

APG Commits to Protecting the Bay

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Aberdeen Proving Ground recently reaffirmed its commitment to preserving the Chesapeake Bay by joining nearly 200 other organizations dedicated to significantly reducing in the amount of pollutants released into the watersheds by the year 2000. In December,

Major General Edward L. Andrews, Commander, renewed APG's membership in Businesses for the Bay, a voluntary team of Bay area industries, small businesses, and federal facilities.

Other Maryland federal facility partners include the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and the U.S. Naval Academy.

Businesses for the Bay program goals for the year 2000 include a 65% reduction, from 1988 levels, in the release into the Bay of chemicals tracked under the Toxic Release Inventory and a 75% reduction in the release of those identified as Chesapeake Bay Toxics of Concern, such as cadmium. Cadmium is often used in industry and consumer products for batteries, pigments, metal coatings, and plastics. Long-term exposure to cadmium can cause possible kidney disease and lung damage.

APG also participates in the organization's mentoring program to advise companies or other federal facilities on implementing pollution prevention practices and technologies. "There is a great deal of expertise," said Businesses for the Bay Coordinator Kelly Mecum, "in preventing pollution within the Department of Defense. By sharing this information with the broader community through the mentoring program, federal facilities can multiply the positive impacts they have on the environment."

Pollution prevention is APG's preferred approach to environmental management. In addition to saving money by reducing chemical wastes, pollution prevention efforts ultimately reduce the amount of pollution that ends up in the Bay and its waterways. More than a hundred thousand rivers, streams, and creeks in six states and the District of Columbia discharge into the Chesapeake Bay's 64,000-square-mile drainage basin.

"All employees can prevent pollution in the workplace, whether in an office or a motor pool," said Elizabeth Longenecker, an APG pollution prevention specialist. "As individuals make environmentally responsible choices, we reduce our use of harmful chemicals, conserve natural resources, and often save money. Training workers on how to make these choices is an integral part of APG's pollution prevention program".

The APG Pollution Prevention Office within the Directorate of Safety, Health and Environment provides regularly scheduled training as well as training to meet the special needs of any installation activity or organization. Training topics include basic environmental science (e.g., air and storm water pollution), how to read a material safety data sheet (MSDS), green building, and environmentally preferred products.

Longenecker described a recent APG pollution prevention project that identified environmentally preferred paints—those least harmful to human health and the environment. The standards that were developed require that environmentally preferred paints meet restrictions on volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which contribute to ground-level ozone; and that they contain no specified chemicals or metals considered harmful in any amount.

Robert Solyan, APG Pollution Prevention Program manager said, "Proper management of products such as paints, adhesives, degreasers, and pure chemicals is a key part of APG's pollution prevention efforts. APG tracks its inventory of over 29,000 chemicals and chemical products using an automated system. The data maintained in the system are required for reporting under the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act and serve as the foundation for identifying opportunities to prevent pollution."

To learn more about how you can prevent pollution at APG, for a complete list of training topics, or to schedule training, contact the APG Pollution Prevention Office at (410) 278-7898/4529. For more information on the Businesses for the Bay program, contact Kelly Mecum at (410) 267-5719.

Ms. Jones is an employee of Dynamac Corporation under contract to support the Directorate of Safety, Health and Environment.