

More cleanup set for ex-Ravenna Arsenal

\$40 million project eyes 16 contaminated sites

By Bob Downing

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PARIS TWP.: The Army is beginning a new investigation into 16 chemically contaminated sites at the one-time Ravenna Arsenal in eastern Portage and western Trumbull counties.

The \$40 million project, to be completed in 2013, will analyze and clean up 16 medium- and low-priority sites at the Ravenna Army Ammunition Plant, Army spokesman Mark Patterson said.

When that work is done, the overall cleanup will be about 70 percent done, he said.

"We're making real progress," he said.

The latest plan calls for cleaning up contaminated soils, surface water and sediments and analyzing contaminated aquifers, Jed Thomas of Science Application International Corp. told a community-based advisory committee at a Wednesday meeting.

The Army will deal with contaminated ground water on the entire complex later, officials said.

Thomas said his project also calls for drilling six monitoring wells to determine whether the deeper aquifer at 150 to 200 feet below the surface is contaminated.

Low-level contamination, to date, has been limited to shallow aquifers and have not spread off site, said Eileen Mohr of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Thomas said his project also calls for dealing with contaminated ground water at Load Line No. 12 and to investigate the complex's sewer systems.

To date, 35 other contaminated sites have been cleaned up or are being cleaned up at the 21,419-acre complex.

The Army is cleaning up the property and most of the site has been turned over to the Ohio National Guard as a training facility.

Patterson said the Army has invested \$58 million in cleaning up the site and another \$46 million likely will be spent before the work is completed.

The Army is gearing up to begin dealing with unexploded ammunition at already-identified sites on the facility, he said.

That work likely will take 10 years and cost \$41 million, he said.

The Army spent an initial \$771,000 this year and has committed \$7 million next year to get that cleanup under way, he said.

Brian Stockwell, of PIKA International, told the advisory committee that an additional cleanup is getting under way at the Winklepeck Burning Grounds, where defective ammunition was once exploded.

About 180 acres at that site has been cleaned up, turned over to the National Guard and transformed into a Mark 19 machine gun range.

But 20 acres still must be cleaned up so the National Guard can build an additional firing line at the range, Stockwell said.

The Ravenna complex produced artillery and mortar shells in World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. It closed in 1971.

Bob Downing can be reached at 330-996-3745 or bdowning@thebeaconjournal.com.

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