

# RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD (RAB) MEETING

Former Fort Devens Army Installation  
November 18, 2021



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

11/18/2021



## WELCOME!



- The call is being recorded to facilitate minutes.
- We have muted all lines to reduce background noise.
- Q&A will follow our presentation. However, during the meeting, you can also submit a question via the chat box and we will address it at the end.
- If you need to leave the call, click “Leave.”



CHAT  
BOX



MUTE/  
UNMUTE





# WELCOME!



**Thank you for joining us tonight.**

Penny Reddy (Project Manager) and  
Dan Groher (Environmental Engineer)  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers -  
New England District

Dr. Laurel Schaider  
Senior Scientist  
Silent Spring Institute

Andy Vitolins, Julee Jaeger,  
Sue Tauro, and Steven Perry  
SERES-Arcadis JV Team



**WELCOME!**



**Tonight's topics**



**Community  
Involvement**



**RAB  
Discussion**



**Massachusetts  
PFAS and  
Your Health  
Study**



**Project  
Updates  
& Upcoming  
Work**



**Q&A**



**Next Steps  
& Meeting**



# 1 | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## Implementing the Community Involvement Plan (CIP)



Shepley's Hill Landfill fact sheet and first quarterly project update distributed; new fact sheets and updates will continue quarterly



Information repository is at the Ayer Library and being updated with PFAS project documents

CIP is available on the Fort Devens Environmental Cleanup website at:  
<https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/projects-topics/former-fort-devens-environmental-cleanup/>



RAB meetings will change to the second Thursday of the month in Feb 2022



Website enhancements are done, with mechanism for continued community input



MEC outreach plan is being finalized and will be part of the CIP



# 1 | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## MEC Safety Information & Signs



*Boat Launch at Bill Ashe Visitor Center*



*Riverfront at Still River Depot Rd*



*On the bridge at Still River Depot Rd*



**Former Fort Devens: 3Rs of Explosives Safety**

**Background:** Fort Devens is a former military base where military munitions were used for training and where munitions and explosives of concern (MEC) have been encountered. Because of this, there exists the possibility that MEC may still be encountered on the property. The Army completed extensive MEC investigations of former Fort Devens — which included historical records reviews, site inspections, statistical sampling, geophysical surveys, chemical investigations, and removal actions. These investigations determined that the probability of encountering MEC was low at the former installation.

**Minimizing Fishing Risk:** After two individuals who were reported fishing found MEC in the Merrimack River in 2020, Massachusetts imposed a ban on migrant fishing from the stretch of the Merrimack River near Devens (COMR 946 & CD, Section 4.19). At the same time, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) evaluated the potential for MEC for the portion of the river that runs through former Fort Devens. It was determined that the former base never used the Merrimack River or its tributaries for munition-related purposes. The USACE concluded that there is a low probability for people to encounter MEC within this area.

**Follow the 3Rs of explosives safety if you encounter MEC or a suspicious item:**

- Recognize:** MEC is dangerous.
- Retreat:** Don't touch, drive, or disturb MEC. Leave the area.
- Report:** Call 911.

**MEC includes items like grenades and mortar shells such as these.**

**3Rs Safety Card**



# 1 | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



## Enhanced Former Fort Devens environmental cleanup site

The screenshot shows the website's layout. On the left is a vertical navigation menu with items like 'Home', 'About', 'Business With Us', 'Missions', 'Locations', 'Careers', 'Media', 'Contact', and 'Commodities'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Projects/Pages > Former Fort Devens Environmental Cleanup'. The main content area features a large header image of a river with the text 'FORMER FORT DEVENS ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP'. Below the image is a welcome message: 'Welcome to the Former Fort Devens Environmental Cleanup website! This website contains lots of valuable information about the environmental activities planned and implemented for this former military installation, and how you can get involved.' The right sidebar contains three sections: 'Public Information' with links to 'History', 'Environmental Cleanup', 'Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)', 'Document Repository', 'Community Involvement Plan', 'Project Photo Gallery', and 'Explosive Safety'; 'What's New?' with a link to 'For the Former Fort Devens RAB, we've set up a dedicated email address: FormerFortDevensRAB@arcadis.com'; and 'Website Suggestions' with a link to 'For website suggestions please email us: All Project Topics here.' At the bottom of the page is a 'Contact Us' section with the text: 'Please contact the Army BRAC Environmental Coordinator, Bob Schmitt, at bob\_schmitt@arcadis.com or 978.445.5299 if you need to view or request a document or have any additional questions on the environmental cleanup.'

