

# COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN FOR THE EASTERN BRAC BASES

Communication Goals & Strategies



**U.S. AIR FORCE**

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# Introduction

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Since 2005, the Air Force Real Property Agency has had oversight of 40 closed bases as a result of various rounds of Base Realignment and Closure. Within these 40 former bases, 13 are located in the eastern region of the U.S. and are specifically referred to in this Community Relations Plan (CRP). Most of these former bases previously had a CRP, with the exceptions of Plattsburgh AFB, O'Hare AFB and Roslyn AFB. This document will replace any previous existing base specific CRPs for the eastern region and will now serve as the sole combined CRP.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the Community Relations Program to ensure public involvement in all cleanup actions. The U.S. Air Force has been designated as the lead government agency in cleanup efforts at each of the 13 former eastern region bases. As the lead agency, the Air Force must ensure public involvement in all remedial cleanup decisions. This CRP is intended for Air Force and regulatory authorities to describe how the community relations program will be implemented at each of the bases.

The plan serves as the management tool to direct the Air Force's communications methods for the communities surrounding the 13 eastern bases; Local, State and Federal Regulators; Public Interest Groups; Citizen Groups; Local Businesses; School Districts and other stakeholders. The plan identifies community relations activities that will be used to help ensure two-way communication between the United States Air Force and those interested in becoming involved in the decision making process regarding clean-up activities. Designed to meet federal, state, and local requirements for disclosure, this plan also outlines how the Air Force encourages public participation in the Environmental Restoration Program process.

## Overarching Goals

Five goals guided the development of this plan. These goals provide a roadmap to identify stakeholders' concerns, establish appropriate communication tools and venues and define the information to be distributed.

Listed below are the five goals for the eastern bases CRP development:

1. Assess existing community concerns regarding planned and ongoing studies at each of the bases, including all phases of cleanup activities to determine how best to involve the public in the decision-making process

2. Establish procedures for accurate and timely release of information to potentially affected and interested stakeholders
3. Establish methods to facilitate communication between the Air Force and the community at large
4. Articulate and clarify key issues for the public regarding remedial cleanup
5. Establish appropriate channels for two-way communication and feedback with the public

### **Report Organization**

This CRP consists of two sections. The first is the body of the document which will serve as a playbook for installations outlining the goals and objectives of the CRP, communication and outreach strategies, and recommendations on timelines for implementation. The second part of this document consists of 13 base-specific appendices that cover background and historical information, clean-up efforts at the base, and recommendations for communication strategies per base.

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# Overview of the Environmental Cleanup Program

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## History of the Air Force Installation Restoration Program

Before the mid-1970s, industry, agriculture and government managed and disposed of hazardous and non-hazardous waste products by standard practices that were later found to be potentially detrimental to the environment. Liquids and dissolved chemicals leached into groundwater, contaminated dust and vapors polluted the air and erosion and flooding washed contaminated soil into waterways. Consequently, the environmental contamination issue rose to the top of the national agenda and prompted legislation to cope with increasing amounts of toxic substances and hazardous waste sites. The fact that hazardous waste disposal practices can have adverse effects on human health and the environment was expressed by Congress in 1976 with the passage of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). It mandates the management and accountability of present and future disposal of hazardous wastes. In 1980, the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) was passed to investigate and remediate areas resulting from past, formerly acceptable hazardous waste management practices. "Superfund" is the term often used with CERCLA activities. The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA), enacted in 1986, amended CERCLA to require public involvement as a defined set of activities and schedules.

The Air Force is engaged in manufacturing activities which involve toxic and hazardous materials. Due to past waste and resource management practices at Air Force installations, some sites are contaminated by various toxins and/or hazardous compounds that are unique to aircraft operations and support requirements. These materials, if released into the environment, could harm human, animal or plant life, or damage water supplies and other resources. This issue prompted Air Force action to address current and future hazardous waste operations, and also to eliminate the threat posed by previously discarded, potentially hazardous materials.

The Air Force-wide program to identify, investigate and cleanup environmentally contaminated sites is called the Installation Restoration Program (IRP). A proactive Air Force IRP policy has resulted in action to resolve potential threats posed by contaminated sites at Air Force installations. Consequently, the Air Force is acting both as a responsible protector of the public and the environment, and as a good neighbor.

The Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 1988 and the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990, designed to close or realign major Department of Defense military installations, heightened public awareness of the environmental cleanup process in making military property available for civilian reuse. The Federal property

disposal process requires that before property can be transferred, it must be determined to be environmentally clean or a remedial action be in place for parcels found to be contaminated. Announced in July 1993, the President's Five-Part Plan emphasized a fast-track cleanup process so community revitalization of military installations could occur rapidly.

## **Phases of the Installation Restoration Program**

The Air Force Real Property Agency (AFRPA) has a team of BRAC Environmental Coordinators (BEC) responsible for directing and implementing the environmental cleanup program at each of the former bases. The IRP process consists of following phases:

### *The Preliminary Assessment*

The initial phase in the IRP is the Preliminary Assessment (PA). The PA uses every possible means to identify and locate past sites of spills, leaks and disposal activities that could adversely affect the environment or human health. This process collects and reviews available information about known or suspected sites. The PA identifies each site where a potential environmental problem may exist. A list of sites is compiled with the help of installation personnel. These sites are then reviewed to confirm the presence or absence of contamination. During the review process, several methods are used to gain information about each site. Installation records, aerial photos, maps and waste disposal documents are researched. Environmental regulatory agency documents, which may contain information about the installation, as well as interviews with former and present base personnel or other persons having first-hand knowledge of possible sites, will be used. The PA is the foundation of the IRP process and determines which sites require further investigation.

