



October–December 2002

Environmental Action Update

A Quarterly Newsletter About Environmental Activities at McClellan

Air Force increases public comment opportunities— more on the way

You may have noticed an increase in information arriving in your mailbox from the Air Force—for example, fact sheets, newsletters and public notices. McClellan officials have been holding many public meetings and requesting your comments on several activities this year.

In this issue of the *Environmental Action Update* you will read about the status of four *formal* public comment periods (see *Pages 4 and 5*). You'll also read about *informal* opportunities to talk with Air Force and regulatory agency representatives and ask questions of technical staff involved in the cleanup efforts at McClellan.

Formal comment periods occur at specific cleanup milestones (see *Cleanup Process flow chart on Page 4*) and are required by the federal law that

governs the cleanup at McClellan. Informal public participation activities are other important ways of informing and involving the public. During informal activities, such as open houses and public meetings, community members can discuss concerns with program decision makers.

But you don't need to wait for a public comment period to express your ideas or concerns. You are encouraged to contact the individuals listed on the back page of this newsletter with questions, concerns or information related to cleanup of the former base.

Documents under review and responses to public comments are available at the Administrative Record (see *Page 6 for location*). ■



Community members at public meeting asked questions and made comments on changes to the work plan for Confirmed Site 10.

Excavation of drainage ditch resumes, restoration to follow

The Air Force completed excavation of contaminated sediments in a drainage ditch along the southwest boundary of McClellan in Operable Unit B1. Sediments in the 5,800-foot-long ditch contain contaminants called polychlorinated biphenyls, which were previously used in insulating oil within electrical transformers. Cleanup at the drainage ditch stopped in winter 2001 due to weather conditions and the need for additional funding. Excavation resumed in fall 2002 when funding became available.

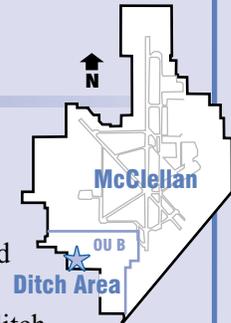
The drainage ditch transports surface water runoff from the former Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office storage area to Magpie Creek. The drainage ditch is one of several sites at McClellan that could have contributed to contamination in the creek. Magpie Creek is one of several sites being investigated in an Ecological Feasibility Study. Sediment traps within the drainage ditch prevent any further erosion of sediments into the creek.

The goals of the cleanup effort in the drainage ditch are intended to protect the sensitive nature

of the creek habitat. Those cleanup goals are:

- No detection of polychlorinated biphenyls above 25 parts per billion in sediment within the ditch.
- Concentrations of metals in sediments should not be higher than concentrations found in surrounding areas.
- Levels of dioxins and furans should be below levels shown to be harmful to ecological receptors. Dioxins and furans are by-products of burning activities, and have been found to be toxic at very low levels.

The Air Force and regulatory agencies agree these cleanup goals are protective of the creek habitat. Sediments to a depth of 24 inches have been excavated. Sample results confirm that the cleanup goal for polychlorinated biphenyls has been achieved. Laboratory results for dioxins, furans and metals are expected to be available in December. Once all cleanup goals have been met, the site will be restored to promote proper drainage. ■



Cones and caution tape were used to keep traffic and bystanders at a safe distance from the drill rigs.

Summer drilling activities are complete

Field crews began installing wells for Phase III of the McClellan Groundwater Treatment Program. While systems have been installed that treat contaminated groundwater from most areas, the goal of the third phase is to address areas of groundwater contamination that are not being captured by existing extraction wells.

Drilling activities were conducted in neighborhoods south of McClellan to determine the extent of contamination and to install groundwater wells (*see map at right*).

Crews will return at various times to collect groundwater samples. The results will be used to determine if treatment systems need to be expanded to capture contaminated groundwater in the area. ■

Name change for Air Force agency managing cleanup

Recently the Secretary of the Air Force consolidated the Air Force Base Conversion Agency (AFBCA) with the Air Force Real Estate Division to form the Air Force Real Property Agency (AFRPA).

The mission of the Air Force Real Estate Division was to manage real property acquisition and disposal for active Air Force installations worldwide. The Air Force Base Conversion Agency, as well, has successfully transferred property since its creation in 1991. "Merging the two agencies will consolidate the Air Force's real property disposal and acquisition efforts, maximize resources and save limited funds that can be available to support combat readiness," said Albert F. Lowas, Jr., director of the newly consolidated agency.

