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YAKIMA TRAINING CENTER PFAS RESPONSE

A quarterly newsletter focused on informing the East Selah, Washington, community on Yakima Training Center's PFAS response

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Group B treatment systems take shape across East Selah



The working POET components found inside a Group B POET system enclosure

The Army and its contractor partner APTIM Federal Services LLC continue to build, commission, and operate point of entry treatment (POET) systems on Group B and shared water systems in East Selah. As of late July, four of the nine planned systems are in operation and providing PFAS-free water; the remaining five are either under construction or scheduled to begin construction this year.

A Group B water system is a small water system that serves two to six homes and is regulated by the Yakima Health District. The Group B POET systems use the same treatment approach as the single-family systems installed throughout East Selah - granular activated carbon (GAC) vessels to remove PFAS, a water softener, pressure tanks, and an ultraviolet light system for disinfection - but are built at a larger scale to meet the combined water demand of several households.

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- USGS Advances Groundwater Science near Yakima Training Center
- Wildfire Season: A few Minutes at your POET Shed goes a Long Way

Bringing a System Online Takes More than Construction

Finishing construction is not the last step. Before a Group B system serves homes, it is disinfected, commissioned, and sampled, then those results are confirmed by an independent laboratory. Once a system is in service, contractors collect samples monthly for the first six months and then quarterly for at least two years.

This step-by-step process is how the Army confirms a system is performing as designed before residents rely on it, and how performance is verified over time.

Bring Your Questions to the Sept. 1 Open House

Representatives from the Army and various contractor partners will be available to answer questions about the Group B systems at the next **Yakima Training Center Open House, Tuesday, Sept. 1, 2026, 2-5 p.m., at the Selah Civic Center, 216 S. 1st Street, Selah.** Army representatives will also be available to answer questions about Right of Entry (ROE) agreements and to finalize ROEs with property owners.

For more info, check out Yakima Training Center PFAS information web page: YTC PFAS Information

Troubleshooting along the Way

Naturally occurring microbes, including iron-reducing bacteria, are detected in groundwater. The groundwater sources in East Selah are no different. When these nuisance organisms are detected during startup of a new POET, contractors clean the carbon and sample the system. Iron-reducing bacteria occur naturally in regional groundwater and are not related to PFAS, but they can reduce how effectively the carbon removes PFAS if left untreated.

Where construction is still under way, the Army continues to provide bottled water to affected residences through alternate systems so that households are not left without water during the construction.

Remote Monitoring is Coming to the Group B Systems

Nine telemetry units have been delivered for the Group B systems, and installation will begin soon. Telemetry allows contractors to monitor system performance remotely. That means fewer visits to private property for routine checks and a faster response when a component operates outside its normal range – the same approach is already occurring in the single-family POET systems in East Selah.

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The USGS advances groundwater science near Yakima Training Center

Over the past year, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has continued its collaboration with the Army to characterize the geology and groundwater flow system beneath Yakima Training Center (YTC) and East Selah.

The Army uses this information to improve its understanding of where PFAS is in the groundwater and how it got there. Below is more information on the status of three USGS efforts.

Mapping the Aquifer

USGS has completed its multi-year study of the groundwater system in the Selah Basin. The study assembles a three-dimensional picture of the rock and sediment layers beneath the area and describes seasonal patterns and trends in groundwater levels.

An approved preliminary version of the report, the supporting data, and an interactive online summary called a geonarrative are expected to be available in the fall of 2026. This preliminary version is the finished science: it has already completed peer review and USGS approval, and its results and conclusions will not change. The formally published report will follow roughly six to eight months later—that step adds USGS editorial polish and final page layout, not new findings. These products complement the groundwater-level web application announced in the last newsletter, which remains available at https://doi.org/10.5066/P13ERWA4.



Measuring how fast PFAS Moves

In summer 2025, USGS placed passive flux meters in monitoring wells at YTC. A passive flux meter is a device lowered into a well and left in place for days to weeks. Instead of capturing a snapshot of PFAS concentration at a single moment in time, it measures the rate at which water and PFAS move past a point in the aquifer, at several depths within the same well. Measuring the rate of movement over time can provide useful information for assessing PFAS risk.

