



Site Investigation Continues

FACT SHEET, May 2005

Investigation planned for groundwater below Gratts Elementary School

An investigation will soon be under way to determine the effectiveness of the groundwater and soil vapor treatment system (system) that has been operating for a decade at the Evelyn Gratts Elementary School (Gratts), located at 309 Lucas Avenue, in Los Angeles, California. The investigation will evaluate the effectiveness of the system and alternative methods for cleaning up remaining contamination in the groundwater and soil. This investigation is part of the continuing environmental studies at the school being conducted by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) under the oversight of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). DTSC is the state regulatory agency which oversees site investigations and cleanups of school sites throughout California.

Environmental Conditions at the School

Previous environmental investigations found that the soil and groundwater beneath the school property contained petroleum products and industrial solvents, left over from prior commercial businesses, automotive painting and maintenance businesses on the site prior to building the school. Before the school was constructed, a system was installed onsite to cleanup contaminated groundwater and soil. In addition, a barrier was placed beneath the school buildings to prevent any movement of vapor into these buildings.

Evaluation of the site occurred over several years. An extensive soil investigation that concluded in 2002, found that the chemicals were not getting inside the buildings or to the surface anywhere at the school. A health risk assessment study was conducted to evaluate the risks to the students, faculty and the community from the contaminants. The health risk study concluded that Gratts was safe for students, faculty, staff, and the community. The only remaining concerns are:

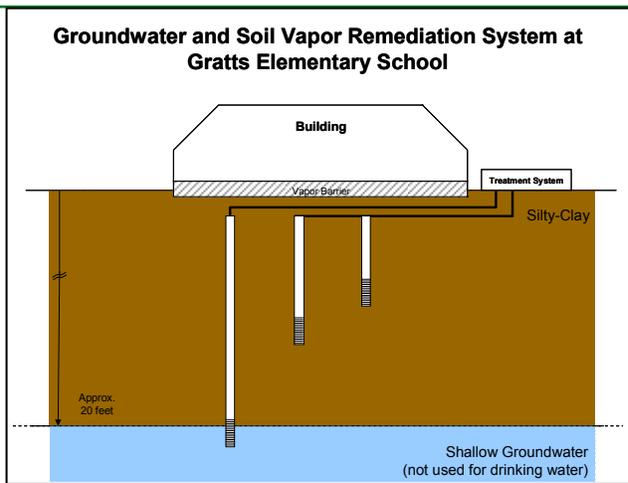
- To determine the extent of the contamination in the groundwater and its remaining risk to the environment;
- To evaluate the efficiency of the current treatment system; and
- To evaluate other methods to continue cleanup.

It is important to know that the groundwater under Gratts is not a source of drinking water for anyone. Drinking water for Gratts Elementary School and the surrounding community comes from the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power sources hundreds of miles away. The drinking water at Gratts is safe for everyone to drink.

Evaluating the Cleanup System's Effectiveness

The groundwater and soil cleanup system at Gratts has been in operation for approximately 10 years. The current Gratts cleanup system consists of two treatment units: A Groundwater Extraction and Treatment Unit and a Soil Vapor Extraction Unit (SVE). The combined system draws and removes contaminants from the soil and groundwater.





Soil vapor extraction systems draw chemicals in vapor form out of the soil and groundwater, and clean the contamination from the vapor before releasing it into the air. As added protection Gratts has a dual SVE and groundwater treatment system, which also filters the water in the groundwater table.

The treatment system at Gratts has safely cleaned over 38,000 pounds of chemicals from soil and groundwater on the property. However, in order to evaluate its effectiveness, the system will be turned off for three months. The system needs to be shut down for a period of time to study soil and groundwater impacts when the system is not running. The investigation results will be used to develop remedial action objectives. *Shutting down the system will not pose a threat to the safety of the children, faculty, staff or the community.* Soil gas levels will be monitored while the treatment system is shut down. The system is scheduled to be turned-off in May for a period of three months. If the periodic monitoring detects contaminated gas at the ground surface at levels that could pose a health risk, the system would be turned back on.

Upcoming Activities

As part of the treatment system evaluation, five soil vapor probes will be installed on the school grounds in May to evaluate gas contamination levels. The probes will be installed during the hours when the children are not in school and on weekends. Additionally, to determine whether the contamination has spread offsite, a total of four groundwater monitoring wells are planned, three of which have been installed on nearby streets. Two groundwater monitoring wells were installed on the 300 and 400 blocks of Witmer Street and one was installed on the 300 block of Columbia Avenue. The fourth groundwater monitoring well will be installed in May, probably on Witmer Street.

These installation activities will be completed in May 2005. Efforts will be made to minimize noise and traffic disruptions. A work notice with more detail was distributed to the neighborhood adjacent to the work

areas. Any subsequent monitoring activities on school grounds will be conducted during the hours when the children are not in school. Upon completion of the evaluation, a report will be issued summarizing the findings and providing recommendations on the effectiveness of the groundwater treatment system.

Where to Get More Information?

LAUSD and DTSC are committed to keeping all parties informed on the status of the environmental cleanup at Gratts. If you would like more information on this investigation, the Gratts Elementary School Groundwater Remedial Investigation Workplan (treatment evaluation plan) describes in detail the activities necessary to install the monitoring wells and evaluate the treatment system. This workplan and other site related documents including the Public Participation Plan Update 2005 are available for your viewing at the following locations:

Echo Park Branch Library

1410 W. Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(213) 250-7808

Gratts Elementary School Administration Office

309 Lucas Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 250-2932

Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health & Safety
333 S. Beaudry Avenue, 20th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
(213) 633-8242

Department of Toxic Substances Control

Regional Records Office
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630
(714) 484-5337

Web Links

More detailed information on how soil vapor extraction systems operate can be found at this Web site: <http://sve.ucdavis.edu/index.htm>. You can learn more about how DTSC evaluates health risks on the DTSC Web site at: http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/ScienceTechnology/HERD_FL_Y_Overview.html. For more information about DTSC, see our Web site at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

For More Information

If you have any questions about the workplan or other project activities, please contact:

Mr. Amit Pathak, DTSC Project Manager, at (714) 484-5468

Ms. Treva Miller, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (818) 551-2846

Ms. Jeanne Garcia, Media Contact, at (818) 551-2176

LAUSD Representative:

Mr. Christer Loftenius, LAUSD Environmental Assessment Coordinator at (213) 241-3930

Notice to Hearing-Impaired Individuals

You can obtain additional information about the Site by using the California State Relay Service at (888) 877-5378 (TDD) to reach Treva Miller, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (818) 551-2846.

**GRATTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Site Location Map**

