



AEROJET GENERAL CORP. SUPERFUND SITE

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • MAY 2004

Rancho Cordova, California

Edge of Groundwater Contamination Plume Appears in Carmichael

Since the discovery in 1979 of industrial solvents in drinking water wells near the Aerojet General Corp. property in Rancho Cordova, California, two State agencies and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) have been working with Aerojet to ensure that the company cleans up pollution caused by its operations at the site. Under State and federal enforcement orders, Aerojet has installed several systems on the borders of its property to pump out and treat contaminated groundwater. However, recent groundwater sampling data show a new plume of contamination extending northwest under Carmichael, indicating that more work is needed to prevent further spreading of contaminated groundwater from Aerojet. This newsletter describes events at the Aerojet site that affect the Carmichael community.

EPA's recent regulatory efforts on the Aerojet site

In November 2000, EPA proposed a plan to clean up the plume of groundwater contamination to the west of the Aerojet property and to ensure continued, safe water supplies for area residents. After two public hearings and extensive public comment, EPA signed a Record of Decision in July 2001 to formally approve the cleanup plan for this area of the site, called the Western Groundwater Operable Unit. Part of the plan includes both long- and short-term contingency planning for drinking water supply wells. Despite long negotiations, EPA was unable to reach an agreement with Aerojet General Corporation to implement the remedy for this part of the site, and, in August 2002, issued an order to Aerojet for this purpose. Aerojet has now begun installing wells, pipelines, and treatment systems in a first phase of this effort.

Known plume of contamination expands into Carmichael

In June 2003, Aerojet sampled groundwater at Rossmoor Bar Park on the American River, at that time north of the known edge of the contamination plume, to investigate a potential site for a new drinking water well to replace wells already lost to contamination in the Western Groundwater area. Analysis revealed that the groundwater is contaminated with n-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), TCE and perchlorate.

Further sampling of existing wells showed that the NDMA plume extends northwest underneath the American River and below the southern edge of Carmichael. NDMA is reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen based on animal experiments, according to the National Institute of Environmental Health and Safety. Historical research suggests that the source of this plume may be past discharge via Buffalo Creek into former sand-mining pits just south of the river, northwest of the Aerojet property. To date the contamination has not reached the public drinking water supply wells in Carmichael, but the Carmichael Water District is currently planning for that possibility.