### *The Site Investigation (SI)*

The Site Investigation (SI) is a technical phase designed to collect additional site information. During this phase, environmental samples from various sites are obtained and analyzed, and the testing results will confirm the presence or absence of contaminants. From these results, an assessment of the potential risks to human health and the environment will be completed. This data will also be used to determine whether further sampling will be necessary to define the extent of contaminants. During this phase, the need for an immediate response to critical situations is addressed. If a site is discovered to be contaminated and poses a threat to human health or the environment, prompt steps are initiated to cleanup or remedy the site.

### *No Further Response Action Planned Decision Document (NFRAP DD)*

If data acquired during the SI phase indicates a site is clean and does not pose a health risk, a No Further Response Action Planned Decision Document (NFRAP DD) is completed.

### *The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)*

If contamination discovered at a site during the SI phase warrants further investigation, a Remedial Investigation (RI) is conducted. The RI identifies the type of contaminant(s) at or near a site, assesses the degree of contamination and characterizes the actual and potential risks to the community and the environment. These investigations will yield data which are necessary for the completion of a Feasibility Study (FS). The FS evaluates several remedies for problems at each site.

### *Proposed Plan (PP)*

The Proposed Plan (PP) summarizes a preferred cleanup/remedial strategy and reviews other alternatives for each RI site, including those with No Further Action. This is an important document as the PP is presented to the public for review and comment. Submission of written and oral comments can be made on all remedies considered by the Air Force and associated regulatory agencies during a 30-day comment period, which can be extended by an additional 30 days upon request. During this comment period, the Air Force will be available to the public to answer questions concerning the PP and will hold a public meeting to solicit verbal and written comments. The Air Force also places Public Notices in local paper(s) to solicit feedback from the community.

### *Record of Decision (ROD)*

The Record of Decision (ROD) explains the final remediation actions that will be implemented for a particular site(s). The ROD takes into consideration public comments about the PP and community concerns.

### *The Remedial Design (RD)*

The selected remedy is planned and developed during the Remedial Design (RD) phase. The RD is an engineering phase when technical drawings, field testing, sampling and specifications are developed for the subsequent Remedial Action.

### *Remedial Action (RA)*

The Remedial Action (RA) is the construction and implementation phase. During this process, the control measure, or combination of control measures, are implemented as a remedy to prevent or mitigate site contamination problems. The control measure(s) refers to the action or actions used to identify, remove, contain, destroy or treat the source(s) of contamination.



### *Operation and Maintenance (O&M)*

Operation and Maintenance (O&M) may be required at some sites for certain cleanup activities and ongoing monitoring. Five year reviews begin five years after the remedial action has been completed to review the selected remedy. Once the O&M has been completed and the cleanup objective is achieved, the reviews are no longer required.

If a site poses an immediate threat to public health or the environment at any time during the remedial process, time critical removal actions can be initiated as an interim remedial action. This can be done as part of an Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EEICA) which includes a 30-45 day public comment period and a responsiveness summary as part of the action memorandum. A final report is issued within one year following completion of removal actions.

The time needed to complete an IRP phase can vary for each site. A RI/ES generally may take one to three years to complete. An additional year may be required to design a long-term cleanup solution. Implementing the final long-term solution frequently requires another one to two years. Certain cleanup activities and ongoing monitoring may continue for a number of years.

The Air Force is committed to cleaning up all its closure/realigning installations - operational and financial - however long it takes.

### **Purpose of the Community Relations Plan**

The CRP identifies community concerns, promotes public participation in the environmental decision-making process and ensures the public is provided accurate and timely information about restoration program. The CRP is consistent with federal and state regulations for implementing community relations efforts. As lead agency, the Air Force Real Property Agency is responsible for implementing, directing, and managing environmental community relations program at former bases. This plan is based on information obtained from stakeholder interviews and research on new guidance for environmental risk communications and public involvement. Information was also acquired through base documents, the BRAC Cleanup Plan, newspaper articles, public meetings, and Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) meetings. This is a living document. It will be updated to include new or changed information.

The playbook portion of this document details various environmental steps and strategies/best practices for involving the local community. The appendices allow for base-specific strategies to be tailored for the current conditions at each of the bases.

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# CRP Goals & Objectives

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## Community Relations Plan Goals

The CRP serves as a guide on how to engage individuals, neighborhoods, community and special interest groups, agency representatives and policy leaders in meaningful and collaborative decisions. The plan seeks to build informed consent (meaning that people understand why decisions are made and can support the process even if they disagree with the final outcome) among those interested by involving them in the planning process. To achieve this purpose, the plan must be inclusive, proactive, flexible, responsive, maintain accountability and, where appropriate, be multi-lingual. The CRP will encourage an open and participatory process that maximizes opportunities for involvement of the public, including persons with disabilities, affected agencies and others.

This CRP sets forth strategies for communicating with agencies, stakeholders and the public about the project. It defines the tools and timing for obtaining public involvement.

The following are goals and objectives that provide guidelines for the development of this CRP. The program and planning process should be designed to provide constructive opportunities for interested parties to exchange information, debate issues and play a role in the decision-making process at key milestones during the study. The following goals and objectives are consistent with the existing policies of the Air Force and with those strategies recommended by CERCLA.

### GOAL 1

Assess existing community concerns regarding planned and ongoing studies at each of the bases including all phases of cleanup activities to determine how best to involve the public in the decision-making process

#### *Objectives:*

- Conduct interviews with BECs and community stakeholders as appropriate to better understand local issues and community concerns.
- Review recent news articles and blog postings to identify current issues of interest surrounding each of the eastern BRAC bases.

- Utilize information gathered through interviews and review of other documents to develop community relations recommendations that are specific and tailored to each of the eastern BRAC bases.

