

Groundwater treatment system adjusted

Army monitors contamination boundaries

There are several layers of groundwater under the former Fort Ord and the surrounding communities. The layers, called aquifers, are actually areas of sand and/or gravel saturated with water. Layers of clay separate these aquifers.

The most frequently detected chemical in the affected groundwater areas under the former Fort Ord is trichloroethene (TCE). The discharge of various flammable liquids into a burn pit to facilitate fire-fighting practice has been associated with groundwater contamination under the former Fritzsche Army Airfield. Refuse disposal in the Fort Ord landfill resulted in contamination of groundwater under the landfill. Other areas of groundwater contamination include a TCE plume associated with vehicle maintenance activities at Sites 2/12 in the vicinity of 1st Ave. and 10th Street, and a carbon tetrachloride plume in the vicinity of Reservation Road.

Local drinking and irrigation water supplies are not affected by the groundwater contamination under and adjacent to the base. However, the Army is working to remove known groundwater contamination to prevent its potential migration.

The groundwater cleanup has included the closure of the Fort Ord landfill and the construction of three groundwater treatment facilities. The first of these facilities to be constructed was the Fritzsche Army Airfield fire drill burn pit groundwater treatment facility, Operable Unit 1, which began operation in 1988. The Fort Ord landfill area groundwater treatment facility, Operable Unit 2, began operation in 1995. The most recent groundwater treatment facility, Sites 2/12, is located at 1st Ave. and 10th St. and began operation in 1999.

The installation of new supply wells in areas that may influence Fort Ord groundwater contamination plumes remains restricted by the Monterey County Health Department under regulations for issuing permits for well construction.

Recently, efforts have been underway to determine the boundaries of a groundwater contamination plume of carbon tetrachloride that has been found to extend from the former Fort Ord under portions of northeast Marina. The Army has identified an area of groundwater containing the common cleaning solvent in the two shallowest aquifers extending from under the Preston Park area of the former base westward along Reservation Road.

The monitoring of more than 235 wells now helps the Army track concentrations of the chemicals of concern in four different areas on and surrounding the former base. Monitoring information is used to develop proposed remedial actions and adjust the groundwater treatment systems. Groundwater sampling is conducted quarterly. The next sampling of groundwater monitoring wells on and around the former Fort Ord is scheduled for December 2001.

The procedure for monitoring and an analysis of previous groundwater sampling data is described in annual evaluation reports. Quarterly reports are also available at the project information repositories in the Seaside, CSUMB and Chamberlin libraries, the Administrative Record, or online at: www.fortordcleanup.com