



Robins Air Force Base Environmental Advisory Board (EAB) *Fact Sheet*



Volume 16, Issue 1, May 2023

The Robins AFB EAB

Recognizing the importance of public involvement in environmental matters, Robins Air Force Base (Robins AFB or Base) has established the Environmental Advisory Board (EAB). The mission of the EAB is to encourage participation of surrounding communities in the Base's environmental programs and allow community members and other stakeholders to have meaningful dialog with Base officials. Specifically, the EAB serves to promote community awareness and obtain constructive community review, comment, and input on current and proposed actions associated with environmental programs at Robins AFB. The EAB supports the Air Force environmental mission of sustaining readiness, being a good neighbor, protecting human health and the environment for the Base and community, and making smart business decisions.

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May 2023 EAB Meeting

The spring EAB meeting was held on Thursday, May 4, 2023.

This *Fact Sheet* provides a summary of the information and topics discussed during the meeting.

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 3, 2023.

Remedial Investigation of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances

Ms. Jennifer Ludwig of QRI, LLC and Mr. James Griffin of Sustainment and Restoration Services (SRS) briefed: "Remedial Investigation (RI) of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)" at the May 2023 EAB meeting.

PFAS are a group of man-made chemicals found in many industrial and consumer products (e.g., nonstick cookware, waterproof fabric, food packaging, etc.) and Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF), which is used to put out fires. The compounds are excellent surfactants, as they repel both water and oil.

The most known and studied of these compounds include perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA). PFAS compounds are very persistent in the environment.

Key regulatory actions related to PFAS have included the following:

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The Robins AFB PFAS RI was briefed at the May 2023 EAB meeting.

Remedial Investigation of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (CONTINUED...)

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- ♦ In 2009, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) issued a Health Advisory (HA) for PFOA at 400 parts per trillion (ppt) and PFOS at 200 ppt. HAs are non-regulatory information for federal, state and local officials to consider when addressing drinking water contamination.
- ♦ In May 2016, the US EPA issued a revised HA for PFOS and PFOA of 70 ppt for each of these compounds; the HA for the sum of both compounds was also set to not exceed 70 ppt. In February 2019, the US EPA released a PFAS Action Plan to further study these compounds.
- ♦ In July 2022, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (ASD) issued a memorandum establishing risk screening levels for select PFAS in groundwater and soil.
- ♦ In March 2023, the US EPA announced proposed maximum contaminants levels (MCLs) for select PFAS compounds with a public comment period through May 30, 2023.

US EPA continues to research human health/toxicity, as well as analytical, site characterization, and treatment/remediation methods.

Within the Air Force, investigations related to PFAS are being guided by Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), applicable state laws, and risk-based screening levels. The Air Force is using a three-step approach to assess the potential for PFAS contamination of drinking water and to respond appropriately. These steps include: (i) identification by assessing potential AFFF releases, verifying releases through sampling, and evaluating if contaminant pathways to drinking water exist; (ii) response by providing an alternative drinking water supply if PFOS/PFOA concentrations are greater than the HA, or continue monitoring if concentrations are less than the HA; and (iii) prevention by disposing of old AFFF and transitioning to new AFFF and retrofitting fire vehicles.

The identification steps include a Preliminary Assessment (PA), which includes a base-wide rec-

ords review to identify fire training areas, crash sites, and other areas at the installation where AFFF may have been released. The PA is followed by a Site Inspection (SI) where groundwater, surface water, soil, and/or sediment sampling is conducted to verify releases and map contamination and potential pathways to drinking water. If the SI sampling indicated potential pathways to drinking water supplies, the SI footprint is expanded into an RI.

At Robins AFB, the PA with record searches and interviews was conducted in May 2015. During the PA, the Fire Chief, who had been at Robins AFB for 20 to 30 years, provided detailed records of potential source areas, which allowed the PA to be very thorough. The PA identified 30 areas on Robins AFB where there was the potential that AFFF has been stored or released. Soil and groundwater at these 30 areas were sampled between March and April 2017 as part of the SI. Based on detections of PFAS during the SI, an RI is being conducted at 19 Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) sites.

The purpose of the RI is to conduct site characterization to delineate the nature and extent of PFAS contamination at Robins AFB. As part of the RI, the conceptual site model (CSM) will be updated. The 19 investigation areas are generally related to crash/fire response sites, fire department training activities, releases from fire suppression systems in aircraft hangers, disposal sites, and the industrial wastewater treatment plant. The RI includes soil, groundwater, surface water, and sediment sampling at these areas, as appropriate. The work plan for the investigation currently includes collection of more than 2,800 samples.

The contract for the RI was awarded in August 2022. Planning documents are currently under review. Field work is scheduled to commence in September 2023. The contract extends through August 2025.

It is important to note that the six active drinking water wells on Robins AFB were tested in 2016 and 2020, and the results were below the HA of 70 ppt and below the laboratory detection limit of 2 ppt. Based on these results, the drinking water at the Base has not been impacted.

Remedial Investigation of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (CONTINUED...)



Robins AFB PFAS RI Areas

Environmental Management Wins General Thomas D. White Award

During the Spring 2023 EAB meeting, Ms. Shan Williams announced that the Robins AFB Environmental Management Branch recently won the General Thomas D. White Award for Best Industrial Environmental Quality Program in the Air Force.

The award was established to honor General Thomas D. White, the Air Force Chief of Staff from 1957 to 1961, who charted the course for the Air Force environmental programs. The awards recognize the efforts of installations, teams, and individuals for environmental quality.



Select members of Robins AFB Environmental Management.

Acronyms

| | |
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| AFB | Air Force Base |
| AFFF | Aqueous Film Forming Foam |
| ASD | Assistant Secretary of Defense |
| CERCLA | Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act |
| CSM | Conceptual Site Model |
| EAB | Environmental Advisory Board |
| ERP | Environmental Restoration Program |
| HA | Health Advisory |
| MCL | Maximum Contaminant Level |
| PA | Preliminary Assessment |
| PFAS | Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances |
| PFOA | Perfluorooctanoic Acid |
| PFOS | Perfluorooctane Sulfonate |
| ppt | part per trillion |
| RI | Remedial Investigation |
| SI | Site Inspection |
| SRS | Sustainment and Restoration Services |
| US EPA | United States Environmental Protection Agency |

For more information regarding the EAB, please contact
Mr. Fred Otto, Robins AFB EAB Manager, at (478) 327-9272
or visit <http://www.robinseab.org>

Environmental Advisory Board Members

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| Ms. Shan Williams, Robins AFB Installation Co-Chair | Mr. Lawrence Collins, Byron Community Member | Dr. Richard Mines, Macon Community Member |
| Dr. Linda Smyth, Macon Community Co-Chair | Mr. James Harden, Warner Robins Community Member | Dr. Clarence Riley, Warner Robins Community Member |
| Mr. Craig Benedikt, US EPA Region 4 Superfund Division | Mayor John Harley, Centerville Community Member | Dr. Brian E. Rood, Macon Community Member |
| Mr. Jim Ashworth GA EPD Hazardous Waste Management | Mr. Stephen Johnson, Macon Community Member | |
| Ms. Tiffany Bowen, Warner Robins Community Member | Mr. Mike Maffeo, Macon Community Member | |