## GOAL 2

Establish procedures for accurate and timely release of information to potentially affected and interested stakeholders

### *Objectives:*

- Inform the public through a broad range of innovative outreach methods that target different audiences, including traditionally under-represented groups, and strive to maintain a high level of public interest and enthusiasm in the clean-up program. Numerous methods will be used to make the community aware of the clean-up efforts on various bases and provide opportunities for input.
- Provide a variety of means for public participation that are accessible in terms of location and time, as well as flexible in terms of resource allocation of time, so certain individuals or groups are not precluded from participating in the process.
- Where possible, encourage private-sector participation in public outreach efforts to further increase awareness of this decision-making process, reduce costs and increase support.
- Identify and contact key community and agency leaders to obtain input on local issues and concerns regarding areas of concern and solutions, as well as to identify RAB representatives.

## GOAL 3

Establish methods to facilitate communication between the Air Force and the community at large

### *Objectives:*

- Seek out the participation of low-income, minority, youth and elderly populations, as well as persons with disabilities, the chambers of commerce, economic development councils and business groups. Monitor the participation of these groups so that alternative involvement methods may be implemented as necessary to ensure their representation and participation.

- Present information in a manner that overcomes potential language, economic or cultural barriers and is meaningful to different cultural groups.
- Facilitate effective participation by the hearing and sight-impaired.
- Ensure conformance with Title VI and Environmental Justice provisions.

#### GOAL 4

Articulate and clarify key issues for the public regarding remedial cleanup

##### *Objectives:*

- Provide the public with information regarding the objectives of the clean-up efforts, as well as the importance of their role in providing feedback on alternatives and in helping to select mitigation plans.
- Develop and implement a formal process for enabling the public and agencies to actively participate in the decision-making process, including the development of alternative, identification of trade-offs and methods for evaluating and selecting viable alternatives.
- Involve affected agencies early in the planning process to identify key environmental issues and concerns that may affect the feasibility of alternatives.
- Present findings in an understandable, objective and reader-friendly manner.
- Facilitate communication among community stakeholders so that tradeoffs among alternative strategies and funding options may be identified.
- Formalize a process to incorporate public and agency input into the technical analyses, and be able to demonstrate to the community that their issues and concerns have been considered in an equitable manner, even if not eventually adopted.

#### GOAL 5

Establish appropriate channels for two-way communication and feedback through formal and informal communication activities.

### *Objectives:*

- Provide a variety of methods or opportunities for members of the community to provide feedback or solicit information.
- Include contact information including phone, fax, e-mail and postal address on all informational materials.
- Develop, distribute and collect meeting evaluation and feedback forms, as appropriate.
- Include opportunities for face-to-face interactions with key technical staff that allows for more personal interactions.

### **Community Relations Plan Flexibility Statement**

While specific activities are outlined as part of the base-specific appendices, issues specific to this study may require that adjustments be made to this approach in order to better accommodate communication obstacles encountered during implementation.

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## Techniques & Timelines

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As part of the development of this plan, the Air Force conducted community interviews to determine the knowledge of the environmental clean-up and the community's preferences on receiving and disseminating information. Many of the community concerns and issues expressed in the interviews are addressed through the Air Force's current Community Relations Program. The Air Force prepares newsletters and fact sheets as needed which are distributed to provide the community with current information on the cleanup program. The Air Force also hosts public RAB meetings as needed to provide up-to-date information and address the community's concerns.

This subsection provides an overview of activities to be conducted by the Air Force as part of the Environmental Restoration Program, in coordination with regulatory agencies, to inform and involve the public throughout the cleanup process. Some of these activities are required by regulations or recommended by guidance. Other activities are supplemental and are conducted to further the community involvement in the ERP.

### Community Relations Plan

The CRP is a public document that organizes and explains how the Air Force provides information on the cleanup efforts and involves the community around each of the bases. The plan governs how the Air Force in conjunction with regulatory authorities will execute the Community Relations Program. It describes the current cleanup program at a base or former base and community relations activities. This plan is a living document and should be updated at a minimum during the environmental five year review.

### Restoration Advisory Board

A RAB is comprised of volunteer members of the community, representatives from the Air Force and federal and state regulatory agencies. RAB members perform a variety of functions, including reviewing plans and documents and advising the Air Force of community concerns and priorities as they relate to environmental cleanup. Not all of the 13 eastern bases have a RAB. To see base-specific information regarding the availability of a RAB for each of the bases, see the base-specific appendices.

### Information Repository

The purpose of an Information Repository is to allow convenient access to documents explaining the cleanup actions taking place at a former base. The repository includes

copies of work plans, technical reports and maps. See the base-specific appendices for specific locations.

*CERCLA 113(k); NCP 40 C.F.R. 300.415(n)(3)(iii) - Within 120 days of the start of on-site removal activity, the lead agency must establish at least one information repository at or near the location of the removal action that contains items available for public inspection and copying. The lead agency must inform the public of the establishment of the information repository and provide notice of the administrative record in this repository.*

## Administrative Record

The Administrative Record consists of all the documents and correspondence used by the Air Force to make decisions about cleanup which are documented in the Records of Decision. The Administrative Record is located in the AFRPA electronic library. It is accessible via the AFRPA public website <http://www.safie.hq.af.mil/afropa/index.asp>; click on “Administrative Record and Document Library” located in the right-hand column. The eastern bases can be accessed by name in the search window for the Administrative Record.

*CERCLA 113(k); NCP 40 C.F.R. 300.820 - The lead agency must establish an administrative record and make the administrative record available to the public at a central location at or near the site.*

## Fact Sheets

The Air Force prepares and publishes fact sheets to help explain specific topics and increase the community’s knowledge of the cleanup activities at former bases. Fact sheets address a variety of issues, such as general investigation and cleanup activities, technologies, program updates, history, risk, real estate issues and specific plume or source areas. These fact sheets should be visually appealing and are developed and updated as needed.

