



# North & South Basin Groundwater Cleanup Update

October 2023

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 (portions of Fullerton, Anaheim, Placentia, and Buena Park) and South Basin (portions of 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 Basin 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 October 2023, a Revised Draft FS was submitted to EPA, state agencies, and the Cities of Fullerton, Anaheim and Buena Park for review. Following their review, a final FS Report will be prepared, which is anticipated to be completed in December 2023 or January 2024.
- 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 available for public review and comment. Also, a public meeting will be held to present the Proposed Plan and listen to questions and comments provided by attendees. The Proposed Plan is expected to be completed in 2024.
- 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 24 monitoring wells at seven locations. These monitoring wells help define the boundaries and depth of the leading edge of the contaminant plume.
  - EPA is currently constructing four more monitoring wells at one location in Anaheim. Completion is anticipated in January 2024.
- 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.

## South Basin

- The Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) is finalized. The following activities have been done in support of the 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 the 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
- The District is currently preparing the proposed Interim Remedial Action Plan and CEQA evaluation, both of which will involve public participation.
- The Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report and Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting for the South Basin Groundwater Protection Project were sent to the State Clearinghouse, public agencies, and interested parties on October 5, 2023. Written comments on the NOP will be received by the District through 5:00 pm November 6, 2023. The NOP is available for review on the District's South Basin website (linked below).

## Additional Information

For additional information, please contact Roy Herndon, chief hydrogeologist at [rherndon@ocwd.com](mailto: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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