

## Army seeking public input on latest Badger clean up plan

by JOE BLOCK  
Editor

The Army's new plan to clean up the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) is open for review and public comments are welcome. What started in 1980 and seemed settled in 2011 is starting over again as the Army plans to inject vegetable oil into the groundwater in order to eliminate cancer-causing contaminants.

As the Army explains:

"The Former Badger Army Ammunition Plant (BAAP) operated intermittently from 1942 until 1975. The Army no longer owns land at BAAP. Ownership has been transferred to Bluffview Sanitary District, Ho-Chunk Nation, Town of Sumpter, USDA, WDNR, and Wisconsin DOT."

Further:

"Historical releases of production related substances from BAAP to the groundwater occurred through production activities and various waste disposal practices."

The "historical releases of production related substances" manifested themselves in four plumes of polluted groundwater that contain cancer-causing contaminants exceeding standards safe for human consumption. As these plumes stretched downgradient and off the BAAP property they began to impact residential wells along Lake Wisconsin and inland. The past decade or two of BAAP remediation has included a whack-a-mole approach to contaminated residential wells, where bottled water

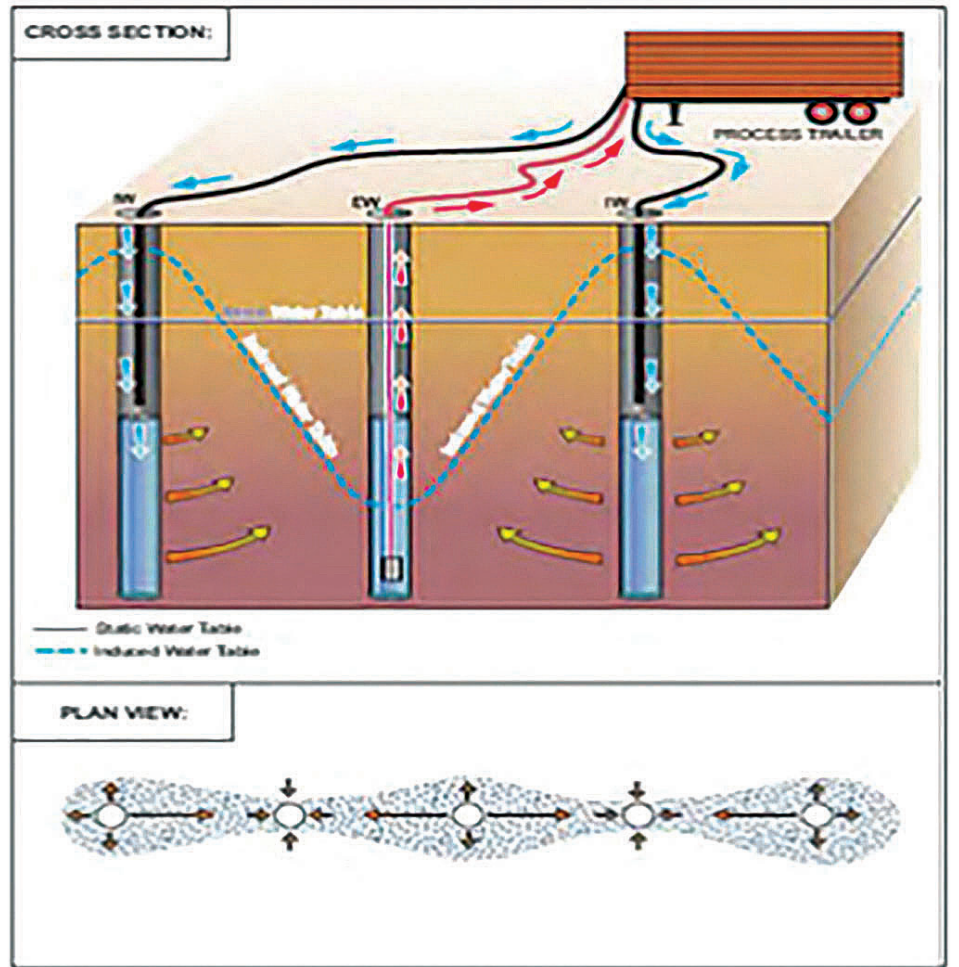
is first supplied and then a deeper well is dug.

In that time there have been smaller on-site remediation projects, as well as the idea for a new municipal water supply for affected regions. The municipal water proposal confusingly never came to fruition and the plumes continue to encroach on off-property residential wells.