## Newsletters

Newsletters are a great way to push out information on a regular basis. The intent is to address pertinent environmental issues and to provide a status of technical milestones as needed. Newsletters may be distributed in a variety of ways including electronically to an email list, by mail to a database or at drop-off locations at popular community gathering places such as an airport, school, post office, grocery store, radio station, government facilities or business.

## Open Houses, Poster Board Sessions and Site Tours

Open houses, poster board sessions and site tours offer the public opportunities to meet government representatives, ask questions, express concerns and receive information about the cleanup. All of these events should be publicized through the appropriate methods. This could include notices to an email list or database, news releases or advertisements, the newsletter or through the posting of flyers.

## Public Notices

Public notices (paid for by the Air Force) may be placed in local newspapers to advertise upcoming meetings, general public meetings, the release of documents and public comment periods. Displays should be posted in the most widely read portions of the newspaper, be visually appealing and include the following information:

- Explain the proposed action
- Explain how to submit oral and written comments
- Identify the location of the information repositories and administrative record
- Name a contact person and how to reach him or her
- Provide the opportunity for a public meeting, or state the time and place of a public meeting/hearing if one has been scheduled

The public notice should be made at least two (2) weeks prior to the beginning of the public comment period so the public has sufficient time to review the necessary information and make plans to attend the public meeting if one is scheduled. To document this notice, the public involvement coordinator should request an affidavit from the publishing publication.

## Media Relations

The media can be a powerful way of getting information out to the public at large. This is most commonly done through the use of strategic news releases covering the progress of clean-up efforts, major milestones and events. To be successful, a news release should be timely, provide facts and figures and if appropriate provide an opportunity for interviews or graphics and visual elements. Additionally, television morning programs and public access shows provide another means of disseminating information.



## Neighborhood Notices and Flyers

On occasion, whenever significant work activities or meetings are planned, the Air Force will prepare a flyer providing details on the work to be conducted or on the meeting to be held. These flyers can be disseminated through the same channels as the newsletter or at local businesses and locations frequented by stakeholders.

## Public Meetings

Public meetings provide information about the ERP and opportunities for community involvement. RAB meetings are an example of public meetings. Additional public meetings will be held to inform the public about specific projects, often during public comment periods. Written and oral comments are taken from the public and a verbatim transcript is published. Prior to a public meeting, a paid display advertisement will be placed in the local newspaper(s).

### *Proposed Date and Time*

Public meeting dates and times should be selected with care to avoid conflicts and maximize participation. Mondays and Fridays are typically not good days for public meetings because people tend to have other plans or forget about meetings on these days. Wednesdays may be equally bad due to conflicts with faith-based organizations events and services. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays work best for public meetings. When setting public meeting dates and times be sure to consider your local community's preferences in addition to your project schedule.

### *Proposed Tasks & Outreach*

In order to ensure participation at the public meetings, a robust outreach program is recommended with initial efforts starting six weeks in advance of the actual event. The following table outlines recommended tasks and outreach methods and the timeframe for implementation of each method.

Tasks	Timeline
Secure location	60 days prior
Submit meeting information to neighborhood association, chamber of commerce and agency newsletters for dissemination	45 days prior
Distribute flyers to organizations that meet on a monthly basis	45 days prior
Complete draft newsletter for review and approval	45 days prior
Post date on community calendars and websites	45 days prior
Request that faith-based organizations, PTAs and civic groups make announcements at weekly/monthly meetings	45 days prior
Send newsletter to printer for production	45 days prior
Distribute public service announcements to area radio stations	45 days prior

Post information in faith-based organization bulletins	45 days prior
Publish legal notice and/or display ad 30 days in advance of public meeting	30 days prior
Coordinate sending flyers home with elementary school children	30 days prior
Mail out newsletter to project database	30 days prior
Request that local universities send out e-mail announcements to their students, faculty and staff	30 days prior
Produce agenda, comment card and meeting handouts	20 days prior
Coordinate with local professors in the areas of planning, geography and political science and request that they encourage their students to participate	20 days prior
Send out e-mail reminder	20 days prior
Send out bulletins to fans on Facebook page, if appropriate	20 days prior
Publish legal notice and/or display ad approximately and electronic media ad 20 days in advance of public meeting	20 days prior
Distribute public meeting flyers/posters to key locations near the upcoming meeting location	20 days prior
Translate agenda, comment card and meeting handouts (if needed)	10 days prior
Secure A/V equipment (PA, projector, laptop, screen, etc.)	10 days prior
Produce graphics and exhibits for meetings	10 days prior
Send out e-mail reminder	10 days prior
Send out press release to local media	7 days prior
Secure special needs translator (if necessary)	If needed
Resubmit press release requesting coverage	Day of event
Send out e-mail reminder	Day of event
Public event supplies (newsletters, name tags, sign-in sheets, pens, Sharpies, public meeting way-finding signs, clipboards and refreshments)	Day of event
Staff Event	Day of Event
Public Meeting Report	10 days following

## Public Comment Period

Federal law requires formal public comment periods be conducted for key documents pertaining to proposed remedial and removal activities to solicit public input. The documents are placed in the Administrative Record prior to the start of the public comment period. The public receives advance notice of the public comment periods for key decision documents through paid advertisements in local newspapers and news releases. Notices and advertisements will contain a brief description of the document, where it can be reviewed, the dates of the public comment period and the date and location of any related meetings.

