



# Environmental News

November 2013

## UPDATE



## Air Force, Sacramento County celebrate whole base transfer of former Mather Air Force Base

The Air Force and Sacramento County celebrated the final transfer of the last Air Force property at the former Mather Air Force Base in June.

Throughout the closing and transfer of Mather, the Air Force has been committed to working together with community members, regulators and stakeholders to transform the former base into an asset for the local community.

Currently, the airport and surrounding commerce center has 80 employers with more than 6,000 employees.

“For 75 years, Mather Air Force Base served as a training base for pilots from World War I through the first Gulf War,” said Philip Mook, Western Region Supervisor for the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, responsible for Mather’s environmental cleanup and property transfer. “The Air Force is pleased to see Mather’s distinguished legacy of service continue by providing jobs, homes and parklands for the local community.”

Slated for closure by the Base Realignment and Closure commission in 1988, Mather closed in 1993. Upon closing, the Air Force leased a large portion of the 5,717-acre base to Sacramento County enabling redevelopment to begin immediately.

Progress made in the environmental cleanup effort has provided a successful platform for the redevelopment. At Mather, the Air Force’s work ensures the safety of those who live and work at the former base. Early transfer of some property from the Air Force to the County about 10 years ago allowed development to proceed while the Air Force continued cleaning up the former base.

As parcels have been cleaned through the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), they have been transferred to Sacramento County or other recipients for redevelopment.

The final transfer was a tangible indication that the Air Force met its objectives of cleaning up the base and

transferring it out of federal ownership as directed by the Base Realignment and Closure commission.

“This is an important step toward creating more jobs at Mather,” said Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, who represents the 5th District that includes Mather.



Rancho Cordova Mayor Linda Budge, Council Member Bob McGarvey, County Supervisor Phil Serna, Troy Givans of Sacramento County, and County Supervisor Roberta MacGlashan look on as County Supervisor Don Nottoli signs a plaque commemorating Mather’s land transfer.



AFCEC Western Region Supervisor Philip Mook speaks during the Mather whole base transfer ceremony last summer.

# Status of Mather Environmental Cleanup

Since redevelopment began 20 years ago, the ongoing transformation of the former Mather Air Force Base to civilian use has flourished.

Supporting that redevelopment is the successful environmental cleanup, overseen by the Air Force Civil Engineer Center.

Now in its final stages, all cleanup remedies are in place. In 2011 the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined all systems were “operating properly and successfully” for remediation

of groundwater and soil sites. Groundwater cleanup is performed by pump and treat technology and remaining soil sites are cleaned through soil vapor extraction (SVE) and bioventing.

The Air Force has spent more than \$125 million on the cleanup and millions more will be spent to finish the last remaining cleanup. This includes ongoing operation and monitoring of groundwater treatment and soil cleanup systems, and maintenance and monitoring of landfill sites.

Groundwater cleanup is ongoing and landfills will continue to be monitored, ensuring protection of human health and the environment.

The Air Force will continue to manage the cleanup process until it is finished.

Contaminated water is not used for drinking water. Drinking water is supplied by the Sacramento County Water Agency. This agency tests its drinking water wells regularly and provides annual water quality reports to customers as required by law.



Landfills like this one located on the northeast side of Mather are monitored to ensure they remain protective of human health and the environment.



Some of the treated groundwater is discharged to surface water, while the rest is re-injected back into the groundwater. This discharge location is near the SAC/Main Base treatment plant located on the northwest corner of Mather.

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## Background

Mather Air Force Base, earlier called Mather Field, operated from 1918 to 1993, including some breaks in service. Mather was used for combat pilot and navigator training. During that time, Mather's military workforce used chemicals, including fuels, solvents and oils in support of national defense. Past disposal practices, spills and leaks resulted in contaminants in some of the soil and groundwater at Mather.

In 1979, contamination was detected in water supply wells on and near Mather. More extensive testing and environmental cleanup began in the 1980s, years before Mather closed.

The biggest problem was from solvents such as trichloroethene (TCE), perchloroethene (PCE), and carbon tetrachloride.

All potential exposure to contaminated soil and groundwater is eliminated at Mather.

Groundwater cleanup primarily involves removing contaminants through three pump-and-treat systems. These systems pump groundwater to the surface and remove contaminants. The clean water is then re-injected back into the groundwater, discharged to surface water or used to irrigate landscaping along some of the roadways at Mather.

Soil cleanup primarily involves removing contaminants from the soil using various processes, including soil vapor extraction (SVE) and bioventing. Through SVE, contaminated air in the soil is vacuumed out and treated or discharged into the air under air quality standards. Bioventing is a process in which air is injected into the soil to promote the growth of naturally occurring microorganisms, which break down the contaminants. SVE and bioventing continue at several sites.

At this groundwater treatment plant, contamination is extracted and run through an air stripper that removes the contaminants. No drinking water is impacted, as it comes from a different source.

For more information about the cleanup  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
<http://www.afcec.af.mil/brac/mather>.

To get on our mailing list, email [afropa.west.pa@us.af.mil](mailto:afropa.west.pa@us.af.mil) or call (916) 643-6420 x257.



# Mather Community Relations Plan being revised

The Air Force is seeking community input for the 2014 update to the Mather Community Relations Plan.

The Plan identifies and addresses communication needs of the community on and surrounding the former base. This plan provides an overall reference tool for anyone interested in the cleanup program.

The Air Force periodically evaluates the Community Relations Program to ensure it is appropriate, effective and meets the community's needs.

Interviewing community members helps the Air Force determine how to best meet the communication needs of the community. Community interviews provide valuable information about people's interests related to the Air Force and the cleanup. This information helps the Air Force determine subject areas to address in written products and areas where people may be seeking more information.

The Mather Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) was adjourned in 2011, after all cleanup decisions had been made and attendance at RAB meetings had decreased to a dedicated few. A volunteer group of citizens, the Mather RAB met for more than 17 years to advise the Air Force and regulators of the environmental concerns at Mather. Therefore, activities

to keep the public informed now in the final stages of the cleanup program are typically done by newsletters and web updates.



Community involvement is an important part of the Mather cleanup program.

The Air Force is revising the Community Involvement Plan. If you would like to be interviewed, please contact the Air Force Civil Engineer Center:

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