TOWN HALL MEETING

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

See back page

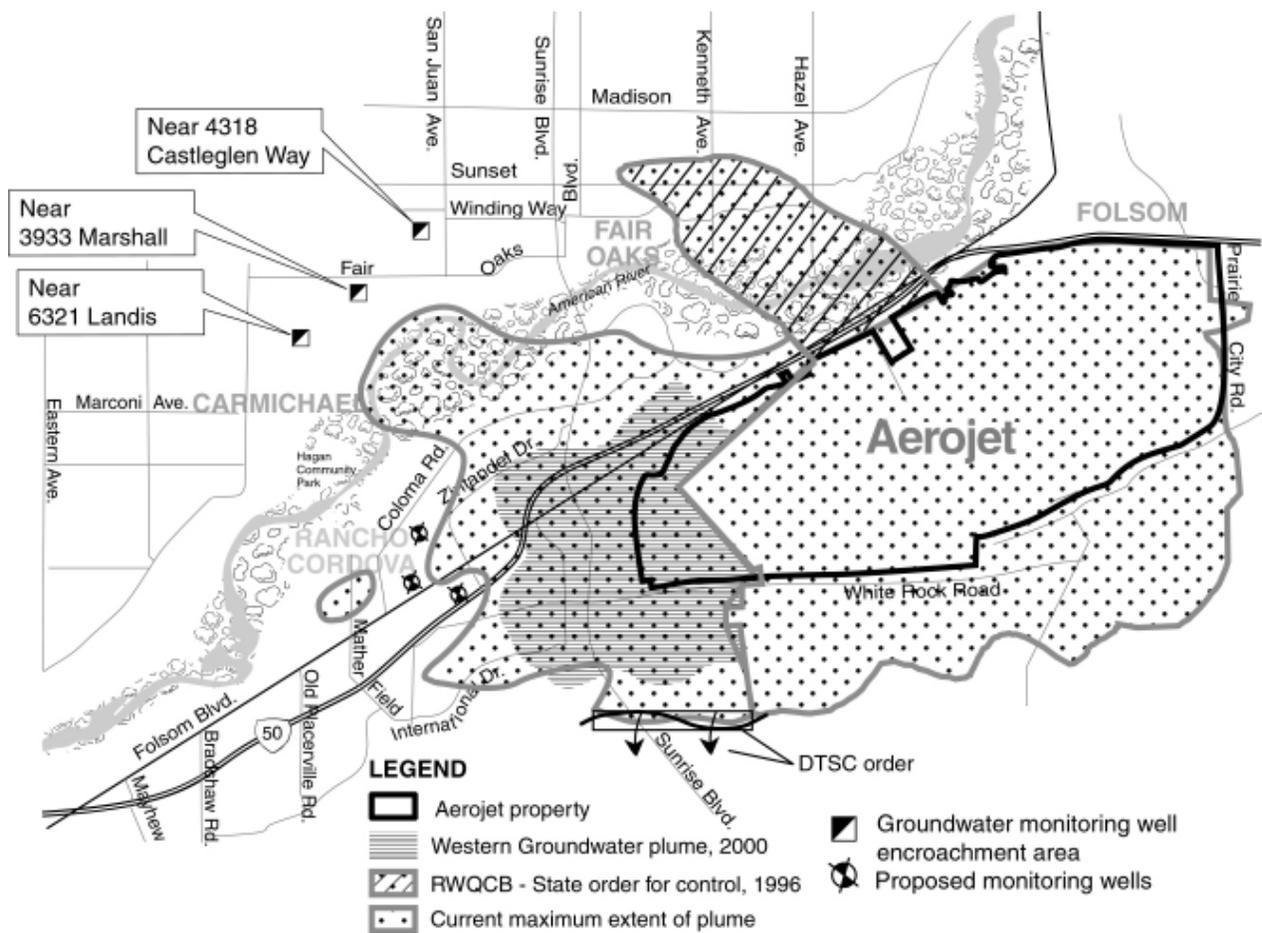
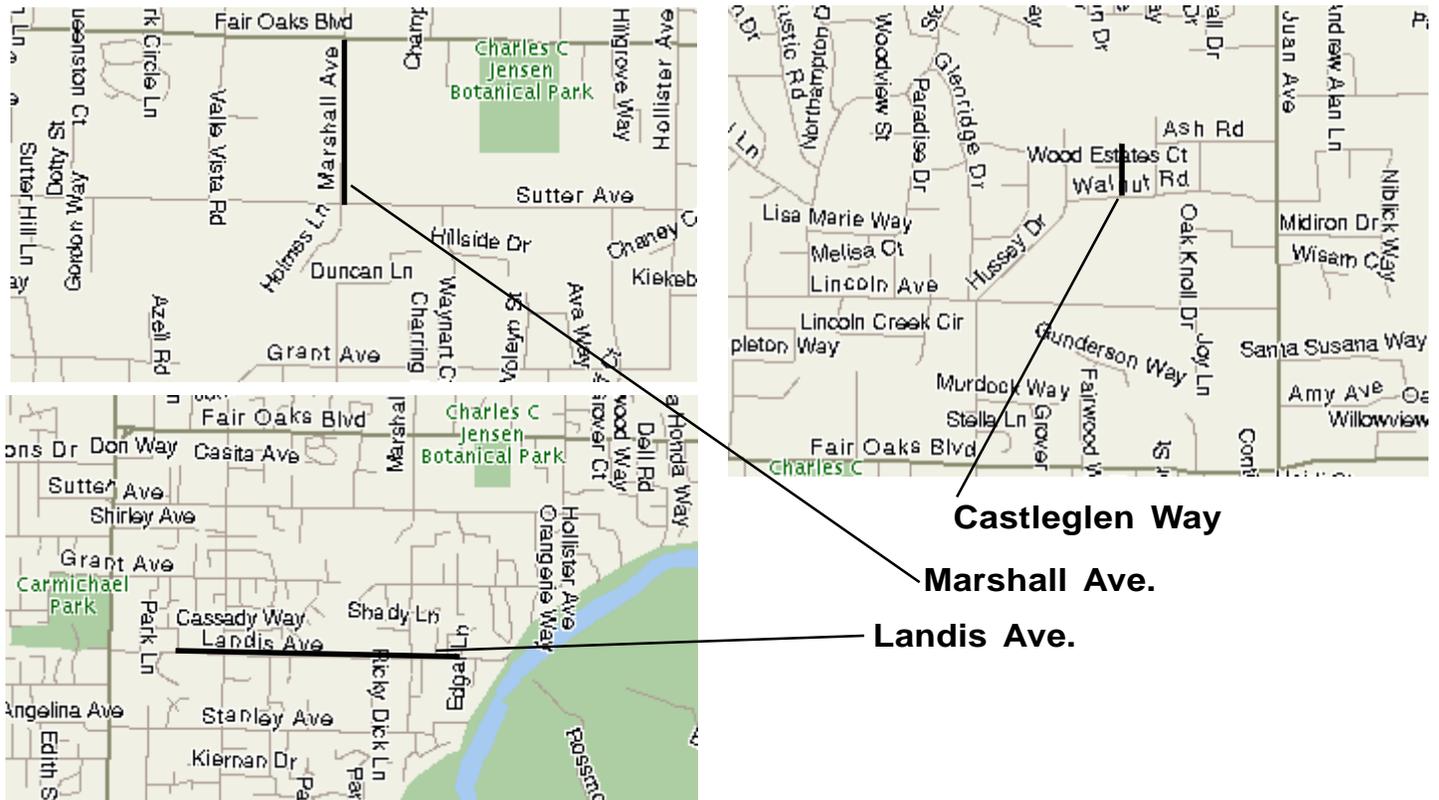