The Propellant Burning Ground plume contains the following contaminants in exceedance of WDNR standards: Carbon tetrachloride, Ethyl ether, Total Dinitrotoluene (DNT), 2,4-DNT, 2,6-DNT, and Trichloroethylene (TCE).

The Deterrent Burning Ground plume contains the following contaminants in exceedance of WDNR standards: Total DNT, and Sul-

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Above, the Army will inject nutrient-enriched emulsified vegetable oil "distributed into groundwater using food-grade oil, surfactants and clean water. Surfactants are widely used in the food industry to lower surface tension." Wells would be drilled at spaced intervals throughout each plume. This is considered a green remediation process.

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## Show Choir told by judge Sauk Prairie is "where they grow show choir kids!" Talents shine in competition

The Sauk Prairie High School Show Choirs returned to the stage in La Crosse this past weekend, after a mid-season weekend off. The La Crosse Grand Showcase, hosted at La Crosse Logan High School by the now-combined La Crosse School District Show Choirs, featured 11 choirs from 8 schools competing in Treble/Single Voicing, Prep and Open Classes.

YTBN, Sauk Prairie's treble group, started the day strong with high-energy, precisely-coordinated dance moves and some of their best vocals yet. The costumes remind us of the diverse ways girls in the 1980s strove to find and express themselves, while the lyrics underscore the power of the belief that, "There is nothing we can't do" despite the fact that, "The whole world's out of sync." YTBN placed first-runner-up after Sparta's Rise of Adrenaline's powerful tribute to Rosie the Riveter, recognizing the strength of women even earlier in the last century. Lauren Endres was named the Showstopper for the group for her standout performance. Pictured at top left is Sauk Prairie's Neelah Ganshert.

After a weekend off, Sauk Prairie Middle School show choir, pictured at left, traveled to Fort Atkinson on February 7th. Soaring Sound brought over 70 students to participate in the Fort Showcase. Seven middle schools from Wisconsin and Illinois competed in a stiff competition. Soaring Sound ended the night with a strong 3rd place finish behind Mayville and St. Michael Parish School. After their show as 74 students filed in for critique, a passing judge commented, "Oh my goodness! There're so many of you! What school are you from?" When she heard the students say, "Sauk Prairie!" The judge replied, "Oh! That makes total sense. That's where they grow show choir kids!" Sauk Prairie Show Choirs are thankful for the continued community support, opportunities to perform, and the growth of the program!

For more, see page 2.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED





## PETS OF THE WEEK

This week's SCHS Pets of the Week are Thor and Goose! To make an appointment to meet them, call us at 608-356-2520.

Thor is truly one of a kind. With his big heart and even bigger personality, he's the type of dog who leaves a lasting impression. Sporting a stunning brown and black brindle coat, Thor is a head-turner, but it's his sweet nature that really wins people over. A friendly terrier mix, he was surrendered to the

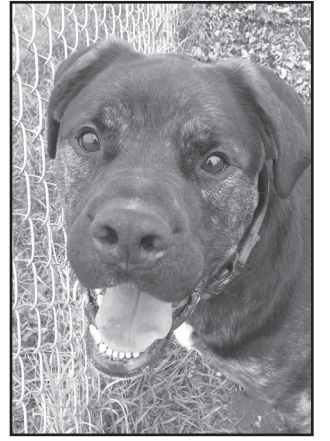
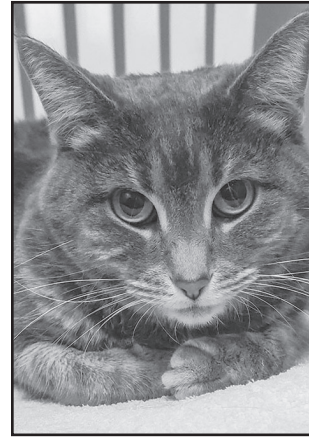
shelter because his previous owner's living situation changed. Despite this, his easy-going attitude and good manners have made adjusting to shelter life a breeze. Thor has moved past his rambunctious puppy days and at nearly two years old, he's all about being a well-behaved companion. He walks nicely on a leash and knows several commands like come, sit, stay, shake, and lie down. Thor enjoys the company of both cats and

dogs and has a special love for playing in the snow. If you're looking for a sociable and loving buddy to join in on your outdoor adventures, Thor is your perfect match. He's always ready to lean in for a cuddle or greet new friends with enthusiasm. He is neutered and up to date on his vaccinations.

