

NIAGARA FALLS STORAGE SITE

Scientist acknowledges concern over dump site

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YOUNGSTOWN — A scientist involved with cleanup of land in Lewiston formerly used by the Department of Defense said Wednesday night she still is not sure what materials are in containment structures or other parts of the area, and that ambiguity causes her concern.

Judith Leithner, director of the Army Corps of Engineers environmental investigation of the Niagara Falls Storage Site, said because historical documents of the materials Manhattan Project engineers used at the site off Fletcher Road are at least incomplete, the Corps

must rely on its extensive testing of the area.

"We don't really know what is on the site, we know only part of what is on the site, and that is what has me concerned," Leithner said. "This is why this is a really big complex job."

Leithner's comments came during a meeting of the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site Restoration Advisory Board, during which community representatives brought up rumors that anything from the carcasses of animals used in radiation experiments in Rochester, to plutonium, to an entire train might be buried somewhere on

the 190-acre site.

The Corps maintains that any radioactive material at the site does not present an exposure hazard to its on-site workers or members of the public, but Leithner admitted she cannot say exactly what materials in what concentrations are present until the results of her group's tests are analyzed.

Leithner said she was looking forward to getting the results of the completed Phase I tests soon. Phase II testing will be executed between March and July of this year, with a complete risk determination report expected in September.

"We want to make sure that

once it's cleaned, it's cleaned," Leithner said.

About 40 people attended the meeting of the 23-person board, filling most of the space in the board room of the Lewiston-Porter Center School Primary Building that wasn't already given over to technical drawings and computer projection equipment.

At the same meeting, the director of the investigation into the Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Site, Bill Kowalewski, said about one-quarter of the pipeline underneath that area has been cleaned or excavated. That site is located between

Creek and Porter Center roads behind the Lewiston-Porter Central School campus.

Kowalewski said he was pleased to report none of the material collected from pipelines that formerly carried wastewater used in the making of TNT was "not detonable or in any way an explosive hazard." He said the liquid discovered in sections of the now-cleaned areas of pipeline was found to be contaminated with PCBs, diesel-range organics, carbon tetrachloride and chloroform. That waste was collected and sent to an off-site waste storage facility, he said.