

# Environmental Action UPDATE



AIR FORCE ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES AT MCCLELLAN • SEPTEMBER 2021

## 2021 CLEANUP FIELD SEASON IS UNDERWAY AT FORMER MCCLELLAN AIR FORCE BASE

The 2021 field season for environmental cleanup is underway at the former McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, CA, now known as McClellan Business Park. Despite the challenges of the global pandemic, progress was made at cleanup sites in 2020 and into 2021, with health safety protocols in place. For this field season, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center (AFCEC) continues to monitor and follow pandemic health advisories while conducting cleanup activities.

One of the most significant aspects for this new field season was the anticipated additional funding for increased excavation activities and remediation projects. The additional funds were made available by recent Congressional actions and are being applied to sites AOC 314, CS 067 and PRL S-038. AFCEC will now resume work in these areas ahead of the next fiscal year (see below for details).



Air Force Civil Engineer Center environmental contractor, Aaron Johnson, AECOM Field Technician, inspects a groundwater extraction well at the former McClellan Air Force Base. Extracted groundwater is processed at a nearby treatment plant where clean groundwater is then returned to local creeks.

## CLEANUP UPDATE

**Consolidation Unit (CU), Combined Cap, Operable Unit (OU) D Cap, and Potential Release Location (PRL) 008 Cap** – AFCEC contractors completed winter operations earlier this year to inspect and maintain the protective caps at these sites. These engineered caps consist of an impervious liner placed over the contaminated soil to prevent rainwater from contacting the soil and causing the migration of contaminants into the groundwater beneath the site.



Work was also done to drain accumulated winter storm water from tarps and sump pumps at the Consolidation Unit. The CU provides a large, on-site, protected location at McClellan for excavated soils from cleanup sites during the field season which runs from April to November. In April, it began accepting soils from small excavation projects and it fully opened in May to receive more scheduled excavations from this year's field season.

**Areas of Concern (AOC) 314** – Two field projects are planned for this former Ammunition Storage Area in 2021. The Air Force will resume the existing excavation project and proceed with a radiological scoping survey at unexcavated areas at the site. The survey will help identify if other areas will need excavation. The Air Force recently awarded additional dollars to the existing contract and expects to complete the excavation work here.

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Protective winter tarps at the Consolidation Unit are removed opening the unit to receive newly excavated soil for the 2021 field season. Cleanup progress continues at McClellan, enabling further site closures and property transfers at the former base, closed in 2001. To date, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center has transferred 3,458 acres to Sacramento County and McClellan Business Park for redevelopment, with 194 acres remaining pending completion of cleanup.

## CLEANUP UPDATE CON'T.

**Confirmed Site (CS) 043 and Potential Release Location (PRL) 020** – These sites have been remediated and include a former waste disposal and burn pit and sludge/oil pit sites. Final remedial action completion reports were issued and the California Department of Public Health is working on the recommendation for unrestricted use for CS 043. In November 2020, PRL 020 was released for unrestricted use.

**CS 052 and CS 067** – These are two former landfill disposal sites. The Air Force expects to begin excavation at site CS 052 in 2022. At CS 067, initial excavation work found radium in the soil and

the project was put on hold pending additional funds. That funding has arrived and excavation work will resume this field season. There is no risk of exposure to the public because access to the site is restricted.

**CS 069** – At this former burn pit site, the Air Force conducted the CS 069 West final inspection and started work on a Final Status Survey Report (FSSR). The Air Force received regulatory comments for the CS 069 East FSSR and is preparing responses to those comments to finalize this report.

## PRIVATIZED CLEANUP PROGRESS

The Privatized Cleanup program at McClellan is nearing completion. To date, 294 privatized cleanup sites (approximately 2,500 acres) have been transferred to McClellan Business Park. This program helped the Air Force expedite McClellan's overall cleanup efforts by allowing McClellan Business Park to directly manage cleanup activities at nearly 300 sites. Cleanup at the last three remaining sites is expected to be completed in 2021. These sites cover approximately two acres where

soil will be excavated and placed into the Consolidation Unit.

Cleanup reports mark the last phase of project completion for privatized sites and will be completed in late 2022. Along with Air Force funding and oversight from regulatory agencies like the US EPA, State of California and Sacramento County, these sites are part of the total cleanup effort to ensure protectiveness of human health and the environment at McClellan.

## EMERGING CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN

California recently set a Maximum Contaminant Limit (MCL) of 5-parts per trillion in groundwater for 1, 2, 3 trichloropropane (TCP), a cleaning and degreasing solvent used on aircraft. As a result, the Air Force completed a groundwater sampling project at 30 key wells to determine if there are levels of TCP above the new MCL. The results confirmed the presence of TCP in a few locations. An expanded sampling project will now be performed across McClellan's network of sampling wells to determine if additional plumes of TCP are present. Then further decisions will be made on the best approach to comply with the new cleanup standard.

The Air Force has completed a Preliminary Assessment and Site Investigation at McClellan for the presence of Perfluorooctane

Sulfonate (PFOS) and Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA), chemical compounds historically found in aircraft fire-fighting foam. Results revealed the presence of these chemicals above screening levels at four soil sites, and nine locations in groundwater. The next step in the CERCLA process is to conduct a Remedial Investigation (RI) and Feasibility Study (FS) at these identified areas and determine necessary remedial actions. The Air Force may take an early removal action at the soil sites, excavating the soil and placing it in the Consolidation Unit (CU) while the CU is open and has the capacity to receive this soil.

There is no immediate impact to drinking water, as restrictions are in place to prevent the use of groundwater beneath McClellan. There is no exposure to workers or the public.

## PROPERTY TRANSFER UPDATE

The Air Force recently signed property transfer deeds for two lots adjacent to Magpie Creek near Building 690. Lots 149e and 159d are close to being transferred, with Sacramento County working to complete the process. Once transferred, the lots will be

a part of McClellan Business Park. Seven lots, comprised of 194 acres, remain to be transferred once cleanup is completed. A total of 3458 acres have been transferred to Sacramento County and McClellan Business Park for reuse and redevelopment.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH: COMMUNITY CREEK CLEANUP EVENT HELD AT MCCLELLAN

Last fall, volunteers gathered for a Fall Creek Cleanup Event at McClellan on October 10, 2020. The long-standing spring annual Creek Week event normally held in April, sponsored by the Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, was cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

A fall cleanup event was organized in its place where volunteers could easily maintain social distancing by taking advantage of the wide open natural areas at the former base, and thus making it possible to still have a safe cleanup event.

“Unfortunately, the litter and debris that gets washed into our creeks doesn’t take a break during a pandemic, so there’s cleanup work to be done before the rainy season returns,” said Steve Mayer,

Air Force Civil Engineer Center, McClellan BRAC Environmental Coordinator, who spearheaded McClellan’s creek cleanup effort.

More than 40 jumbo trash bags and numerous large items were removed from creeks and grouped in a central location for disposal. After the event, volunteers were treated to a barbecue lunch and given event t-shirts for their hard work in helping to clean the creeks at McClellan.

Mayer added, “It was great to see the community come out and volunteer to clean up. We’re glad we were able to work with our cleanup partners to adapt during the pandemic and continue this important community tradition.”



Steve Mayer, McClellan BRAC Environmental Coordinator, in yellow vest, provides an early morning safety briefing to creek cleanup volunteers at the former McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento, CA.



McClellan Fall Creek Cleanup volunteers in 2020 worked to remove litter from creeks throughout the former base. Over 40 jumbo trash bags of litter were collected for disposal.

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