

# Environmental Action UPDATE



Air Force Environmental Activities at Former McClellan AFB – April 2025

## Air Force Readies for the 2025 Field Season; Reviews Milestone Progress Made in 2024

As the Air Force prepares for the upcoming 2025 field season, they are also taking a moment to review the progress made in 2024. One of the recent milestones achieved in McClellan's cleanup program was the completion of a new groundwater treatment plant on the west side of the former base.

Its construction was part of a project that involved demolishing an older treatment plant in order to gain access beneath it to clean up contaminants from the soil. "This was an opportunity for the Air Force to design and construct a new plant to replace an aging system, which will operate more efficiently to further support McClellan's ongoing cleanup mission," said Steve Mayer, McClellan BRAC Environmental Coordinator.

Located just north of the former plant site, the new plant is treating groundwater at approximately 1400 gallons per minute. Groundwater is pumped from a series of extraction wells located throughout McClellan and piped into the plant to remove volatile organic compounds. The processed water is then returned to the local creeks where it finds its way back to the groundwater system as part of the cleanup process.

In addition to the new plant's ability to operate more efficiently from advanced blower motors and management software—the plant also has the flexibility to integrate a granular activated carbon filtration system to remedy emerging contaminants such as Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances or PFAS.

"We're very pleased with the construction and completion of the new groundwater treatment plant. With its efficient features and manageability, the new plant will serve as an important tool in McClellan's cleanup program



(Center) Steve Mayer, Air Force Civil Engineer Center BRAC Environmental Coordinator cuts ribbon at inauguration event at the new McClellan groundwater treatment plant. To his left and right are representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Regional Water Control Board and Department of Toxic Substances Control, McClellan Business Park, environmental contractors, congressional and community members.

for years to come until all the work is done," said Mayer. "This milestone project was a great example of the team effort from everyone involved from our contractors to our regulatory partners in making this happen."

2024 also saw a well-attended creek cleanup event at McClellan. Over 40 people from the community and various cleanup groups gathered to remove trash and debris from McClellan's creeks.

The cleanup event coincided with Earth Day observations celebrated in April and highlights the Air Force's commitment to environmental restoration and revitalization at former bases like McClellan.

"The creek cleanup was a great success because of the efforts of so many volunteers coming together to help maintain the good health of creeks at McClellan," said



## Air Force Readies for the 2025 Field Season; Reviews Milestone Progress Made in 2024 (con't.)



Above drone photo showing the new McClellan groundwater treatment plant constructed in 2024. Foreground shows 8 granular activated carbon vessels that can be utilized for additional groundwater treatment.



Volunteers getting into the weeds and creekbed to pull out trash for disposal.

Mayer. “It was impressive to see all the volunteers work their way into the creeks and pull out as much trash and debris as they did – approximately 30 cubic yards was collected for disposal!”

After the event, volunteers were treated to a catered lunch for their efforts. They also had the opportunity to see the new groundwater treatment plant and ask the cleanup team many good questions about its operation and McClellan’s ongoing cleanup program.

2024 also marked the kick-off of new projects to pursue cleanup activities and investigations. These new projects

will allow the Air Force to continue the cleanup mission to ensure the protectiveness of human health and the environment.

The Old Magpie Creek Channel project will remediate contaminants from the original Magpie Creek channel location, which is located on the southwest side of the former base. Environmental contractors have begun preparing workplans for initial work in 2025 such as performing soil sample borings to define soil properties and the location of contaminants, and to ultimately excavate the soil thereafter.

Another project that kicked-off in 2024 is the Remedial



McClellan creek cleanup volunteers take a group photo before heading out to the local creeks. 30 cubic yards of trash and debris was collected for disposal by over 40 volunteers.



Investigation or what is called an “RI” for potential releases of chemicals containing PFAS. As an emerging contaminant, McClellan’s environmental cleanup program is focusing on investigating the historical use and locations of where PFAS may have been spilled or released when McClellan AFB was in active use.