### Highlights:

- ✓ Better navigation with the new left menu of **“Features”**
- ✓ **“History”** is now a feature on the left instead of on the front page
- ✓ **“Restoration Advisory Board (RAB)”** is now a feature with its own page and documents
- ✓ **“Document Repository”** is now organized in categories to make finding documents easier
- ✓ **“Public Information”** is now front and center
- ✓ **“What’s New”** section on the home page for news about former Fort Devens
- ✓ Dedicated RAB email address at: **FormerFortDevensRAB@arcadis.com**, for folks to provide suggestions and ask questions



## 2 | RAB DISCUSSION



**Former Fort Devens Army Installation  
RAB Interest Form for Community Members**

We are seeking several people to serve as community members of the Former Fort Devens Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for a 2-year term (2022–2023). No technical expertise is required to serve as a community member on the RAB, but members should want to participate collaboratively and facilitate communication between the RAB and the local communities of Ayer, Harvard, Lancaster, and Shirley. Completed forms will be reviewed by current RAB members and Army / U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel. All candidates who submit a completed interest form will be notified about next steps. The deadline to be considered for membership for the 2022-2023 term is November 1, 2021.

For more information please read our community fact sheet about the RAB. (614)  
<https://www.usace.army.mil/Portals/7/DownloadTopics/F11Devens/Documents/FactSheets/Fort-Devens-RAB-FactSheet-Final-June-2021.pdf>

1. Your Name \*

2. Your Address \*

3. Your Phone \*

### Nine people submitted interest forms to serve as RAB Board Members for the 2022-2024 term!

We truly appreciate the great response and are communicating directly with all nine people.

Two of the respondents expressed interest in serving as Community Co-Chair.

We will make a special announcement in January 2022 about Board Members, who they are, what the Board Members will be doing during their term, and the RAB's upcoming activities.





## 2 | RAB DISCUSSION



### RAB Interest Form Results

#### **Communities represented:**

- Harvard
- Lancaster
- Ayer
- Devens
- Shirley

#### **Respondents have a diverse mix of professional backgrounds:**

- Professional geologist
- Science teachers
- School librarian
- Information resources specialist
- Environmental educator
- Software engineer
- Graduate college student & educator



## 2 | RAB DISCUSSION

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### RAB Interest Form Results

**Respondents are a diverse group with varied experience working with environmental groups, town committees and boards, community groups, and other organizations such as:**

- Former Fort Devens RAB (three respondents previously served on the Board of the RAB)
- Adult Learners in the Fitchburg Area
- Ayer Cultural Council
- Ayer Pond and Dam Committee
- Building Commission for Brookline
- Devens Committee
- Federally designated NSN Steering Committee
- Harvard Ambulance Service
- Harvard Board of Health
- Lancaster Council on Aging and Community
- Lancaster Land Trust
- Lancaster Selectmen
- Mass Audubon
- Nashoba Valley Chorale
- Nashua River Watershed Association
- North County Land Trust
- People of Ayer Concerned About the Environment (PACE)
- Self-managed condominium board



## 2 | RAB DISCUSSION

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### RAB Interest Form Results

#### **The primary reasons why the respondents wish to serve on the Former Fort Devens RAB:**

- To represent my community and have a seat at the table.
- To bring an informed, technical perspective.
- To bring years of experience and historical insight to the Superfund remedial process, for protection of the local environment and human health.

#### **The respondents are interested in:**

- Restoring the name Fort Devens within the area.
- Supporting the continued development of commercial/industrial/residential real estate, provided the architecture of existing structures are preserved.
- Land preservation.
- Positive change at the airfield.
- Climate change, environmental issues, and protecting the Earth.
- Stemming noise pollution.



### 3 | MASSACHUSETTS PFAS AND YOUR HEALTH STUDY



*The Health Study presentation is being given by Silent Spring as information to the RAB members. The presentation is a follow-up from the prior RAB meeting, which agreed to allow community presentations to the RAB. This presentation is an independent effort outside of the Army, without Army collaboration, input or review. The content and opinions expressed in the presentation are solely those of the presenter (Silent Spring). It is presented without comment or opinion from the Army.*



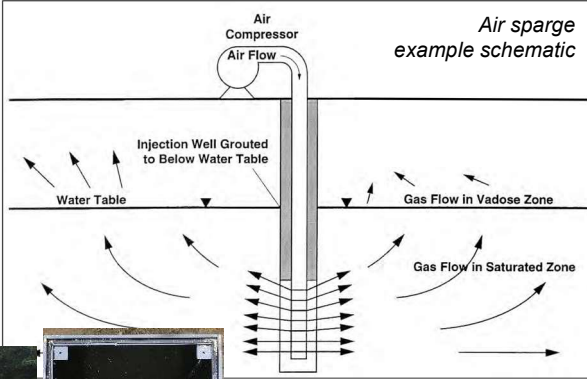
## 4 | PROJECT UPDATES

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### Shepley's Hill Landfill (SHL): Air Sparge (AS) Pilot Test

- Conducting an AS pilot test to evaluate the effectiveness for arsenic treatment in groundwater.
- Inject air into the groundwater (through wells) to change the groundwater geochemistry so that arsenic will precipitate out of the groundwater.
  - ✓ System installation, baseline sampling, and start-up testing completed in September 2021.
  - ✓ System operation began in the first week of October 2021.
  - ✓ There are two shallow sparging wells and two deep sparging wells.
- Site visit with MassDEP and Mass Development was held on October 28, 2021.
- SHL fact sheet was distributed November 16, 2021.



