

NewsRelease

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For Release

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NASA GROUNDWATER CLEANUP PROJECT ENTERS NEW YEAR IN HIGH GEAR

NASA's Groundwater Cleanup Project at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) achieved major milestones during 2005, and it begins the new year with high expectations.

"Much of our comprehensive cleanup program has taken shape over the past 18 months," said NASA Remedial Project Manager, Steve Slaten. "We are delighted that we are entering the new year in such a positive manner, and we're especially pleased to be able to share this good news with our neighbors."

Slaten cited four major NASA groundwater cleanup project milestones:

- near completion of the cleanup on-site at JPL of soils containing volatile organic compounds;
- proposed expansion of a new on-site "source area" treatment plant removing volatile organic compounds and perchlorate;
- continued operation of a groundwater treatment plant near two Lincoln Avenue Water Company drinking water wells in Altadena removing volatile organic compounds and perchlorate;
- reaching an agreement in principle with Pasadena; the city accepted NASA's offer to fund a major groundwater treatment facility near four Pasadena Water & Power wells in the upper Arroyo Seco. The NASA-funded treatment facility, once permitted, will treat up to 7,000 gallons of water per minute.

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"I think there has been tremendous progress this year," said Managing Director of the Arroyo Seco Foundation Tim Brick. "We're glad to see NASA fulfilling its pledge and taking responsibility for cleaning up the groundwater beneath and around JPL."

Since receiving approval in 2002 to use soil vapor extraction to remove volatile organic compounds, NASA has removed more than 250 pounds of unwanted chemicals from the soil beneath JPL. The agency is nearly finished with this aspect of the cleanup.

NASA is also cleaning the groundwater in the aquifer hundreds of feet beneath JPL. Its new JPL treatment plant has removed close to 400 pounds of unwanted chemicals from the deep groundwater. A proposed expansion of the plant, which began operations in 2005, will more than double its water treatment rate to 350 gallons per minute.

The NASA-funded perchlorate treatment plant at Lincoln Avenue Water Company has been operating for 18 months. It is coupled with an existing NASA-funded system that removes volatile organic compounds. The combined plant has removed nearly 200 pounds of chemicals from Lincoln Avenue Water Company wells during the past decade.

According to Bob Hayward, General Manager of Lincoln Avenue Water Company, "The NASA-funded system has been doing its job of cleaning up the groundwater and allowing us to provide our customers with clean drinking water."

"Investigations and studies over the past several years led to a point where we can actually make real significant cleanup progress," Slaten said. "When we look back at the sum of all these activities, we can see that this has been an amazing year."

NASA also has a continuous groundwater monitoring program to evaluate the extent and movement of chemicals and clean up progress. NASA quarterly samples and analyzes groundwater from 25 monitoring wells. Many of the monitoring wells allow sampling at various depths, gathering 82 samples each period.

"We're looking forward to working with our neighbors toward the final goal of restoration of the groundwater," said Outreach Manager for NASA's Water Cleanup, Merrilee Fellows. "During the process, we want to be a good neighbor and keep the community informed about our progress."

For information about NASA's groundwater cleanup efforts on the Web visit:

<http://JPLwater.nasa.gov>