California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Toxic Substances Control

ASCON SITE
UPCOMING PILOT TESTING

Fact Sheet #5 **October 1999**

INTRODUCTION

The Ascon Landfill Site is a vacant 38-acre parcel at the southwest corner of Hamilton Avenue and Magnolia Street in Huntington Beach (Figures 1 and 2). As part of an ongoing study to determine the best cleanup alternative, the second of two onsite pilot-scale tests is planned for mid October 1999. This fact sheet includes information on the first and second pilot study, the site history and how the public can participate in Ascon's cleanup.

BACKGROUND

The California Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), has signed a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement (VCA) with California/Nevada Developments, LLC (CND), formerly Savannah Resources Corporation. Under this VCA, the DTSC is overseeing CND's efforts to develop a plan for the cleanup of the Ascon Site. A new VCA or Consent Order will be required for the actual cleanup activities in the future. Further detail regarding the VCA was outlined in Fact Sheet #4 dated March 1999. This document is available at the public respositories (for locations see fact sheet article "Information Repository").

PROJECT UPDATE

Results of Pilot Test 1: On March 29, 1999, pilot-scale testing occurred at the site. Representatives of the DTSC, city Fire Department, and other agencies were onsite throughout the day. The purpose of the testing was to: 1) closely monitor air emissions during trial excavations in three lagoons, and 2) evaluate solvent extraction process on liquid waste.

Prior to going into the field, very conservative action levels were established for air emissions. Site workers were informed that if the levels were exceeded, site activities would stop. None of the site specific levels came close to being exceeded.

During the limited excavations, real-time air measurements of volatile organic compounds were taken. Measurements were recorded immediately above the excavated material, other areas of the site and along the downwind site perimeter. These field instruments provided workers with instantaneous data to control the site activities.

Air and particulate sampling was also conducted for offsite laboratory analysis. (The laboratory analyses have lower detection limits than the field measurement instruments and also have the ability to identify specific compounds unlike the field instruments.) The laboratory analytical results indicated that although various compounds were detected, the concentrations were orders of magnitude lower than the allowable* perimeter exposure levels that are protective of human health.

Testing to evaluate the effectiveness of solvent extraction on the liquid material from Lagoons 1 and 2 was generally successful. The Pilot Test 1 showed that, if this remedy is included with the final clean up technology, some adjustment and refinement of the process would be required for optimal effectiveness.

Pilot Test 2: The second pilot test, proposed for mid October, will occur during a 4 to 5-day period. Similar to Pilot Test 1, the purpose of this test is to: 1) closely monitor air emissions during excavation and stabilization activities, and 2) evaluate the effectiveness of the stabilization process on the major types of site wastes (drilling muds and petroleum-impacted soil). This test will be performed on materials collected from various onsite locations. Air emissions will be monitored, sampled and analyzed.

Stabilization involves adding cementing agents to the waste material. These agents react with the moisture in the waste material and bond with the solids forming a material with significantly increased strength and decreased leachability potential (i.e., reduces the ability for water to flush chemicals out of the material). The reaction can generate some heat, which conceivably could drive volatile compounds out of the waste material. Similar to the first Pilot Test, air emissions will be monitored. If emissions reach the conservative emissions levels, work will be halted and safety measures will be implemented.

To find the recipe (or mix) that yields the maximum strength and decreased leachability potential, various mix designs will be evaluated. The physical and chemical properties of the resultant product types will be evaluated and compared. If stabilization is chosen as the final cleanup technology, this information will provide guidance to the full-scale stabilization operation.

The results will be summarized in a future Fact Sheet and presented in their entirety in a Feasibility Study Report Appendix.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Feasibility Study will be revised to include a discussion of the Pilot Studies and added detail regarding the styrene pit(s). The document will be submitted to DTSC for review, comment and approval. While this report is in a review and approval cycle, the draft Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and environmental impact assessment documents will be prepared.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITY

The draft RAP is an important public document that educates the community about the preferred cleanup technology and provides them with an opportunity to participate in the cleanup decision. The draft RAP includes a: summary of the site investigation (Remedial Investigation), discussion of cleanup technologies evaluated (Feasibility Study), Health Risk Assessment, identifies the preferred cleanup method and states how the community can participate in the cleanup decision. This information will be summarized in a fact sheet, which will be mailed to everyone on the project mailing list.