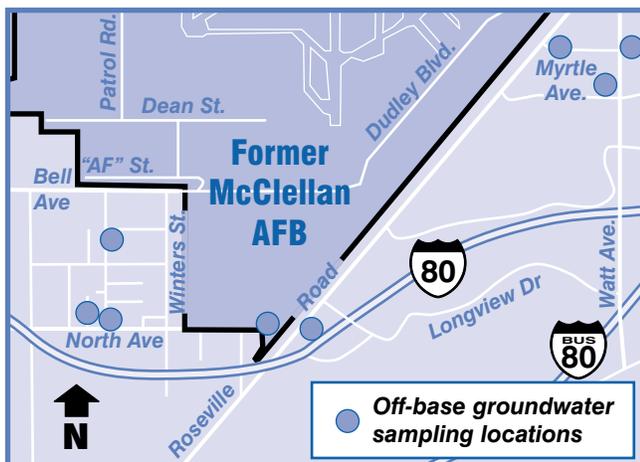
Under this merger, AFRPA will continue the work of managing the environmental cleanup program and facilitating property transfer at the former McClellan Air Force Base. ■

McClellan Environmental Remedial Scoreboard

As of October 1, 2002:

1,136,285

Pounds of volatile organic compound contamination removed from soil and groundwater.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service okays mowing as long as steps are taken to protect vernal pools

Maintenance requirements for the McClellan airfield include routine mowing of all grassy fields adjacent to the runway and active taxiways. The vegetation in these areas must be kept short enough to see potential safety hazards to aircraft.

The open space areas surrounding the runway and taxiways consist of grassland habitats including vernal pools. Vernal pools are seasonal wetlands that hold rainwater in the winter and are dry the remainder of the year. The vernal pools are habitat for two federally listed species: the vernal pool tadpole shrimp (*Lepidurus packardii*) and the vernal pool fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta lynchi*). The Federal Endangered Species Act protects these species and their habitat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews projects that may impact federally listed species. After its review of a project, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepares a document called a Biological Opinion that identifies measures to avoid and minimize these impacts. On Aug. 9, the Air Force received the Biological Opinion for mowing within the airfield.

Requirements set forth in the Biological Opinion include mowing during the dry season only. Staff who mow the airfield are required to attend a Worker Environmental Awareness Training Program. The Biological Opinion for mowing the airfield can be found in the Administrative Record.

It is important to note that mowing occurs in many other areas of McClellan. However, mowing of any vernal pools located outside the airfield is strictly prohibited at all times. ■

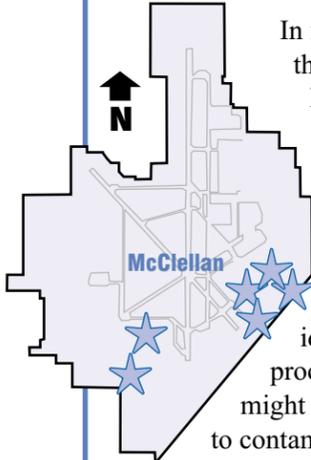


PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1

Air Force responds to public comments on Proposed Plan for no action at six soil sites

Public Comment Period: Sept. 18 to Oct. 18
Public Meeting: Oct. 9.



