Hewlett-Packard (620-640 Page Mill Rd.) Superfund Site

and related off-site areas including HP's 395 Page Mill Road and former Varian 601 California Avenue

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA • August 2011

Palo Alto, California

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) have developed this fact sheet for community members interested in the Hewlett-Packard (H-P) 620-640 Page Mill Road property, the former Varian 601 California Avenue property and related off-property areas in Palo Alto, California. What follows is information on what has been done at the site and what remains to be done. After completing the third Five-Year Review for the H-P Site in September 2010, the two agencies have a clearer picture of current site conditions as well as information gaps and how to address them.

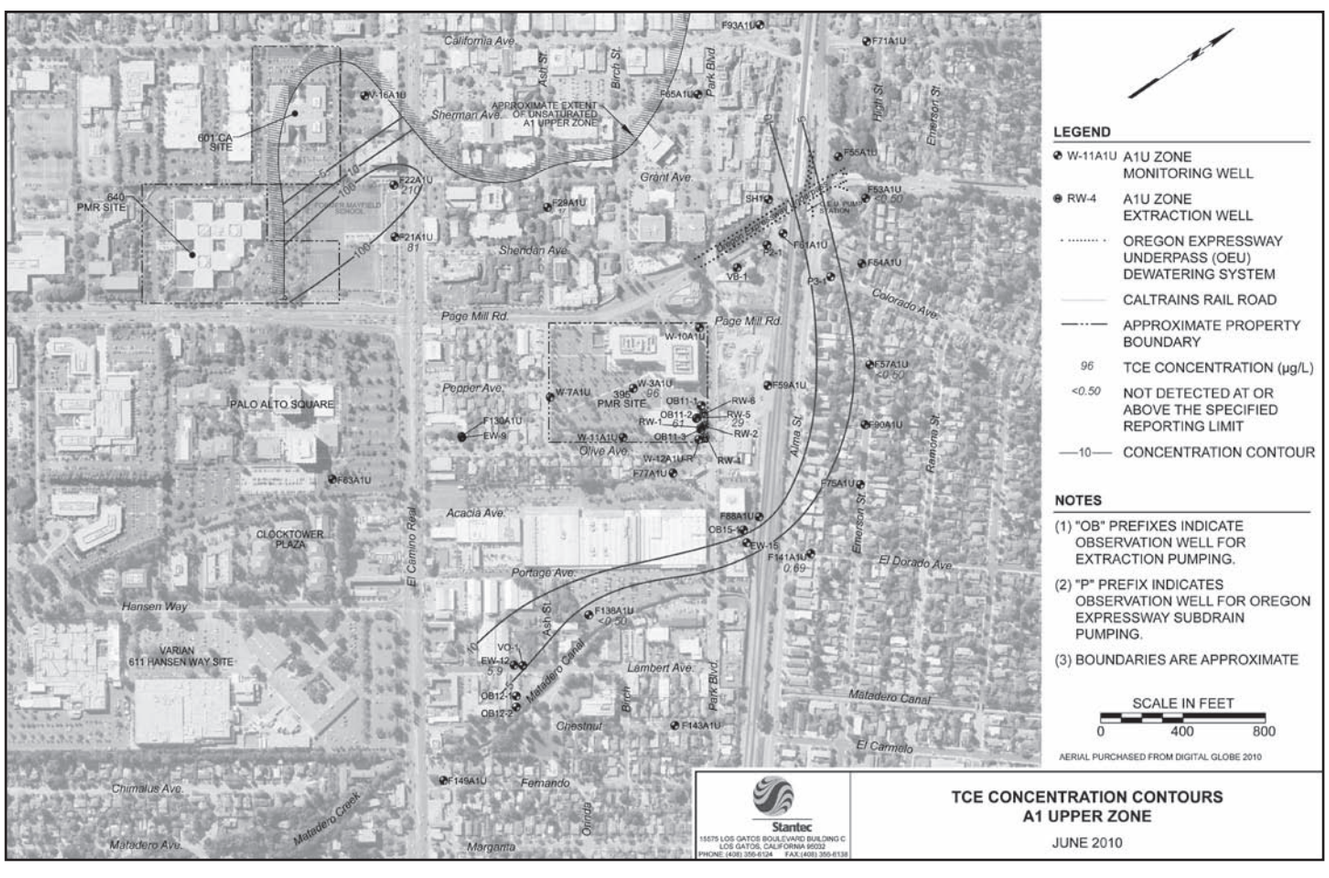
What Are the Environmental Issues?

