

# Health-minded board wants update on lake ordnance site

**GATHERING:** *The Restoration Advisory Board met Wednesday for the second time since its creation.*

By Ann McBride *FOOHP*  
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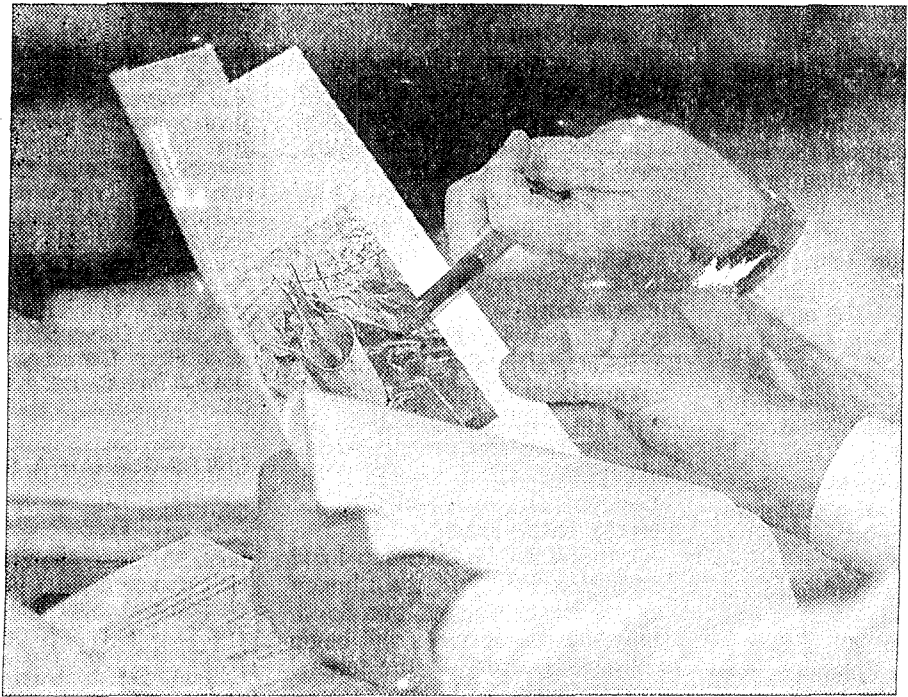
LEWISTON — A community-based advocacy group asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update them at their next meeting on what types of health studies have been completed in the area surrounding the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site.

The newly created LOOW Restoration Advisory Board was given an update Wednesday on the status of the cleanup at the 190-acre Niagara Falls Storage Site, which is part of the 7,500-acre LOOW site in the towns of Lewiston and Porter. The Niagara Falls Storage Site, north of Pletcher and east of Lutts roads, serves as a long-term but not permanent solution to the storage of radioactive wastes from the processing of uranium ore.

Although the Storage Site does not fall under the jurisdiction of the advisory board, RAB members asked for an update during their initial meeting in June because of potential health risks.

Judith S. Leithner, who oversees the Niagara Falls Storage Site for the corps, said the area people are most concerned with is a 10-acre parcel where radioactive wastes and residues were buried during two-phases in 1986 and 1991. The wastes are contained in a concrete structure, which is lined and topped with 3 feet of clay, 1 foot of fill and 6 inches of top soil. A retainer wall made of clay surrounds the pit, which contains 249 cubic yards of a number of different materials.

A 1998 National Academy of Science study stated that the arrangement had a longevity of 25 to 50 years and that there were "site unknowns" that affected the overall risk. Just what steps the federal government should take to secure a more permanent



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**HANDY WORK:** Board members Wednesday review a photo of the TNT pipeline, which is undergoing remediation at the ordnance site.

solution currently are being studied under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program. Leithner said there are differing opinions on whether to remove the radioactive materials or keep them buried.

The site is monitored continuously at a cost of \$400,000 a year, Leithner said. The corps has found no detectable releases of radon on the pile or in the groundwater.

Even so, RAB member Marty Hodgins said he would like to see just a small portion of the hundreds of millions of dollars it's expected to cost to clean up the site be spent on a health study of the immediate area. Corps officials said they will contact a member of the State University at Buffalo's School of Medicine to see if he can discuss the results of a health study he completed some years ago.

As for the LOOW location, of which 2,500 acres was used for several

different types of defense activities from the 1940s to 1960s, cleanup continues on removing a TNT pipeline, chemical waste sewer lines and demolition of a wastewater treatment plant. The company, Radian International LLC of Maryland, also discovered a trash pit and several buried drums on the property since it began its remedial work. Cleanup of these sites has been added into the company's contract.

The program is continuing to have problems securing enough money to complete a second phase of studies on the LOOW property.

Ray Pilon, LOOW's project manager, urged the board members to write their elected officials to request additional funds be placed into the Formerly Used Defense Sites program.

The board's next meeting is scheduled for Jan. 12 in the Lewiston-Porter Primary Building on Creek Road.

Board Cont....



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**AT THE MICROPHONE:** Becky Zayatz of CWM, center, addresses members of an advisory board for the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works on Wednesday in Lewiston. Zayatz describes the benefits of a tour of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site that she and others took Wednesday.