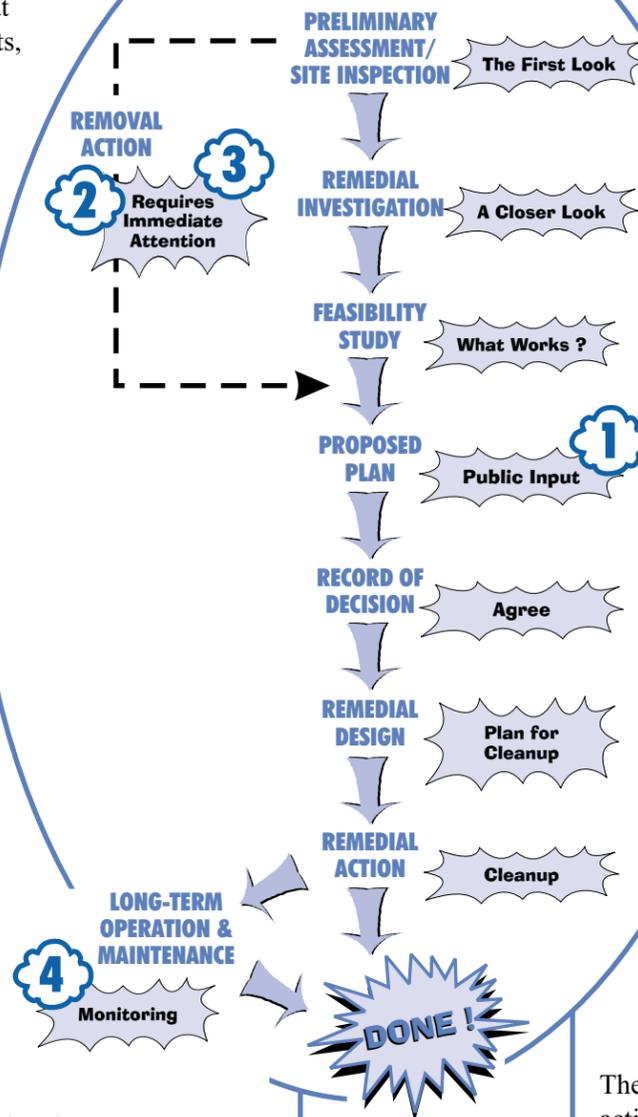
In fall 2002, the Air Force published the No Action for Soil Proposed Plan summarizing its recommendation that no cleanup action is required for soil at six sites (see map for site locations): Potential Release Locations B-004 and 035, Study Areas 017, 039, 050 and 064. The sites were identified early in the cleanup process at locations where activities might have occurred that could have led to contamination of soil. Subsequent investigations, however, did not find soil contamination at levels that required cleanup. The no action recommendation applies only to soil at these sites; it does not apply to groundwater, which will be handled in a separate action.

Next Step: The Air Force will review the comments submitted. If the comments on the Proposed Plan

indicate a reason that soil at any of these six sites do, in fact, require action, that site will not be included in the No Action for Soil Record of Decision. A Record of Decision is the legally binding document that explains cleanup requirements, if any, for a site.

A section in the Record of Decision will include the Air Force's response to the comments received. The Record of Decision is scheduled to be published Jan. 15 and will be available to the public in the Administrative Record. ■

THE CLEANUP PROCESS



3

Air Force presents options for removing metals from groundwater

Public Comment Period: Tentatively scheduled for Feb./March
Public Meeting: Tentatively set for March 27

The Air Force is currently looking at technologies capable of removing hexavalent chromium from extracted groundwater. The metal hexavalent chromium has been detected on several occasions in outflow from the McClellan groundwater treatment plant at levels slightly exceeding the level that protects freshwater aquatic life. When this happens, the Air Force redirects the treated water to the county's sanitary sewer instead of Magpie Creek. Modifying the treatment plant to remove the metal is a high priority because of limited sewer capacity.

Two treatment technologies are being researched. One uses sulphur-modified iron; the second uses an ion exchange process.

Next Step: After testing the available technologies, the Air Force will prepare a Remedial Action Work Plan that explains the advantages and disadvantages of the two technologies and recommends a particular approach for removing the metal from treated groundwater. The public will be given an opportunity to comment on the work plan and the action the Air Force is taking. ■

