

Orange County Water District

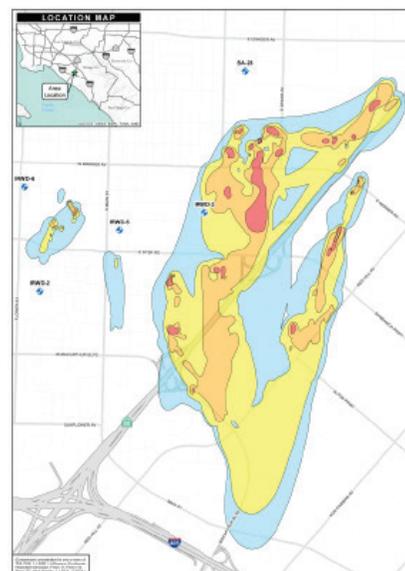
South Basin Groundwater Protection Project (SBGPP)

The Orange County Water District (OCWD) was established in 1933 by an act of the California Legislature to manage and protect the groundwater basin that underlies north and central Orange County. Nineteen cities and water agencies draw approximately 75 percent of their water supply from the groundwater basin. OCWD ensures the water it provides is safe to drink and meets or exceeds state and federal drinking water standards. A proactive groundwater and surface water monitoring program allows OCWD to identify and address water quality impacts to protect and improve groundwater quality in the basin.



SBGPP at a Glance

- Chemical contamination exists in the soil and shallow groundwater along the CA-55 corridor roughly between the I-5 and I-405 freeways within the cities of Santa Ana, Irvine, and Tustin. The groundwater contaminant plume must be controlled and cleaned up to prevent the plume from expanding and impacting the deeper parts of the aquifer that supplies drinking water wells. Failure to deal with this groundwater contamination may eventually constrain pumping and limit the availability of the local water supply, causing water agencies to purchase more costly and less reliable imported water from Northern California and the Colorado River.
- The contamination is primarily from chemicals referred to as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that were released into soil in an industrial area from the 1960's to 1980's. The VOCs consist primarily of chlorinated solvents used for cleaning parts in manufacturing operations. These VOCs have moved downward through the soil, reached the shallow groundwater, and have spread both laterally and vertically in the groundwater.
- OCWD is conducting a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) with the goal of containing and cleaning up the contamination. The now-completed Remedial Investigation found that the groundwater contaminant plume occurs over an area at least 2.5 miles in length from north to south and 1.2 miles in width from east to west.

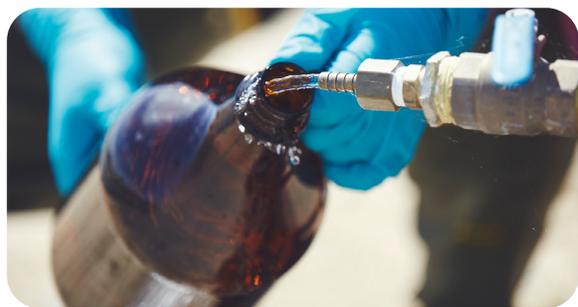


Cleanup Strategy

- The parties responsible for the contamination are investigating and, in some cases, cleaning up contamination under their properties with regulatory oversight being provided by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). OCWD is coordinating closely with both the DTSC and RWQCB on cleanup efforts.
- OCWD brought a lawsuit against non-cooperative responsible parties seeking court orders that require them to reimburse OCWD for its costs to investigate and clean up their contamination.
- The ongoing Feasibility Study being conducted by OCWD is evaluating alternative measures to contain and clean up the groundwater contamination. It is estimated to be completed in early 2022. OCWD will then present its proposed groundwater cleanup plan to the public, regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders for their review and input.

Your Water is Safe to Drink

Stringent and ongoing testing by OCWD of hundreds of monitoring wells and all drinking water wells assures that your water supply meets all drinking water standards. To date, one South Basin water well has been put on standby status because of contaminant detections.



Paying for the Cleanup

OCWD is using its funds to address the contamination not being addressed by responsible parties. However, to reduce impacts to water ratepayers, OCWD brought a lawsuit against responsible parties seeking reimbursement for OCWD's costs to investigate and clean up their contamination. OCWD has also received approximately \$1,400,000 in California Proposition 1 grant funding to offset some the RI/FS costs.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

OCWD is conducting informational briefings with cities, community groups, service organizations and others. If you have any questions or concerns about the SBGPP, please contact the OCWD hotline at (714) 378-8244.

For more information about the SBGPP, visit
<https://www.ocwd.com/what-we-do/water-quality/groundwater-cleanup/south-basin/>