COMMUNITY Notice

The mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances through the restoration of contaminated resources, enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.

Whittaker-Bermite Facility
21116 West Soledad Canyon Road, Santa Clarita CA

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) invites you to review and comment on a plan to cleanup the groundwater at the Whittaker-Bermite Facility (Site). This Community Notice will inform you about the history of the Site, ongoing cleanup of the soil, and the proposed plans to clean the groundwater:

SITE LOCATION AND HISTORY

The Site is a 996-acre property located at 22116 West Soledad Canyon Road in Santa Clarita. Since 1934, different companies made and tested fireworks, weapons and explosives. These activities left behind contaminants in the soil and groundwater and some unexploded ordnances (UXO). There has been broad testing of soil, soil gas, and groundwater to determine the level of contamination. This summary will explain the plan to clean up the groundwater.

WHY IS CLEANUP NECESSARY?

Removal of the chemicals in the soil and groundwater will prevent the potential for exposure in the future. Cleanup of the groundwater is important because of contaminants like perchlorate. Perchlorate is a compound of powder found in fireworks, weapons and rocket fuel. Like all drinking water, Santa Clarita Valley's water is tested throughout the year to ensure safe drinking water. For more information about your drinking water quality, call your water company or go to the Castaic Lake Water Agency at www.clwa.org.

WHAT IS A REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN?

A draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP) describes where the contamination is located and various methods to clean it up. The draft RAP includes the best state-of-the-art cleanup methods based on testing and scientific facts. The draft RAP will be finalized after the DTSC considers all public comments.

Public Comment Period

April 28 – May 28, 2014

Please attend a public meeting to learn more:

Thursday, May 15, 2014
Santa Clarita City Hall
23920 Valencia Blvd., 91355
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

DTSC will consider all public comments before a decision is made. Public comments must be postmarked, faxed or emailed by May 28, 2014 and sent to:

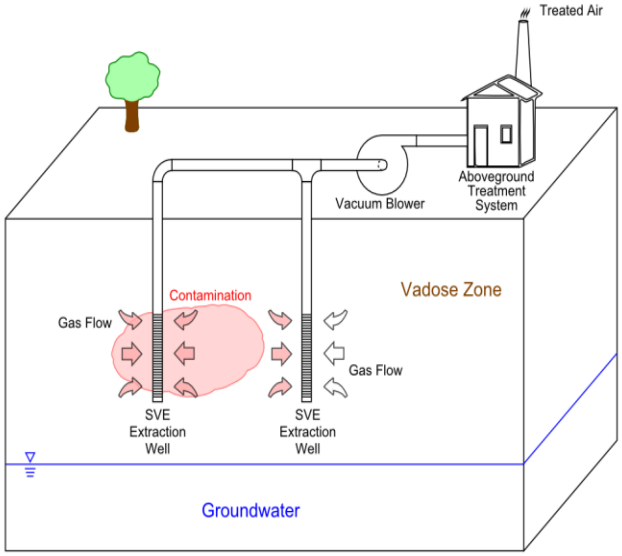
Jose Diaz, Sr. Project Manager
9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Office: (818) 717-6614
Fax: (818)717-6527
jose.diaz@dtsc.ca.gov

The complete draft RAP is available for review at the Information Repositories listed on the back page or at the website: http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=19281087

SITE INVESTIGATION AND CLEANUP ACTIVITIES

Since 1995, DTSC has overseen testing of the soil and groundwater. The property is divided into six **soil** cleanup areas based on geography called Operable Units 1 through 6 or OU1 to OU6. The groundwater under the Site is an area known as Operable Unit 7 (OU7). There have been a number of accomplishments to date, including:

- A RAP for OU1 soil cleanup was completed in 2004. A soil vapor extraction (SVE) system was used to clean the Volatile Organic Compounds VOCs in the soil. VOCs are chemical gases left over from products produced during the Site's active manufacturing period. The SVE works by creating a vacuum underground. It pulls chemicals into the above ground system where they are treated. The cleanup was finished in 2009 and this SVE system has been removed. After completion of SVE, soils contaminated with perchlorate were removed and treated by using harmless bacteria that feed on perchlorate in the soil. The cleaned soil was returned and used to backfill the holes.



A soil vapor extraction system (SVE) pulls chemicals into the above ground system where they are treated.

- A RAP for OU2 through OU6 soil cleanup was completed in 2010. The methods now underway also include SVE systems. Soil that is too contaminated to treat will be removed. The cleanup of OU2 through OU6 is expected to be finished in mid-2017.
- UXOs were identified and cleared by experts. These experts will also remain on call throughout the cleanup process.

