

Pasadena Star-News, March 18, 2009

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★ Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Work starts on water treatment plant near JPL

From staff and wire reports

PASADENA — Officials broke ground Tuesday on a water treatment plant that will remove pollutants from groundwater near NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, a federal Superfund site.

The plant, to be completed next year, will get rid of perchlorate and other chemicals. The treated water will then be disinfected and used as drinking water by about 68,000 peo-

ple in the Pasadena area.

Perchlorate is a chemical used in rocket fuel that was disposed at JPL in the 1940s and 1950s when the site was being used by the Army Air Corps.

Representatives from the city, the Environmental Protection Agency and JPL were on hand for Tuesday's groundbreaking.

"This was a major milestone for the city, to have us actually start to build

this treatment plant," said Phyllis Currie, general manager of Pasadena Water and Power. "Construction should start within 30 days, they're already doing preliminary site clearance."

The plant is scheduled to be finished by the end of next year, Currie said.

JPL was listed as a Superfund site in 1992, requiring NASA to identify the scope of the pollution and come

up with a cleanup plan.

The groundbreaking marked the beginning of construction of the Monk Hill treatment plant near the city's Windsor Reservoir, 2696 Windsor Ave.

Speakers at the event included Pasadena Mayor Bill Bogaard; Pasadena City Councilwoman Jacque Robinson, who represents District 1 where the wells are located; Currie; Dr. James Wright, deputy assistant administra-

tor for the NASA Office of Infrastructure; and Steve Slaten, NASA project manager for groundwater cleanup.

The festivities also included a tree-planting, refreshments and informative displays about the project.

NASA is funding construction and operating costs; the city will own and operate the plant.

For more information about the groundwater cleanup project, call (818) 393-0754, or visit www.jplwater.nasa.gov.