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# CleanUpdate

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October 2010

## DOE reaches Agreement in Principle with DTSC

Greetings to the SSFL community:

We at the Department of Energy (DOE) are pleased that we have achieved a conceptual agreement for cleanup of the DOE portion of the Santa Susana Field Lab site.

The revised Consent Order would commit the Department to cleaning the soil to background levels of contamination, as determined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) for radioactive materials and the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) for chemicals.



Dr. Inés Triay

By putting to one side unresolved legal issues and working together, we have found a framework that would result in an enforceable consent order. This is indeed a breakthrough, and we anticipate moving forward to receiving public input, swiftly completing the consent order, and implementing its provisions. To read the full agreement, please visit [http://www.dtsc-ssf.com/files/lib\\_correspond/agreements//64704\\_FINAL\\_DOE\\_Agreement\\_in\\_Principle.pdf](http://www.dtsc-ssf.com/files/lib_correspond/agreements//64704_FINAL_DOE_Agreement_in_Principle.pdf).

Dr. Inés Triay, DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management

## DOE invites community to meeting on co-located chemical soil sampling

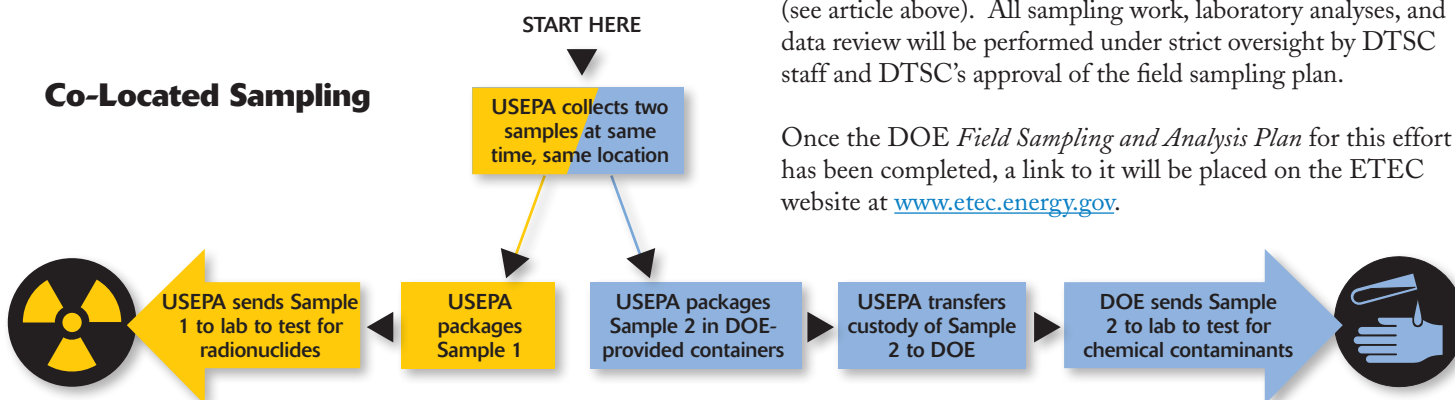
DOE plans to hold a community meeting to discuss the concept of “co-located chemical sampling” and the associated field sampling plan, from 1 to 4 pm on October 12, 2010 at the Radisson in Chatsworth.

To take advantage of USEPA’s radionuclide soil sampling program scheduled to start on October 18th, DTSC and DOE have agreed to have the USEPA collect additional soil to be analyzed for chemicals. This will allow DTSC and DOE to evaluate whether locations exhibiting contamination by radionuclides also exhibit contamination by chemicals.

Termed “co-located samples,” the samples will be collected at the same locations and at the same time as the USEPA samples. USEPA will select the sample locations, with input from DTSC and the community. USEPA will then collect two sets of soil samples, one set for its radionuclide studies, and the other set, to be placed in containers provided by DOE’s contractor, for chemical analysis.

DOE’s contractor will then prepare the samples for shipment to a laboratory approved by DTSC. In addition, DOE has agreed to have the samples analyzed for the lowest possible laboratory reporting limits, consistent with the Agreement in Principle (see article above). All sampling work, laboratory analyses, and data review will be performed under strict oversight by DTSC staff and DTSC’s approval of the field sampling plan.

Once the DOE *Field Sampling and Analysis Plan* for this effort has been completed, a link to it will be placed on the ETEC website at [www.etc.energy.gov](http://www.etc.energy.gov).



**Greetings to the SSFL community:**

Our major effort this summer has been conducting interviews with former Area IV workers, and we are happy to report that these interviews are nearing completion. We want to thank the 120-plus individuals who agreed to be interviewed and the USEPA for the collaborative approach on interviews we conducted together. We believe readers would be interested in some statistics about the interviewees. See the article on page 3. Once our interview team has written up the results, we will make them available on the ETEC website.

Meanwhile, Area IV studies continue on several fronts:

- The USEPA has completed their first round of groundwater sampling for radionuclides; gamma scanning of two portions of Area IV; and vegetation cutting of a larger area in advance of continued gamma scanning.
- We completed soil sampling for chemicals at the Group 6 RFI sites in September. See item below.
- DTSC has released the sampling plan for the chemical background study. More on page 4.
- Finally, we are developing a sampling plan for radionuclides in remaining buildings and paving in Area IV. This effort will complement the USEPA's gamma walkover and radiological survey of soil and groundwater. We will hold a public comment period and encourage members of the public to comment on the building sampling plan when it has been completed, some time this year.