PFAS are synthetic chemicals and were widely used in the 1970’s in firefighting foam as well as in nonstick cookware, stain-resistant fabric and carpet, cleaning agents and many other uses. The RI project is ongoing from historical research to fieldwork being done by contractors performing soil and groundwater sampling at sites throughout McClellan. A report will be issued of the findings of the nature and extent of PFAS as a result of the investigation.

The McClellan cleanup team is looking forward to continuing the progress made in 2024 with a new field season just around the corner in April 2025, when the ground is dry enough to resume excavations.



Air Force environmental contractors using a drilling rig to do geotechnical soil sampling at an Old Magpie Creek Channel project site. Results from the soil sampling at these sites will help with upcoming soil excavation work.

## Cleanup Update

### Area of Concern (AOC) 314



Remediation work progressed at AOC 314 during the 2024 field season and will resume excavations in 2025.

Soil excavations continued throughout sites in this former ammunition storage area in 2024. Sampling at the excavated southern operable unit (OU) was completed and a final status survey plan is being prepared. Remediation activities are continuing in the eastern and northern OU’s as weather permits, with soil stockpiling occurring. Once the Consolidation Unit (CU) opens in April, these stockpiled soils will be placed into the CU. The rest of the site is winterized with a storm water pollution prevention plan in place to mitigate impacts from winter rains.

### Confirmed Site (CS) 67

Excavation, soil sampling, and gamma walkover scans were completed within the site during the 2024 field season. A containment berm was restored for the anticipated winter rains from November to March. The site will be backfilled and restored this coming field season, and the Final Status Survey Report (FSSR) prepared for regulatory review and approval.

### CS 69A

Excavation work continued in the 2024 field season at this former burn pit/incinerator site. All waste was transported to the CU. A water line replacement project was completed, which will allow a former water line to be removed and the excavation work completed this coming field season. Two exploratory trenches were completed along the former creek alignment (north of the current excavation), and it was determined additional excavation is needed this coming field season. CS 69A was winterized.

### PRL 20/CS 69 Excavation

The excavation and removal of impacted soil and debris beneath the demolished former groundwater treatment plant and adjacent site CS 69 was completed in 2024. Confirmation sampling was completed and several areas were identified where additional excavation will be completed this coming field season. A final status survey report will be prepared and the site back-filled and restored this coming field season. The site was winterized and is being monitored.

# Environmental Action UPDATE Newsletter



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Learn more about former McClellan AFB online at: <https://www.afcec.af.mil/Home/BRAC/McClellan-ABF/McClellan/>

Please email us at [AFCEC.CIB.WREC@us.af.mil](mailto:AFCEC.CIB.WREC@us.af.mil) to add or delete your address from the mailing list.

## Cleanup Program Five-Year Review Completed

The Air Force recently finished its review of the environmental cleanup program at McClellan. This is the sixth Five-Year Review report of the cleanup activities and looks to ensure those methods used are keeping people and the environment safe.

The review is like a report card and focuses on looking at cleanup work done over the last five years at key areas, including groundwater zones, specific cleanup sites, and a former skeet shooting range. Other areas reviewed include parcels of land, ecological sites, and specific project areas like Parcel C-6 and several FOSET (Finding of Suitability for Early Transfer) sites.

The cleanup methods are expected to fully protect people and the environment once all work is completed. For now, measures like monitoring and restrictions on land use are effectively preventing exposure to harmful chemicals left from when the base was active.

The review recommends continuing to monitor the cleanup systems, completing evaluations at additional sites, and maintaining current rules about land access and use. It also highlights the need to keep studying chemicals known as PFAS, which are emerging as potential concerns. An



McClellan creek cleanup volunteers gather around the new groundwater treatment plant to learn about its design and construction from the project team. The new plant can treat approximately 1400 gallons of groundwater per minute and replaces an aging treatment system.

investigation into PFAS in the soil and water at McClellan is ongoing.

The next McClellan Five-Year Review report will be issued in 2029. The full report is available online for public review at <https://ar.cce.af.mil/>. To find it, select “BRAC,” then “McClellan AFB,” and enter “638812” in the search field.