

April 2005

DTSC is one of six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. The Department's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.

State of California



California  
Environmental  
Protection Agency



## Wyle Labs recent offsite sampling results and site update



This fact sheet is an update on the ongoing investigation and cleanup at and around the Wyle Laboratories, Inc. site at 1841 Hillside Avenue in Norco, California. Wyle is a 429-acre former defense and aerospace testing facility that operated on the site from the late 1950s until 2004. Wyle's activities resulted in the release of hazardous chemicals into the soil and groundwater on the site. The purpose of the investigation is to find and clean up chemicals that have leaked into the soil and groundwater, and in some cases have moved offsite into the surrounding community. Included in this fact sheet is news about:

- ✓ The latest offsite sampling results
- ✓ The full-scale program of soil and groundwater sampling both on and offsite, which began this month.
- ✓ Development of a cleanup plan for the area northwest of the site, on Golden West Lane, Hillside Avenue, and Third Street
- ✓ Upcoming activities

Our agency is the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). DTSC's mission is to protect human health and the environment by overseeing the investigation and cleanup of the site. Former site owner Wyle Laboratories is paying for the testing and cleanup. They have hired the contracting firm Environ

### Community Meeting April 26, 2005

Open House: 6-7 p.m.  
Presentation: 7 p.m.

Corona-Norco Unified  
School District  
2820 Clark Avenue, Norco  
Learning Center South  
meeting room

*For information on accessibility (wheelchair ramps, etc.) or to request a reasonable accommodation (such as translation or sign language interpretation), please call Kim Foreman at (714) 484-5324 at least one week in advance of the meeting.*

to perform the work, with our close supervision.

### Solvents and perchlorate the main concerns

The main chemicals of concern at this site are a cleaning solvent called TCE (trichloroethene) and the rocket fuel component perchlorate. TCE is a liquid that can seep down to the groundwater, and can also turn to vapor ("soil gas") and move through the soil. TCE may cause health problems if consumed in water, or inhaled as soil gas in high concentrations over many years. Perchlorate does not turn to vapor, but can cause health problems if consumed in water or in fruits and vegetables irrigated with water containing perchlorate.

The Wyle investigation includes tests for many other chemicals, but TCE and perchlorate are the main concerns we've found so far at this site.

## **Brief history of the investigation**

Beginning in February 2004, we sampled the groundwater and soil gas around the boundary of the Wyle property to find where chemicals might be moving offsite. TCE and perchlorate were found near the area of Golden West Lane, on the northwest boundary (see map on last page). Follow-up sampling done in that neighborhood found TCE in the groundwater, the soil gas, and inside one home. (Wyle has installed a ventilation system that is successfully clearing the vapors from that home.) We have continued sampling farther out from this area to see how far the contamination has spread. These tests included soil, soil gas, and groundwater. We also sampled a private well at a residence on the corner of Hillside and Third Street, and found high levels of TCE. This well was not used for drinking water.

In actions taken earlier in the investigation, we had Wyle install a cleanup system to remove TCE and other chemicals from the soil and groundwater in a known source area on the Wyle property. This contamination was found in earlier tests done on the site. That cleanup system has been in operation since April 2004.

The rest of this fact sheet focuses on the latest investigation results. For more information on past site activities, you can check our website, call or email us, or look at reports in two information repositories. Contact information is on page 5 of this fact sheet.

## **No TCE found in latest private well sampling; perchlorate found in one sample**

In March 2005 we took water samples from two private wells (see map on last page) used for irrigation by the property owners. One of them was also used for drinking. The well at a home on Hillside Avenue used for drinking showed no perchlorate or TCE, and no other chemicals of concern. The second well, located on First Street and used only for irrigation, contains low levels of TCE (3.3 parts per billion, also referred to as micrograms per liter) and also perchlorate at 27 parts per billion.

The State of California Drinking Water Standard, or Maximum Contaminant Level, is 5 parts per billion for TCE. The California Department of Health Services Action Level for perchlorate in drinking water is 6 parts per billion. (The well water containing the TCE and perchlorate is **not** used for drinking.)

The sampling is part of an effort to find out whether chemicals from Wyle have affected private wells near the site. In December 2004 DTSC mailed out a survey to residents near the Wyle property to find private wells. The responses included eight residents who said they had wells on their property. The two wells sampled in March 2005 were from this group. The rest of the eight wells were inaccessible or the owners did not respond to requests to test them.

We recommend not using water from any private wells near Wyle's boundary, until we can find out whether they are affected by Wyle-related contaminants.

## **Norco tap water not from wells near Wyle property**

The private wells are not a source for Norco tap water. The Norco drinking water supply comes from deep municipal wells several miles away from the Wyle site. The City tests this water regularly for many chemicals, including TCE and perchlorate. They also test for other contaminants such as nitrates.

