



# EPA

## Western Pacific Railroad Superfund Site

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA • JUNE 1997

# Update on Site Activities at the Western Pacific Railroad Superfund Site

**T**he U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is presently cleaning up groundwater at the Western Pacific Railroad (WPRR) Superfund site in Oroville, California.

In addition to the groundwater cleanup, a site investigation was also conducted for the final cleanup decision for the site. This fact sheet discusses the current and future cleanup activities on the site, as well as how the public can get involved in the cleanup process.

### Site Background

The WPRR site covers approximately 90 acres at the southern end of the City of Oroville (See Figure 1). WPRR used the property to repair, service and clean railcars and engines from the 1880s to 1982. Union Pacific Railroad (Union Pacific) bought WPRR in 1982 and continued to use the property for railcar maintenance until 1989. Union Pacific no longer performs railcar maintenance, but daily trains still operate on the main rail line.

Chemicals used by the railroads to maintain the railcars have contaminated the soil and groundwater at the site. Diesel fuel has been found up to 28 feet deep in some areas. Solvents have contaminated the groundwater beneath the site with volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Some of these chemicals are suspected to cause cancer (carcinogens).

The groundwater under the WPRR site flows to the southwest and away from nearby residences. A drinking water supply well operated by the California Water Service Company on the property

has not been contaminated by any chemicals.

In August 1990, the WPRR site was added to EPA's National Priorities List, a list of hazardous waste sites nationwide which have been identified for cleanup under the federal Superfund program.

