

# Corps decides against forming an official RAB

by Terry Duffy

It appears the northern Niagara County area will continue without an officially recognized Lake Ontario Ordnance Works Restoration Advisory Board by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

On Friday, June 15, the Corps announced that following what it termed "careful consideration," it has decided against establishing an official LOOW RAB for the area at this time.

"Based on the input received, there does not appear to be sufficient and sustained community interest in forming an official DoD RAB for the former LOOW site under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (DERP-FUDS)," said Buffalo District Cmdr. Stephen H. Bales. "This decision supports the diverse array of community interests, makes the best use of available project funds, and does not exclude anyone from the opportunities to participate in the decision-making process for the site."

Buffalo District Corps reps reported it received 11 letters in response to its earlier solicitation seeking interest in the 23,000-resident northern Niagara Country area where the LOOW site is situated. "Based on the input received, there is not sufficient and sustained community interest to warrant the formation of an official DoD RAB," said the Corps in a statement.

It furnished a 24-page PDF of respondents' input, accessible on the Corps website at <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/derpfuds/loow/index.htm>. Perusing the document finds that while there was support for a new RAB from such diverse respondents as the Town of Porter, the Town of Lewiston, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, State Sen. George Maziarz, the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 463, and unnamed private individuals, there was also opposition from others. Among them were the Niagara County Legislature, the Village

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## Corps opts for status quo

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of Youngstown, CWM Chemical Services LLC and others, who either supported continuance of the existing RAB or saw no need for its existence.

As an alternative the Corps reports the Buffalo District will con-

tinue to sponsor periodic poster or availability sessions for the former LOOW site to inform and to receive input from community members.

Currently, two groups – one identified as a RAB, the other as a community action council

– operate locally with an interest on various LOOW site environmental concerns, including those of the Niagara Fall Storage Site where a 10-acre interim radioactive waste containment cell awaits government action, and other LOOW site remediation issues. Both groups consist of citizen volunteers with significant educational and/or professional interests/expertise in LOOW site concerns and maintain communication with the Corps. However neither group maintains officially recognized status with the Corps.