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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE, "CONTAMINATION CONTINUES TO BUBBLE UP AT SHIPYARD  
SAYS ADVISORY BOARD" NSY PORTSMOUTH ME  
6/14/2001  
PORTSMOUTH HERALD

PORTSMOUTH HERALD  
JUNE 14, 2001

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Contamination continues to bubble up at shipyard, says advisory board

#### To the Editor:

This letter is a report on the May meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board, a citizen advisory group for Superfund site cleanups at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. I am the Seacoast AntiPollution League's representative to this board. The major order of business was assigning priorities to future projects. The board was presented five choices, four of them involving specific shipyard sites and one involving a general study of past pesticide usage around the shipyard. While all of the projects seemed desirable, adequate funds would not be available to begin them all in the near future. The board decided that its first choice would be the Topeka Pier site. This pier was created with landfill materials from the early 1900s until about 1945. A monitoring station off this site has detected steep increases in discharges of heavy metals, especially copper, into the adjoining mud flats and waters of the Back Channel. Prudence would seem to dictate that an investigation of the possible human and environmental risks from those discharges should begin sooner rather than later. The Navy representatives also gave the board updates on two other projects. The first project involves the site of a former galvanizing plant, at Building 184. Various acids had been poured into a galvanizing pit over the years.

This pit was eventually covered over with a concrete floor. Concerns about this site arose because crystalline growths began to appear on the floor, apparently through capillary action from the pit below. The Navy is currently monitoring the perimeter of this site and analyzing test pit results.

The second project involves the site of a former battery acid storage tank, next to Building 238, which is very close to the Piscataqua River. A leak was detected in the tank in 1984, and it was removed two years later. Subsequent tests revealed very high levels of lead pollutants in the locale, especially around the remains of the drain pipe leading into the tank. The Navy has planned an extensive set of test pits to determine the impact of these battery acid leaks into the surrounding subsoil and groundwater. The challenges presented by these various sites are daunting, and planning for their cleanup seems to proceed at a glacial pace at times. However, progress is being made, slowly but surely. The next meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board will be on June 21. The public is always welcome at these meetings. Two memberships on the board are currently open.

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