OU7 RECOMMENDED CLEANUP METHODS

The goals of the RAP for OU7 are to clean the **groundwater** on-site and protect off-site water supplies. The RAP for OU7 identifies three separate groundwater areas. They are the Northern Alluvium Area, the Saugus Aquifer, and the Perched Groundwater.

The RAP for OU7 recommends cleanup options for each area. These cleanup options are called Remedial Actions (RA). Below is a summary of the recommended alternative cleanup options. The bolded options are recommended in the draft RAP for OU7.

RA Options For OU7 Groundwater

Area 1. Northern Alluvium Area

RA-1 — Limited Action*
RA-2 — Groundwater Extraction and Treatment
RA-3A and RA-3B — Groundwater Extraction and Groundwater "Hot-Spot" Treatment Actions
RA-4A and RA-4B — Groundwater Extraction and In Situ Reactive Zone at the Downgradient Property Boundary
RA-5- Groundwater Extraction, In Situ Permeable Reactive Zone at the Downgradient Property Boundary, and groundwater "Hot Spot" Treatment Actions

Area 2. Saugus Aquifer

RA-1 — Limited Action*
RA-2A — Groundwater Extraction (No Treated Water Reinjection)
RA-2B — Groundwater Extraction (With Treated Water Reinjection)
RA-3 — Groundwater Extraction and Surface Water Recharge Control
RA-4A and RA-4B — On-site Groundwater Extraction; On-site Groundwater Extraction at Downgradient Property Boundary; and On-site Injection of Treated Groundwater

Area 3. Perched Groundwater

RA-1 — Limited Action*
RA-2 — Surface Water Recharge Control
RA-3 — Surface Water Recharge Control and Dewatering
RA-4 — Surface Water Recharge Control and In Situ Treatment

**Limited Action is a baseline for comparison with other RAs. Limited action involves cleanup actions already implemented. These existing actions are elements of all the RAs.*

Area 1. Northern Alluvium Area

One section of OU7 is the Northern Alluvium Area. It has shallow groundwater and runs along the northern boundary of the Site and under the Santa Clara River. The contaminants in this area include perchlorate and VOCs, such as trichloroethene (TCE), tetrachloroethene (PCE), and dichloroethene (DCE). RA-5 is the preferred option for the Northern Alluvium Area. Cleanup option RA-5 recommends several methods for treating the North Alluvium Area groundwater:

- One remedy would remove the on-site groundwater and clean it in a treatment plant. It would remove perchlorate and VOCs. Then, the cleaned water would be released into the Santa Clara River.
- Another method would remove perchlorate and VOCs in an underground zone. This zone beside the border would zig-zag along the flowing groundwater. Water would pass through and natural microorganisms would use the perchlorate and VOCs as a food and energy source. This method is known as in-situ bioremediation.
- One more treatment would place asphalt covers over "hot spots." These shields would prevent rainwater and contaminants from soaking through the soil into the Northern Alluvial Aquifer north of the San Gabriel Fault. An aquifer is a huge collection of water underground.
- The groundwater would be regularly checked to make sure these treatments are working.

The 996-acre Whittaker-Bermite Facility Site comprises steep hillsides vegetated with brush and chaparral foliage. The Site is bound by Bouquet Canyon Road/Railroad Avenue to the east, West Soledad Canyon Road to the north, and Golden Valley Road to the west.

Image Source: Google Earth 2014

Area 2. Saugus Aquifer (South of the San Gabriel Fault)

The second groundwater area is the Saugus Aquifer. The Saugus Aquifer is polluted with perchlorate and TCE. This polluted groundwater is blocked from moving north off-site by the San Gabriel Fault. RA-2A is the preferred option for the Saugus Aquifer. It includes several methods for cleaning the groundwater in the Saugus Aquifer:

- 14 groundwater wells would pump up polluted groundwater to the treatment system. These wells would be for cleanup only. They would not be used for drinking water.
- Treatment options include two granular activated carbon (GAC) vessels at the treatment plant. GAC is made from raw organic materials, like coconut shells or coal. Chemicals get trapped in the GAC. Perchlorates would be removed from the water by a biological treatment called a fluidized bed reactor (FBR). In the FBR, the polluted water passes through a grainy material. Also, nutrients are added to help the growth of bacteria that remove chemicals.
- Treated water would flow to the Santa Clara River. In the future, this water could be reclaimed for such uses as landscaping. For example, public parks and road medians could use this water supply.

Area 3. Perched Groundwater

The third groundwater area is known as the Perched Groundwater area. Perched groundwater is a small basin that traps underground water above a big aquifer. This happens when a layer of rock blocks water from reaching the big aquifer. The perched groundwater is polluted with perchlorate. There are five areas of perched groundwater. RA-4 is the preferred option for perched groundwater. It recommends several methods for cleaning the perched groundwater:

- Shielding, covers, and channels on the surface would prevent rain from going into the perched groundwater.
- Perched groundwater would be cleaned up underground. Nutrients would be added to help the growth of bacteria that remove chemicals.
- Perched groundwater would be tested to make sure it is cleaned up.