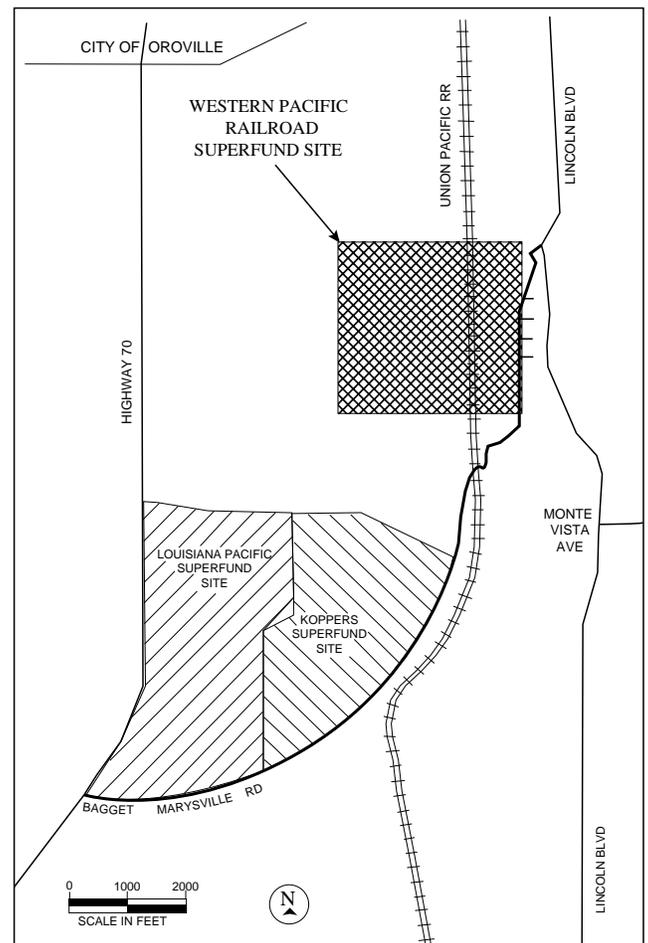


Figure 1: Area Map of the Western Pacific Site

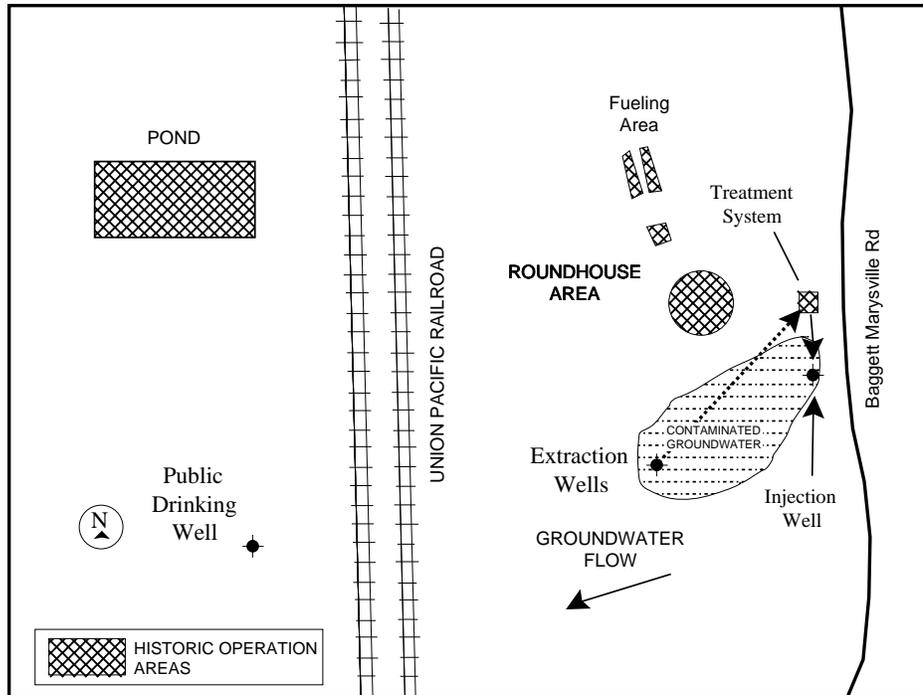


Figure 2: Site map

## Current Site Cleanup Activities

As part of a 1993 agreement with EPA, Union Pacific installed a groundwater treatment system to clean up the groundwater plume of VOCs near the drinking water well on the site (See Figure 2). The groundwater pump and treat system has been in operation since September 1994 and continues to operate. The system pumps out the contaminated groundwater, removes the contamination and then re-injects the clean water back into the ground.

The soil in the former railyard was sampled and low levels of contamination were found. Union Pacific conducted a risk assessment to determine the potential for these chemicals to have harmful effects on human health and environment. The results of the Risk

Assessment indicate that the risk to on-site workers and nearby residents is minimal.

Union Pacific also did a Feasibility Study Report (FS) for the area with contaminated soil. This report evaluates several options for cleaning up the contamination. EPA uses the FS report to select a remedy for the site. Some of the criteria used to select the remedy include protection of human health and environment, effectiveness, cost and implementability. The Risk Assessment and Feasibility Reports are available for public review at the site's local repository (See page 3).

For the soil area, one of the remedies EPA is considering is to leave the contaminated soil where it is because it poses minimal risk to nearby residents and on-site workers. Restrictions would be placed on the property to ensure

that it remains an industrial area and is not developed for residential use.

Final selection of the soil cleanup remedy will take place after EPA presents all the cleanup alternatives to the community.

## Future Site Activities

In early 1997, Union Pacific installed a second extraction well in order to make the groundwater cleanup more efficient. Union Pacific also plans to add a soil vapor extraction (SVE) system to this new well. The SVE system will remove chemicals from the soil before they have the chance to migrate down into the groundwater.

## Community Involvement In the Cleanup Process

As part of the remedy selection process, EPA will hold a 30-day public comment period during which members of the community are encouraged to submit comments on all the cleanup alternatives considered for the site. During the comment period, EPA will hold a public meeting to discuss the results of the Remedial Investigation, Risk Assessment and Feasibility Study and to receive oral and written comments on the cleanup options, including EPA's preferred remedy. The dates of the comment period and public meeting will be announced in a local newspaper and in a fact sheet that describes the various cleanup methods considered. This fact sheet, known as the Proposed Plan, will be distributed at the start of the public comment period. Copies will also be available in the site's repository. ■

## Local Repository Information

For your review, the Remedial Investigation and Risk Assessment reports and all other site related documents are at the following locations:

Butte County Public Library  
1820 Mitchell Avenue  
Oroville, CA 95966  
(916) 538-7641

CA State University at Chico  
Meriam Library  
Government Documents  
First Street  
Chico, CA 95929  
(916) 898-6802

Superfund Record Center  
U.S. EPA Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 563-2000



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## For Additional Information

### For More Information

If you have questions or concerns about the WPRR site, please contact:

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