2

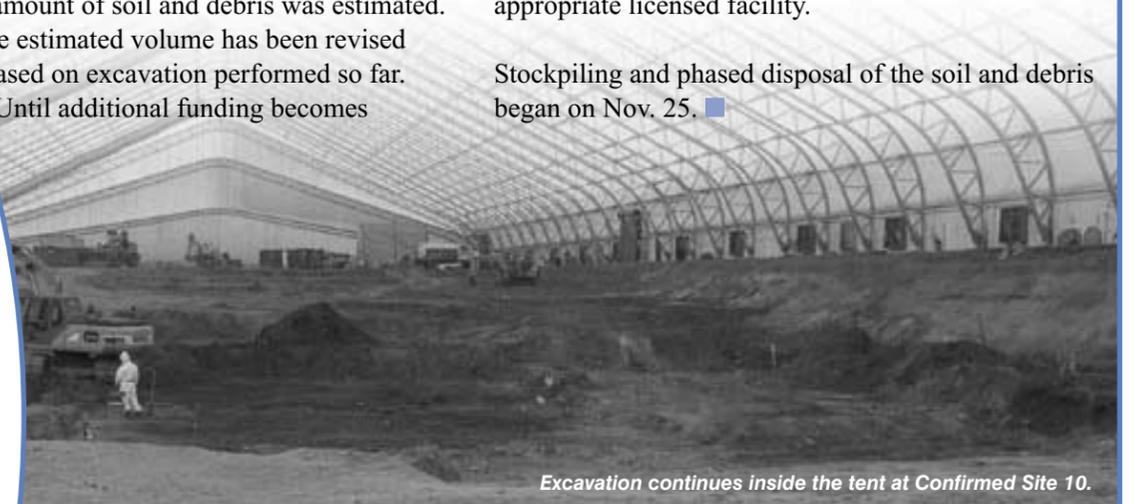
At Confirmed Site 10, soil to be stored on site while excavation continues

Public Comment Period: Oct. 21 to Nov. 21
Public Meeting: Nov. 13

The Air Force held a public meeting Nov. 13 seeking public comment on a change to the work plan for the disposal of soil and debris at the inactive disposal pit, Confirmed Site 10. Current funding is not sufficient to cover the costs for disposal of the increased amount of soil and debris found at Confirmed Site 10. In the original work plan, the amount of soil and debris was estimated. The estimated volume has been revised based on excavation performed so far. Until additional funding becomes

available, the Air Force will safely stockpile the soil and construction debris under the tent that currently covers the excavation site. Stockpiling soil and debris is a way to conserve funding so that identification of contaminants in the disposal site can continue. The drums and the contents of the drums will continue to be excavated, segregated and disposed off site at the appropriate licensed facility.

Stockpiling and phased disposal of the soil and debris began on Nov. 25. ■



Excavation continues inside the tent at Confirmed Site 10.

4

McClellan conducts check-up on its cleanup actions

In 2003, the Air Force will begin the second five-year review of cleanup actions at McClellan. A five-year review is a check-up. The purpose of the review is to:

- Make sure the site is still safe;
- Make sure the cleanup continues to protect people and the environment; and
- Offer a chance for the community to express concerns they may have about the cleanup.

The five-year review will be conducted on cleanup actions to date. These actions include the capping of soil in Operable Unit B1 in the Defense Reutilization and Maintenance Yard near Building 700 and the containment of contaminated groundwater beneath McClellan. The first five-year review was completed

in 1999. That review resulted in a determination that the Air Force is meeting intended goals and is protecting human health and the environment. The second five-year review is due in 2004.

In addition to the actions completed to date, the upcoming five-year review will also summarize progress at all of McClellan's sites. This review will include the soil vapor extraction systems in place to remove solvents from the soil and the time-critical removal action at Confirmed Site 10, where the Air Force is removing disposal pit wastes.

Next Step: This five-year review is scheduled to begin in early 2003, at which time the Air Force will seek input from the public. In early 2004, the report will be made available in the Administrative Record. ■

**The McClellan
Information Repository/
Administrative Record**

**Building 10,
First Floor of the West End,
3411 Olson Street
McClellan**

8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Monday - Thursday
and every other Friday

For questions about the
Repository or special visit needs,
please call the librarian,
Laraine McQuillen, at
(916) 643 1250, Ext. 239.

Meet the RAB

Kevin Baum, the newly selected Restoration Advisory Board member for the east side of McClellan, is a Supervising Healthcare Team Member at Sutter Medical Center. He is also active in his church, a volunteer with a local sportsman's club, and active in the scouting program. He looks forward to the opportunity to assist in making this area a cleaner and safer place to live.



Air Force reaches out to community

During the past few months, Air Force staff have participated in Community Service Day at the McClellan Aviation Museum and Good Neighbors Night Out in Rio Linda, as well as made presentations to the Sacramento Groundwater Authority and McClellan Park's tenants.

