

Environmental Action

UPDATE

A Quarterly Newsletter About McClellan AFB Environmental Activities - California

October 2000

Community Open Houses Held Around McClellan

Over the summer McClellan Air Force Base held a series of public community outreach meetings. Community members visited poster board stations detailing cleanup actions, talked with the cleanup program managers and saw demonstrations of the various aspects of the McClellan environmental cleanup program. Representatives from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California State Department of Toxic Substances Control, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Sacramento County Local Redevelopment Authority, McClellan Business Park, Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Authority, as well as staff from local congressional and local elected representatives attended the meetings and were available to answer questions. Meetings were held at the Fred C. Joyce School in North Highlands, Vineland School in Rio Linda, Grant East School in Del Paso Heights and McClellan High School in Antelope. ■

Work at Site CS-10 Halted

Shown in the foreground is CS-10 surrounded by fencing.



While conducting a removal action at a known radiological site, work was halted as a safety precaution after several small jars and vials potentially containing Plutonium were uncovered. A sample of the liquid was sent to a laboratory and the results confirmed that the estimated total quantity of plutonium in the jars and vials was 160 milligrams (one gram is equivalent to 1,000 milligrams).

Air force officials arranged with a licensed contractor and shipped the

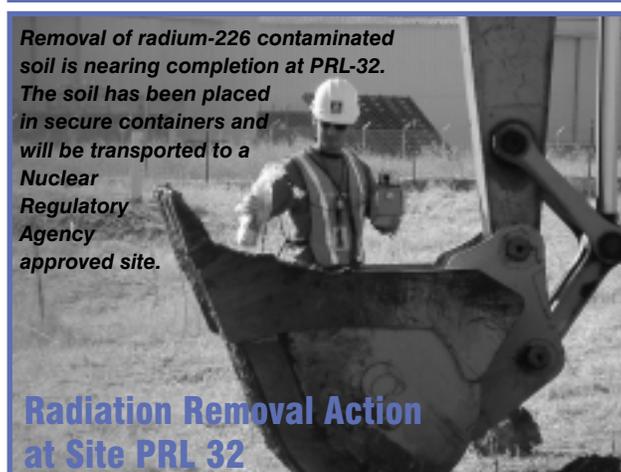
radioactive material to a licensed research facility at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The material will be used for academic research.

The Confirmed Site 10 (CS-10) project is part of the Air Force's

environmental restoration effort at McClellan. Base officials expected to uncover sources of radiation, primarily Radium 226, which was commonly added to paint and used on aircraft gauges for night-time illumination. Work began August 15 to remove buried drums and surface soil in order to reduce the potential exposure to Radium 226 and allow for more extensive study of the site. Because of the initial radiation detected, site workers had already established protocols to safely explore for potential radioactive material.

Removal of radium-226 contaminated soil is nearing completion at PRL-32.

The soil has been placed in secure containers and will be transported to a Nuclear Regulatory Agency approved site.



Radiation Removal Action at Site PRL 32

The site is a two-acre, 30-foot deep landfill on the undeveloped central western side of the base. CS-10 has not been used as a base landfill since the mid-1960s. The site has been fenced off since the mid-1990s. It is secured and there is no risk of public exposure to any contaminants.

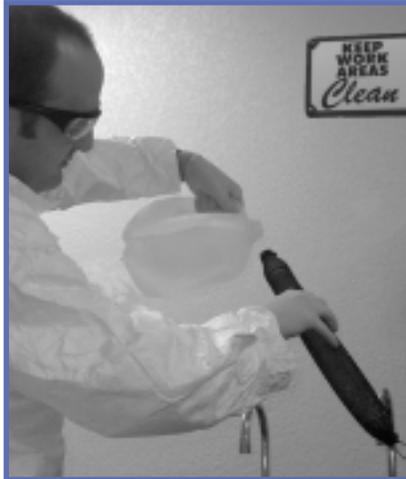
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Passive Diffusion Membrane Sampler Will Save Time and Money

The McClellan National Environmental Technology Test Site (NETTS) recently completed a full-scale demonstration of an innovative approach for collecting groundwater samples using passive diffusion membrane samplers developed by the United States Geological Survey. The technology uses a low-density, water-filled polyethylene diffusion membrane to collect groundwater samples for volatile organic compound analysis. The membrane allows volatile organic compounds in contaminated groundwater to diffuse into the initially uncontaminated deionized water sealed within the membrane. The one and a half-foot long samplers are attached to a weighted rope and lowered into a groundwater monitoring well. The samplers are left in place for a minimum of 14 days to attain volatile organic compound equilibrium between the well water and the deionized water within the samplers. The diffusion samplers are brought up, cut open and the water is poured into standard

sample vials and submitted to an analytical lab for analysis.

