates to environmental restoration priorities and levels of cleanup.

A partnership between the RAB and the local redevelopment authority (LRA) a community organization created to address reuse of a closing base is essential. Methods and timetables established for cleanup should be coordinated with the type of reuse planned for the installation and priorities set by an LRA regarding time frames for reuse. Clarifying the role of the RAB in relation to reuse can help avoid delays in the approval of environmental restoration plans and intended reuse of an installation.

Community representatives of the RAB at **McClellan AFB**, California, have agreed on the importance of maintaining an active role in reuse decisions at that installation. To that end, the RAB has formed a Base Reuse Subcommittee to monitor the activities of the LRA. In addition, members of the RAB believe that their efforts will help ensure that environmental issues are considered when making decisions about potential reuse options, as well as to ensure that costly delays are avoided.

One community member of the RAB noted that, "the primary goal of the RAB Reuse Subcommittee is to not allow commercial interests to overwhelm the interest and responsibility of McClellan AFB to proceed with environmental restoration."

Remaining Flexible Embodies The True Spirit Of Partnership--An Essential Element In Achieving Dialogue

DoD recognized early on that each RAB established would be a unique organization dealing with installation-specific issues. Thus, each installation has been encouraged to customize implementation of its RAB to reflect the unique circumstances at that installation and within that community.

By working together, each installation is looking to conduct environmental restoration activities in a timely and cost-effective manner.

At communities in the Oxnard Plain in central California and those near the extensive Pearl Harbor Naval Base Complex in Hawaii, each of which is home to a number of installations, RAB activities are conducted by a single consolidated RAB that serves as a focal point for dialogue among the extended community, the installations, and regulatory agencies. These "joint" RABs, established for 45 installations DoD-wide, demonstrate how installations can work together to share resources, encourage the participation of members of communities, and speak with one voice about DoD's environmental restoration activities in a specific region.

During 1995, installation efforts to implement proactive public outreach programs resulted in the formation of interservice RABs. In Long Beach, California, the Navy and DLA have joined to form a RAB to serve the communities surrounding the Navy's Long Beach Naval Complex and DLA's Defense Fuel Support Point, San Pedro. By working together, each installation is looking to conduct environmental restoration activities in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Gaining Momentum and Achieving Results

"It's been gratifying to watch RABs evolve into an essential part of our program. Public participation has helped us improve the cleanup process, proving that good ideas are always welcome."

--Patricia A. Rivers, P.E., Assistant Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Environmental Cleanup)

Initiatives Undertaken in Fiscal Year 1995

During the past year, DoD implemented several activities to support the RAB initiative. Key activities included:

- Developing the *Directory of Restoration Advisory Boards (RAB)*, which lists for each RAB information about installation and community co-chairs
- Beginning to compile information for a RAB resource book that will provide practical, "hands on" tools for establishing and operating RABs
- Publishing in the *Federal Register* a notice of request for comments about various funding options for technical assistance for public participation and beginning the development of a proposed rule based on comments received

During FY95, DoD began efforts to design its Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) program. A senior level working group composed of representatives of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the DoD Components, and EPA, developed and proposed for public comment in the *Federal Register* three options for providing technical assistance to the community.

Most commentors favored the option that called for technical assistance to be provided through the use of local purchase orders. With this input, the working group began

drafting a proposed rule defining how this will be accomplished within DoD, as well as identifying criteria for the receipt of funds, appropriate use of funds, dollar limitations, and reporting requirements.

The proposed rule will be published in the *Federal Register* for public comment and comments will be incorporated before the program is initiated. DoD believes that public involvement in the development of the program is especially appropriate given that the TAPP program is specifically intended to assist communities.

Results and Successes

When RABs were first implemented in September 1993, DoD policy outlined specific responsibilities of the RAB. In September 1994, the RAB Guidelines, issued jointly by EPA and DoD, further clarified the roles and responsibilities of each of the members of the RAB.

The following stories illustrate how RABs are fulfilling their key responsibilities.

Providing Advice To The Installation And Federal And State Regulatory Agencies

One key benefit of a RAB is the opportunity it offers an installation to build or strengthen its relationships with its regulatory partners. By acting as a forum for the discussion and exchange of information among the community; the installation; and Federal, state, and local government agencies, RABs have provided advice that has resulted in significant avoidance in cost and time.