*Construction of injection wells*



*Completed injection well*

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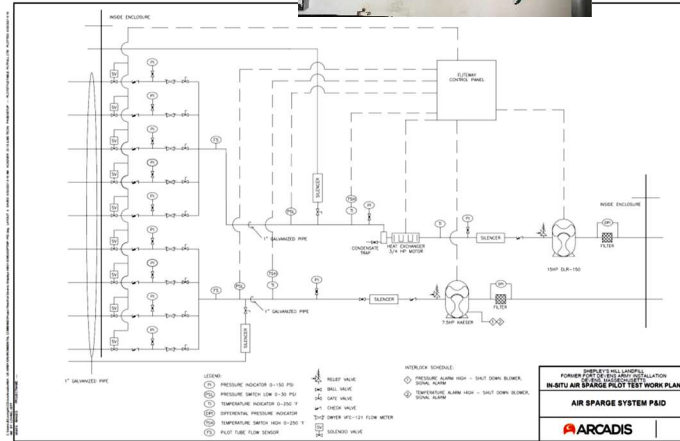
# 4 | PROJECT UPDATES



## Shepley's Hill Landfill (SHL): Air Sparge (AS) Pilot Test



- AS system operates by “pulsing” air into the wells to maximize the number of air-filled channels and improve oxygen dissolution.
- ✓ Current mode is 4 cubic feet per minute (cfm) for 1 hour shallow and 1 hour deep, with 1 hour rest between each.
- Initial results indicate sparging influence in the downgradient monitoring wells.
- ✓ Water level changes
- ✓ Dissolved oxygen (DO) increases
- ✓ Dissolved iron reduction (field test kits)
- Operational monitoring continues.
- ✓ Water quality testing
- ✓ Field geochemistry testing



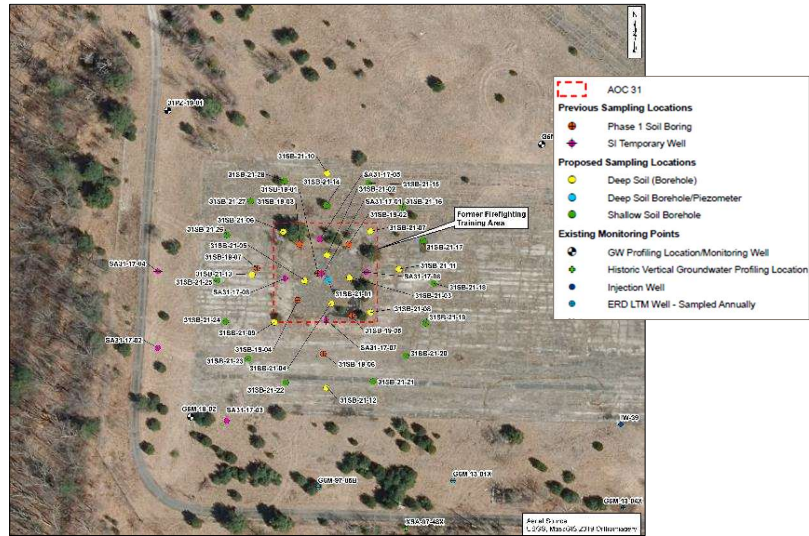


# 4 | PROJECT UPDATES & UPCOMING WORK



## Former Airfield Fire Training Area (FTA) PFAS Supplemental Sampling

- Additional sampling is planned in the former FTA to evaluate source concentrations and potential remedial pilot studies. Data will include:
  - ✓ Soil samples to evaluate depth and volume of PFAS contamination.
  - ✓ Vertical aquifer profile groundwater samples to assess vertical distribution of PFAS in groundwater.
- Work is planned to start during winter 2021/2022.





## 4 | PROJECT UPDATES & UPCOMING WORK



### The Look Ahead for Anticipated Technical Work

#### Fall 2021

- SHL Remedy Evaluations
- Debris Area Removals
- AOCs 43G/57/69W Supplemental Remedial Investigation (RI) Work Plans
- Long-Term Monitoring Program Fall Sampling & LUCs Inspection

#### Winter 2021-2022

- Airfield FTA Additional Sampling
- SHL Remedy Evaluations
- Potential Upgrades to Optimize SHL Arsenic Treatment Plant (ATP)
- Area 1 Phase 2 PFAS RI Work Plan Submission and Field Work Planning
- AOCs 43G/57/69W Supplemental RI Field Work Planning

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## 5 | QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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## 6 | NEXT STEPS & MEETING

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### Community Involvement & RAB

#### Action Item 1

Ongoing – Continue to update the document repository at Ayer Library with final PFAS documents and sending notifications

#### Action Item 2

Ongoing – Finalize any additional comments on the website and start work on the digital Administrative Record

#### Action Item 3

Quarterly – Continue with fact sheets and project updates

#### Action Item 4

January 2022 – Special announcement about Board Members, Co-Chairs, and RAB activities

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**THANK YOU!**  
**YOUR PARTICIPATION IS APPRECIATED!**

**NEXT RAB MEETING IS:**  
**FEBRUARY 10, 2022**

**Moved to the second**  
**Thursday of the month**