

News from the Corps

Sent: Wed 1/14/09 at 3:34 PM

Hello from the US Army Corps of Engineers Buffalo District:

The purpose of this email is to update you on the status of the Corps response to the December 29, 2008, invitation from Village of Youngstown Mayor, Neil Riordan, to discuss with elected officials from the community the status of the independent, volunteer-based community group and the hiring of a facilitator as it pertains to the outreach program for the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) Site and the Niagara Falls Storage Site (NFSS). The Corps has discussed this with Mayor Riordan and appreciates his leadership in organizing this meeting. Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Snead, the Buffalo District Commander, supports such a meeting but unfortunately has a prior commitment on January 17. We will work with Mayor Riordan to schedule a meeting with the elected officials at a time when LTC Snead is available.

The Corps also provided Mayor Riordan a copy of the Corps' response to the New York State Attorney General's Office regarding the Corps' decision not to recognize the independent, volunteer-based community group as an official Department of Defense Restoration Advisory Board (DoD RAB). This letter details the Corps' legal determination regarding the community group and is available on the Buffalo District Website at <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/derpfuds/loow-nfss/index.htm#LOOWCommunity>. This determination is not a discretionary one to be reversed at a meeting or through a facilitator. The Corps will resolicit community interest in establishing an official DoD RAB in 2010, consistent with DoD regulations.

The Corps has given serious consideration to the input received from a diverse audience of community members in developing an outreach program for the former LOOW Site and NFSS. Among the outreach activities to be supported by the Corps in 2009-2010 are periodic community workshops to provide the public with an informal roundtable discussion forum on Corps projects. The independent, volunteer-based community group (currently retaining the name LOOW RAB) is encouraged to attend and participate, as are other groups, individuals, and government officials. A summary of the proposed Corps outreach activities for 2009-2010 is provided below.

Summary

Corps Sponsored Outreach Activities 2009-2010 Lake Ontario Ordnance Works (LOOW) and Niagara Falls Storage Site (NFSS)

This summary provides a concise description of the outreach products and services the Corps can sustain throughout 2009-2010 given available staff, resources, and project workload and schedule demands. These activities were designed around the diverse needs of the community audience the Corps has engaged since the initiation of our projects in the late 1990s. We support these activities in balance with our mission and the public's expectation to see results from our environmental remediation programs.

- **Community Workshops:** Based on input received the Corps will sponsor periodic community workshops designed to meet the needs of audience groups in the community. The Corps will schedule these workshops and publish a proposed agenda which may be adjusted to meet public input received in advance of the meeting. We ask that requests be submitted in writing one month prior to the workshop so that the Corps project teams have time to prepare meaningful answers. These meetings are intended to be informal roundtable type discussions of Corps project issues. The agenda is anticipated to include time for presentation of Corps updates and information, receipt of public input, and discussion of community issues. We anticipate hosting quarterly meetings in 2009 tentatively scheduled for March, June, September and December.

- **Public Information Sessions:** The Corps will sponsor public information sessions when needed to present new project information. These are typically held soon after the release of major project deliverables to provide an overview of key project findings, facilitate questions and answers, and receive public input.
- **Comment periods** of 90 days will be provided to allow the public to submit written input on Corps reports and decision documents.
- **Responsiveness Summaries** will be issued to document the Corps response to public comments received during public comment periods.
- **News from the Corps emails** will be sent to interested individuals to announce new project information. We will include all interested members of the public on the email service. We will publish *News from the Corps* emails on our public website for those who do not receive them.
- **Beyond the Headlines** postings to our public website will be used to correct errors or omissions in media reports on Corps projects.
- **Public Website** will be used as a publicly accessible repository for project information. We are working to increase the amount of documents and information available on our public website. The site address is <http://www.lrb.usace.army.mil/derpfuds/loow-nfss/index.htm>.
- **Access to Government Records:** We receive many requests for federal project records through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). We are required by law to provide these records in accordance with the act. Requests for Corps documents should be sent in writing to the Office of Counsel, Buffalo District, 1776 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14207.
- **Administrative Record Files** – This is the collection of documents upon which Corps decisions at the LOOW and NFSS are based. We make them available to the public for transparency in our decision-making process. We currently maintain the Administrative Record Files in the Town of Lewiston Public Library. Our staff is working to greatly expand these files to include historic documents from the Department of Defense and US Department of Energy. We are also working to improve accessibility to the public by converting hardcopy records to digital format.
- **Fact sheets** will be published throughout the lifecycle of each project to communicate key project issues, updates, and findings.
- **Advertisements** will be placed in the Buffalo News, Niagara Gazette/Union Sun Journal, to announce upcoming community workshops or other key activities.
- **Mailings** will be used to invite those on our mailing list to upcoming meetings and events.
- **Email addresses and a toll-free telephone number** are provided to make it easy for the public to reach us.
 - NFSS - fusrap@usace.army.mil
 - LOOW - derpfuds@usace.army.mil
 - 1-800-833-6390