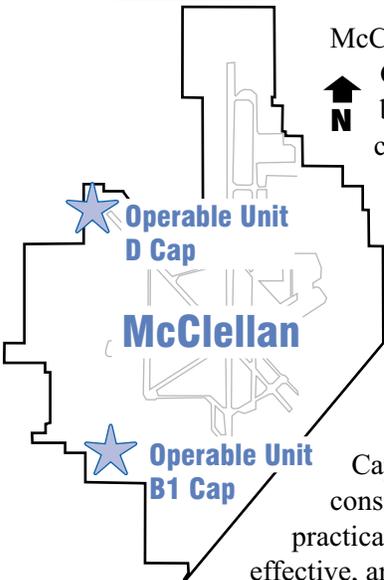
The parking lot of the Base Exchange was the site of a lively Open House on Sept. 21. Display boards and tours of cleanup sites provided visitors with information on the environmental programs at McClellan. Representatives from the Air Force and Department of Toxic Substances Control discussed the programs with community members.

The Sacramento County Redevelopment Authority hosted the International City/County Management Association's 2nd Annual Base Reuse Research Forum at McClellan Park. This three-day event included a tour of McClellan by the Sacramento Local Redevelopment Authority and the Air Force Base Realignment and Closure Environmental Coordinator, Paul Brunner (*left in photo below*). The tour highlighted the reuse and environmental cleanup efforts at the former McClellan Air Force Base. ■



Paul Brunner, BRAC Environmental Coordinator, explains cleanup and reuse at McClellan

Caps protect public and environment from contaminants



McClellan has two sites with caps.

Caps are protective covers built over disposal pits or contaminated soil sites that prevent exposure to contamination. A cap also prevents rainwater from carrying contaminants deeper into the soil where they could reach groundwater.

Caps are considered practical, effective, and less

expensive compared to other cleanup technologies. Cap design is site-specific and depends on its intended function. Caps can be designed for either non-hazardous or hazardous waste applications, and range from a one-layer system to a complex multi-layer system of soils and other materials.

Capped sites at McClellan

McClellan's two caps cover disposal sites at Operable Units D and B1. The Operable Unit D cap was constructed

in the mid-1980s to cover several disposal pits. It has a two-foot foundation layer of compacted soil, a one-foot barrier layer of clay, a plastic-like layer and a two-foot vegetative layer (plants). This type of cap is commonly known as a "Composite Cap."

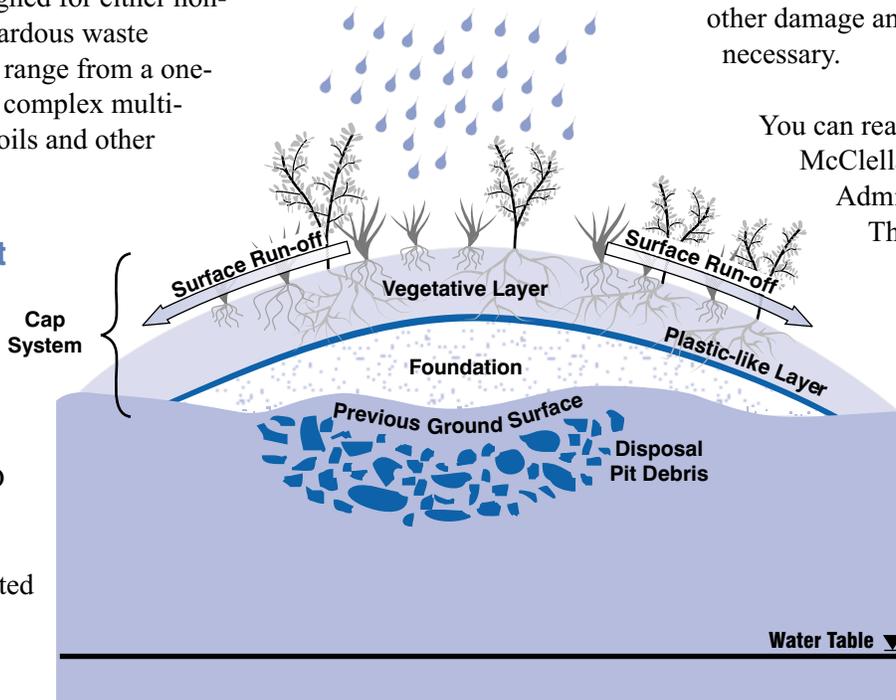
The Operable Unit B1 cap, installed in 1994, has a six-inch base of aggregate rock and an asphalt layer two-inches thick. This cap was built over a site where oil, once used as an insulating agent in electrical transformers, was spilled onto the ground.

