



Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control

*The Mission of the  
Department of  
Toxic Substances  
Control is to  
provide the highest  
level of safety, and  
to protect public  
health and the  
environment from  
toxic harm.*



State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, January 2009

## **DTSC investigates solvents in Visalia groundwater; plans further study**

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has sent you this fact sheet to provide you with information about the DTSC investigation of soil and groundwater throughout the city of Visalia. This investigation began after DTSC identified 25 public drinking water supply wells with the cleaning solvent, Perchloroethylene or PCE in their water. The impact on four water supply wells required wellhead treatment to remove the PCE. These PCE impacts are thought to be related to solvent releases from dry cleaning operations in Visalia.

In 2007 and first half of 2008, DTSC sampled the soil and shallow groundwater, analyzed the results and included them in the "Phase 1 Remedial Investigation Report Visalia Dry Cleaner Investigation, Visalia, California" You can review it on our web site. DTSC plans further environmental sampling in 2009.

Users of the public water supply are not exposed to contaminated drinking water because the impacted wells are controlled and monitored by the California Department of Public Health and public water providers who have made sure that drinking water meets state drinking water standards.

### **City Wide Investigation**

During 2007, in response to finding the PCE in water supply wells, DTSC started an investigation that included environmental sampling. The primary objective was to identify potential source areas for the PCE detected in public water supply wells. The investigation included:

- Reviewing files and databases related to groundwater use, water quality and dry cleaning operations;
- Sampling soil gas and groundwater in roadways near 35 suspected source areas (dry cleaners);
- Sampling groundwater from several private wells in Visalia;
- Performing a Preliminary Assessment in 2008 (done by U.S. EPA) at five dry cleaner sites in Visalia and;
- Conducting modeling of potential human health risk from vapor intrusion to people from PCE detected in soil gas samples.



## Findings

The sampling results showed PCE contamination in soil and shallow groundwater in several areas of the city. In March, 2008, DTSC shallow groundwater sampling showed PCE contamination in Visalia's groundwater at 80 to 90 feet below ground surface.

DTSC also found PCE in a number of private water wells. DTSC collected shallow soil gas samples in the vicinity of past and present dry cleaning operations. The data also shows PCE detections in shallow soil gas in several areas of the city. When vapors of cleaning solvents such as PCE are present in the soil, the vapors can move into buildings nearby where they could pose health risks to the building occupants. DTSC determined that some areas of the city need more study to evaluate that possibility.

In general, what DTSC has found in Visalia soil gas samples would not present a short term risk of health effects. However, DTSC needs to do further evaluation of the potential for vapors to move into buildings and any associated potential long term health effects. The soil gas samples showing PCE detections were taken in open areas of public right of way, and not under or near buildings.

DTSC plans to conduct additional sampling in seven areas covering 18 locations where elevated concentrations of PCE were found. The areas for further study are located on the map on page three of this fact sheet.

## DTSC's future work

In 2009, DTSC will start a second phase of investigation. The work will include:

- Site inspections and information surveys at 18 suspected source locations (dry cleaners);
- Active soil gas sampling at the 18 suspected source locations;
- Sewer surveys beneath the 18 suspected source locations;
- Additional evaluation and modeling of potential health risks from vapor intrusion;

- Installation of shallow monitoring wells in cooperation with site inspections to be conducted by US EPA at four dry cleaners already assessed;
- Additional sampling of several private wells in the vicinity of the 18 suspected source locations.

## Contacts for Additional Information

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### Project Manager

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### Public Participation Specialist

