



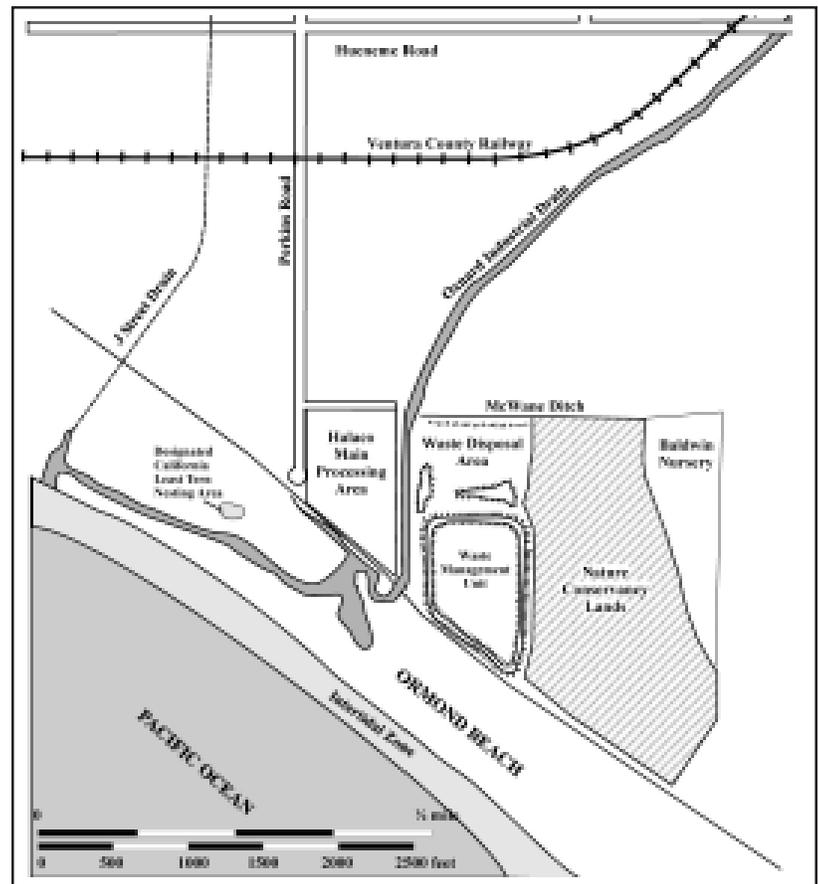
## Removal Action Planned to Address Immediate Environmental Concerns

### Further Site Investigations to Follow

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that a time-critical Removal Action is necessary at the Halaco Engineering Company site in Oxnard, California. A Removal Action consists of removing and/or stabilizing an imminent and substantial environmental threat to human health and the environment. Although the start date for the Removal Action has not yet been set, activities will likely begin at the end of this month (June). Either EPA's Emergency Response personnel or the potentially responsible parties (under EPA oversight) will perform the work at the former metal reclaiming facility and smelter. Regardless of who actually conducts the removal, steps will be taken to lessen what are considered the most immediate concerns about the site and the contaminants located there.

At the same time, EPA's Site Assessment Office will conduct an Integrated Site Assessment. This type of assessment uses the data gathered during the Removal Action and additional sampling data to provide a comprehensive assessment of the site. From this information, EPA will better understand the types and extent of pollution that may be attributable to the site. The Integrated Site Assessment will involve taking soil, air and water samples at the Halaco facility along with selected areas adjacent to the site. This

assessment will also identify if humans, animals or plants might potentially be exposed to contamination from the site. Having a better understanding of site-related contamination will enable EPA to determine what long-term actions might be taken to fully address environmental problems connected to the site.



Location of Halaco Engineering Co.

## Site History

Halaco Engineering Company began operation as a metal reclaiming facility at 6200 Perkins Road in Oxnard in 1965 (see map). The approximately 38-acre facility consists of two separate parcels on either side of the Oxnard Industrial Drain: a smelter and a waste disposal area (which includes the waste management unit, or WMU). Different types of waste were deposited on the WMU including heavy metals and radioactive contaminated slag (the scum that forms on the surface of molten metal). It is estimated that more than 400,000 cubic yards of waste make up the WMU. Halaco also deposited waste in the area north of the WMU. The smelter itself contains large quantities of waste as well.