Sincerely,



William H. Backous, P.E., ETEC Federal Project Director



Stephie Jennings, DOE NEPA Document Manager



**Additional soil sampling for chemicals completed.** DOE completed soil sampling for chemical contaminants at the Old Conservation Yard and Building 064 Leach Field in September. These facilities were identified under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) as RCRA Facility Investigation Sites.

The photo above left shows soil sampling at the Old DOE Conservation Yard using a Geoprobe® 6600 truck and a Macro-Core® sampler, which provides 4-foot long continuous core samples. Below left, contractors prepare soil samples.

# Former worker interviews nearing completion

DOE and USEPA have nearly completed interviews with more than 120 former workers at the SSFL. While it is premature to draw any conclusions about what we have learned, DOE would like to share some statistics about the interviewees and the process:

- The earliest employment start date for any interviewee was 1950; the latest was 1995. Interviewees worked at SSFL between 1 and 51 years. Interviewers are not asking how old they are, but the oldest one who interviewers know about is 97.
- Interviewees' jobs at SSFL included: photographer, engineer, maintenance worker, physicist, designer, quality assurance, manager, truck driver, shipping clerk, technical staff, secretary, mechanic, bench machinist, purchasing, medical director, contracting, draftsman, law enforcement, staff scientist, metallurgist.
- Interviewees now reside in 16 states: CA, WA, OR, ID, NV, AZ, NM, TX, WY, CO, GA, FL, NC, MD, MO, MI.

- Of the people who agreed to be interviewed, 2 chose to be interviewed by USEPA alone, 18 by both DOE and EPA, and the rest by DOE alone.

Interview questions focus on how chemical and radioactive materials were handled (including any knowledge of how and where they were disposed of), how activities were documented, how worker health and safety were protected, how workers were trained and their performance was supervised, and knowledge about specific known locations within Area IV. In addition, workers are invited to share any other information they think relevant about working at SSFL.

Any information about radiological contamination is forwarded to USEPA for use in the radiological survey. DOE uses any information about chemical contamination in its studies of chemical contaminants.

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## Looking out for a rare butterfly...

An important element in any cleanup is to make sure that it doesn't cause damage to threatened or endangered species. This spring in Area IV, one of our biologists observed several California plantains (*Plantago erecta*), a tiny, short-lived plant that is the primary host plant for Quino Checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*) larvae.

Our biologist had a habitat assessment conducted by a permitted expert to determine the likelihood of the Quino Checkerspot butterfly, an endangered species, being present in Area IV.

No evidence of the butterfly was found. The potential for its presence on site was judged to be unlikely due to the

scarcity of the host plant, its distribution in very small, scattered patches on site, and the long distance to the nearest populations of Quino Checkerspot documented in recent years. This leads to the conclusion that the rare butterfly won't be in harm's way as site investigations and cleanup proceed. Readers may review his report at this [http://www.etc.energy.gov/EIS/Documents/Quino\\_Butterfly\\_Report.pdf](http://www.etc.energy.gov/EIS/Documents/Quino_Butterfly_Report.pdf).

For an additional close-up photo of the California plantain, see the upper right corner of page 1. Our thanks to Michael Charters ([www.calflora.net](http://www.calflora.net)) for permission to use this photo.

**This close-up of the California plantain** is set against a hillside of the plantain in its natural habitat.



## Draft Soil Background Sampling Plan released

DTSC has posted on its website the *Draft Sampling and Analysis Plan for the Chemical Soil Background Study (SAP for Chemical Soil Background)*. The *SAP for Chemical Soil Background* describes proposed activities to investigate chemicals in soil and sediment near the SSFL to establish “background concentrations” of these chemicals

The purpose of this chemical soil background study is to establish a regulatory agency-approved, publicly-reviewed, and technically-defensible set of data on the chemical background of soils in the geographic area around SSFL to be used as a reference for SSFL environmental programs.

DTSC invited public review and comments on the *SAP for Chemical Soil Background*, which were due September 30.

The *SAP for Chemical Soil Background* is located on the DTSC website at [http://www.dtsc-ssfl.com/files/lib\\_cbs/workplan/64677\\_DRAFTChemicalBackgroundStudyWorkplan.pdf](http://www.dtsc-ssfl.com/files/lib_cbs/workplan/64677_DRAFTChemicalBackgroundStudyWorkplan.pdf)

## SSFL parties offer site tours to community

DOE, NASA, and Boeing are jointly offering SSFL site tours approximately once a month on a Saturday. Here, visitors learn about the former Sodium Reactor Experiment during the August tour. Anyone interested in taking a tour of the SSFL is invited to send a message to [EETEC-Energy@emcbc.doe.gov](mailto:ETEC-Energy@emcbc.doe.gov) or call Debbie Kramer at 818 466 8898.



### For more information

<http://www.etec.energy.gov/>

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### Have email? Get connected!

To receive the **CleanUpDate** and other SSFL news by email, send your email address to: [EETEC-Energy@emcbc.doe.gov](mailto:EETEC-Energy@emcbc.doe.gov).



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