# SALTON SEA TEST BASE FACT SHEET

SOUTHEST DIVISION NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

## INTRODUCTION

This month's Salton Sea Test Base (SSTB) fact sheet provides an update on the status of the Navy's Underground Storage Tank (UST) Program. USTs at the base were used to hold gasoline and other fuels. The October 1995 fact sheet described the UST investigation which confirmed the locations of 33 tanks. These tank locations are collectively referred to as Installation Restoration Program Site 2. Several tanks and, when possible, contaminated soil, were removed during the investigation. When it was complete, all but fifteen tank locations of Site 2 were recommended for "No Further Action" (see box below). These fifteen tank locations were found to have more significant contamination and were included in the UST Mitigation Program. Federal and state laws require the Navy to remove and/or clean up all UST locations before the property can be made available for transfer.

## NO FURTHER ACTION

Based on evaluation of contaminant concentration, surrounding geology, and depth to groundwater, a decision of No Further Action is made when:

- a site is found to have no evidence of contamination,
- levels of contamination are considered low enough to pose no significant threat to human health or to the surrounding environment, or
- removal of all contamination is complete and has been confirmed.

No Further Action eventually will be recommended for SSTB as a whole when each Installation Restoration Program site has been cleaned up to regulatory satisfaction (i.e.; US Environmental Protection Agency; California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control; California Regional Water Quality Control Board; and the County of Imperial).

## Underground Storage Tank Mitigation Program

The UST Mitigation Program consists of two phases. During Phase I, ten of the fifteen remaining tanks were removed from SSTB. Six of these also required the removal of contaminated soil and groundwater for treatment off site. This included disposing of more than 3,400 tons of soil and 8,000 gallons of groundwater contaminated with spilled fuels and oil. Phase I was completed in May of this year.

As detailed in the March 1996 SSTB fact sheet, *in-situ* bioremediation was found to be feasible at several former UST sites within the Main Compound Area of SSTB where contamination was too extensive to be removed cost effectively. It was found that *in-situ* bioremediation would work successfully at these sites by stimulating naturally occurring microbes in the soil to break down, or "eat," the contamination. Begun during a Treatability Study, *in-situ* bioremediation was very successful and is in operation today.

Phase II includes the operation and maintenance of the *in-situ* bioremediation system set up at four locations during the Treatability Study, and expanding it to include the last contaminated former tank location. Groundwater and soil sampling and analysis are performed regularly to monitor cleanup progress. Air emissions are also monitored and adjustments made so that contamination to air is not caused by this cleanup process. Operation of this system will continue until cleanup goals have been met and regulatory agencies approve a decision for No Further Action. It is expected that cleanup will be completed by July 1997.

## What Happens to Contaminated Soil Removed from SSTB?

It is not always possible to make soils perfectly clean, but it is possible to reduce contamination to safe and acceptable levels. Petroleum-contaminated soil that has been excavated and taken to a permitted cleanup facility can be treated several ways so that it is not harmful to humans or the environment.

Some contaminated soils from former tank locations at SSTB are being treated using a technique known as "land farming." Using conventional farming practices, contaminated soil is tilled regularly to expose it to the air. Mixing oxygen into the soil this way breaks down harmful compounds of the contaminants.

Sometimes soils need not be treated at all. For example, some of the soils from SSTB have been taken to asphalt companies to be mixed with more petroleum products and incorporated into road paving material. This is a two-fold solution to an environmental problem as it provides a use for petroleum-contaminated soil and eliminates the need to introduce petroleum products to clean dirt in order to pave roads.

## RAB Update

The most recent meeting of the SSTB Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) included an in-depth look at the latest technical document reviewed by the public. The final Removal Site Evaluation Report for SSTB and its addendum were presented in a workshop at the Salton City Spa and RV Park on 23 October. It was a productive evening. The next RAB meeting was tentatively scheduled for 20 November, 1996 at the West Shores Senior Citizens' Center. As always, the public is invited to attend.

**Information Repositories** for the SSTB cleanup project have been established at two locations in the area so that the local community has the opportunity to review project documents and reports:

**Salton City Library**
2098 Frontage Road (Hwy 86)
Salton City, CA (619) 394-4446

Hours: Mon-Wed-Fri
8:00 AM - NOON
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**Spencer Library Media Center**
Imperial Valley College, Aten Road/Hwy 111
Imperial, CA (619) 355-6377

Hours: Mon-Thur: 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Fri: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sat: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
(except holidays)

*In addition, documents, reports, and Restoration Advisory Board meeting minutes and agendas are available at the reading room of the Salton City Spa and RV Park in Salton City. Please contact Ms. Shirley Lee Palmer at (619) 394-4333 for hours.*

## For More Information


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