

Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center

Former Chanute AFB Environmental News Update February 2019



Note to Rantoul Community Members on Proposed RAB Adjournment

The Air Force has completed the cleanup, or records of decision for cleanup have been reached, of more than 250 sites under CERCLA or the state cleanup program, at the former Chanute Air Force Base (AFB). The majority of the base property has been transferred to the local community for redevelopment. All but a few acres of the remaining property will be transferred in 2019. Based on these factors, the Air Force has decided to adjourn the Chanute AFB Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). The Air Force invites the public to comment on this decision. **The 30-day public comment period begins February 15, 2019 and ends March 15, 2019.** If you have comments or would like to learn more about the cleanup, the RAB, or the adjournment process, you are encouraged to contact BRAC Environmental Coordinator, Paul F. Carroll at paul.carroll.1@us.af.mil or the Air Force Public Affairs Office at (866) 725-7617 or afimsc.pa.workflow@us.af.mil.



Why is a RAB adjourned?

When there is no longer a sufficient and sustained community interest, all cleanup remedies are in place, all Records of Decision have been signed, RAB goals have been achieved or the land has been transferred to an entity not controlled by the Department of Defense, then a RAB may be adjourned.



Who decides to adjourn a RAB?

The Installation Commander makes that decision after consulting with and considering comments by community members, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), tribes (if applicable) and RAB members. In the case of the former Chanute AFB, the Installation Commander equivalent is Dr. Stephen TerMaath, Chief, BRAC Program Management Division, Air Force Civil Engineer Center.

Have RABs been adjourned at other former Air Force bases?

Yes. Recent adjourned RABs include the former Mather AFB, Calif., former Kelly AFB, Texas and the former Williams AFB, Ariz.

What is the process for adjourning a RAB?

The process begins with the Air Force consulting with the state, USEPA, tribes, RAB members, and the local community, as appropriate. A notice is published in the local newspaper inviting the public to comment on the proposed RAB adjournment. All responses are considered before making a final decision. Once a decision is made, a written notice is sent to RAB members and a public notice is printed in the local newspaper regarding the adjournment. This notice includes information on other ongoing public involvement opportunities available to the public once the RAB is adjourned. Finally, a memorandum is added to the Administrative Record, documenting the rationale for adjournment.

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Environmental Cleanup Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



Is the water on the former Chanute AFB safe to drink and where does it come from?

Yes, the water is safe to drink. The water provider for the former Chanute AFB property is the Village of Rantoul Public Works. This water meets the rigorous standards set by the Illinois EPA. The groundwater issues at the former Chanute AFB have no impact on the quality of drinking water provided through the water system.



How can you be sure the water is safe to drink?

The contaminated water is in the shallow Wisconsinan groundwater system that has low yield and is not used for drinking water. Wells providing drinking water are screened in the deeper Illinoian and pre-Illinoian Aquifers and are tested regularly. Annual water quality reports are provided to water customers as required by law. The Wisconsinan groundwater is separated from the deeper aquifers by a hard, clay layer. The Air Force has sampled the water from below this clay layer to ensure that shallow contaminated water has not impacted drinking water supplies.

What about the soil? Is it hazardous?

Since the investigation and cleanup began in the 1990s, the Air Force has gathered extensive information about the locations where hazardous waste was dumped, leaked or spilled. The Air Force cleaned up the soil to residential standards at almost all of the sites and to industrial standards at the Fire Training Area 2 and landfills in the former industrial area. Land use controls are in place to prevent access to these areas.



Is it safe to grow vegetables or work in the soil?

It is safe to plant a garden and grow vegetables. There are no restrictions on the former Base, except at Fire Training Area 2 and the landfills.

Can I dig in my yard?

As in any community, you must first obtain permission to avoid damage to underground utility lines and pipelines. Contact the Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE) One-Call System phone number (811 or 800-892-0123) two business days before digging in your yard.

Is my home or business affected by the ongoing cleanup?

There is no exposure to contamination at any home or business. However, some businesses may be located close to wells used to sample groundwater and monitor cleanup progress.

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Is PFOS/PFOA a problem at the former Chanute AFB and where is it?

There are a few areas where perfluorooctanesulfonic acid and perfluorooctanoic acid, PFOS/PFOA, from previous fire training, demonstrations and fire suppression activities traveled over time into the shallow Wisconsinan groundwater underneath the former Chanute AFB. However, it has not affected Illinoian and pre-Illinoian Aquifers, which are the sources for drinking water in the area. PFOS/PFOA are emerging contaminants and there are currently no promulgated cleanup standards in Illinois. The Air Force will continue to address PFOS/PFOA at Chanute following the CERCLA process.

The cleanup at Chanute seems to be taking a very long time. Why?

Even with the best technology, the removal of contaminants in soil and groundwater is a time-consuming process. To ensure human health and the environment is protected, the Air Force follows a methodical process to achieve cleanup. This ensures all investigations, monitoring and remedies are done correctly.



When did the Air Force start the cleanup and when will they be finished?



The Air Force began clean up at Chanute in the 1990s at sites such as leaking underground fuel tanks and degreasing chemical spills. Today the soil at all sites, except for one - Chanute Fields Trap Range 1 has been cleaned up. As of February 2019, groundwater at all but five sites has been cleaned up. Of the five sites, two sites have achieved the cleanup goals and are in the confirmation sampling phase. Cleanup systems at the remaining three sites are in place and continuing to reduce contamination; however, a few more years are needed to complete the cleanup.

Where can I get more information about the cleanup?

Cleanup documents are available on the Administrative Record website: www.afcec.publicadmin-record.us.af.mil. At the top of the Administrative Record webpage, select "BRAC" and choose "Chanute AFB" from the installation list. You can also refer to the Chanute BRAC page at: www.afcec.af.mil/Home/BRAC/Chanute.aspx.



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Environmental Cleanup Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



AIR FORCE PROPOSES RAB ADJOURNMENT FOR CHANUTE AIR FORCE BASE PUBLIC COMMENT INVITED

The Air Force encourages the public to comment on the adjournment of the Chanute AFB Restoration Advisory Board (RAB). Comments may be provided in writing or verbally from February 15, 2019 to March 15, 2019. Written comments may be submitted using the comment form below. If additional space is needed, comments may be written neatly on plain white paper. Any mailed comments must be postmarked by March 15, 2019.

In addition, the Air Force welcomes written comments submitted directly to our office.

Comments may be submitted to:

Mr. Paul Carroll, P.G., AFCEC/CIBE
9801 Reese Boulevard North, Suite 210
Lubbock, Texas 79416-2107

or via Fax at (806) 885-5022

or via email at paul.carroll.1@us.af.mil

Comments will be considered before making a final decision on RAB adjournment.

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

- I support the Air Force's Decision of RAB Adjournment
- I do not support the Air Force's Decision of RAB Adjournment

Additional Comments:
