



California Regional Water Quality Control Board

Central Coast Region



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Public Notice of Remedial Design/Remedial Action Work Plan

Former Whittaker Ordnance Facility
2751 San Juan Road
Hollister, CA

February 16, 2006

This notification is being provided to nearby landowners and residents/occupants as well as other interested persons. It describes site background, the proposed cleanup strategy, previous cleanup activities, next steps, and how you can obtain more information.

Introduction

The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region (Water Board) is the regulatory agency responsible for overseeing the investigation and cleanup of the Former Whittaker Ordnance Facility (Site) located in Hollister, California. Whittaker Corporation (Whittaker) recently submitted a Remedial Design/Remedial Action Work Plan¹ (Action Plan) for Water Board review that summarizes Whittaker's proposed cleanup approach for the Site. The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide the public with a summary of the information presented in the Action Plan.

Site Background

The Site occupies approximately 94 acres of land south of Highway 156 at 2751 San Juan Road in Hollister, San Benito County, CA. The San Benito River is located approximately 2,000 feet north of the property. Land to the immediate west and south is currently farmed or grazed. There are several residences in the vicinity of the Site.

From 1957 to the present, the Site was used as an ordnance manufacturing facility. Historically, during manufacture of small explosive devices, chemicals were spilled or disposed of at the Site. Chemicals in soil

percolated to groundwater during the rainy season.

Chemicals Found at the Site

Chemical impacts to both soil and groundwater have been identified at the Site. The most prevalent pollutant at the Site is perchlorate, a highly soluble salt used in the manufacture of explosives. The other major pollutant is trichloroethene (TCE), a common solvent used in many industrial processes. Less prevalent pollutants include hexavalent chromium and some of the breakdown products of TCE.

Site Risks and Cleanup Goals

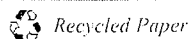
A baseline risk assessment has been completed for the Site². The assessment concluded that perchlorate in near-surface soils does not present an unacceptable potential risk to either Site workers or potential future residents of the property except in one area of the Site, the Building 22A area³. Perchlorate cleanup goals for soil were therefore based on the protection of groundwater. These numerical values are included in the Action Plan. Soil cleanup goals for TCE are currently being developed.

¹ Remedial Design/Remedial Action Work Plan, ARCADIS, May 27, 2005.

² Baseline Risk Assessment and Risk-Based Cleanup Level Development Report, Montgomery Watson Harza, March 19, 2002.

³ The Building 22A area will be addressed during Site cleanup.

California Environmental Protection Agency



Item No. 11 Attachment No. 2
March 24, 2006 Meeting
Perchlorate Cases

Proposed Cleanup Approach

To control the off-site migration of chemically impacted groundwater, Whittaker proposes a groundwater extraction and treatment system. The groundwater treatment system will have the dual function of treating and containing contaminated groundwater. In general, groundwater underlying the Site flows northwest. A series of shallow and deep wells will be installed along the northwestern Site property boundary to extract groundwater. Extracted water will be pumped to an on-site treatment system where VOCs will be removed by granular activated carbon. Perchlorate and hexavalent chromium will be treated in a bioreactor (see Figure 1). Treated water will be discharged to the San Benito River in conformance with a Water Board discharge permit. The discharge permit will establish effluent limits. Whittaker will monitor the discharged water weekly during the groundwater treatment system startup period, and monthly thereafter.

The groundwater treatment system will remove pollutants from groundwater before they can flow from the Site. Groundwater modeling indicates that the off-site plume will naturally attenuate over time. Whittaker will closely monitor the behavior of the off-site plume. If monitoring data indicate that the off-site plume is not naturally attenuating over time, then Whittaker will consider alternative cleanup strategies for the off-site plume.

At least two off-site domestic/agricultural wells are impacted by pollutants from the Whittaker Site. Down-hole video surveys indicate that two wells are likely damaged, providing a potential pathway for downward movement of chemicals. It is likely that the two wells will be destroyed. Whittaker will provide alternative water supplies to users of the two wells.

Whittaker plans to conduct additional soil investigations in 2006 that will better define the extent of soil affected with TCE. Pollutants in soil can percolate with rainwater into groundwater. The final proposed soil cleanup strategy will depend, in part, on the results of these additional investigations. It is likely that

the soil cleanup strategy will consist of some combination of soil excavation and soil capping to control the infiltration of rainwater to the subsurface.

Previous Cleanup Activities

A small groundwater extraction and treatment system is currently operational to address volatile organic compound (VOC) impacts to groundwater in a small area of the Site. Once the new groundwater treatment system is operational, the existing treatment system will be decommissioned. Well-head treatment systems are currently operational on various domestic and irrigation wells. Depending on which of the off-site wells are decommissioned, these treatment systems will also be decommissioned.

A third well (the Terra Linda Well) is also affected with pollutants, but data indicate that the pollutants did not come from the Whittaker Site. Whittaker will attempt to determine the source of the contamination through further investigation.

A soil vapor extraction system is currently operational to address VOC-impacted soils in a small area of the Site. Whittaker intends that this system will remain operational at least until the soil cleanup is finalized. Additionally, Whittaker has completed pilot tests to determine the efficacy of various soil and groundwater cleanup technologies. Currently, there are no plans to carry out any additional pilot tests.

Next Steps in Cleanup

Construction of the groundwater extraction and treatment system is targeted for the first half of 2006. The groundwater treatment system is anticipated to be operational by the end of 2006. Also in the second half of 2006, Whittaker will submit a detailed groundwater-monitoring program for Water Board review. This plan will provide specifics on how the performance of the groundwater treatment system will be evaluated and what groundwater monitoring will be implemented to track the behavior of the off-site plume.

Eighteen months from startup of the groundwater treatment system, Whittaker will provide a Remedial Design/Remedial Action Report that evaluates the groundwater treatment system performance. Using this report, Water Board will determine whether the groundwater treatment system will be considered as the final groundwater cleanup strategy for the Site.

Public Comment Period

The public has 30 days to comment on the proposed cleanup plan for the Site as

summarized in this fact sheet. All comments should be submitted to the Water Board in writing on or before March 24, 2006, for Water Board consideration. Comments should be addressed to:

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Figure 1: Preliminary Groundwater Extraction and Treatment System

