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Area Water Cleanup Plans for JPL to be Discussed at Public Meetings

Pasadena, CA -- NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory groundwater cleanup plans and area water quality issues that may affect a source of the region's drinking water will be discussed at public meetings. These open meetings will be on Tuesday, January 27, at 7:30 – 9:00 p.m., at the Charles W. Eliot Middle School, 2184 N. Lake Ave. in Altadena and on Wednesday, January 28, 2004, at 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m., at John Muir High School, 1905 N. Lincoln Avenue in Pasadena. NASA, Lincoln Avenue Water Company and Pasadena Water and Power will sponsor the meetings. A Spanish translator will be available.

NASA officials will describe two technologies under consideration to remove perchlorate from area groundwater beneath and adjacent to JPL. Both technologies have been conditionally accepted by the State of California. The selected system will operate with another process that is commonly used to remove Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from groundwater. After treatment, the clean water will be reinjected underground and later may be made available to the City of Pasadena.

"The purpose of the meetings," said Steve Slaten, NASA's Remedial Project Manager "is to keep the public involved and informed on the actions we are taking to clean up chemicals in the soil and water under and around JPL, as part of our mission to be good environmental stewards. We also are very eager to hear the local residents' questions and concerns about our activities."

The chemicals were released during the 1940s and 1950s when JPL was the site used by the U.S. Army to develop and test rockets. During that time, the Army used seepage pits to dispose of chemical wastes, a waste management practice that was common at that time. When JPL was transferred to NASA, a sewer system was installed at JPL, and the seepage pits were shut down and closed. Today, laboratory chemical wastes are either recycled or sent off-site for treatment and disposal at regulated facilities.

"The public can rest assured that local water companies deliver water that meets all standards and is safe to drink," said Slaten. "NASA is working with its neighbors and taking responsibility for cleaning up the groundwater."

To keep the public informed about its cleanup efforts, NASA has established information repositories on its overall remediation effort and invites public review and comment on any aspect of it. The repositories are located at the Altadena and La Cañada Flintridge public libraries and at the Pasadena Central Library. Materials can also be viewed on the Web at <http://JPLwater.nasa.gov> or go to www.jpl.nasa.gov and click on "NASA Water Cleanup" under Quick Links.

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