Fort Ord Cleanup Fact Sheet: Operable Unit 1 (OU1) Groundwater Cleanup

History:

Operable Unit 1 (OU1) is of one of four groundwater contamination areas located on the north side of former Fort Ord. The groundwater contamination at OU1 is associated with the improper disposal of solvents used during fire response training in this area. Fuels and solvents were discharged into an unlined pit, ignited, and then extinguished. Some of the unburned fuels and solvents leached into the groundwater. The groundwater contamination was limited to the shallow A-Aquifer and moved westward toward the ocean. The initial



environmental investigations took place between 1984 and 1987 and documented the nature and extent of the contamination in soil and groundwater.

What Chemicals Have Been Found in the Groundwater Related to OU1?

Trichloroethene (TCE) was the primary Chemical of Concern (COC) in groundwater at OU1 because it was detected at the highest concentrations across the greatest extent of the impacted groundwater. From 2008 through September 2014, only TCE was detected at concentrations greater than cleanup goals, also known as Aquifer Cleanup Levels or ACLs.

What has the Army Done to Clean the Water?

As part of the Superfund cleanup of former Fort Ord, the Army, with oversight by federal and state regulatory agencies listed at the end of this fact sheet, implemented a program to stop further contamination of the aquifer and clean up the contaminated groundwater. The cleanup included treatment of the contaminated soil from the OU1 former training area (cleanup was completed in 1988) and construction of three groundwater treatment systems. When operational, the treatment system extracted contaminated groundwater using extraction wells to remove the contaminants through a treatment process using granular activated carbon, and returned the treated water back into the A-aquifer. Two treatment systems were removed after the groundwater in those areas reached the cleanup goals. The third treatment system (photo above) is presently on standby while groundwater sampling (attainment monitoring) is performed to confirm that the groundwater cleanup goals have been achieved throughout OU1.

The groundwater treatment system (see above photo) has removed contamination from the groundwater. Groundwater was pumped from extraction wells and COCs were removed using carbon filtration. The blue containers (see photo above) hold granular activated carbon used to filter and clean the water in a manner similar to the carbon filtration systems found in many households and refrigerators.

During attainment monitoring, the groundwater treatment system is on standby now that groundwater has met cleanup standards—these standards require COC concentrations to be less than or equal to federal and state safe drinking water standards.

Cleanup is Nearly Complete.

The map at the right shows the maximum area (plume) where TCE exceeded the ACL (pink shading). The plume footprint has been steadily decreasing since the expanded remediation system began operating in 2006. Sampling results from the OU1 monitoring well network in September 2014 and December 2014 showed that concentrations of all COCs, including TCE, were less than their respective ACL. For TCE, the ACL is 5 micrograms per liter (5 μ g/L). Currently, the treatment system is on standby while attainment monitoring of select wells ensures cleanup is complete. Once regulatory review of the monitoring results confirms COC concentrations will remain below ACLs, the treatment system will be decommissioned and removed. The Army is currently preparing site close-out documents to define the attainment



monitoring effort and cleanup confirmation criteria.

Your Drinking Water is Safe.

Water pumped from the Marina Coast Water District supply wells on former Fort Ord consistently meets the drinking water safety standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the California State Water Resources Control Board, Division of Drinking Water. Data indicate that very low concentrations of TCE have been found in two drinking water supply wells on the former Fort Ord. The supply wells are located far from OU1 and are associated with a different groundwater plume. Concentrations of TCE in the supply wells are significantly below the Federal and State Safe Drinking Water Act maximum contaminant levels—your water is safe. For details, see the groundwater cleanup overview fact sheet.

What Happens Next?

Based on sampling results from September and December 2014, the cleanup goals have been met. The treatment system is on standby while attainment monitoring is performed to confirm the cleanup effort is complete. The Army has submitted a draft close-out document for regulatory review defining the proposed attainment groundwater monitoring effort and confirmation of cleanup criteria. Final close-out documents are expected in 2015, and will be placed into the Administrative Record.

To Learn More About the Fort Ord Groundwater Cleanup:

U.S. Army Fort Ord Base Realignment and Closure: William Collins, BRAC Environmental Coordinator, (831) 393-1284, Melissa.M.Broadston.ctr@mail.mil. To view site-related documents, go to www.FortOrdCleanup.com to access the Administrative Record.

California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control: Min Wu, (916) 255-3621, Min.Wu@dtsc.ca.gov

California Environmental Protection Agency, Regional Water Quality Control Board: Grant Himebaugh, (805) 542-4636, Ghimebaugh@waterboards.ca.gov

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