The United States Geologic Survey conducted a limited field evaluation of their technology at the McClellan NETTS location. Based on the preliminary success of this



technology, a detailed experimental design and work plan were developed by the McClellan NETTS staff to evaluate the cost and performance of this new technology. The fieldwork and laboratory analyses were performed

concurrently with the McClellan AFB Second Quarter 1999 Groundwater Monitoring Program sampling event.

The evaluation concluded that the volatile organic compound concentrations reported in the diffusion samplers were equivalent to the conventional sampling results. In many cases, the diffusion sampler results provided data that appear to be more representative of the true nature of volatile organic compound contamination in the groundwater immediately adjacent to the well screen. Between \$275 to \$600 cost savings per sample are seen due to the decrease in labor during sampling.

McClellan AFB has received approval to implement diffusion samplers from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control, and the State of California Regional Water Quality Control Board. The first full-scale implementation of diffusion samplers at McClellan AFB began in August 2000. ■

Is Your Name and Address Correct?



We want our mailing list to be as accurate as possible. Please let us know if your name and address on this mailing is incorrect.

Do you know people who would also like to receive this newsletter? Please let us know so that we can add them to the mailing list.

For more information, you are welcome to mail us, fax us: (916) 643-5880, or call us: (916) 643-1742—either Merianne Briggs (ext. 457) or Roxanne Yonn (ext. 354).

Does your organization want to learn more?

To keep the community informed of the McClellan Air Force Base Environmental Management program, speakers are available to come to your school, community group or organization. The presentation can be tailored to meet the needs of your group.



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The *Environmental Action Update* is a publication of the Environmental Public Affairs Office at McClellan AFB, California, designed to keep the public informed of environmental activities at the base. For questions, comments, or to be added to the mailing list, please write to SM-ALC/EM, 5050 Dudley Boulevard, Suite 3, McClellan AFB, CA 95652-1389 or phone (916) 643-1742 ext. 457.

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Environmental Studies Students Learn About McClellan Cleanup

The Cosumnes River College Environmental Technology Program and the Sacramento Engineering and Technology Regional Consortium sponsored



Elk Grove HS students explore the vernal pools at McClellan.

educational experiences for local high school environmental programs. Four of those schools came to McClellan to learn about the environmental cleanup program. Over 100 students from Elk Grove High School, Luther Burbank High School, Adelante High School, and El Dorado High School came to McClellan to learn how the contamination occurred at the base and what is being done to clean it up. Each school spent several hours in lecture and tours. They were given the opportunity to collect water samples from the creek and learn about the testing process and strict controls for sampling. ■



El Dorado HS student collecting creek water for sampling.



Adelante HS students learn how to collect a water sample.

Luther Burbank students learn about the groundwater treatment plant from Capt. George Joyce.



Work at Site CS-10 Halted

Air Force officials are preparing a plan on how to proceed with further site investigations at CS 10 and

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have not set a date for resumption of the site investigation. The cost estimate for investigation and

complete cleanup of the site is \$38.4M.