The clean perched groundwater would stay underground. It will not be used for drinking water or any other purpose.

This is a rendering of what the water treatment plant would look like. It would treat all groundwater from the entire Site.

CALIFORNIA ENVIROMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

CEQA is a state law. It requires state and local agencies to identify the environmental impacts of their actions. It also makes the agencies try to avoid or lessen the impacts. An Initial Study (IS) is an early report. The IS explains if a planned project will have an impact on the environment. An IS also explains whether the impacts can be lessened to a "Less Than Significant" or "No Impact" level. Other CEQA reports are prepared after an IS. A Negative Declaration (ND) is typically prepared for a project that will not have an effect on the environment. A Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is usually prepared for a project that may have major effects that could be lessened with changes to the project. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is for a project that would have a major effect on the environment. DTSC prepared an IS for the cleanup of OU7. This IS explains any environmental impacts that may happen from cleanup activities. The report determined that cleanup would not have major environmental impacts if some changes are made to the project. As such, a MND has been prepared.

NEXT STEPS

After the 30-day comment period (April 28--May 28, 2014) on the OU7 draft RAP, the IS/MND, comments will be evaluated and incorporated into the planned cleanup, as feasible. Both the RAP and IS/MND will need to be approved by the DTSC. Following approval, the cleanup of OU7 is expected to commence in late 2014 and be completed by 2021

WHERE TO FIND PROJECT DOCUMENTS

You can find the draft RAP, the IS or the MND online or at the following repositories:

Department of Toxic Substances Control
9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Phone: (818) 717-6500
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Santa Clarita Public Library – Valencia Branch
23743 W. Magic Mountain Parkway, Santa Clarita
Phone: (661) 259-8942
Monday – Thursday: 10:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Friday: 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Saturday: 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday: 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Online Envirostor:
http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/profile_report.asp?global_id=19281087

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

Whittaker-Bermite Facility Draft Remediation Action Plan (RAP) and Environmental Documents

Comment Period – April 28, through May 28, 2014

You can use this form to send your written comments on the draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP), the IS or the MND. Please include your name and address on the form with your comments. **All written comments must be postmarked, faxed or e-mailed no later than May 28, 2014 to:**

Jose Diaz, DTSC Sr. Project Manager
9211 Oakdale Avenue
Chatsworth, CA 91311
Office: (818) 717-6614 Fax: (818) 717-6527
JDiaz@dtsc.ca.gov.

Name: _____

Organization (if applicable):_____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

E-mail Address: _____

___ Please add me to the Whittaker Bermite e-mail list

Comments:

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DTSC mailings are solely for the purpose of keeping people 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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WHITTAKER-BERMITE SITE CLEANUP

What are the health risks?

There are no current health risks for people living, working or going to school near the Site. Cleanup of the contaminants will prevent the potential for exposure in the future.

Is my water safe to drink?

Yes. Environmental and public health agencies have water quality standards in order to protect consumers and ensure public health and safety. All drinking water must be of a quality that meets these high standards. Santa Clarita Valley drinking water is tested throughout the year and is safe to drink. For more information about your drinking water quality call your water company or go to the Castaic Lake Water Agency at www.clwa.org.

Can winds blow contaminants into my neighborhood?

Cleanup of the soils is currently underway and is carefully monitored to ensure public safety. If conditions become windy, the cleanup operation is stopped. If you have any concerns during high winds, call the City of Santa Clarita at 661-259-CITY (2489).

Is storm water coming from the Site contaminated?

Storm water and soil erosion are captured on-site. The water is pumped to a treatment system and contaminants are removed. The cleaned water is released into the Santa Clara River under a permit with the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Who is paying for the cleanup?

Whittaker Corporation is paying for the cleanup.

What will happen to the property after it is cleaned up?

DTSC is only responsible for the cleanup of the Site. Our goal is to protect public health and environmental resources. We do not decide what happens to the property after cleanup is completed. The City of Santa Clarita is the public agency that has jurisdiction over future land uses of the Site. For questions or comments about the future use of the cleaned property contact the City of Santa Clarita Planning Department at 661-259-CITY (2489).

Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any questions about the Site, IS, MND or the draft RAP, contact Sr. Project Manager Jose Diaz at (818) 717-6614 or jose.diaz@dtsc.ca.gov or Public Participation Specialist Mary Sue Maurer at (818) 717-6566 or mary.maurer@dtsc.ca.gov.