The RAB at **Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island**, Washington, has been meeting since February 1994 to review documents and provide advice to installation personnel. Among the most significant contributions the RAB has made to the decision-making process is the RAB's advice on alternatives for cleanup, which was a crucial factor in the selection of a cleanup alternative that resulted in a cost avoidance of \$4.5 million.



Members of the Whidbey Island RAB tour an air purification facility at a former landfill.

One key benefit of a RAB is the opportunity it offers an installation to build or strengthen its relationships with its regulatory partners.

Under the environmental restoration program at NAS Whidbey Island, more than 40 sites have been listed as potentially contaminated. In one area, the former runway fire school, concentrations of petroleum and other chemicals in soil and groundwater exceeded regulatory levels. The former fire school lies in a restricted area with limited access and the groundwater is not a source of drinking water.

The Navy originally selected a cleanup alternative--excavation and removal of soil--designed to meet all regulatory requirements. The area was considered eligible for residential use after an evaluation of potential risk to human health was performed. The cost of the selected alternative was estimated to be \$5.4 million.

The RAB questioned the stringency of the "residential" cleanup standard, stating that the human health and ecological risk did not appear to warrant such a costly cleanup. Subsequently, the Navy selected a new preferred alternative: oil skimming and bioventing, along with restrictions on future residential development of the area and requirements for monitoring of the groundwater. The cost of that alternative is estimated at \$0.9 million--resulting in a cost avoidance of more than \$4.5 million.

Recommending Priorities Among Sites Or Projects

At many installations, RABs participate in the evaluation of relative risk, the backbone of DoD's common-sense approach to the environmental restoration program. At several installations at which RABs have become integral parts of the review process, the participation of the RAB has brought about revisions to priorities (both major and minor) that are producing solid savings in both time and expenditures.

At many installations at which the priorities selected by the RAB matched those developed by the installation, the RABs applauded the use of relative risk evaluations to set priorities for environmental restoration at military bases.

"The entire remediation from identification to cleanup has been handled swiftly and professionally. It is obvious that the Navy takes environmental restoration seriously and that the Navy cares about public involvement in the cleanup process."

--Ms. Dottie Marron, RAB Community Co-chair NAS North Island, CA

At closing installations, RABs provide a link between cleanup and the transfer of property to the community.

The participation of the RAB at Kirtland AFB, New Mexico, in the installation's relative risk process enabled the installation to save time and money because site investigation projects were accelerated. In addition, Kirtland AFB became one of the first installations to complete relative risk evaluations of all its contaminated sites with the full involvement of stakeholders.

In early 1995, RAB members representing the community, the installation, and the New Mexico Environment Department evaluated the relative risk of 43 sites and recommended priorities for cleanup. The RAB members attended a training session on the site ranking system that included a tour of the sites.

Because of the success of efforts during early 1995 to involve the public, EPA Region 6 determined that the installation's efforts to obtain the RAB's participation in the conduct of relative risk site evaluations met the requirements for involving the public which usually are satisfied by a public hearing.

The effectiveness of the working relationship the Air Force has established with the RAB at Kirtland AFB provides regulator personnel and the public with confidence in DoD's environmental restoration activities at the installation.

Addressing Important Issues Related To Environmental Restoration

The RAB's focus is on providing advice about environmental restoration activities at military installations throughout the decision process. Among the responsibilities of the RAB, the task of addressing issues important to environmental restoration such as the scope of studies, reviewing and evaluating documents, cleanup levels, waste management, and remedial action alternatives is central to improving the community's understanding of the activities being undertaken to clean up the installation.

At closing installations, RABs provide a link between cleaning up property and preparing the property for transfer to the community. RABs address issues related to reuse in two ways:

- By providing input to the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Cleanup Team (BCT) on those issues that affect cleanup priorities and decisions
- By providing comments to the LRA on possible reuse options, based on the environmental condition of the property.

The RAB established at **NAS North Island**, California, has been working with installation personnel since June 1994 to address issues related to the installation's environmental restoration program. Recently, the RAB gave the Navy high praise for its quick response to the RAB's concerns about the cleanup of a shoreline site. NAS North Island had discovered that slag and sediments at the shoreline site were contaminated with heavy metals and radiation. The RAB was immediately notified of the discoveries. When news of the contamination was broadcast, the community was not surprised--the Navy already had been working on the problem with the RAB. The relationship of trust

and openness fostered by the RAB has paid dividends for both the Navy and the community.

