



VALETERIA DRY CLEANERS REMOVAL SITE

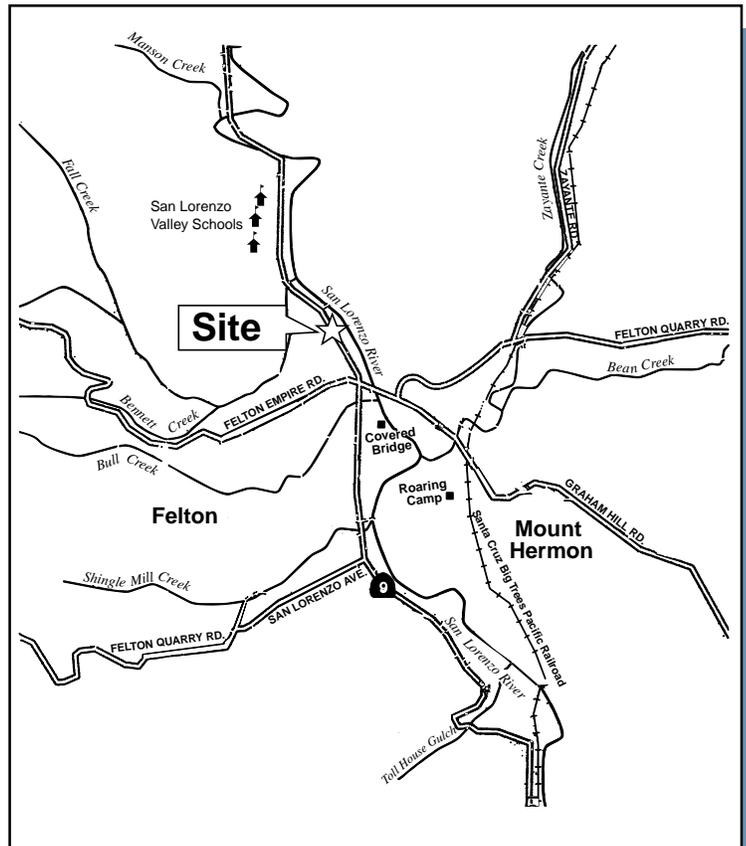
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, California • May 2002

Felton, California

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be cleaning up contamination from the Valeteria Dry Cleaners on Highway 9 in Felton, California. This fact sheet has been written for the nearby community and other interested persons to communicate what we know about the site and what we will be doing to control and clean up the perchloroethylene (PCE) coming from the site. EPA will be conducting a "removal" at Valeteria. A removal is quick action designed to minimize what is seen as an "imminent and substantial" threat to human health and the environment.

Site Overview

Valeteria Dry Cleaners is located at 6531 Highway 9 in Felton, California (see map). The PCE problem being dealt with today was caused many years ago when a previous owner operated a dry cleaners from 1960-1962. No dry cleaning has been done at this site since that time. When the solvent PCE was used at the site in the early '60s, it was disposed in a wooden septic tank. This caused contamination of the soil beneath the tank, the shallow groundwater, the San Lorenzo River and the springs that feed the river. There is concern over both human and ecological exposure to PCE from the soil and surface water. There is also concern that contamination in the San Lorenzo River could affect drinking water for the City of Santa Cruz if no action is taken.



Location of Valeteria Dry Cleaners Removal Site

Previous Actions

Santa Cruz County first detected PCE contamination in the San Lorenzo River in 1985, followed by further investigations and monitoring. The State Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Coast Region, was subsequently notified and started investigating Valeteria Dry Cleaners as a potential source of the contamination in 1990. This led to more site investigations of soil and groundwater by the original owner of Valeteria. Samples of sludge from inside the septic tank revealed concentrations of PCE at 2,000,000 micrograms per liter (or parts per billion). The shallow groundwater had PCE levels up to 18,000 ppb. Soil samples were up to 160,000 ppb. After these findings were made, the Regional Board directed the former owner to do a cleanup. In 1993, the responsible party removed liquid sludge from the septic tank, steam cleaned the redwood tank and backfilled it with sand. However, the contaminated wooden septic tank and surrounding soils and leach field were not removed. This is now believed to be the continuing source of PCE contamination we are dealing with today. No further action was taken at the site due to lack of funding.

