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Navy asks for input on environmental concerns

by JEFF HAYNES
STAFF WRITER

Mayport Naval Station is inviting residents with environmental concerns about the base to attend a Thursday night meeting in Atlantic Beach.

The Restoration Advisory Board, a committee of five citizens, will be meeting to discuss environmental reports from the base and the community relations plan for 1997.

Cheryl Mitchell, spokeswoman for the environmental cleanup program, described the RAB as a "link" between the Navy and the community, with a focus on environmental concerns. The RAB works to keep the public informed of what is happening on the base with regard to these issues, and brings feedback from the public to the Navy, she said.

The community relations plan must be updated on a regular basis,

examining the investigations of the hazardous waste cleanup and spills on the base, said Mitchell. The update for 1997, she said, helps the RAB identify points of contact in the community, and venues for conveying information.

"It's an overall discussion of what we've done to make the community more aware," said Mitchell.

Some of the concerns raised by the community include debris on the beaches, water quality and the method in which ships handle waste, said Mitchell.

"We also take recommendations from the community," said Mitchell. Based on a suggestion from citizens, the Navy is considering targeting meetings for specific audiences, such as an elementary school, she said.

The RAB meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Atlantic Beach City Hall, 800 Seminole Rd.