Goose, a 6-year-old grey and white tabby with captivating green eyes, urgently needs a home where she can thrive. Having come from a stray background, she finds the shelter environment particularly stressful and hasn't adapted well. Despite these

challenges, Goose is incredibly sweet and affectionate. She comes alive in the comfort of a warm lap, purring contentedly while being petted. Her favorite moments are those spent close to someone who loves her. We are eager to find Goose a calm, loving home where she can relax and be her true, affectionate self away from the stresses of shelter life. Let's come together to give her the peaceful life she deserves. She is ready to go home—she is already spayed and up to date on her vaccinations.

Visit our website [saukhumane.org](http://saukhumane.org)



to view all of our adoptable animals. Cat and dog adoptions include the spay or neuter surgery, a microchip, and current vaccinations.

Not able to adopt? Donations needed: cat litter, dog and cat chow, bleach, and paper towels.

## BADGER

FROM PAGE 1

fate. This plume is affecting the Weigand's Bay area.

The Central plume contains the following contaminants in exceedance of WDNR standards: Total DNT. This plume is affecting Gruber's Grove Bay and The Water Edge subdivision.

The Nitrocellulose Production Area plume contains the following contaminants in exceedance of WDNR standards: Total DNT. This plume is within the boundaries of the former BAAP.

Past Army actions as far as remediation and cleanup have included:

“Soil remedial actions ranged from active treatment (Excavation, Bioremediation, Soil Vapor Extraction) and capping/covering to minimize surface exposure and leaching to groundwater.

Groundwater interim remedial action for the PBG Plume consisted of extraction and treatment to reduce contaminant levels and minimize further off-post transport.

Residential well replacement.

Land Use Controls implemented including site access, excavation and groundwater use restrictions.”

The current BAAP cleanup proposal is in the stage in the Army's bureaucratic process where a proposed plan is put forward, to solicit public comment, and present information to the public. Next steps include

further explanation of the decision made, as well as addressing each public comment made on the proposal.

One may ask why, at this point, the Army is starting the cleanup proposal process over again. Indeed, investigations for remedial action began as far back as 1980. However, in 2011, as they explain:

“The Army submitted a Revised Alternative Feasibility Study, Groundwater Remedial Strategy report to the WDNR; however, no human health risk assessment was conducted. CERCLA process was not followed. The selected groundwater remedy was Monitored Natural Attenuation (MNA) and included the construction and operation of a municipal drinking water system.”

The CERCLA process, according to the EPA, is:

“The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, was enacted by Congress on December 11, 1980. This law created a tax on the chemical and petroleum industries and provided broad Federal authority to respond directly to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment. Over five years, \$1.6 billion was collected and

the tax went to a trust fund for cleaning up abandoned or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.”

That failure to follow CERCLA led to the Army in 2017 informing the public that they would need to reevaluate the groundwater remedy at BAAP “to comply with Army legal policies and funding authorities.”

By 2018 the Human Health Risk Assessment was completed. This step determined “whether groundwater contamination originating from the BAAP posed a current or hypothetical future risk to human health.”

In 2021 the Army completed the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study, and now the proposed plan has been released.

### The Plan

The Army's proposed solution for contaminated groundwater in and around the former BAAP—called Preferred Alternative 4—is in-situ anaerobic bioremediation. That complex-sounding name is actually something very simple: via wells drilled into the groundwater supply, the Army will inject nutrient-enriched emulsified vegetable oil. The enriched vegetable oil will be “distributed into groundwater using food-grade oil, surfactants and clean water. Surfactants are widely used in the food industry to lower surface tension.” Wells

would be drilled at spaced intervals throughout each plume. This is considered a green remediation process.

The Army explains:

“Alternative 4 (In-Situ Anaerobic Bioremediation) would reduce DNT concentrations through in-situ anaerobic biodegradation.

The bioremediation process permanently destroys the groundwater contaminants.

Alternative 4 would be both long-term effective and the most permanent for treatment of DNT contaminated groundwater.”

The Army cleanup of the former BAAP is advised by the Badger Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), a committee composed of citizen-members from the affected communities. This group attends quarterly meetings with the Army about the cleanup process and represent the best interests of landowners and affected residents. Throughout the years RAB members have patiently listened to the Army's plans and missteps. By all objective measures, the Army's cleanup of the former BAAP has not gone well, and the RAB is the community's first line of defense.