For formal public comment periods on key decision documents, a verbatim transcript of comments is generated and the public has a 30-day minimum time period to review the

proposed decision document and supporting information and to submit comments to the Air Force. At the close of each formal public comment period, the Air Force and regulatory agencies review all written documents received and oral comments given at the public meeting and respond to these comments through a written responsiveness summary. Comments received during the formal public comment periods are included in final decision documents in the Administrative Record. The documents that trigger public comment periods are proposed plans and proposed ROD amendments.

## Responsiveness Summary

As required, the Air Force prepares a responsiveness summary to describe and document the community's comments received during the formal public comment period. The responsiveness summary contains the Air Force's responses to the comments. A copy of the responsiveness summary is available in final decision documents located in the administrative record. Individuals who submit questions or comments during the formal public comment period are provided a copy of the responsiveness summary.

## Website

Websites are becoming more and more common – even expected. They provide an opportunity to disseminate information and provide links to documents in the administrative record. You may also utilize them to announce upcoming milestones, meetings or events.

## Speaking Engagements/Outreach Meetings

Another opportunity to keep community members informed is to use regular meetings of social and civic clubs and organizations to provide an opportunity to inform and educate regarding on-going activities. Normally, these organizations need speakers and this provides a low-cost method to reach groups with a built in audience. Examples include neighborhood associations, elected official town hall meetings, rotary clubs, lions clubs, Kiwanis, League of Women Voters, etc.

## Informal Activities

- **Social Media** – Given that Facebook currently boasts 500 million active users, it is impossible to ignore social media as a method for disseminating information to the public. Social media presents a valuable opportunity to expand the reach of community relations efforts. It should be reserved as a means to push out information to the community and to provide a forum for community members to dialogue amongst each other about the current effort. Social media sites for

an ongoing federal action should post a clear disclaimer informing users that the site is informational in nature, is not a formal medium for collecting input and feedback and should direct users to the formal means for providing their input and feedback. The type of information to be disseminated varies greatly by project but could include invites to meetings, links to published articles and brief updates on the project with links to the Administrative Record or Information Repository.

- **E-mail marketing** – Technology allows us to reach larger audiences than before without incurring the costs of traditional mail outs. E-mail lists can be utilized to disseminate information by e-mail to thousands of stakeholders at a push of a button. Mass e-mails can also be utilized to send out online feedback forms to collect information. When taking advantage of this tool, care should be taken to maintain copies of e-mail lists used for each e-mail campaign. Care should also be taken to remove participants who request to be removed and to provide opportunities for people to be added to the e-mail distribution.
- **Exhibits** – When communicating information, care should be taken to ensure the inclusion of “go to them” outreach. This means that instead of asking a citizen to come to a special meeting on a particular topic, the community relations coordinator goes to existing fairs or events and presents information where people are aggregating. This can be done by securing a booth and displaying boards with project information. This can also be another way of building the mailing list and conducting informal feedback polls.
- **Special Events** – Special events are a good way to mark milestones and celebrate victories. Events should be coordinated with the RAB and other community stakeholders and where appropriate involve the local media through press releases and editorial boards.

## Strategic Communications Planning

While the EPA provides some guidance on when to use specific techniques, deciding on the right mix of communication avenues is often left to the community relations coordinator. The following table outlines each of the techniques, tips for success and pros/cons that can be used to which technique is most appropriate for a given situation. Base-specific guidance is provided in the appendices for each of the eastern bases.

Techniques	Tips for Success	Pros	Cons
<b>Restoration Advisory Board</b>	<p>Define roles and responsibilities up front</p> <p>Be forthcoming with information</p> <p>Use a consistently credible process</p> <p>Interview potential committee members in person before selection</p> <p>Use third-party facilitation</p>	<p>Provides for detailed analyses for clean-up issues</p> <p>Participants gain understanding of other perspectives, leading toward compromise</p>	<p>General public may not embrace committee's recommendations</p> <p>Members may not achieve consensus</p> <p>Time and labor intensive</p>
<b>Information Repository</b>	<p>Make sure personnel at location know where materials are kept</p> <p>Keep a list of repository items</p> <p>Track usage through a sign-in sheet</p>	<p>Relevant information is accessible to the public without incurring the costs or complications of tracking multiple copies sent to different people</p> <p>Can set up visible distribution centers for project information</p>	<p>Information repositories are often not well used by the public</p>
<b>Fact Sheets/Newsletters/ Neighborhood Notices and Flyers</b>	<p>KISS! Keep It Short and Simple</p> <p>Make it visually interesting but avoid a slick sales look</p> <p>Be sure to explain public role and how public comments have affected decisions</p> <p>Q&amp;A format works well</p>	<p>Can reach large target audience</p> <p>Allows for technical and legal reviews</p> <p>Facilitates documentation of public involvement process</p>	<p>Only as good as the mailing list/ distribution network</p> <p>Limited capability to communicate complicated concepts</p> <p>No guarantee materials will be read</p>
<b>Open Houses, Poster Board Sessions and Site Tours</b>	<p>Someone should explain format at the door</p> <p>Have each participant fill out a comment card to document their participation</p> <p>Be prepared for a crowd</p>	<p>Foster small group or one-on-one communications</p> <p>Ability to draw on other team members to answer difficult questions</p> <p>Builds credibility</p>	<p>Difficult to document public input</p> <p>Agitators may stage themselves at each display</p> <p>Usually more staff intensive than a meeting</p>