The shoreline site has been subsequently cleaned up. One million pounds of contaminated slag and sediment were excavated, placed in containers, and shipped off-site for stabilization and final disposal. The RAB assisted in this process, providing their endorsement of the cleanup approach.

The Navy estimates that the cost avoidance associated with the compromise was from \$15 to \$20 million.

By taking this proactive approach, installation officials believe that significant delays of as much as five to ten months were prevented thanks to the facilitation of the RAB in the shoreline cleanup process. In turn, the RAB felt that it had been kept well informed about the site due to the prompt response by the Navy. Having the RAB in place served as a mechanism for communication to the community about the contamination and helped to respond to community concerns.

Short Stories

The following short stories more fully illustrate the integral role the RAB can play in enhancing the public's trust in DoD's environmental restoration program.

Naval Air Station Cecil Field, Florida

Benefitting from an aggressive training program, the RAB established at NAS Cecil Field, Florida has proven to be a valued partner in the installation's environmental restoration program.

When the RAB first was formed in 1994, the community members of the RAB requested that the Navy clean up its sites to residential standards, regardless of the intended reuse or level of potential risk to human health or the environment. In response, installation officials developed and implemented a plan to educate the RAB about the environmental restoration process, including DoD's relative risk site evaluation framework and the level of risk posed by each site and what those levels mean. The training program featured a discussion of costs and funding which focused on balancing the need to clean a single site to a high standard with the need to spend available funds in a way that will produce the greatest overall reduction in risk.

The first test of the effectiveness of the training program occurred when installation officials proposed a plan that called for simple monitoring of two landfills located adjacent to a wetlands area surrounded by a thicket of pines. The sites were considered

low risk because of the lack of "receptors," such as human or animal populations living nearby, wetland areas, drinking water supplies, and so forth.

Initially, the RAB and the community sought stringent cleanup actions that would have required the construction of a large landfill cap, supplemented with extensive groundwater remediation. However, through its newfound understanding of the low level of risk present at the landfills, the community and the members of the RAB agreed that the Navy proposal would address their concerns. The Navy estimates that the cost avoidance associated with the compromise was from \$15 to \$20 million.

The RAB at NAS Cecil Field continues to provide advice on the selection of cleanup technology, focusing on cost-effectiveness with considerations of relative risk and future land use.

Fort Detrick, Maryland

In 1993, Fort Detrick, located near Frederick, Maryland, established one of the first RABs in the nation. RAB members include local citizens, Army personnel, government officials, and state and Federal regulatory personnel--reflecting the diversity within the Frederick community. The successful formation and implementation of the RAB illustrates how active participation of members of the community can build trust between local residents and DoD and gain support for DoD's environmental restoration program.

The RAB initiative at Fort Detrick has proven instrumental in addressing the public's fears and correcting misconceptions about environmental restoration activities at Fort Detrick. The public had legitimate concerns about cleanup activities but, before the RAB was established, had no means of obtaining accurate information and voicing opinions.

One of the first actions the RAB took was to address fears in the community about the possibility that biological agents were buried at or near Fort Detrick. A public meeting was held at the Frederick City Hall, a neutral location. A large audience attended the meeting, broadcast live on local cable television. During the meeting, members of the community telephoned to ask specific questions about contamination at the installation. By holding the meeting, the installation gained greater credibility for its environmental restoration program. The installation also built stronger relationships of trust with RAB members and the community.

The Fort Detrick RAB plays an essential role in communicating information to the local community. For example, when the results of tests of contaminated wells were released, many misconceptions about the extent of contamination arose because of the technical language used in the reports. The RAB clarified technical issues and helped the community understand that the contamination did not pose a significant threat to human health.

In addition to forming a RAB, Army personnel have worked hard to gain the trust of the community. They use educational materials to keep the community informed about environmental restoration activities being conducted at the installation. The installation's Public Affairs Office regularly mails a newsletter to nearly 1,800 residents of the community. The newsletter describes details of the environmental restoration process at the installation and identifies contacts for information about specific investigation efforts.

Fort Detrick's work in the field of biomedical research continues today, with the support and understanding of the community. As a result of the activities of the RAB, the community and the installation no longer view each other as adversaries. Instead, the community has expressed an appreciation for the Army's foresight and the Army has shifted its way of thinking to a more proactive approach.

