

Army Restoration Advisory Boards

If there is no RAB, how can communities find out what is going on?

As part of DERP and CERCLA guidance, the Army actively informs and involves the public in the cleanup process through a variety of outreach efforts outlined in a Community Involvement Plan (CIP) developed for each installation's restoration program. Activities outlined in the CIP, including public meetings, notices and comment periods, fact sheets, mailings, and media releases, as well as formal Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs), give local citizens and other stakeholders the opportunity to learn about and have input into the restoration process. Installations also maintain an Information Repository that includes cleanup documents of interest to the public. The CIP identifies the location of the repository.



What is Environmental Restoration?

Environmental restoration includes the cleanup of environmental contaminants, such as hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, and petroleum as well as unexploded ordnance and military munitions. Restoration activities may also include the demolition and removal of buildings and other structures. The Army conducts environmental restoration in accordance with federal law, including the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). At Army overseas locations, environmental restoration is conducted in accordance with DoD policies and in compliance with international/ host nation agreements.



For More Information:

Visit the U.S. Army Environmental Command RAB webpage at <https://aec.army.mil/index.php?cid=354>

Links to the RAB Rule, RAB Rule Handbook, TAPP Rule, TAPP Rule Handbook and other useful information can be found under **Read More About It.**

More information about the Army's cleanup program can be found at <https://aec.army.mil/index.php?cid=356>

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What is a RAB?

A RAB is a stakeholder group that meets on a regular basis to discuss environmental restoration at a specific property that is either currently or was formerly owned by the Department of Defense (DoD), but where DoD oversees the environmental restoration process. RABs enable people interested in the environmental cleanup at a specific Army installation to exchange information with representatives of regulatory agencies, the Army, and the community. While the public can comment on the Army's environmental restoration program, RABs offer a focused and interactive opportunity to shape cleanup decisions through discussion and to provide input to Army decision makers. Because representatives of the environmental agencies overseeing cleanup participate in the RAB, the RAB offers members and the public the opportunity to share their questions, concerns and ideas with agencies involved in the cleanup. RABs provide valuable input to the installation and environmental agencies on environmental restoration decision, but RABs are not decision-making bodies.

Who can serve on a RAB?

RABs are comprised of individuals from the community who are affected by the Army's environmental restoration activities because they live and/or work in close proximity to the installations. Anyone interested in restoration activities and willing to dedicate their time may participate in RAB meetings, even if they are not a RAB member. RABs also include representatives from the installation and regulatory agencies that oversee cleanup at the installation. Army RABs are co-chaired by an Army representative, appointed by the installation commander or their designee, and a member of the community, elected by the community members of the RAB.



What is a RAB member's responsibilities?

RAB members serve without compensation. They are responsible for attending meetings and providing individual input in an open, honest, and constructive manner. They represent and communicate community concerns to other RAB members and act as a conduit for exchange of information. RAB members review, evaluate, and comment on documents and other material related to restoration. Local and state government members of the RAB also ensure the state and local environmental standards and regulations are identified and addressed by the Army. They may also facilitate flexible and innovative resolutions of environmental issues and concerns. They assist the Army in education and training for RAB members. Tribal

government members may educate RAB members regarding tribal sovereignty, tribal laws, and their application to the property. Tribal member participation in the RAB does not replace the government-to-government relationship with the Federal Government.

When are RABs established?

According to the Management Guidance for the Defense Environmental Restoration Program, Army installations must establish a RAB where there is sufficient and sustained community interest. Where RABs are not formed initially, Installations must reassess community interest at least every 24 months. Solicitation for interest in forming a RAB may occur at any point in the cleanup process, but must occur during the Remedial Investigation phase.



When do RABs meet?

A RAB should meet as often as necessary. RAB members decide on a schedule when they establish the RAB's operating procedures and then add or delete meetings as necessary. There are times when a flurry of activity occurs in planning or conducting environmental restoration and RABs may want to meet more often to review and provide input on relevant documents and ensure they stay abreast of the activities. There are other times when the RAB may determine that infrequent meetings are adequate.

What are the benefits of establishing a RAB?

RABs provide a collaborative forum for the community, government agencies, tribes, and Army decision makers to discuss and identify the most efficient and productive means to restore the environment. As with all public participation, RABs contribute to better decisions. They help provide more complete information, in the form of public input, that gives decision makers additional facts, values, and perspectives. This allows them to consider and incorporate the best information and expertise from all stakeholders. A progressive and successful public

involvement program such as a RAB should prevent delays and assist, rather than hinder, the project. A RAB that provides a balanced representation of the entire affected community can establish the basis for building relationships and trust.