

FACT SHEET

OPERABLE UNIT 2 LANDFILL GAS COLLECTION AND TREATMENT SYSTEM

Fort Ord landfill history: Like many cities, Fort Ord maintained a landfill (many people called it "the dump") during its years as an Army training base. Like many such landfills, hazardous chemicals leaked into the ground beneath the Fort Ord's landfill waste. The landfill is closed and covered with a special "cap" so that water cannot reach the waste and move chemicals through the soil into the groundwater beneath the landfill. (One section of Area E is being used to hold the materials from the final cleanup of other areas at Fort Ord and is not yet capped). Groundwater beneath the landfill area was contaminated prior to the closure of the landfill, and a groundwater treatment facility has been operating since 1995. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control have overseen the cleanup. This project is often referred to as Operable Unit 2 or "OU2".

Current status: Monitoring at the Fort Ord landfill has been conducted since the landfill was closed. As with all landfills, the decay of the waste produces gasses (primarily methane, an odorless and colorless gas, and carbon dioxide). Over time, as wastes continue to degrade, less methane will be produced and eventually will decline to near zero. While methane gas has practically no toxic effects, at levels of 5 to 15 percent, methane can be ignited and could harm landfill workers and nearby residents. The Army has installed underground probes to monitor and extract the landfill gas, and also monitors the air at the surface to determine the levels of methane and potentially hazardous gasses in and around the landfill.

Recent measurements indicate that the methane in the soil around the landfill is higher than state

standards. In response, the Army has installed a landfill gas collection and treatment system adjacent to the landfill near the closest residences--California State University Monterey Bay housing. The system draws methane and other gases from the soil surrounding the landfill and transports them to a treatment facility.

The landfill gas treatment system consists of two granulated activated carbon units and five drums containing potassium permanganate. These units remove potentially hazardous trace gases from the landfill gas. Until February 2002, the treatment system was located on the landfill near the edge of Area F. Recently the treatment system has been moved to a location in the center of the landfill near Area E. The Army is operating the treatment system to maintain the methane concentrations in the soil at the landfill perimeter adjacent to Area F at acceptable levels.

Forthcoming activities: The Army will continue to operate the extraction and treatment system. A report will be issued later this year describing the results of the system and containing a technical and economic evaluation regarding long-term operation of the treatment system. It is not expected that methane or other gases will reach levels that present a hazard to nearby residents. However, if monitoring indicates the possibility of hazardous levels of landfill gas, residents will be notified and provided safety instructions.

Where can I learn more? If you have questions concerning the landfill gas collection and treatment system construction or operation, please contact Lyle Shurtleff at (831) 393-9691 or visit our web site at www.FortOrdCleanup.com

(see map on reverse side)

Fort Ord Landfill Operable Unit 2