Halaco's waste disposal practices have been cited by federal, state and local authorities for many years. The facility received various orders and notices of violation from EPA, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Health Services Radiological Health Branch, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the City of Oxnard Fire Department.

Halaco stopped operating in late 2004 after filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in mid-2002. The bankruptcy was converted to a Chapter 7 liquidation in January 2006.

## Site Hazards

Two removal assessments were conducted by EPA this past March and April. Solvents, corrosives, oxidizers and flammable liquids were found on site. EPA also observed large quantities of process waste solids throughout the smelter. A preliminary radiation survey was conducted by EPA that indicated elevated levels of alpha and gamma radiation, specifically thorium isotopes at the surface of the smelter and the WMU. Based on preliminary data, EPA believes that heavy metals such as chromium, lead and beryllium, and thorium radioisotopes pose the major concern at this site.

*A concern for public health and safety exists because of the presence of contaminants at the WMU. This is due to the fact that people walk, jog and ride dirt bikes on*

*the WMU. It is important that the public understand there is a potential health threat in this area. The area will be secured and warning signs posted to minimize public exposure to hazardous chemicals.*

Site contaminants may also pose a threat to the environment near the facility. Contaminants may have moved from the site either through the groundwater (contaminants moving from above ground into water below ground) or surface water (rain moving contaminants from one location to another) or in the air (wind blowing contaminants from the site). In the past, high concentrations of ammonia were noted leaving the site, posing a threat to aquatic life in nearby wetlands and Ormond Beach. It is also possible that endangered species that make their habitat nearby may be impacted. The contaminants at Halaco could pose serious health threats to people, animals and the ecology if steps are not taken to control the site.

## What EPA Will Do (or Oversee) During Removal Action

Removal activities may begin as early as the end of June and take approximately two weeks to complete. This phase will concentrate on the smelter and the WMU. Activities will likely include the following:

- Removing containerized hazardous substances and disposing at an approved facility;
- Removing or containing and stabilizing onsite process solids and liquids;
- Removing or shielding surface radioactive materials;
- Preventing off-site migration of hazardous substances from the site;
- Securing the site and restricting access by trespassers, including but not limited to: fencing, posting signs, installing locks or using security guards;
- Removing, transporting and disposing onsite wastes at an approved facility;
- Crushing empty drums for off-site disposal and decontaminating and dismantling tanks; and
- Performing confirmation soil sampling to ensure all hazardous substances identified have been removed to appropriate cleanup levels.

# What EPA Will Do During Integrated Site Assessment

Beginning the week of June 19, site assessment sampling activities will be conducted by EPA over an approximately three-week period. These activities will include:

- Collecting soil samples on and around the site;
- Collecting groundwater samples on and around the site;
- Collecting soil samples on or near adjacent residential areas as a precaution;
- Collecting sediment and water samples from nearby wetlands;
- Collecting sediment samples offshore in the ocean;
- Collecting fish samples;
- Surveying Ormond Beach for radiation where the wetlands drain into the ocean (a device called an ERG will be used which looks like a snowplow with a large metal plate in front that can detect gamma radiation in the sand); and
- Collecting air samples at the facility and surrounding areas.

This Integrated Site Assessment will give EPA a better picture of potential threats posed by the Halaco site. Results of the sampling will help EPA determine whether the site should be proposed for the National Priorities List, or Superfund, the cleanup program that addresses the nation's most hazardous waste sites.

## The Importance of Community Participation

The above removal and site assessment activities will be conducted under EPA's Superfund authorities. This program places a high value on public input into the process and makes community involvement opportunities a regular and integrated part of the activities. Results of our investigation will be communicated in a timely manner to the affected and interested community through fact sheets, websites and face-to-face community meetings as appropriate. We encourage the public to contact us at any time with questions or concerns about this project.



### Mailing List Coupon

To be included on EPA's Halaco site mailing list, please send the coupon below to Vicki Rosen, Community Involvement Coordinator, U.S. EPA, 75 Hawthorne St. (SFD-3), San Francisco, CA 94105. Email: [rosen.vicki@epa.gov](mailto:rosen.vicki@epa.gov)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

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Affiliation (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

# Removal Action Planned at Halaco Engineering Co.

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