



DTSC helps turn former landfill sites into a center of learning

Three former garbage burn sites near Grass Valley – contaminated and unused since the 1940s – are being made safe to become part of Yuba River Charter School’s new campus, thanks in part to the efforts of the [California Department of Toxic Substances Control](#) (DTSC).

Representatives of the [charter school](#), with the help of DTSC staff applied for and received a [\\$600,000 grant](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to pay for cleaning up the former municipal garbage properties under the supervision of DTSC. It was the largest federal EPA brownfields grant in California this year.

DTSC’s School Property Evaluation and Cleanup Program assesses and remediates proposed campus sites. Program staff ensures sites are free of contamination or, if they were previously contaminated, are cleaned to a level that protects students and staff.

The program staff worked with Yuba River Charter School for two years to develop the grant application.

The kindergarten-through-eighth-grade school currently meets in downtown Nevada City. Administrators propose excavating and removing about 300 cubic yards (the equivalent of 30 dump trucks) of the most contaminated soil, while consolidating about 5,100 cubic yards of the remaining lesser-contaminated soil under what will become a parking lot and entry way of the new campus. Capping the site like that offers more protection, said Mellan P. Songco, project manager.

DTSC is waiting for approval of the new campus’ required CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) document before going forward with the cleanup plan’s public comment period, Songco said.

The three-acre former dump site is adjacent to 13 acres that contained remnants of an old barn and house, and will house the main part of the campus. DTSC approved that site in 2010. Campus officials hope to open the new school in 2015.

The Sacramento Bee [has more](#).