	<p>all at once – develop a contingency plan</p> <p>Set up several stations so multiple people can view at once</p>		
<b>Public Notices</b>	<p>Figure out the best days and best sections of the paper to reach intended audience</p> <p>Avoid rarely read notice sections</p>	<p>Potentially reaches broad public</p>	<p>Expensive, especially in urban areas</p> <p>Allows for relatively limited amount of information</p>
<b>Media Relations</b>	<p>Fax or e-mail press releases or media kits</p> <p>Foster a relationship with editorial board and reporters</p>	<p>Informs the media of project milestones</p> <p>Press release language is often used directly in articles</p> <p>Opportunity for technical and legal reviews</p>	<p>Low media response rate</p> <p>Frequent poor placement of press release within newspapers</p>
<b>Public Meeting</b>	<p>Set up the meeting to be as welcoming and receptive as possible to ideas and opinions and to increase interaction between technical staff and the public</p> <p>Review all materials and presentation ahead of time</p>	<p>Participants here relevant information and have an open opportunity to ask questions and comment</p> <p>People learn more by hearing other’s questions and comments</p> <p>Legal requirements are met</p>	<p>There is a potential for the meeting to escalate out of control because emotions are high</p> <p>It is challenging for facilitators to establish an open and neutral environment for all views to be shared</p>
<b>Responsiveness Summaries</b>	<p>May be used to comply with legal requirements for comment documentation</p> <p>Use publicly and openly to announce and show how all comments were addressed</p>	<p>Responsiveness summaries can be an effective way to demonstrate how public comments are addressed in the decision process</p>	<p>With a large public, the process of response documentation can get unwieldy</p>

<b>Website</b>	<p>A good home page is critical</p> <p>Each Web page must be independent</p> <p>Put critical information at the top of the page</p> <p>Use headings, bulleted and numbered lists to steer user</p>	<p>Reaches across distances</p> <p>Makes information accessible anywhere at any time</p> <p>Saves printing and mailing costs</p>	<p>Users may not have easy access to the Internet or knowledge of how to use computers</p> <p>Large files or graphics can take a long time to download</p>
<b>Speaking Engagements/ Outreach Meetings</b>	<p>Understand who the likely audience will be</p> <p>Make opportunities for one-on-one meetings</p>	<p>Opportunity to get on the agenda</p> <p>Provides opportunity for in-depth information exchange in non-threatening environment</p>	<p>May be too selective and can leave important groups out</p>

Source: International Association of Public Participation. "Public Participation Toolbox," 2006.

# CRP Recommendations by Phase

The EPA provides guidance on how and when to involve the community in the environmental clean-up process. While very few activities are specifically prescribed by the letter of the law, the EPA has repeatedly made it clear that the intent of the law was to “provide every opportunity for residents of affected communities to become active participants in the process and to have a say in the decisions that affect their community.”

The Air Force adopts the intent of the law and is committed to go above and beyond the letter of the law at each of the former eastern BRAC bases. The following table outlines the activities recommended by the EPA at various steps in the process. The BEC at each of the bases should work closely with their community relations coordinator to ensure the public is afforded every opportunity to learn more about where the base is in this process so they may provide their input and feedback at appropriate points in the process. The community relations coordinator should also ensure the information is presented in easy to understand terms and that technical terminology is clearly and concisely communicated. In addition to the activities listed below, the BEC and the community relations coordinator should work together to determine which of the informal activities listed in the previous section would be appropriate throughout the process.

	Restoration Advisory Board	Information Repository	Administrative Record	Fact Sheets	Newsletters	Open Houses, Poster Board Sessions, and Site Tours	Public Notices	News Releases/Media Relations	Neighborhood Notices/ Flyers	Public Meetings	Public Comment Period	Responsiveness Summary	Website	Speaking Engagement/ Outreach Mtrs
Preliminary Assessment/ Site Investigation			●	●		●	●	●	●					
Listing on the National Priorities List			●				●	●			●	●		
The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS)	●		●	●	●	●							●	●
Proposed Plan (PP)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Record of Decision (ROD)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Remedial Design (RD)/ Remedial Action	●	●	●	●	●	●		●					●	●
Operation & Maintenance (O&M)	●	●	●		●		●	●			●	●	●	●
Deletion from the National Priorities List	●	●	●				●	●			●	●	●	●

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “Superfund Community Involvement Handbook,” 2005.



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## Stakeholder Identification

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A necessary first step in the public involvement process includes identifying local agencies and community stakeholders and their issues related to the former base. A preliminary list of potential stakeholder groups is listed below. The identification of stakeholders should continue throughout the duration of the environmental process, and the stakeholder list should be updated and supplemented to include newcomers and to keep contact information current. Stakeholders should be integrated into the process and informed on an on-going basis. See the base-specific appendices for information on specific outreach activities recommended to target these audiences for each of the eastern BRAC bases.

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# Program Evaluation

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The community relations coordinator should measure and evaluate performance with regard to goals and objectives. These activities will serve several purposes:

- To measure the awareness of, and satisfaction with, clean-up activities from different target audiences
- To ensure that comments received during the process are being addressed and incorporated into the decision-making process
- To determine the effectiveness of the program in increasing awareness and understanding of the clean-up efforts
- To identify ways in which the program can be improved in terms of reaching target audiences and methods of participation and education

## *Qualitative Methods*

- Comment forms collected after each public meeting
- Remarks obtained through phone calls to the BEC
- Feedback obtained during stakeholder meetings with community contacts
- Opinions gauged by project publicity, including news stories and editorial/opinion pieces in the media

## *Quantitative Methods*

- The scale of distribution lists
- The reach and frequency of project communications
- Attendance counts at public and agency coordination meetings
- Incoming calls to the designated phone number
- Hits to the project website and social media sites

