

Low-tech solution yields big environmental benefit
by Master Sgt. Christopher Botzum, 111th Attack Wing Public Affairs

HORSHAM AIR GUARD STATION, Pa. -- In the base's ongoing commitment for remediation of contaminants discovered in 2014 on what was once known as the Willow Grove Naval Station, a straight forward solution seems to be working. Scrubbing the ground and storm water runoff from the Horsham Air Guard Station's outflow to tributaries.



Unveiled on Nov. 1, 2017, area water authorities, environmentalists and township leadership met with base personnel here to look over unassuming sand bags, plastic pipes, a water pump and a series of filters purifying this outflow before it touches area streams.

“Nothing high-tech here,” said Lt. Col. Jacqueline Siciliano, 111th Mission Support Group's environmental manager, who had minutes before the meeting received testing results for perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorooctanoic acid at non-detectable levels.

More commonly known as PFOS and PFOA, the compounds are found in a variety of products to include water repellent products, non-stick cookware, firefighting foams and packaged food containers.

“In order to expedite the outflow filter installation and operation, Horsham Air Guard Station joined Warminster Township Water Authority in a cooperative agreement,” Siciliano said. “The cost for the installation and maintenance for one year is approximately \$200,000.”

In operation for three weeks and located at the top of the water retention basin here, it was estimated that the system was capturing and filtering between 90 and 95 percent of the ANG base's ground water runoff.

The filtering unit is a temporary installation to verify feasibility and functionality, said Maj. Lydia Stefanik, base civil engineer with the 111th ATKW. With ongoing testing of water results to confirm its performance, we'll move to the design stage for a permanent solution.