Groundwater underneath and near the former H-P property is contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs), primarily trichloroethene or TCE. Additionally, this plume of contaminated groundwater is co-mingled in the offsite area with plumes from other sources, including a plume from the former Varian facility at 601 California Avenue. This contamination is thought to be caused by accidental releases from operations many years ago, before regulations to prevent such occurrences were in place. Because public utilities supply water from distant sources to consumers in the site vicinity, no one is drinking this water or coming into direct contact with it. However, the goal is to clean up the groundwater so it meets drinking water standards as it is considered a valuable resource and potential drinking water source. However, even though no one is drinking the contaminated water, there is the potential for vapors from the TCE in the water to come up through the soil and accumulate in buildings. This is known as vapor intrusion. Based on what we know about the groundwater plume (levels of contamination and location) indoor air problems are unlikely. However, it is still a potential pathway that must be evaluated.

How Much Has Been Cleaned Up?

H-P has operated various cleanup technologies for many years, extracting and treating thousands of pounds of VOCs from the groundwater and soil. Additionally, 11,000 cubic yards of soil were removed from the facility.

H-P continues to investigate the groundwater on and off the property to further understand how much is still there and where it is located. To date, H-P has extracted and treated more than two billion gallons of on and off-property groundwater since the 1990s. Varian has conducted similar activities at its 601 California Ave. site, and both parties have been involved in a joint effort in the off-property areas.



What Are the Current Conditions?

Most groundwater monitoring wells show that TCE contaminant concentration has been constant or declining. Due to the increased pumping by H-P (extracting and treating the groundwater), certain wells located on the 640 Page Mill Road property have shown higher concentrations, but this is not unexpected. One aquifer zone, A1 Upper (see map), needs to be more fully defined in order to take the next step in evaluating whether vapor intrusion may be occurring in buildings overlying the comingled plume. The other two aquifers, A1 and A2 Zones, need to be more fully defined to determine the southern and northern boundaries of the plume based on drinking water standards.

In the meantime, H-P has also increased the pumping rate in their off-property A1 zone well, located in Palo Alto Square (near the intersection of El Camino and Pepper Ave.), to address TCE levels in the area of 2825 and 2875 El Camino. The on-property source of this off-property contamination is also being more aggressively remediated. These efforts should help to decrease the TCE levels in the off-property groundwater.

What Happens Next?

H-P and Varian will be installing additional groundwater monitoring wells over the next 12 months to better understand the location of the groundwater plume in the various zones and the levels of TCE present. In order to evaluate the potential for vapor intrusion, the extent of contamination in the A1 Upper and A1 zones must be better defined. However, the information currently available suggests that the risk of vapor intrusion into indoor air space is low.

Information Repository

The Administrative Record for the site is located at

EPA Superfund Records Center
95 Hawthorne St., 4th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 820-4700
Hours: Mon – Fri 8am – 5 pm

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For More Information

If you have questions or concerns about the Hewlett-Packard (620-640 Page Mill Road) Superfund property, please contact any of the staff listed below:

Regional Water Board

Roger Papler
Engineering Geologist and Lead Project Manager
San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board
1515 Clay St., Suite 1500
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 622-2435
rpapler@waterboards.ca.gov

The Regional Water Board maintains a web page for the H-P site at: **http://geotracker.swrcb.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=SL720511210**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Matt Salazar
Remedial Project Manager (SFD-7-1)
U.S. EPA, Region 9
75 Hawthorne St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 972-3982
salazar.matt@epa.gov

Vicki Rosen
Community Involvement Coordinator (SFD-6-3)
U.S. EPA, Region 9
75 Hawthorne St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 972-3244
rosen.vicki@epa.gov

EPA maintains a web page for the H-P site at: **www.epa.gov/region9/Hewlett-Packard**

United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-6-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105
Attn: Vicki Rosen (HP 8/11)

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