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# Glossary

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- Administrative Record - A file that contains information that forms the basis for the selection of a response action, including verified sampling data, quality control and quality assurance documentation, site inspection and evaluation reports and ATSDR health assessments. This file is available for public review.
- Aggregate - Materials such as sand, gravel, or crushed stone used for mixing with a cementing material to form concrete or alone as railroad ballast or graded fill.
- Air Stripping - A treatment system that removes, or "strips," volatile organic compounds from contaminated groundwater or surface water by forcing an airstream through the water and causing the compounds to evaporate.
- Alluvium - Clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar material deposited by running water.
- Aquifer - The water-bearing portion of subsurface earth material that yields or is capable of yielding quantities of water.
- Asbestos - A naturally occurring, incombustible chemical, resistant, fibrous form of magnesium silicate, known to be carcinogenic, which was used for years as insulation, fireproofing or filtering media.
- Carcinogen - A substance that causes cancer.
- Cleanup - Actions taken to deal with a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health or the environment. The term is often used broadly to describe various response actions or phases of remedial responses, such as the remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/ES)
- Comment Period - A time period, usually lasting 30 days, for the public to review and comment on various documents and actions.
- Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) A Federal Law, commonly known as Superfund, passed in 1980 and modified in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA).
- Comprehensive Plan - A public document, usually consisting of maps, text, and supporting materials, adopted and approved by a local government legislative body, which describes future land uses, goals, and policies.

- Contaminants - Undesirable substances rendering something unfit for use.
- Corrosive - A material that has the ability to cause visible destruction of living tissue and has a destructive effect on other substances, an acid or base.
- Cultural Resources - Prehistoric and historic districts, sites, buildings, objects, or any other physical evidence of human activity considered important to a culture, subculture, or a community for scientific, traditional, religious, or any other reason.
- Decision Document - A formal record of significant decisions on cleanup alternatives for a particular site. Decision documents are typically prepared to record the following decisions: no further action, selection of a remedy, implementation of a sampling or monitoring program.
- Effluent - Waste material discharged into the environment.
- Environmental Impact Analysis Process - The process of conducting environmental studies as outlined in Air Force Instruction 32-7061.
- Erosion - Wearing away of soil and rock by weathering, and the action of streams, wind, and underground water.
- Floodplain - The lowland and relatively flat areas adjoining inland and coastal waters including flood prone areas of offshore islands including, at a minimum, that area subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year.
- Focused Feasibility Study - An in-depth evaluation of potential remedies for a site. A Focused Feasibility Study follows the site investigation if further study is not required.
- Groundwater - Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills spaces between layers of sand, soil and rock. In aquifers, groundwater occurs in sufficient quantities that can be used as a source of water for drinking, irrigation and other purposes.
- Hazard Ranking System (HRS) - A scoring system used to evaluate potential relative risks to public health and the environment from releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. The U.S. EPA and the states use the HRS to calculate a site score (0 to 100) based on the actual or potential release of hazardous substances for a site through air, surface water or groundwater. This score is the primary factor used to decide if a hazardous waste site should be placed on the National Priorities List.

- Hazardous Substance - Any material that poses a threat to public health and/or the environment. Typical hazardous substances are materials that are toxic, corrosive, ignitable, explosive or chemically reactive.
- Hazardous Waste - A waste, or combination of wastes, which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical, or infectious characteristics, may either cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible illness, or pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of: or otherwise managed Regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).
- Heavy Metals - A metal (e.g., lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium) of atomic weight greater than sodium (atomic weight 229 grams per molecule) that forms soaps on reaction with fatty acids.
- Herbicides - A pesticide, either organic or inorganic, used to destroy unwanted vegetation, especially various types of weeds, grasses, and woody plants.
- Hydrogeologic Study - A study that examines the way water behaves or moves in soil and rock formations beneath the ground.
- Impacts - An assessment of the meaning of changes in all attributes being studied for a given resource, an aggregation of all the adverse effects, usually measured using a qualitative and nominally subjective technique. Environmentally, the word impact is usually synonymous with the word effect.
- Infrastructure - The basic installations and facilities on which the continuance and growth of a local community depend (e.g., roads, schools, power plants, transportation, communication systems).
- Installation Restoration Program (1IRIP) - The Air Force's progressive nationwide plan to identify, investigate and if necessary, cleanup contamination at Air Force facilities that has resulted from previous waste disposal practices or accidental spills. Most of these activities occurred years before laws were passed or knowledge was obtained that these practices posed potential problems.
- Information Repository - A file containing current information, technical reports, reference documents and Technical Assistance Grant applications information. The information repository is usually located in a public building that is convenient for local residents, such as a public school, city hall or library.
- Leachate - A contaminated liquid resulting when water percolates, or trickles, through waste materials and collects components of those wastes. Leaching

may occur at landfills and may result in hazardous substances entering soil, surface water or groundwater.

- Lead - A heavy metal which, if ingested, can accumulate in the body, and cause deleterious effects to health.
- Mitigation - A method or action to reduce or eliminate program impacts.
- Monitoring Wells - Special wells drilled at specific locations on or off a hazardous waste site where groundwater can be sampled at selected depths and studied to determine the direction of groundwater flow and the types and amounts of contaminants present.
- National Priorities List - U S Environmental Protection Agency's list of the most serious waste sites identified for possible long-term remedial response. The list is based, primarily, on the score a site receives on the Hazard Ranking System.
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) - A federal law that requires environmental reviews of Federal actions that have the potential to significantly impact public health or the environment.
- National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) - A provision of the Federal Clean Water Act that prohibits discharge of pollutants into domestic waters unless a special permit is issued by the U S EPA or the State 100-Year Flood Plain A geographical parcel which has the probability of being flooded at least once in a hundred year program.
- Operating Location - An organized element of the Air Force Base Conversion Agency located at a closing or realigning base The OL is responsible for the care and custody of closed areas of the base, disposal of real and related personal property, and environmental cleanup This office is the primary point of contact for local community reuse organizations, and the general public who deal with the disposal and reuse of the base.
- Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Activities conducted at a site after a response action occurs to ensure that the cleanup or containment system is functioning properly.
- Permeability - The capacity of a porous rock or sediment to transmit a fluid.
- Pesticides - Any substance, organic or inorganic, used to destroy or inhibit the action of plant or animal pests; the term thus includes insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticide, fumigants, and repellents. All pesticides are toxic to humans to a greater or lesser degree. Pesticides vary in biodegradability.

