

Globe West Extra

WAYLAND

Extent of contamination unknown

Tests, findings continuing on Raytheon site

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As Raytheon Co. crafts a detailed cleanup plan for the Boston Post Road property it leased for 40 years, the company's engineers are still investigating new evidence of contamination, the extent of which isn't fully known.

The company, which used the site until 1996 for a variety of research and development functions, had, in an original conception of the cleanup, confined its attention to two primary locations: the southern portion of the property and a wetlands area to the west of an existing office park.

But the recent discovery of trichloroethylene, or TCE, on the northern border of the property has prompted a fresh round of testing. Thirty wells are expected to be in place in the next couple of weeks. The new test results — which will start coming in next month — will determine the scope of the new phase of the cleanup.

"We really now have a separate issue there we have to deal with," said John Drobinski, an engineer with Raytheon's consulting firm, ERM. "We're out there drilling like crazy right now. It's a sensitive is-

sue not only to the town, but to Raytheon."

The primary concern, Drobinski said, is whether the TCE plume is headed west, or whether it's headed north toward the Baldwin Pond drinking water wells. One particular spot shows TCE levels many times higher than the safe drinking water standard.

"We have no direct knowledge on how the TCE or PCBs got there," Drobinski said, referring also to the contaminant polychlorinated biphenyl. "We know they're there and we're going to fix them."

Also, in a meeting with the community last week, Drobinski said test results show arsenic and MTBE, a fuel byproduct, buried in other sections of the 83-acre property. Those results warrant further analysis, he said.

Raytheon says it will address whatever threats to human or environmental health that arise at the site, where the company did photographic development, circuit board work, and hydraulic testing, among other activities.

"Raytheon is willing to work with the town to address all their concerns," said company spokeswoman Amy Hosmer.

Andy Irwin, a Wayland conservation commissioner, said the new discoveries, because they followed prodding by Wayland, show the importance of community oversight.

"Raytheon has been very re-

sponsive, but the investigation has found other significant issues, which . . . otherwise might not have been addressed," he said.

The company gave Wayland \$25,000 earlier this year, and has agreed to give the town another \$25,000 so it can continue to have its own site engineer.

Meanwhile, the company's cleanup efforts regarding the original contamination is advancing.

Engineers last month pumped 9,000 gallons of sodium permanganate into one area of the property to combat volatile organic compounds, or VOCs. The permanganate destroys the compounds through oxidation.

Drobinski said the expectation is that the VOCs will be disintegrated by next fall. The cleanup goal, he said, is to bring that part of the site up to drinking-water standards.

Raytheon is also planning to remove and restore a chunk of wetlands on the property, which contaminants have damaged.

Irwin said the key to remediation of the area is to strike the right balance between taking out sufficient contaminated material and overly gutting the wetlands.

Raytheon is proposing to excavate about 1.6 acres of wetlands, but Irwin said the town wants to know for sure whether that's enough. Hauling 1.6 acres out of town will be a massive effort: The company's engineers estimate it would require about 150 trips in a large trailer truck.

The area would then be replanted with native species, with the hope that the wetland would be healthy in two to three years. Drobinski said he hopes to start the work next fall.

One unanswered question for Irwin is the extent of the dioxin contamination in the wetlands. The levels have not been dangerously

high elsewhere, he said, but because dioxins are so toxic, their mere presence is cause for concern.

"We want to understand to what extent it is present," he said.

Drobinski said test results on the dioxins are expected in January, and he assured the town that Raytheon would address any new problems they pose.

'We're out there drilling like crazy right now. It's a sensitive issue . . . to Raytheon.'

JOHN DROBINSKI
Raytheon consultant

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