

PG&E Extracts Groundwater to Deflect Chromium Plume

In March, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), at the direction of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and a consultative working group, began operating a groundwater extraction system near its Topock natural gas compressor station near Needles, California. PG&E intends to remove a plume of hexavalent chromium (chromium VI)-contaminated groundwater. The plume, a result of historic operations, was recently detected in a well 150 feet from the Colorado River in an ongoing testing and monitoring program. One monitoring well on the leading edge of the plume has produced samples with chromium VI concentrations as high as 112 parts per billion (ppb) since June 2003. The maximum concentration of chromium VI allowed in California drinking water is 50 ppb.

PG&E considers the groundwater extraction system to be an interim measure to control the chromium plume. The company is working with the DTSC, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), and U.S. Department of Interior agencies to operate the system and monitor the interim measures, while completing a full evaluation of the site and determining the most prudent long-term course of action to complete groundwater remediation. According to *The Associated Press*, approximately 20,000 gallons per day of contaminated groundwater was being extracted and trucked to Los Angeles for disposal at a toxic waste dump.

On April 1, *AP* reported that PG&E was planning to install a larger pump, and was considering the use of chemical agents to break down the chromium in the subsurface. In addition, the company told regional water-quality officials that they could construct an underground barrier between the leading edge of the plume and the Colorado River, an option that

MWD wanted, according to *AP*. MWD is concerned that the estimated 108-million-gallon plume could reach its aqueduct on the Colorado River, as the plume was headed towards a point 42 miles upstream from the intakes for both MWD's aqueduct and Arizona's Central Arizona Project, *AP* reported; however, no chromium VI had been detected in the river as of April 1.

Visit www.pge.com or the *Los Angeles Times* (www.latimes.com) for *AP* stories.

PG&E Bankruptcy Settlement Benefits Watersheds

On April 11, 2004, PG&E emerged from Chapter 11 bankruptcy resulting from California's energy crisis. Included in the agreement between PG&E and the California Public Utilities Commission is the protection of 140,000 acres of watershed land surrounding the company's hydroelectric facilities. The land will be administered by a 16-member stewardship council comprised of representatives of state and federal agencies, conservation groups, the farm and forest industries, and water districts, according to *The San Francisco Chronicle*. Some of the land will be protected in wildlife preserves, and some will be developed for active recreation. PG&E customers will contribute \$100 million over 10 years for management costs. Of that, \$20 million will go toward planning, \$50 million to rehabilitation and improvements, and \$30 million to urban youth outdoor programs, the *Chronicle* reported.

Visit www.pge.com and www.sfchron.com.

Exxon Mobil to Pay Millions in CA Water Cleanup

Article originally appeared in *Water Tech Online*, March 26, 2004

Communities for a Better Environment (CBE), a California nonprofit environmental health and justice organization, announced that a multi-million-dollar settlement had been reached with Exxon Mobil Corp. over groundwater contamination in California.

The settlement is the first in CBE's multimillion-dollar lawsuit seeking to force the oil industry to clean up more than 1,000 underground storage tanks and refinery leaks, which CBE claims are responsible for contaminating potential sources of drinking water throughout California.

Among other provisions in the settlement, Exxon Mobil has agreed to: install and maintain remote fuel monitoring systems at all California ExxonMobil gas stations; implement a five-year program to inspect each underground storage tank system at its California gas stations at least three times; replace all underground storage tank systems at the California stations that have single-wall tanks and lines with double-wall versions; and conduct monthly inspections of above-ground pipes and storage tanks at its Torrance refinery and three other terminals.

Visit www.watertechonline.com and www.cbecal.org.

Instrumentation Specialists

Toll Free: (800) 948-6236

Products & Services:

- ✦ Water Quality Sondes
- ✦ Water Quality Meters
- ✦ Evaporation Monitoring
- ✦ Level & Flow (Sensors & Meters)
- ✦ Irrigation Control Systems
- ✦ Dataloggers
- ✦ Weather Stations
- ✦ SCADA Systems
- ✦ Flumes (Steel & Fiberglass)
- ✦ Fiberglass Shelters
- ✦ Calibration Solutions

We Distribute for:

- Campbell Scientific
- Onset Computers (HOBO)
- WeatherHawk
- Hydrolab
- In-Situ (Troll Products)
- Oakton (Cole-Parmer)
- And many more ...

Rentals Available

info@inmtn.com

Visit our Website

<http://www.inmtn.com>