- Plume - A body or column of underground contaminated fluid that may move with the flow of the ground water.
- Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) - Any of a family of industrial compounds produced by chlorination of biphenyls. These compounds are chiefly noted as an environmental pollutant that accumulates in organisms, and concentrates in the food chain with resultant pathogenic and teratogenic effects. They also decompose very slowly.
- Preliminary Assessment - The process of collecting and reviewing available information about a known or suspected hazardous waste site or release. The U.S. EPA or states use this information to determine if the site requires further study. If further study is needed, a site investigation is undertaken.
- Quality Assurance/Quality Control - A system of procedures, checks, audits and corrective actions used to ensure that field work and laboratory analysis during the investigation and cleanup of the sites meet established standards.
- Record of Decision - A public document that explains which cleanup alternative will be used at the sites The Record of Decision is based on information and technical analyses generated during the remedial investigation/feasibility study and consideration of public comments and community concerns.
- Remedial Action - The actual construction or implementation phase that follows the remedial design of the selected cleanup alternative at a site.
- Remedial Design - An engineering phase that follows the record of decision when technical drawings and specifications are developed for the subsequent remedial action at a site.
- Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study - The investigations and analytical studies conducted if the results of the site investigation reveal extensive contamination. They are intended to:
  - Fully define the type and extent of contamination at a site
  - Establish criteria for cleaning up a site
  - Identify and screen potential alternatives to cleanup contamination
  - Analyze in detail the technologies and costs of the cleanup alternatives

- Remedial Response - A long-term action that stops or substantially reduces a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that is serious but does not pose an immediate threat to public health and/or the environment.
- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) - A federal law that established a regulatory system to track hazardous substances from generation to disposal. The law requires safe and secure procedures to be used in treating, transporting, storing and disposing of hazardous substances. Record of Decision, highlighting community concerns.
- Responsiveness Summary - A summary of oral and written public comments received during a public comment period. The responsiveness summary is a key part of the Record of Decision, highlighting community concerns.
- Restoration Advisory Board - By encouraging the community, the installation and the regulatory agencies to work together, the RAB creates a partnership that can identify common interests and provides a means for the community to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Site - As it relates to cultural resources, any location where humans have altered the terrain or discarded artifacts.
- Site Investigation - The phase of the Installation Restoration Program that follows the Preliminary Assessment. During the site investigation, more extensive information about the types and amounts of contamination and other important information about the site is collected to evaluate the appropriate course of action. This normally includes actual field testing and sampling.
- Solvent - A substance that dissolves or can dissolve another substance.
- Surface Water - Bodies of water that are above ground, such as rivers, lakes and streams.
- Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) Program - A grant program that provides funds for qualified citizens' groups to hire independent technical advisors to help them understand and comment on technical decisions relating to the environmental cleanup process.
- 13. U. S. Environmental Protection Agency - The independent federal agency, established in 1970, that regulates environmental matters and oversees the implementation of environmental laws.



- Wetlands - Areas that are inundated or saturated with surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for saturated soil.
- Zoning - The division of a municipality (or county) into districts for the purpose or regulating land use, types of buildings, required yards, necessary off-street parking, and other prerequisites to development Zones are generally shown on a map and the text of the zoning ordinance specifies requirements for each zoning category.

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## List of Acronyms

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AFB	Air Force Base
AFCEE	Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence
AFRPA	Air Force Real Property Agency
AH	Air Force Instruction
AFS	Air Force Station
AST	Aboveground Storage Tank
BCP	Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Cleanup Plan
BCT	Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Cleanup Team
BEC	BRAC Environmental Coordinator
BRAC	Base Realignment and Closure
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CRP	Community Relations Plan
DBCRA	Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act
DD	Decision Document
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DERP	Defense Environmental Restoration Program
DESC	Defense Electronics Supply Center
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DOD	Department of Defense

EA	Environmental Assessment
EBS	Environmental Baseline Survey
EC	Environmental Compliance
ELAP	Environmental Impact Analysis Process
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FOSL	Finding of Suitability for Lease
FS	Feasibility Study
FY	Fiscal Year
IRA	Interim Remedial Action
IRP	Installation Restoration Program
LF	Landfill
LRA	Local Redevelopment Authority
LTM	Long-Term Monitoring
NCP	National Oil and Hazardous Substance Pollution Contingency Plan
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFADD	No Further Action Decision Document
NOI	Notice of Intent
NPL	National Priorities List

OL	Operating Location
PA	Preliminary Assessment
PA/SI	Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation
PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl
PCE	Tetrachloroethylene
POL	Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants
ppb	Parts per Billion
ppm	Parts per Million
QA/QC	Quality Assurance/Quality Control
RA	Remedial Action
RAB	Restoration Advisory Board
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RD	Remedial Design
RD/RA	Remedial Design/Remedial Action
RI	Remedial Investigation
ROD	Record of Decision
RPM	Remedial Project Manager
SARA	Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act
SI	Site Inspection
SIAS	Socioeconomic Impact Analysis Study

TSDf	Treatment, Storage, and Disposal Facility
U.S. EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
UST	Underground Storage Tank
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound

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## Sources

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EPA Public Involvement:

<http://www.epa.gov/publicinvolvement/>

Superfund Community Involvement Website:

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/community/index.htm>

EPA Stakeholder Website:

<http://www.epa.gov/stakeholders/intro.htm>

International Assoc. of Public Participation Practitioner Tools:

<http://www.iap2.org>