## **No chemicals found in four “seepage” areas**

In March 2005 DTSC tested the water coming to the surface in four spots along Hillside Avenue (see map on last page). The goal was to see if contaminated groundwater was seeping to the surface after the recent heavy rainfall. A reported seep on Raquel Road turned out to be a leak from a buried pipe, and was not sampled. No TCE or perchlorate was found in any of the “seep” samples.

## **TCE found in drainage pipe discharge on Third Street**

DTSC also tested the discharge from a drainage pipe that runs from an unknown location under a property on Third Street and empties out onto the driveway. This property is adjacent to Wyle’s northern boundary and just east of Golden West Lane (see map). TCE was found at 32 parts per billion. We are evaluating what additional sampling may be necessary at this property.

## **Previous sampling showed chemicals in groundwater and soil gas on Hillside and Third**

In December 2004, groundwater samples were collected along both

Hillside Avenue and Third Street (see map), between the two areas of contamination already identified: Golden West and the private well on the corner of Third and Hillside. The sampling technique used (called “grab” sampling) gives a rough estimate of the chemical concentrations and is used only as a screening tool. We found TCE and perchlorate, and the industrial chemical NDMA, along Third Street west of the intersection with Golden West Lane, and just south of the intersection of Hillside and Third. Further groundwater sampling will be done with more accurate methods to measure exact concentrations and to determine the direction of groundwater flow.

In January 2005, soil gas samples were taken on Golden West and along both Hillside and Third (see map). Results of this sampling showed TCE in soil gas near the intersection of Hillside and Third. The highest level found was 180 parts per billion; the next highest was 61 parts per billion. The rest of the samples were at very low levels. The TCE levels found do not pose an immediate threat to human health, though they show that the contamination has moved offsite into this area and will require more testing. Levels of TCE above 100 parts per billion could potentially pose long term health effects if the vapors are breathed in an enclosed area over many years.

We plan to do more testing in this area to see how far the contamination extends and to make sure no homes are affected by indoor TCE vapors.

## **Full-scale site investigation begins**

Recent sampling has focused on the contamination offsite near the northwest

boundary. This northwest area sampling has continued to evolve, as each round of sampling has led us to move farther out to see how far the contamination has spread. We gave this offsite sampling a priority because our primary concern is finding and eliminating any potential risk to residents. However, this series of offsite samples is only one small part of the overall investigation to find the extent of Wyle-related contamination, both onsite and in the surrounding community.

The larger, overall sampling program is called the Remedial Investigation. The Remedial Investigation will include both on-site and off-site tests of soil, soil gas, and groundwater. The sampling is expected to take about four months to complete. Field activities began the week of April 11, with soil gas testing on residential properties near the intersection of Third and Hillside. The sampling locations are near where TCE was found in soil gas and groundwater in the December 2004 and January 2005 tests. On-site soil gas testing also began during the week of April 11.

## **Cleanup for the northwest area**

DTSC is working with Wyle to develop a plan to clean up the groundwater and soil gas contamination found on Wyle's northwest boundary and off-site along Golden West Lane. Once we have agreed on a proposal, we will present it to the public for formal review and comment before making a final decision. We anticipate having a proposed cleanup plan by mid 2005.

## **Upcoming activities**

The next steps will include more sampling in the Golden West/Hillside/Third Street area

northwest of the site to find the extent of contamination in groundwater and soil gas. This will include more groundwater and soil gas sampling along the streets and on some private properties (with the owners' permission). In addition, the full-scale Remedial Investigation will be ongoing, with both on-site and off-site sampling.

## **What we know so far, and what we have to find out**

We are still in the early stages of sampling. The results we've gotten so far show us that:

- TCE and perchlorate are in the groundwater off the northwest boundary of the Wyle property.
- TCE in vapor form is in the soil gas along some parts of Golden West Lane, Hillside Avenue, and Third Street.
- TCE and perchlorate are in a private well on the corner of Third and Hillside.
- Perchlorate and low levels of TCE are in a private well on First Street.
- Areas of "seeps" caused by recent rains do not contain perchlorate or TCE.
- There is no immediate threat to human health from offsite contamination found to date.

Much more testing is still planned, and is part of the Remedial Investigation described in this fact sheet. This testing is designed to tell us:

- how far the contamination extends in the northwest area
- if there is contamination in other off-site areas and private wells
- where the groundwater pathways (fractures in the bedrock) are located

- what other on-site areas are contaminated
- the best methods for cleaning up on-site and off-site contamination.

## Monthly updates at City Council and Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings

DTSC staff attends the monthly meetings of the Norco City Council and the Community Advisory Group (CAG) to give updates on the site investigation and answer questions. Both of these meetings are open to the public. City Council meetings are at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. CAG meetings are at 7 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month. Both meetings are held in the Council Chambers at Norco City Hall, 2870 Clark Avenue in Norco.