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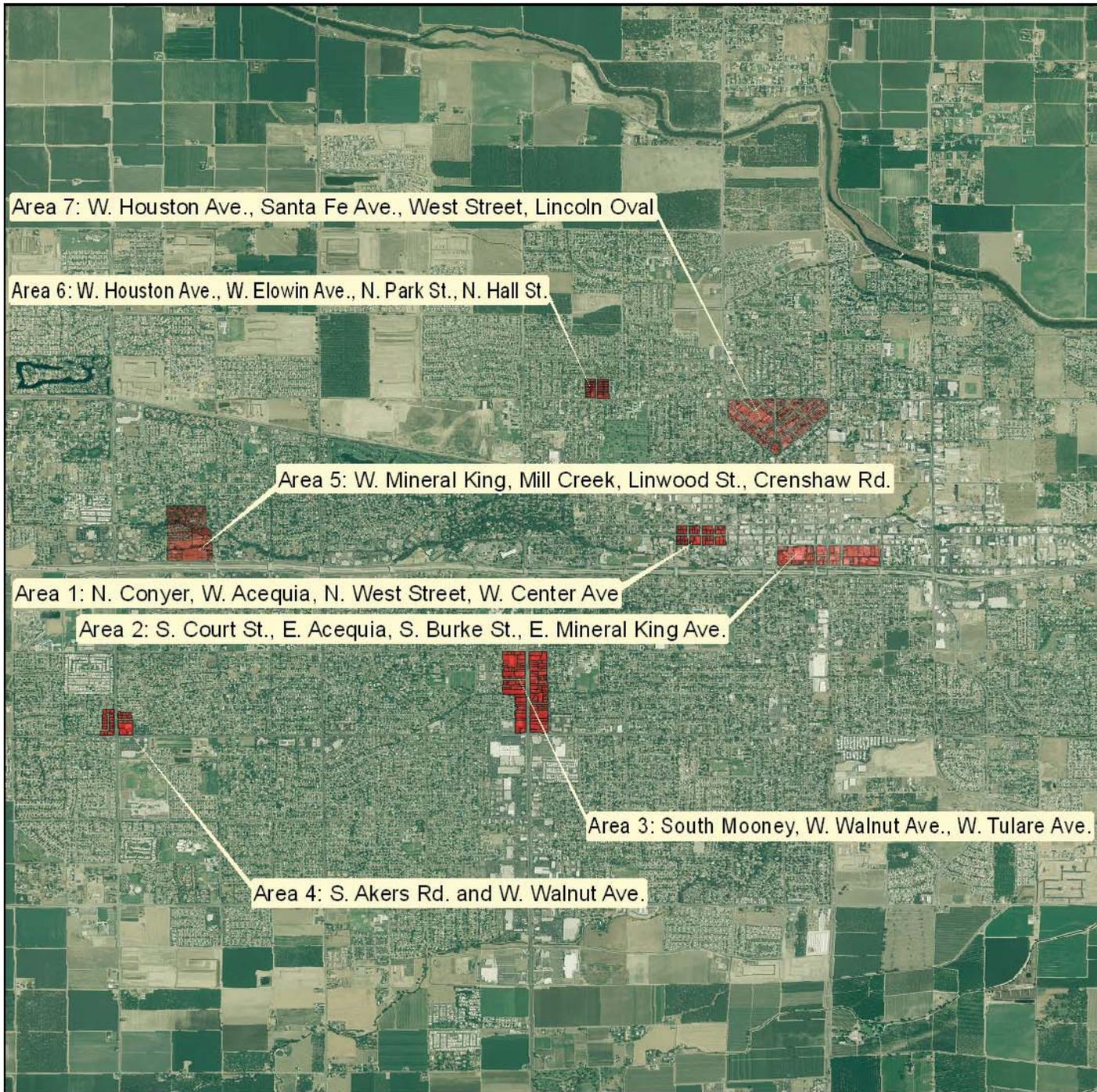
**If you are a member of the media, please contact Claudia Loomis, Public Information Officer, (916) 255-6578 or [CLoomis@dtsc.ca.gov](mailto:CLoomis@dtsc.ca.gov).**

You may review the DTSC report on soil and groundwater sampling entitled "Phase I Remedial Investigation Report Visalia Dry Cleaner Investigation, Visalia, California" at the Tulare County Public Library. The library is located at 200 West Oak Avenue in Visalia. You can also review the report at DTSC's web site, [http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile\\_report.asp?global\\_id=60000403](http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=60000403). Please scroll down the page, find the report and click on "view docs" to look at or print the report files.

## NOTICE TO THE HEARING IMPAIRED

**You may obtain additional information by using the California State Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 (TDD). Please ask them to contact Mr. Nathan Schumacher at (916) 255-3650 regarding the Visalia groundwater investigation.**

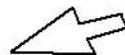
# FIGURE 1 VISALIA DRY CLEANER INVESTIGATION AREAS



Air Photo Source:  
California Department of Agriculture 2005



December 2008



Approximate Ground Water Flow Direction

## Mailing List Coupon

If your address is on the envelope, then you are on the mailing list for the Visalia groundwater investigation. If not, you can be added to the mailing list. Please fill out this coupon and send it to Nathan Schumacher, DTSC, 8800 Cal Center Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

DTSC mailing lists are solely for the purpose of keeping persons informed of DTSC activities. Mailing lists are not routinely released to outside parties. However, they are considered public records and, if requested, may be subject to release.