

# ***PLUM BROOK ORDNANCE WORKS***

## ***Restoration Advisory Board***

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***Quarterly Fact Sheet***

***January through March 2001***

### **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). Groundbreaking 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**

### *Red Water Ponds Area*

- Risk Assessment and Direct push Investigation  
The Final Report was submitted on August 31, 2000. The Nashville District has reviewed the report and all comments have been addressed. The Final Report was mailed on January 31, 2001. The comment period on the Final Report is 45 days from receipt; no comments were received.
- Feasibility Study  
Fieldwork was completed on September 16, 2000. The Draft Phase II Ecological Risk Assessment will be submitted by April 23, 2001 and the Draft Feasibility Study (FS) is scheduled for delivery by May 31, 2001.

### *TNT Area B*

- Final Remedial Investigation Report  
The Final RI Report submitted on August 31, 2000. The report was reviewed by the Nashville District and distributed on November 9, 2000. Additional comments were received from CHPPM and are currently under review.
- Draft Feasibility Report  
The Draft FS Report was submitted on November 17, 2000 and the Nashville District has completed a preliminary review and A-E has submitted changes. The Draft FS was mailed out the week of February 5, 2001. Review is to be completed by March 21, 2001. OEPA requested 2 additional weeks in order to complete their review.

### TNT Area A and TNT Area C

- Remedial Investigation

Fieldwork for the RI was completed on October 13, 2000. The Draft RI Reports are scheduled for submittal on April 6, 2001. Draft HHRA and ERA Work Plans were received and reviewed by Nashville District USACE. The reports were sent out for review on December 6, 2000. OEPA requested until December 29, 2000 to complete their review. All comments have been received and A-E will submit the Final HHRA and ERA Work Plans on April 6, 2001.

### Restoration Advisory Board

A RAB Meeting was held on December 6, 2000 at which time a meeting date was set for March 28, 2001, which was cancelled. The RAB meeting was rescheduled for May 9, 2001.

On March 2-4, 2001, Huntington District USACE conducted a Community Survey and Poster Session for the PBOW RAB at Sandusky Mall in Sandusky, Ohio. Contact was made with members of the surrounding community to familiarize the public with the RAB activities.

### **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. 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.