

**PRESS RELEASE**    *April 3, 2012*

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## **Response to Army Corps Attempt to Replace the RAB**

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In 1999 the Army Corps of Engineers established a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) for community input regarding its investigations and clean-up activities at the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works site, located in the towns of Lewiston and Porter. But in 2008, the Corps decided it had dissolved the RAB back in 2002, without notice to the public. The RAB, all local municipalities, and community groups disagreed that the Corps had dissolved the RAB in 2002. The New York State Attorney General found that the Corps had failed to dissolve the RAB and comply with regulation.

The original 1999 RAB has continued to meet since the organizational dispute, which coincided with scientific disputes with the Corps. The RAB continues to this day to provide the community and Corps with information and analysis on activities at the LOOW. However, through public notice last week, the Army Corps is seeking to replace and reorganize the current RAB. The Corps notice about forming a new RAB neglects to acknowledge that there is an existing RAB.

The LOOW RAB stakeholders include the Towns of Lewiston and Porter, the Villages of Lewiston and Youngstown, and the Lewiston-Porter Central School District in addition to local tribes, groups, community members and agencies. RAB stakeholders have held the following position since 2008:

- 1) There is an existing RAB which we recognize and support.
- 2) We do not support steps to form a new RAB to replace the existing RAB.
- 3) We support the 2007 RAB request for a facilitator to resolve open issues between the RAB and the Corps.
- 4) We support the continued access to information, dialogue and input with project technical staff for Corps activities at the LOOW.”

RAB Chair William Choboy said, “a new RAB would sharply curtail the level of public participation and community influence afforded the current RAB by the Corps in 1999, and as expanded in 2002.” RAB Vice Chair Alfonso Marra Bax noted, “The current RAB protects procedural rights of stakeholders that cannot be grandfathered or delegated to a new RAB or the non-regulated CAC.”

Official information regarding the RAB can be found on the RAB website at <http://loowrab.com/>

The LOOW site consists of approximately 7,500 acres of publicly and privately owned parcels located in the Towns of Lewiston and Porter that were once owned by the federal government and used for military weapons production-related operations started during WWII. It includes the 191-acre Niagara Falls Storage Site, which still houses radioactive waste material from atomic weapons production in the 1940’s and 1950’s.

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The mission of the LOOW RAB is to promote the satisfactory remediation of the entire LOOW site and to help inform and involve the public. The RAB is a stakeholder group comprising municipalities, agencies, tribes, academics, property owners and members of the public. The RAB compliments but does not replace other forms of communication regarding U.S. Army Corps of Engineers environmental investigations and remediation activities at the LOOW site.