

# ***PLUM BROOK ORDNANCE WORKS***

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## ***QUARTERLY FACT SHEET***

*April through June, 2000*

### **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The former Plum Brook Ordnance Works is located four (4) miles south of Sandusky, Ohio, near Lake Erie. Nitro-aromatic explosives produced at the site included TNT, DNT, and pentolite; other products produced at the ordnance works included nitric and sulfuric acid. The plant operated for four years from 1941 to 1944, and was decontaminated by the end of 1945. Possession of the property was transferred to the Ordnance Department in 1946, then to the War Assets Department, and finally to the GSA in 1949. NASA acquired the property in 1963 and presently maintains and utilizes 6453.5 of the original 9009 acres.

### **SITE HISTORY**

The U.S. Army entered into a contract with Trojan Powder Company for the purpose of manufacturing this ordnance. The official title for the site during this time was the Plum Brook Ordnance Works (PBOW). Ground-breaking to construct the facilities to support the manufacturing of ordnance began on April 15, 1941. Production began on December 16, V-J Day (1941). During the production period more than one billion pounds of ordnance was manufactured.

PBOW was placed in standby condition from 1945 to 1946. Throughout this time, the Army conducted decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) of many of the buildings and structures associated with the manufacturing of ordnance. Decontamination efforts on all TNT and DNT lines began in September 1945. Decontamination of TNT lines, acid lines, pentolite lines, and DNT lines was halted during the last quarter of 1945. Typical D&D methods for buildings and structures involved removal and relocation of all explosives to a burning ground where they were burned. Where possible, remaining buildings and structures were burned to the ground. Steam lines, drain lines, etc., were flushed and dismantled. There is no indication in PBOW historical records of where lines were flushed.

It is estimated that 65 percent of the necessary decontamination of PBOW was completed by December 1945. On midnight of December 17, the physical custody of the PBOW was transferred from Trojan Powder Company to the U.S. Army Ordnance Department. The Ordnance Department became the accountable agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assumed responsibility for maintenance and custodial duties at the PBOW from January 1 through June 30, 1946. After further decontamination efforts were completed, and the extent of contamination certified, PBOW was transferred to the War Assets Administration in August 1946. From 1946 to 1949 the property was protected and maintained by Matthew-Levio and Sons. In 1949 it was transferred to the General Services Administration (GSA), which maintained oversight of the facility. Ravenna Arsenal

conducted further decontamination efforts from 1945 to 1958. NASA accepted the facility in 1963 after Ravenna Arsenal certified that the PBOW had been completely decontaminated and was suitable for unrestricted future use. After acceptance of the PBOW, NASA identified further areas that required decontamination. In 1964, NASA continued site decontamination and the removal of structures.

In 1956 an agreement was made to lease 500 acres of the north portion of the site to construct and operate the Plum Brook Reactor Facility (PBRF). NASA operated the PBRF from 1963-1973 under a license agreement with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). NASA currently has a license agreement with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for the safe protective storage of the PBRF. NASA acquired an additional 6,000 acres of the former PBOW on March 15, 1963, for the purpose of conducting various aerospace research activities. NASA continues to use the site today.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

### **Risk Assessment and Direct Push Investigation at Red Water Ponds Area**

IT Corporation submitted the Draft Report on this task in March of 1999. Ohio EPA and NASA reviewed the draft report and submitted comments. USACE prepared responses to comments and submitted them to the regulators for their approval. The responses were also presented in a meeting between Ohio EPA, NASA and USACE on May 10, 2000. The Final Report is scheduled for delivery by August 31, 2000.

### **Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for TNT Area B**

IT Corporation submitted the Draft Report for the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) in July 1999. The Ohio EPA and NASA completed their review and provided comments. USACE prepared their responses to the comments and a meeting was held on May 10, 2000 to discuss these responses with the Ohio EPA and NASA. The Final Report is scheduled for delivery by August 31, 2000.

### **FY00 Work Plan for 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter**

The Work Plan for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY00 included the following activities or documents:

- FS and Decision Document for Red Water Ponds
- Decision Document for TNT Area B
- RI/FS with Decision Document for TNT Area A
- RI/FS with Decision Document for TNT Area C

All of the items included in the Work Plan were awarded. Site-Specific work plans for TNT Areas A and C were submitted on May 10, 2000 and for Red Water Ponds on June 7, 2000.

Fieldwork commenced at TNT Areas A and C on June 19, 2000. An ecological site-walk is scheduled for August 2000. The fieldwork for the Red Water Ponds area is scheduled for August 2000 as well.

### **RESTORATION ADVISORY BOARD**

The Restoration Advisory Board met on May 24, 2000 at Firelands College. USACE Nashville District presented the project work schedule for 2000. Prior to the RAB meeting, USACE Huntington District conducted groundwater level monitoring activities at a limited number of wells. Not all of the wells were accessible due to the overgrowth of vegetation. Plans are being made to make the wells accessible by mowing the overgrowth of vegetation.

Ohio EPA reviewed the agency's prioritization procedures concerning FUDS sites with schools located on the property.

The next RAB meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2000 and is open to the public.

### **PBOW WEBSITE**

USACE Huntington has established a website dedicated to keeping the public informed about the PBOW activities. This site is being updated monthly with new project information, as well as the PBOW fact sheets, investigation schedules and the Annual FUDS Newsletter (available in October 2000). So to find out the latest news for the PBOW project, please visit the website at the following address: <http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/pm/pbow>

### **PBOW TOLL FREE NUMBER**

USACE Huntington now has a toll-free number in place for your use. If you have any information such as personal knowledge, photographs, maps, newspaper articles of past activities or other information you would be willing to share, or you just have questions about current activities at the site, please feel free to use the toll free number. We're interested in hearing from you, so call toll free 1-800-822-8413 and ask for Lisa Humphreys or Frank Albert.

### **PROJECT CONTACT**

The PBOW project manager is Richard L. Meadows, Huntington District (CELRH-PM-P) at (304) 529-5388, fax (304) 529-5715 or via email at [rickme@mail.lrh.usace.army.mil](mailto:rickme@mail.lrh.usace.army.mil). He can be reached during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m, Monday - Friday. You may also call the toll free number listed above and ask to be transferred directly to his office.