"Through its foresightedness, Fort Detrick has involved the Frederick community in its environmental cleanup activities from the initial discovery of the contamination to the current investigation and remediation planning activity... The community involvement on the RAB benefits us all by providing us with a measure of reassurance, direct input, and a forum ...assurance to the community that the whole truth is being presented."

--Gerald Toomey, RAB Community Co-chair Fort Detrick

"I could not imagine us today undertaking such a sweeping environmental program without the involvement of the community."

--Colonel Hank Tuell, U.S. Army Garrison Commander Fort Detrick

The RAB has succeeded in providing a forum in which the members of the community and representatives from the Army, EPA, and the state regulatory agency work together to achieve a common goal--cleanup.

Former Black Hills Army Depot, South Dakota

The Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is finding out that success can be achieved through the establishment of RABs in communities affected by investigations and cleanup projects at formerly used defense sites. As manager of a highly visible project at the former Black Hills Army Depot, USACE understands the critical nature of public involvement and teamwork in its environmental restoration efforts at sites without an active military presence.

The former Black Hills Army Depot is located ten miles southwest of Edgemont, South Dakota. Nicknamed "Igloo" for the 830 large concrete, earth-covered ammunition storage igloos peppered throughout the 21,095-acre former munitions depot, Black Hills was used for long-term storage of ammunition, propellants, and chemical agents. The depot

was closed in 1967 and its property subsequently purchased by several individuals and organizations.

Environmental restoration activities at the former Black Hills Army Depot is facing increasing scrutiny and criticism from local residents. However, in the one year since its inception, the RAB has succeeded in providing a forum in which the members of the community and representatives from the Army, EPA, and the state regulatory agency work together to achieve a common goal: cleanup.

USACE has undertaken efforts to foster a continuous flow of information so that the community can participate as active, informed partners in the environmental restoration program. Significant training efforts included a discussion on ordnance by an expert from Yuma Proving Ground, a field demonstration of various geophysical investigation techniques and equipment, and training on the typical process for cleanup actions. Training about risk assessment is planned for FY96.

USACE also identified a mechanism to provide independent technical assistance to the RAB members. Individuals at Kansas State University, which is the recipient of a grant from EPA's Technical Outreach Services to Communities (TOSC) program, will begin reviewing all technical documents regarding cleanup activities at the former depot and will provide a report of their findings to the RAB.

Community members have used the RAB to communicate their concerns about environmental restoration activities at the former depot. In several instances, USACE has acted on the advice provided by the RAB. For example, members of the RAB expressed concern that an initial search of installation archives had not fully explored former practices at the depot. In response, USACE agreed to conduct a second archives search, including interviewing former depot employees and other individuals who were knowledgeable about past operations.

RAB members also stated that sampling efforts are not progressing as quickly as the community would like. Traditionally, USACE samples for potential contamination after all ordnance has been removed from the area. RAB members were concerned that with this approach, the sampling could not begin until 1999. USACE has agreed to conduct sampling in restricted areas (where there is unexploded ordnance) by using existing site documentation to identify surface ordnance and various geophysical techniques to identify buried ordnance.

Although the environmental restoration program at the former Black Hills Army Depot continues to be scrutinized by the community, USACE believes that significant progress has been made in building support for the depot's environmental restoration program. With the implementation of the RAB, the community has a forum to keep informed and to have their concerns heard and addressed.

"...work hard with area residents and the rewards will come--eventually."

Future Outlook for the RAB Initiative

During FY96, DoD expects to continue efforts to draft regulations that govern the establishment and operation of RABs. The regulations will formally codify the policy already developed for the creation and implementation of RABs at defense installations. DoD also will continue to draft regulations governing technical assistance for public participation. Although DoD TAPP funds will not be available until the program is formally established, grants have been, and continue to be, available through EPA's Technical Assistance Grants Program. In addition, DoD will begin distributing the *Directory of Restoration Advisory Boards (RAB)*, and complete and distribute the RAB resource book.

The future success of DoD's environmental restoration program depends on its ability to incorporate the diverse views of all stakeholders--especially the community--into the decision-making process. Communities must become true partners in ensuring the safest, most efficient, and most cost-effective alternatives possible.

The communication between the installation and the community is no longer a simple matter of promoting community relations through traditional methods that offer little opportunity for the community to respond. An outreach program must continue that will bring the public into the environmental restoration process so that a dynamic exchange will occur between DoD and those most affected by environmental restoration activities.