CS-10 Chronology

- Records indicate disposal pit was active from early 1950's to mid-1960's
- Site identified in 1981 initially listed in Installation Restoration Program as rubble and industrial waste site
- Radiologically marked drums found in 1994
- Investigative and cleanup documents prepared and regulatory/community coordination done 1997-2000 (including public meeting held December 7, 1999 and public comment period December 1 through February 28, 2000)
- Began site work August 15, 2000
- Plutonium marked bottles identified September 6, 2000:
 - Stopped site excavation and secured site on September 6
 - As of September 6, approx. 110 drums had been unearthed (most were 55-gallon drums)
 - Many of the drums have radiological markings, but after scanning, only 4 were above background levels
 - Many of the drums contained laboratory glassware
 - Three drums contained Radium 226 items, including radium paint
- One 20-gal drum contained 3 bottles of liquid and 4 smaller vials of liquid (the bottles and vials were labeled "Plutonium")
- Samples were taken from the liquid and sent to a laboratory for analysis and were confirmed as containing plutonium
- Bottles and vials of liquid were sent to MIT for research
- Air monitoring continues at the site, with no detections above background levels
- The groundwater monitoring wells in the area were checked and the results were non-detect
- The site is safe and secure. ■

Environmental Restoration Advisory Board to Be Reestablished Soon

A panel of community leaders unaffiliated with the Air Force, McClellan's cleanup effort, and McClellan's redevelopment convened on October 3 to begin the process of selecting new members to serve on McClellan's reconstituted environmental restoration advisory board.

The selection panel members are Dr. Tom Krabacher, professor of geography and environmental studies at California State University, Sacramento; Mr. Aubry Stone, CEO of the Black Chamber of Commerce of California; and Mr. Dennis Trinidad, Director of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce for Sacramento

The selection panel will review applications submitted during a membership drive running since June and will make its selections by the end of October. The members selected to serve on the new advisory board will begin meeting by the end of the year.

Public Outreach meeting held during the summer (see front page story)

The process of forming a new board to include a broader range of stakeholders in the cleanup of McClellan began in May after the former board was dissolved. Since that time, base officials have held four public outreach meetings to provide the community with opportunities to stay abreast of cleanup progress and issues.

A restoration advisory board includes community members representing diverse interests in the cleanup of a federal installation, ranging from homeowner associations to education to business. Technical expertise is not required. The Air Force will provide briefings and training to the new board members. Also on the board are state and federal

regulators, as well as congressional office representatives.

The board is set up by the installation to provide a forum to both solicit public input on the process as well as share information on the status of cleanup projects with the public at large. The community members will provide comment to the Air Force and regulators on environmental issues, review restoration documents, and take this information back to the groups they represent and the community. ■

[Applications from community members are welcome at any time. Please contact Merianne Briggs at \(916\) 643-1742, ex. 457, for more information.](#)



IRP News Briefs

- **Site Security** upgrades are currently in progress to ensure all cleanup systems are secure, now that the base is open to the public during the day.
- **Third Quarter 2000 Groundwater Monitoring** of 47 wells began on July 25 with the filling of the passive membrane diffusion samplers with water. Placement of the

samplers followed on July 28 (the diffusion samplers need to equilibrate for 14 days.) Sampling of passive membrane diffusion samplers and monitoring wells began on August 15 and was completed on August 25. Water level measurement for all 567 monitoring wells were taken following the sampling of the wells. Fourth Quarter

Groundwater Monitoring of 90 wells will begin in mid-November.

- **Non-Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) Soil Treatment** project construction began on July 31. Drainage and potable water utilities were re-routed, and on September 30 an asphalt pad was constructed. ■

Hours Change for the Information Repository, Open One Friday Closed the Next

In preparation for closure, an alternate work schedule for base employees has been implemented.

As of October 13, 2000, most base operations are closed every other Friday.

The Information Repository in Building 269-D houses McClellan's cleanup program documents. It is now open Monday-Thursday from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Its first Friday of closure was October 13

and will continue to close on alternate Fridays. The Repository will be available to the public from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM on the alternating Fridays it is open, starting with October 20, 2000. For more information on visiting the Information Repository, please call Laraine McQuillen at (916) 643-1742, ex. 301. ■

For your convenience, the base has placed all recent documents, as well as a list of all IR documents on McClellan AFB Environmental Management's web site located at:



Building 269-D at McClellan AFB housing the Information Repository

<http://www.mcclellan.af.mil/EM/>

What's the Score?

Environmental Management Remedial Scoreboard

As of
Sept 2000:

998,078

lbs. of contamination
removed from
soil and groundwater.

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about McClellan's Installation Restoration
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