The draft RAP will be circulated for a 30 day public review and comment following DTSC's approval of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) documents. A community meeting will also be held during the comment period. After the close of the public comment period, DTSC will evaluate the comments received. Based upon comments received, the documents may be modified. Written responses will be created for each written comment received. These responses and comments will form the Responsiveness Summary. This document will be sent to everyone who submitted comments.

OVERVIEW OF SITE HISTORY

The Ascon site operated as an active dump from approximately 1938 through 1984. In the early years of operation, much of the waste came from oil drilling operations. This includes drilling muds, wastewater brines and other drilling wastes. Records indicate that from 1957 to 1971, chromic acid, sulfuric acid, aluminum slag, fuel oils, styrene (a form of plastic) and other wastes were received by site operators and deposited onsite. From 1971 to 1984, material deposited onsite included inert solid wastes such as asphalt, concrete, metal, soil and wood.

Ascon Properties, Inc. purchased the site in 1984. The company was unsuccessful in attempts to utilize the property and went bankrupt in 1989. NESI Investment Group obtained ownership through a foreclosure sale. NESI prepared to remove some of the oily liquids from the onsite lagoons in December 1991. They were ordered to halt removal work in March 1992 after being informed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District about the need for proper air quality permits. The air permits were issued in August 1992, but NESI did not re-start the liquid removal plan. NESI filed for bankruptcy in January 1993.

* The allowable levels are based on U.S. Public Health Service, Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry Minimum Risk Levels for acute or intermediate exposures and on Cal EPA of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment Reference Exposure Levels.

In May 1993, the property was transferred to Signal Mortgage Company of Long Beach by way of foreclosure proceedings against NESI. In November 1995, Signal Mortgage Company entered into an agreement with CND to work with the DTSC on the RI/FS and RAP for the Ascon site. CND signed a voluntary cleanup agreement in May 1996 for DTSC supervision, review and approval of the RI/FS, RAP and associated documents for the site.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION POLICY

DTSC has a Public Participation policy to ensure effective two-way communication between the public and the DTSC throughout the course of each project. Past public participation activities on the Ascon site have included fact sheets and other mailings, as well as meetings with the public and the citizens' Ad Hoc Committee (the Committee was formed in the mid-1980s). These public outreach activities, and others that may be suggested by the public, will be continued as site work progresses.

Two public information repositories are established in the area. They hold various documents associated to this site. We encourage the public to review these. Additionally, we welcome your questions and concerns at any time.

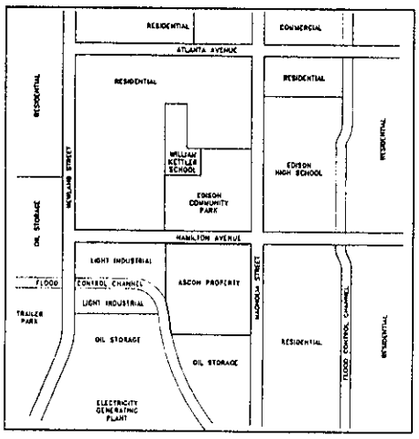

Figure 1

INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

Huntington Beach Public Libraries

Central Park Main Library
Cultural and Information Center
7111 Talbert Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA
(714) 842-4481

Banning Annex
9281 Banning Avenue
Huntington Beach, CA
(714) 375-5005

PROJECT CONTACTS

California/Nevada Developments, LLC

- Marina Robertson, Project Manager
  (562) 430-4354 ext. 108

Department of Toxic Substances Control

- Marsha Mingay, Public Participation Specialist
  (714) 484-5416
- Christine Chiu, Interim Project Manager
  (714) 484-5470

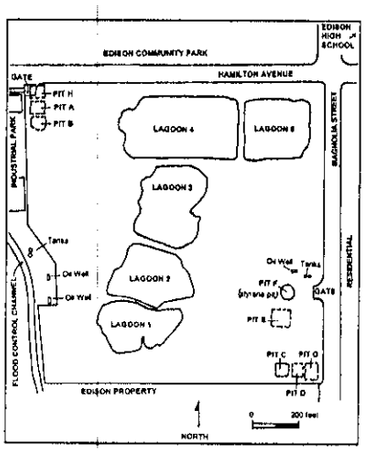

Figure 2

ASCON – Mailing Coupon

If you are not currently on the Ascon mailing list and wish to be added, please fill out the attached coupon and mail to:

Ms. Marsha Mingay
DTSC
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

☐ Please place me on the mailing list to receive all future material and notifications.

☐ Please remove my name from the mailing list.

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

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Comments _____

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ATTENTION:
Update on Cleanup and Planning
for Former Ascon Landfill Site

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, California 90630