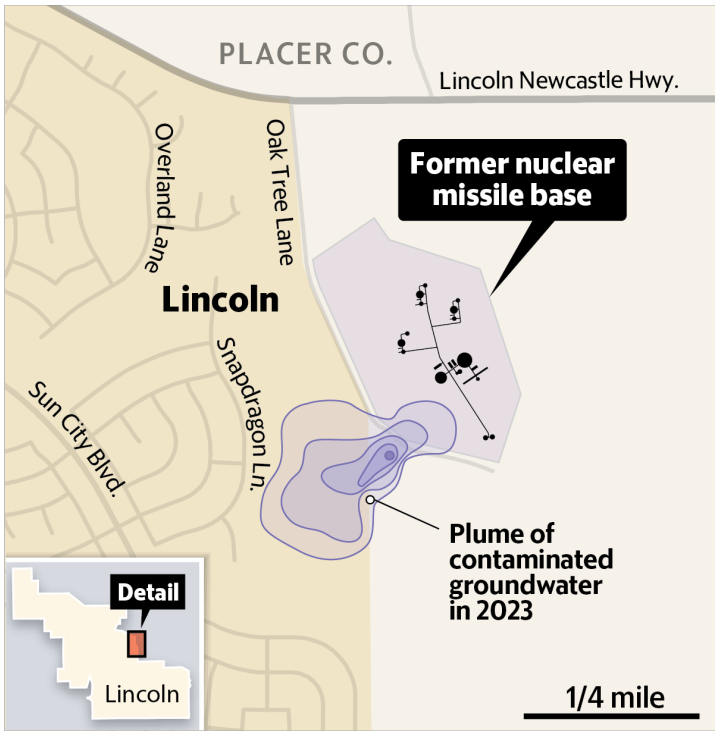
RABNEWSLETTER

Your official community voice for the cleanup of the Titan 1A missile site



Timeline of site's saga

One of the most frequently asked questions the community RAB has received is about the history of Lincoln's former missile base, its contamination and the journey toward restoration. As we enter this new year, here's a look at its past and its anticipated future.

1962-1965: Three Titan 1 nuclear missiles stand ready to be launched from an underground base on 40-plus acres off Highway 193 in what is now eastern Lincoln. The base, part of the Cold War arms race, is

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Analysis

Fate of two testing wells raises questions

"Monitoring wells MW-17 and MW-35 could not be located and were likely covered or destroyed during construction activities; therefore, they were not measured or sampled."

— 2025 First Semi-Annual Sampling of Groundwater and Soil Vapor Monitoring Report, October 2025

By Tom Brutting
Community RAB

Over the past many months, nearly three dozen monitoring wells have carefully traced the TCE plume and given valuable information about any movement and its stability. Those wells have been the key to important updates. In the recent agency reports, we have learned that two of the monitoring wells have been damaged by the construction work underway for the new housing at Village 1 (in this case, the housing development known as Hidden Hills).

This raises some concerns and questions as the issue of damaging the wells was brought up a long time ago. Construction, along with monitoring and testing, along with cleanup, don't seem to meld together well. It seems apparent that

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Timeline: 1962-2027

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decommissioned after three years, when a more-powerful missile is developed**.**

1968: Placer County purchases the property from the federal government.

1991: Trichloroethylene (TCE) is discovered in the groundwater. Once a popular degreaser and cleaner, TCE is now considered a toxic chemical (and later is declared carcinogenic). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) begins a series of tests and remediation studies but the work is paused over wrangling about who is responsible for the TCE getting there.

2018: With the contamination linked to the missile base, the USACE resumes its investigative work. Monitoring wells and soil vapor probes regularly assess contamination levels and collect new data. Their work is guided by a federally mandated process that requires a lengthy step-by-step series of tests and studies toward coming up with a remediation plan.

2024: A Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) is formed, with representatives from the USACE and other agencies, along with community members who are appointed to two-year terms by the USACE. Community RAB's role is to provide input to the USACE as it formulates a clean-up plan and liaise with the public. RAB begins holding quarterly meetings open to the public to share progress reports. Community RAB members speak to groups, produce newsletters and post updates on social media as part of their mission to keep the public informed. Meanwhile, ongoing tests show the underground plumes of contaminated groundwater remain fairly stable.

2025: Contractors test techniques to clean up the TCE. Placer County begins removing lead and other debris from its former shooting ranges on the property; that work is currently paused for rainy season.