Caps are designed to meet site-specific needs, but all function to create a protective cover over contaminated material.

Care and maintenance of caps

The Air Force maintains McClellan's caps with a quarterly inspection and maintenance program. Any activity on or near the caps must be approved by the Air Force. The caps are inspected regularly for cracks or other damage and are repaired when necessary.

You can read more about McClellan's caps in the Administrative Record. The caps will also be featured at the Dec. 12 RAB Meeting and Mixer at Dry Creek Elementary School in Rio Linda from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. (see back page). ■



October-December 2002

The *Environmental Action Update* is a publication of the Air Force Real Property Agency (AFRPA) at McClellan, 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 AFRPA/DD-McClellan, 3411 Olson Street, McClellan, CA 95652-1003 or phone (916) 643-1742 ext. 233.

www.afbca.hq.af.mil/mcclellanem

BRAC Environmental Coordinator **Paul Brunner**
Community Relations Coordinator and Editor **Dawn Young**

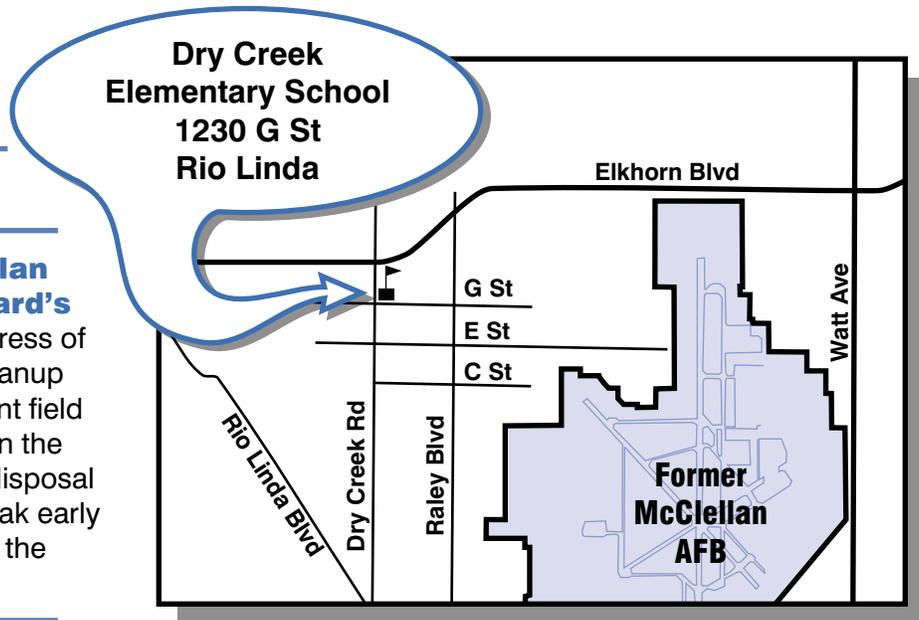
McNews-oct-02.CDR LCT 11.18.02 SAC

McClellan Restoration Advisory Board Meeting & Mixer

Thursday, Dec. 12
6:30 to 8:30 pm

Dry Creek Elementary School

You are invited to the **McClellan Restoration Advisory Board's meeting** to discuss the progress of McClellan's environmental cleanup program. Topics include recent field activities and a presentation on the purpose and construction of disposal pit caps. The meeting will break early so you can meet and talk with the Board members one on one.



The public is encouraged to participate in and attend RAB meetings.

www.afbca-hq.af.mil/mcclellanem

Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA
David Cooper
(415) 972-3237
(800) 231-3075

Public Participation Specialist
Cal-EPA/DTSC
Diane Fowler
(916) 255-6682

Community Relations Coordinator
AFRPA
Dawn Young
(916) 643-1742 Ext. 233

*For More Information
about McClellan's Installation
Restoration Program, please call:*



OFFICIAL BUSINESS

AFRPA/DD
3411 Olson Street
McClellan, CA 95652-1003

PERMITTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
US POSTAGE PAID
SACRAMENTO, CA
Permit No. 2260

Update
Environmental Action