Figure 1: Maximum extent of contamination, November 2000 and current, showing northwestern and western fingers of plume

Addressing the northwestern plume

Construction of the Western Groundwater remedy south of the American River in Rancho Cordova, already begun, will continue over the next year or more. This project will include installation of extraction wells and associated pipelines and treatment plants. (For more information, please request EPA's newsletter, "Western Groundwater Remedy Update", planned for June 2004.)

EPA will treat the contamination plume north of the River in Carmichael as an extension of the Western Groundwater project area. As a first step, EPA has directed Aerojet to install monitoring wells in Carmichael to define the extent of the plume of contamination trending northwest under the American (see figure). Aerojet will install these wells in the spring of 2004. Aerojet will install monitoring wells in residential areas (see Figure 1). Additional extraction and treatment capacity will be necessary north of the river to contain the plume.

Opportunities for information and involvement

As the Western Groundwater project continues and as implementation of remedies for other parts of the site begins, Aerojet will distribute flyers and send letters to announce the location and duration of well installations and to provide any specific recommendations for residents of the area. The Carmichael Water District is organizing a Town Hall meeting for Carmichael on June 2, 2004 (see back page), at which EPA will be available to present information and answer questions. EPA will also hold other public meetings for the community as interest dictates. Further, EPA supports a continuing series of meetings of the Community Advisory Group for Aerojet Superfund Issues, as the primary venue for sharing information among community leaders and local and State agencies on environmental issues surrounding the Aerojet site.

Community Involvement Plan Update

To ensure that EPA is effectively communicating with interested people in the community, EPA is updating and expanding its Community Involvement Plan for the Aerojet site to include communities north of the Ameri-

can River. If you would like to participate in an interview for this purpose, please contact Jackie Lane, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator (see above). To correct or remove your information in our mailing list database, please contact Don Hodge, CIC (see above).

Contacts and resources

Community Advisory Group chair (interim):

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Web page, Superfund site overviews:
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/r9/sfund/overview.nsf> under
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TOWN HALL MEETING
NDMA Groundwater Contamination
Wednesday, June 2, 2004 • 7:00 p.m.
La Sierra Community Center
5325 Engle Road, Suite 100, Carmichael

Presentations by:

U.S. EPA

Regional Water Quality Control Board

Aerojet General Corp.

Carmichael Water District

Hosted by:

Carmichael Chamber of Commerce • Carmichael Creek Neighborhood Association
Carmichael Colony Neighborhood Association • Regional Water Quality Control Board

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