Eight RAB members signed a resolution at the last meeting and submitted it to the Army. It concerns a sticky issue at the former BAAP—enforcement stan-

dards. It turns out different agencies—like the WDNR and the State—have different levels at which they consider contaminants to be dangerous to human life. This very real and crucial debate has been ongoing at the last few RAB meetings, where a member repeatedly questioned the Army about the difference in enforcement standards.

The resolution notes that the Army has informed WDNR that it will not comply with the State's groundwater standards for certain cancer-causing contaminants.

It reads in part:

“Whereas, for decades, contamination from the former 7,400-acre Badger Army Ammunition Plant has been moving offsite and now poses a threat to as many as 300 residential drinking water wells in rural Sauk County, and

Whereas, the WDNR has issued at least three formal letters (June 2023, October of 2023 and again

in October 2024) to the U.S. Army calling for compliance with state groundwater standards, and

Whereas, the Army is pursuing a level of cleanup that is 100 times less protective of human health for the Badger lands, and

Whereas, the purpose of the Badger Restoration Advisory Board is to serve as an avenue for communications between the installation,

state and federal officials, and the community about the environmental restoration activities at the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant.”

A Merrimac-based group exists concerning the former BAAP and water issues, Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger (CSWAB). The group has long drawn attention to water issues and in particular issues at the former BAAP.

The Public Comment period for the plan ends on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Comments can be emailed to: [usarmy.jbsa.imcom-aec.mbx.public-mailbox@army.mil](mailto:usarmy.jbsa.imcom-aec.mbx.public-mailbox@army.mil), and mailed to: Mailstop 112, AMIM-AEC-M (Nguyen), U.S. Army Environmental Command, 2455 Reynolds Road, JBSA Fort Sam Houston, TX 78234-7588.

The Proposed Plan is available on the Resources page (<https://aec.army.mil/BAAP/Resources/>) as well as the front page (<https://aec.army.mil/BAAP/>). It is also available in the Sauk City and Prairie du Sac libraries and on the WDNR website at [https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/botw/DownloadBlobFile.do?docSeqNo=305007&docName=20241211\\_99\\_Final\\_PP\\_GW.pdf&docDsn=35660](https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/botw/DownloadBlobFile.do?docSeqNo=305007&docName=20241211_99_Final_PP_GW.pdf&docDsn=35660).

## GARDENER

FROM PAGE 7

sweet peas, snapdragon, and lupine. You can even start some cool-season vegetables this way such as lettuce, bok choy, and plants in the Brassicaceae family like kale, broccoli, or cauliflower. Sage, oregano, and dill are a few herbs that can be started via winter sowing. Here's a general timeframe you can follow for our area: January and February – perennials that need cold stratification, March – hardy annuals and cool-season crops.

Using a clean milk jug or two-liter bottle, measure up from the bottom about 5-6 inches. At that point, cut the container almost in half, leaving the top hinged or attached to the bottom. Make drain holes in the bottom and air and moisture vent holes on the top half of the container lid. Fill the container with around 4 inches of potting soil and then plant your seeds the recommended depth listed on the seed packet. Label the con-

tainer; water gently (unless your soil is already moist) and cover. Tape the lid down with packing or duct tape so it doesn't get accidentally blown or knocked off. Place your containers outside in a sunny location where they are protected from the wind and animals but still exposed to snow and rain. Then let the containers get snowed and rain on until it starts warming up.

As it gets warmer, start checking on your containers

for germination. Once the seedlings start growing, add more holes to provide additional air circulation. They may also need additional water, so they don't dry out. Eventually, you'll open the top completely during the day so your seedlings don't get too warm. Completely remove the lid once the danger of frost is past – mid May. When your plants reach the top of your container and have a good sturdy root system (easy to see if you use

transparent containers), you can divide and transplant them into individual pots or plant directly in the garden.

Try winter sowing this winter to get a head start on your summer garden and a lot of plants for the price of a seed packet. If you need inspiration, check out the seed packets showing up in stores right now. Visit <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/ym105> for a great guide with pictures and step by step instructions.

This week's article is written by Jeannie Manis, a Wisconsin Certified Sauk County Master Gardener Volunteer. If you have any gardening questions, please contact the Extension Sauk County by emailing to [trripp@wisc.edu](mailto:trripp@wisc.edu) or calling the University of Wisconsin Madison Division of Extension Sauk County office at 608-355-3250.