How EPA Got Involved

EPA's Site Assessment Section discovered the cleanup status of Valeteria while doing research on the site in 2000. They referred the site to our Emergency Response Section which conducted an investigation to determine if there was an on-going release of PCE into groundwater and surface water. Monitoring wells, springs and the San Lorenzo River were sampled. PCE concentrations in the monitoring wells were at 64.6 ppb and 2,500 ppb; a sample from the spring was at 1,290 ppb; the River showed PCE at 1.53 ppb. For comparison, the maximum allowable concentration of PCE in drinking water at the tap is 5.0 ppb. Further EPA assessment took place in July 2001 and showed PCE concentrations as high as 56,000 ppb beneath the septic tank (about nine feet below ground surface), 36,000 ppb in the groundwater (32 feet below ground surface) and 1,600 ppb in the spring water sample. Wood from the septic tank showed PCE at 28,000 ppb. It is

believed that the septic tank, the contaminated soils beneath the tank and the leach field are continuing sources of contamination to the groundwater and, ultimately, to the San Lorenzo River.

What EPA Will Be Doing

Beginning at the end of May, EPA will remove the sources of the PCE contamination at Valeteria Dry Cleaners. The redwood septic tank will be excavated and removed as well as the contaminated soils beneath the tank. Since the tank is located between commercial buildings, the excavation will be supported by slide-rail shoring so as not to risk structural damage to these buildings. It is estimated that we will excavate soil to 20 feet below ground surface, resulting in 300 cubic yards of contaminated soil. This soil and debris will go into roll-off bins and then be transported to an EPA-approved hazardous waste disposal facility. Disposal methods will include incineration, encapsulation and landfill disposal.

A secondary objective of EPA's removal action will be to reduce the levels of PCE discharging to the San Lorenzo River. Depending on what is learned about the groundwater chemistry and sub-surface geology, EPA may choose to use one of two treatment methods to control the movement of PCE. One innovative treatment system under consideration is called a permeable reactive barrier which would intercept the groundwater via a trench approximately 100 feet from the river. This trench would go across the flow path of the contaminated plume and contain zero-valent granular iron. As the contaminated groundwater flows through the iron wall, the PCE will be detoxified before it enters the river. A second innovative technology being considered is phytoremediation, which uses plants to remove contamination. Contaminants are taken up through the roots and broken down through the plant's metabolic process. Phytoremediation has been used successfully on trichloroethylene (TCE), and it is believed it will do the same with PCE. Cottonwoods and willows grow naturally along the San Lorenzo River, and these would be the types of plants we would consider if this method is chosen.

The Schedule

EPA plans to start excavating the tank and soils on May 30, 2002. This first phase should take approximately five days to complete. Hours of operation will be 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. for five days straight so as to minimize disruption to neighboring businesses. Phase II, the treatment phase, should begin in late June. If we are able to construct the permeable reactive barrier, that process should take about three weeks to complete.

During the excavation, precautions will be taken to ensure that dust from the site is controlled with water so people walking or driving nearby are not exposed. You may see workers in protective clothing, but this does not mean that exposure to PCE is going beyond the site. These workers come in contact with hazardous materials on a regular basis; they must protect themselves by following the site health and safety plan as required by the California Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or Cal OSHA.

(Contact Information on back page.)



Mailing List Coupon

EPA is developing a mailing list for the Valetaria Dry Cleaners site. If you would like to be included on this mailing list to receive future information about the site, please fill out the coupon below and return to:

Vicki Rosen, Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street (SFD-3)
San Francisco, CA 94105



PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

You may also provide the above information via e-mail to: rosen.vicki@epa.gov

For More Information

If you have questions or concerns about the Valetaria Dry Cleaners site, please contact either of the EPA staff members listed below:

Dan Shane

On-Scene Coordinator (SFD-9-2)
(415) 972-3037
shane.dan@epa.gov

Vicki Rosen

Community Involvement Coordinator (SFD-3)
(415) 972-3244
rosen.vicki@epa.gov

U.S. EPA
75 Hawthorne St.
San Francisco, CA 94105

You may leave a toll-free message for either Dan or Vicki at **(800) 231-3075** and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

If you have questions or concerns about water quality in the San Lorenzo River, please contact your local water purveyor or the Santa Cruz City Water Department staff member listed below:

Chris Berry

Water Resources Manager
Water Quality Section
City of Santa Cruz Water Department
715 Graham Hill Road
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(831) 420-5481