

TARHEEL ARMY MISSILE PLANT

RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD- MINUTES

Date: April 17, 2025

Time: 6 – 8 p.m.

Meeting called to order by: Paul Humphrey, U.S. Army Environmental Command

IN ATTENDANCE

U.S. Army Environmental Command (AEC)

Paul Humphrey, Environmental Support Manager

Nathan Edwards, Team Lead / Army Co-Chair

Lally Laksbergs, Environmental Public Affairs

City of Burlington

John Vernon, Public Information Specialist

Jamie Lawson, Executive Director of Planning and Development Services

Bob Patterson, Executive Director - Water Resources/ Engineering

Craig Honeycutt, City Manager

Rachel Kelly, Assistant City Manager

Adam Shull, Economic Development Director

North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ)

Sue Murphy, NCDEQ Representative

Terracon

Don Malone, Field Technical Lead

Ethan Dinwiddie, Project Geologist

Northwind/NJJV

Derek Rhodes, Project Technical Lead

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Dena Thompson, Senior Project Ma

Community Co-Chair

Todd Lambert

AGENDA

- RAB membership
- Operating procedures
- Property
- Army background of the Tarheel Army Missile Plant (TAMP).
- Northwind/Terracon overview of assessment and cleanup work.

MEETING INFORMATION

Board Structure & Governance

The Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is now fully formed with 19 members, and Todd Lambert was selected as the community co-chair. Draft operating procedures were distributed on April 2 and 10, with an electronic vote planned; members have until April 24 to provide approval or suggest edits.

Several community members sought clarification on how the co-chair was selected, prompting the Army to commit to a follow-up email explaining the process.

The RAB continues to serve as a key venue for sharing updates on the Army's environmental work and hearing public input.

Site Ownership & Property Transfers

Although the site is privately owned, the Army retains responsibility for environmental restoration activities and access for remediation due to restrictions established during the early transfer process. The Army also reiterated land-use restrictions for the site, that include a requirement for fencing around the property, ground disturbance restrictions within five feet of the water table, and continued Army access to the site.

Community members voiced frustration that the property has changed hands multiple times without clear accountability. One owner previously disrupted cleanup infrastructure by harvesting metals and cutting power to systems. As a result, responsibility reverted to the Army, which resumed budgeting for cleanup in 2015.

Discussions emphasized the need for consistent oversight and communication, regardless of ownership.

Site History & Source of Contamination

Community members expressed concern about the long industrial history of the site, especially regarding operations dating back to World War II.

The Army confirmed the site was historically used for electronics and communications work, with no records indicating experimental chemical use. The known contamination - largely trichloroethene (TCE) and tetrachloroethene (PCE) - was linked to former storage tanks and waste accumulation areas managed by AT&T and Lucent Technology.

Still, attendees questioned whether past assessments were comprehensive enough to detect all legacy contaminants. Some residents emphasized that full history must be accounted for to build trust in the cleanup process. The Army explained that the historical environmental assessments are available on the NCDEQ website.

Cleanup Activities & Progress to Date

Over 460 tons of contaminated soil were removed from two key source areas: the waste oil transfer zone and the waste accumulation pad. These areas were excavated to the water table, backfilled with clean soil, and equipped with new monitoring wells. A groundwater treatment barrier was installed in the northwest part of the site to prevent off-site migration of contamination.

Community members asked detailed questions about how far the contamination has spread and whether groundwater is impacting nearby neighborhoods.

In response, Terracon shared results from on-site monitoring wells and off-site surface water stations, showing reduced concentrations in most locations and promising trends in key plume areas.

Environmental Risk Assessment & Sampling

The Army emphasized that cleanup decisions are grounded in a formal risk assessment, which evaluates chemical exposure pathways and potential health impacts. This assessment is reviewed by state risk assessors and Army assessors.

Community participants requested clearer explanations of how risks are calculated and voiced concern about tunnel systems under the property. Some suspected the presence of undisclosed chemicals, possibly linked to military operations. Participants also stressed the importance of sampling every environmental medium—not just isolated hotspots.

The Army confirmed that sampling was done in the tunnels and offered to walk residents through risk assessment findings in an upcoming meeting.

Community Concerns & Public Transparency

A strong theme throughout the meeting was the community's desire for transparency and open dialogue. Concerns included the long timeline of cleanup, the adequacy of historical data, and whether residents had been fully informed in the past. Specific questions were raised about NEPA compliance, potential health impacts (e.g., cancer or Parkinson's links), and infrastructure under the site.

There was frustration that some documents were hard to access, prompting the Army to commit to sharing reports directly via email and exploring easier ways to distribute information.

Several community members highlighted the importance of not dismissing concerns or relying too heavily on technical jargon.

Waste Disposal & Community Trust

The disposal of contaminated soil raised additional concerns, particularly related to the history of violations at some of the receiving facilities. The Army confirmed that all facilities used were licensed and met NCDEQ standards but acknowledged that trust-building requires more than compliance - it requires consistent, honest engagement.

The community asked for more transparency on how disposal sites were selected and approved.

RAB members urged the Army to approach future meetings with a commitment to plain-language communication, active listening, and responsiveness to community feedback.

Action Items

1. **Operating Procedures Vote:**
RAB members must notify Nathan by **April 24** with either approval or proposed edits to the draft operating procedures. - done
2. **Chair Selection Clarification:**
Army representative will follow up via email with a summary of how the community co-chair was selected. - done
3. **Risk Assessment Explanation:**
Prepare a plain-language overview of the site's **risk assessment** findings for presentation at the next RAB meeting.
4. **Report Access - NCDEQ:**
Provide key reports directly to RAB members and the public via email due to DEQ system challenges.
5. **Enhanced Public Communication:**
Discuss development of simple, shareable materials (e.g., fact sheets or flyers) to keep local agencies and the community informed.
6. **Ongoing Groundwater Monitoring:**
Continue quarterly sampling and share results at upcoming meetings.
7. **Feasibility Study & Public Input:**
Finalize the draft feasibility study and prepare for a **public comment period** on the proposed cleanup plan.
8. **Future PFAS Investigation:**
Plan for a broader PFAS investigation pending available funding and prioritize transparency in findings.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is tentatively planned for July 2025, but no firm date has been set.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. by Paul Humphrey.