

# COMPANY LINE

## 15 CA Companies Fined for Groundwater Pollution

From the San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority

Fifteen groundwater polluters in the South El Monte area east of Los Angeles have been fined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for groundwater contamination. The polluters include Aerojet-General Corporation, Allegheny Technology Inc./TDY Industries Inc., Astro Seal Inc., Chevron Research and Technology Co./Chevron USA, CraneVeyor Corp., Art Weiss/Del Ray Industrial Enterprises Inc., Shelly Linderman/The Linderman Living Trust, M&T Company, Mammoet Western Inc., Plastic Engineered Components Inc. dba L.A. Die Mold Inc., Quaker Chemical Corporation, Seachrome Corporation, Time Realty Investments Inc., Tonks Properties, and Jack Barry Zwahlen Family Trust.

The companies were notified by the EPA that they were in violation of the agency's August 2003 cleanup order because they had failed to negotiate a cleanup settlement. A May 20 letter from EPA told the polluters that negotiation and mediation efforts by the EPA had been terminated after the polluters submitted a settlement proposal on May 7 that the EPA described as "inadequate to discharge the [cleanup] obligations."

The letter said each polluter's case would be referred to the U.S. Department of

Justice for legal action. Under the federal Superfund cleanup law, the EPA said, each polluter could now be liable for triple the actual cleanup costs and for daily fines of up to \$32,500 per day effective May 7.

An EPA order last year gave the responsible parties in the area the opportunity to settle lawsuits with local agencies for cleanup costs and meet their federal Superfund obligations at the same time. Sixteen other parties have already settled, and an additional five have made good faith offers and are in the process of negotiating settlements.

The South El Monte-Monterey Park area is one of several areas in the San Gabriel Valley that were placed on the federal Superfund cleanup list in 1984 because of industrial contaminants found in the underground water supply. It took decades of investigation by federal and state authorities to identify the responsible parties. Meanwhile, plumes of contamination continued to move underground, forcing closure of dozens of public water supply wells.

The San Gabriel Basin Water Quality Authority (WQA) was created by the state Legislature to coordinate and accelerate the cleanup and preserve the public water supply during the federal Superfund investigation. The EPA was criticized by local officials in the late 1990s for not getting tough with the polluters, but the pace of the federal cleanup has accelerated in recent years.

In an unprecedented display of cooperation with local water authorities, EPA issued an order in August 2003 giving polluters in the South El Monte-Monterey Park area the option of meeting their federal cleanup obligations through a partnership with local water agencies, including the WQA, the City of Monterey Park, the San Gabriel Valley Water Company, and the Southern California Water Company. These water entities already have constructed millions of dollars in cleanup facilities, and they have collectively filed suit against the polluters for approximately \$100 million in cleanup costs.

Visit [www.wqa.com](http://www.wqa.com).

## Motzz Laboratories Opens in Phoenix

Motzz Laboratories, specializing in inorganic soil, water, and plant analyses, opened in April 2004 in Tempe, Arizona. Soil services include elemental testing such as sulfate and chloride analyses, textural analysis by hydrometer, and pH and agronomy-related tests. Water analyses include major cations and anions. Plant, fertilizer, and mulch analyses are primarily geared towards the growing of turf, landscape plants, and agricultural crops.

The laboratory is owned and managed by Vicki Normandin and Thelma Sadang. Both have extensive experience in laboratory analytical methods pertaining to physical soil tests and inorganic analyses. Normandin's education and 25 years of experience focus on soil/plant/water interactions, while Sadang's strengths and education emphasize the physical and engineering aspects of soil science.

For more information, phone 602-454-2376.

## USFilter Wins Perchlorate Removal Job

USFilter was recently awarded a contract to remove perchlorate from groundwater in the Rancho Cordova area near Sacramento, California. A Northern

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California manufacturer engaged USFilter to remove perchlorate from nearly a dozen contaminated groundwater wells over the next five years, treating 2.66 million gallons per day.

USFilter will work to limit the spread of a perchlorate plume into the surrounding community. The project will protect uncontaminated drinking water supplies for an existing housing project and a new home development. The company will use disposable ion exchange resin technologies to treat the water. Once the media has reached full capacity, the resin and captured perchlorate is thermally destroyed, preventing future recontamination.

Working with technology invented by Rohm and Haas Company of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USFilter has employed ion specific resins that remove perchlorate from water supplies contaminated with up to one part per million concentrations to below detection levels. According to USFilter, the new resins provide significant improvement over former technologies, since they reduce the operating cost of the treatment systems to below \$200 per acre-foot treated, avoid generation of contaminated brine waste, and provide substantially more total treatment capacity.

Visit [www.usfilter.com](http://www.usfilter.com).

## **SRP Sues Verde Valley Landowners for Water Theft**

In late April, the Salt River Project (SRP), a major water provider for customers in central Arizona, asked a Maricopa County judge to stop landowners in the Verde River Valley from taking more than their share of water, reported *The Arizona Republic*. The Verde provides a critical source of water for the utility. SRP accused more than a dozen landowners of illegally taking water from the Verde River, according to the paper, and the company is worried that with the combination of continued drought and illegal takings, the river could run dry before their case is heard in court. In

fact, SRP has asked the court to separate this case from a larger water rights case encompassing the Verde, Gila, and Salt rivers that has been in the courts for three decades, and to hear and rule on the Verde Valley case immediately, said the article. According to an SRP attorney, some landowners have ignored repeated orders not to take more than their share, in one case going so far as to sell parcels of land along the river with promises of irrigation, although the owner had no water rights for that land, reported *The Republic*. Most landowners contacted by the paper either had not heard about the complaints or denied the allegations.

On May 18, *The Republic* reported that the city of Phoenix had joined SRP in asking the judge to hear the claims immediately. Phoenix draws water from SRP, and holds separate rights to water from the Verde. Tom Buschatzke, Phoenix's chief water advisor, said that Phoenix gets as much

as 24 percent of its water from the Verde, said *The Republic*, and SRP has already had to reduce allocations by one-third because of the drought.

Visit [www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic](http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic) and [www.srpnet.com](http://www.srpnet.com).

## **JE Fuller/ Hydrology & Geomorphology Moves**

JE Fuller/ Hydrology & Geomorphology Inc. recently moved its Phoenix area office to 8400 S. Kyrene Road in Tempe. The company's specialized engineering services include arid land hydrology, applied fluvial geomorphology, floodplain delineation, erosion hazard analyses, sediment transport and scour, drainage master plans, impact fee analyses, drainage cost assessment, and navigability studies. JE Fuller employs 13 professionals in its Tempe and Tucson offices.

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