2026: Report on clean-up techniques due, followed by USACE coming up with a remediation plan. **Next public meeting: Jan. 22, 5 p.m., at McBean Pavilion, 65 McBean Park Drive. Story on Page 4.**

Meet the new RAB members

Three new volunteers have been added to the community Restoration Advisory Board by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They are:

Patrick Egan

A Lincoln Hills resident, Egan has 20-plus years of experience in unmanned systems applications and global airspace integration. He is interested in working toward a viable and timely solution to remediate the Titan missile site.

John Margowski

Margowski lives in Rocklin, about five miles south of the missile site. He's been the project manager at numerous contaminated sites in California, and wanted to support the community in an area where he has some familiarity. Those contaminated sites and the Titan site, he says, may share common issues.

Jim Messelbeck

Another Lincoln Hills resident, Messelbeck worked in the biopharmaceutical industry for 35 years, directing environmental health and safety responsibilities for multi-national companies. He's managed remediation projects from Barcelona to Springfield, MO., and Pleasanton, CA.

The views in this newsletter are those of the community RAB partners and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Analysis: More follow-up needed

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potential for conflicts and damage is probable.

During a public meeting in the past, the concern of damage to the wells by construction work was mentioned and the developer's response was, "we'll tell the contractor to be careful." That wasn't very reassuring.

Now we learn that two wells, located next to each other beside Oak Tree Lane, have indeed been damaged by the construction, yet the agencies — the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the state Water Board — indicate it won't substantially impact the results. That is concerning. One would question why they were installed in the first place, at taxpayer expense, if indeed they wouldn't be that helpful for the overall information. Some further explanation would be helpful. Perhaps it's because the plume seems stabilized it won't matter if these wells exist or not? That's but a guess. Yet, we know over time the plume has indeed moved and morphed in a variety of ways.

If everyone is so certain that the plume is of no danger to the new housing and residents, why are protective measures, like a vapor barrier, being installed under each house slab?

It seems we shouldn't just discount this damage and move on. Some accountability should be given, as well as a thorough explanation why these wells are no longer relevant.

Undoubtedly this has been a complex operation for everyone but, ultimately, sufficient and adequate testing for appropriate cleanup is the common goal. One must look back and ask why better checks and balances, along with consequences for damage to federal testing mechanisms, weren't put in place. These weren't just random wells. They had a purpose or they wouldn't have been placed where they were installed.

Some further follow-up seems needed.

Map of monitoring wells: MW17 and MW35 (right of Oak Tree Lane at curve) were covered or destroyed and weren't sampled.

Next public meeting: 5 pm Jan. 22 at McBean Pavilion, 65 McBean Park Dr. Story: Page 4. Questions: CommunityRab@Yahoo.com.

Jan 22 meeting: Introducing ‘natural attenuation’

By Sandi Dolbee
Community RAB Co-Chair

On Jan. 22, at the next meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board, the contractor hired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to do the testing of the contamination and possible remediation techniques will give a report on something called Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA).

Workers last summer injected a possible remediation compound into several pockets on the former missile site. (File photo)

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), MNA relies on on various natural processes, which are watched carefully, to help break down the contamination — in the case of the former Lincoln Titan missile site, the toxic chemical trichloroethylene (TCE).

Terrific, I thought when I heard about this. After spending millions and millions of dollars on this project, the USACE might just let nature take its course. I can’t wait to see that headline.

But the research I’ve read on various websites as I prepare for this meeting and weigh in with my advice, is starting to get in the way of my skepticism.

The EPA “does not view MNA to be a ‘no action’ or ‘walk away’ approach,” I read in a 2017 primer on the federal agency’s website, “but rather considers it to be an alternative means of achieving remediation objectives that may be appropriate for specific, well-documented site circumstances where its use meets the applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.”

That report, along with others, said it often is paired with another, more aggressive remediation technique. It went on to warn against using MNA exclusively: Other measures should especially be applied in areas with high concentrations of the contaminant while also using MNA, it said. Interestingly, the contractor also is expected to speak about the preliminary results of using one of these more-aggressive techniques that it tested last year.

According to the USACE, the contractor will discuss the addition of a food source (like vegetable oil), which it said is a component of a different alternative known as Enhanced Anaerobic Bioremediation (EAB). EAB also is being considered.

Am I still a skeptic? I’m looking forward to hearing what the contractor’s expert has to say. before coming to my own conclusion, one way or another.

I hope to see you at the Jan. 22 RAB meeting to hear for yourselves. It begins at 5 p.m. in McBean Pavilion, 65 McBean Park Drive. There will be time for questions and comments from the public at the end of the meeting. Meanwhile, here’s a link to the EPA piece: https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-03/documents/tum_ch9.pdf.