



North & South Basin Groundwater Cleanup Update

SINCE 1933

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The Orange County Water District (OCWD; the District) manages and protects the Orange County Groundwater Basin that underlies north and central Orange County, from which 19 cities and retail water districts draw their water supply. OCWD implements a proactive groundwater and surface water monitoring program to protect the quality of the groundwater basin and ensure the water it provides meets all state and federal drinking water standards.

Industrial chemicals have impacted areas in the northern and southern parts of the groundwater basin: North Basin (near Fullerton, Anaheim, and Placentia) and South Basin (near Santa Ana, Tustin, and Irvine). OCWD is proactively seeking ways to clean up the pollution in a united effort with state and federal regulatory agencies.

Below is an update on activities in and around the North and South Basin sites. OCWD will continue to update stakeholders as the need arises.

North Basin

- With oversight from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), OCWD is conducting a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) to further characterize areas with elevated contaminant concentrations (the RI) and develop and evaluate alternatives (the FS) for an Interim Remedy to remediate parts of the plume that contain the highest VOC concentrations.
 - The RI Report was finalized in June 2022 and is available on both the EPA and OCWD websites (see links below).
 - In September 2022, a Draft Interim Remedy FS was submitted to EPA, several state agencies, and the cities of Fullerton and Anaheim for review. Based on review comments, additional groundwater modeling is being conducted, and a revised Draft Interim Remedy FS will be prepared. A Final FS report is expected to be available in fall or winter of 2023.
 - Following completion of the Interim Remedy FS, EPA will prepare a Proposed Remedial Action Plan (Proposed Plan) for the Interim Remedy. The Proposed Plan will be circulated for public review and comment. EPA will host a public meeting regarding the Proposed Plan.
- EPA is conducting a Comprehensive RI to investigate parts of the plume that are outside the Interim Remedy Containment Area, where additional data are needed to delineate the extent of the contamination and determine if additional remedial measures beyond the Interim Remedy will be needed.
 - To date, the EPA has installed and sampled 16 of approximately 24 monitoring wells at four of eight locations. These monitoring wells will help define the boundaries and depth of the leading edge of the contaminant plume. EPA expects to resume drilling and monitoring well construction in May 2023.
- Two state agencies, the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) and Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), are overseeing the investigation and remediation of sites where releases of contaminants occurred. The RWQCB and DTSC oversee the work by responsible parties to investigate and eliminate sources of contamination, which is key to addressing the problem.

- North Basin documents may be accessed via the OCWD and EPA websites (see links below).

South Basin

- The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) is finalized. The following activities have been done in support of the recently completed FS:
 - Technologies for potential interim remedial measures were evaluated and a draft technologies screening technical memo was prepared and submitted to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), including staff from the RWQCB, State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance, and DTSC, for review in the first quarter of 2021. Review comments were received and incorporated in the draft FS Report.
 - A numerical groundwater flow model of the South Basin area was developed and used to evaluate remedial alternatives.
 - A detailed evaluation of selected remedial alternatives technical memo, which included the groundwater modeling of alternatives, was completed and submitted to the TAC for review. Review comments were received and incorporated in the draft FS Report.
 - The draft FS report was reviewed by the TAC and the Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) in first half of 2022 and all comments were addressed in the Final FS report that was released in January 2023.
 - South Basin documents may be accessed via OCWD's website (see link below) and are also available for public review at the following locations:
 - Santa Ana Public Library, 26 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92701
 - OC Library - Heritage Park, 14361 Yale Avenue, Irvine, CA 92604
 - Tustin Public Library, 345 East Main Street, Tustin, CA 92780
- OCWD and other stakeholders provided a Groundwater Quality Protection Project update to the Delhi Community Association in Santa Ana in March 2023. The meeting was recorded, and the video is available on the [Santa Ana YouTube page](#).
- In the coming months, the District will be developing the proposed Interim Remedial Action Plan and CEQA evaluation, both of which will involve public participation.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact Roy Herndon, chief hydrogeologist at rherndon@ocwd.com or (714) 378-3260.

- EPA North Basin website: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/orange-county-north-basin>
- North Basin general information: <https://www.ocwd.com/what-we-do/water-quality/groundwater-cleanup/north-basin/>
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