Results from Summer 2025 have been reviewed, approved, and published as a public USGS data release (https://doi.org/10.5066/P13WDKG6). A second round of measurements is planned for Summer 2027. In 2028, a final interpretive report summarizing the data will be published.

Estimating the age of Water in the Deep Aquifer

USGS has also begun a study of the deep Wanapum Basalt, the aquifer that supplies water to parts of YTC. This volcanic rock layer is one of the least-characterized parts of the local groundwater system; only a handful of wells are deep enough to pump water from this source. The USGS study aims to estimate how long ago the water in these wells entered the ground. Groundwater carries a set of natural fingerprints: by measuring trace amounts of substances such as carbon-14 and dissolved gases, scientists can estimate whether water fell as rain or snow decades ago or thousands of years ago, and whether a well produces a blend of both young and old water.

The distinction matters for understanding the deep aquifer. Water that entered the ground recently traveled a relatively fast path from the land surface; water that has been underground for millennia followed a much slower one from perhaps more distant sources. Knowing the timing helps managers judge how quickly the deep aquifer responds to changes at the surface.

USGS field crews & vehicles will be sampling August 31 - September 4, 2026. USGS identified wells earlier this spring to be included in the study. Lab analyses will take several months; results will be published in a future USGS report.



Wildfire Season: A few minutes at your POET shed goes a long way

The Yakima County sits in some of the most fire-prone, shrub-steppe country in Washington, and the Point of Entry Treatment (POET) shed on your property houses the equipment that keeps clean water flowing to your home. A little preparation now protects that equipment…and gives the firefighters a safer place to work if fire ever comes close.

Clear the first FIVE Feet

Army Fire agencies consider the ground immediately around any structure the most vulnerable zone, because wind-driven embers land there and ignite whatever will burn. For outbuildings, the recommended standard is 10 feet of clearance down to bare mineral soil, plus another 10 feet free of flammable vegetation beyond that. Around your POET shed, that means:

- Mow or pull cheatgrass and weeds within 10 feet of the walls and door
- Move woodpiles, scrap lumber, pallets, and burn barrels well away from the shed
- Rake out dry leaves, needles, and tumbleweeds that collect against the foundation and under the eaves
- Keep bark mulch away from the base - it ignites easily and holds embers.

Keep the Inside Clear, Too

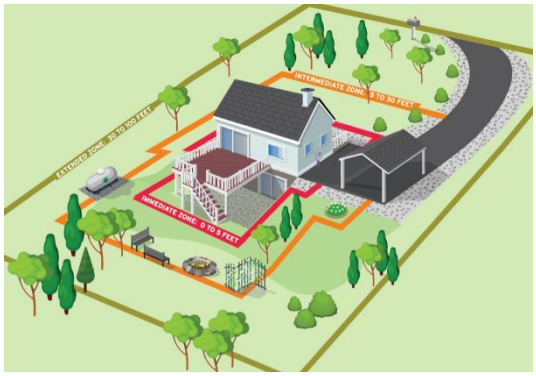
POET sheds are built to house treatment equipment and electrical service, not storage. Gasoline cans, propane cylinders, paint, mowers, and cleaning chemicals stored inside create a fire hazard next to live electrical components and can interfere with contractor access during maintenance and sampling visits.

Protect the Power and the Access Route

Your POET system needs electricity to operate. Trim branches away from overhead service lines running to the shed and keep driveway and approach path clear enough for a service truck – the same clearance helps a fire engine.

If Fire Threatens

Follow evacuation instructions from local authorities first. ***Your safety comes before the equipment.*** Once it is safe to return, report any damage to the shed, the electrical service, or the treatment system to the Army at **usarmy.ytc.id-readiness.mbx.ytc-pfas@army.mil** so contractors can inspect the system before you rely on the water.



Immediate and Intermediate buffer zones surrounding a structure for fire protection.

THE ARMY WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU

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The Army is planning to host our next **Yakima Training Center Open House**

September 1, 2026
2-5 p.m.
The Selah Civic Center - 216 S 1st Street, Selah, WA 98942

Representatives from the Army and contractors will be there to answer your questions and finalize Right of Entry (ROE) agreements. An ROE allows the Army [and its contractors] to install and maintain a treatment system on private property that may be affected by PFAS from past operations at Yakima Training Center.

For more info check out Yakima Training Center PFAS information web page:
YTC PFAS Information