## Who to contact at DTSC

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## For media inquiries

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## More information on our website, in the libraries, and at our office

Weekly updates, fact sheets, and some of the technical documents are available on our website at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). There is a link on the home page to Wyle information. Documents about the Wyle Labs site, including the Remedial Investigation Work Plan, are at the following locations:

Norco City Hall  
2870 Clark Avenue  
(951) 735-3900

Corona Library  
650 South Main Street, Corona  
(951) 736-2381

The complete set of files related to the Wyle project is at our agency's office:

Dept. of Toxic Substances Control  
5796 Corporate Avenue  
Cypress, California.  
Call (714) 484-5337 (File Room) for an appointment.

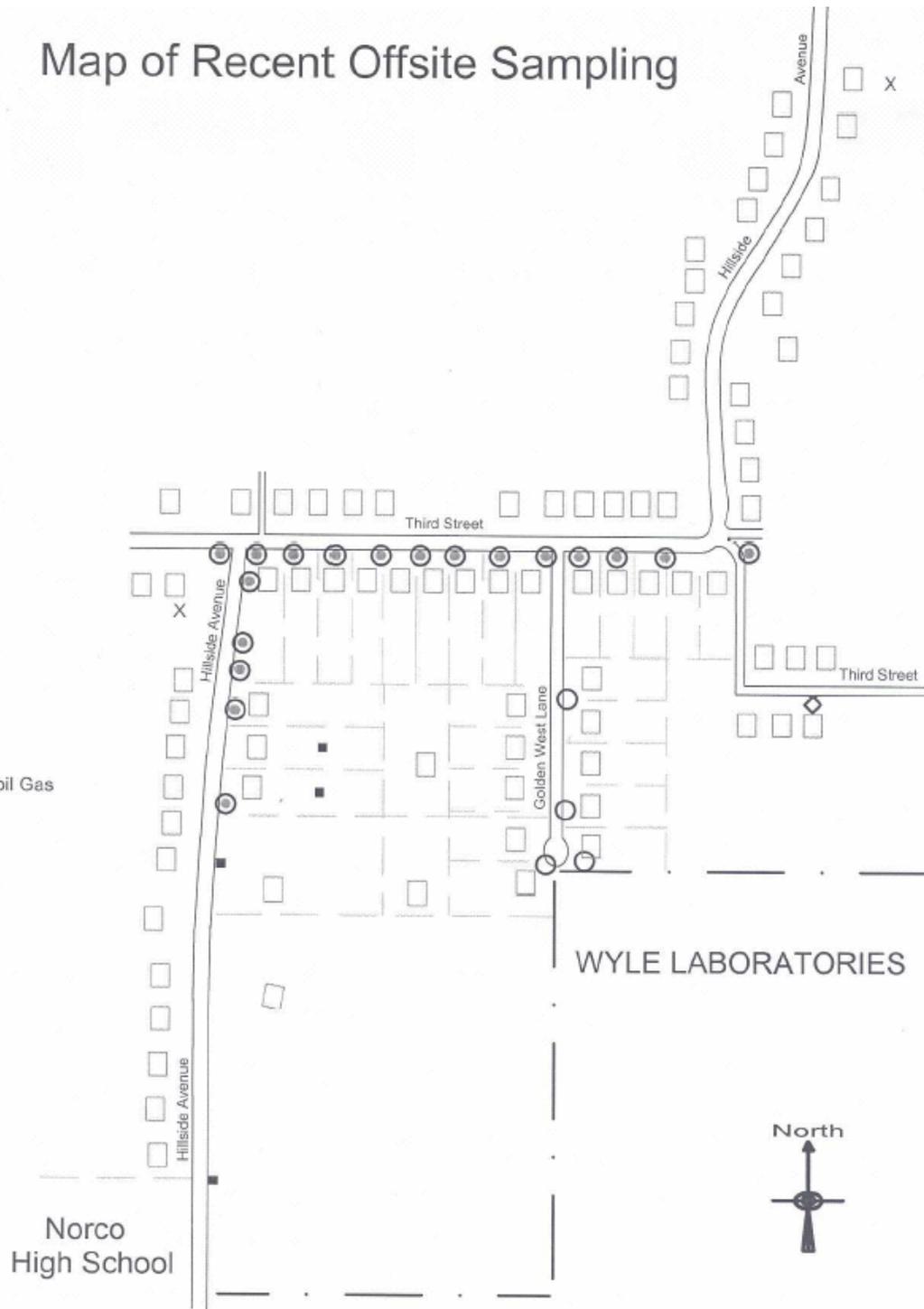
**Notice to the Hearing Impaired:** For more information, you may use the California State Relay Service at 1(888) 877-5378 (TDD). Ask them to contact Kim Foreman at (714) 484-5324.

*For more information about DTSC, visit our website at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov)*

# Map of Recent Offsite Sampling

## Sample Locations

- X Residential Well
- Seep
- Groundwater & Soil Gas
- Soil Gas
- ◇ Pipe Drainage
- House



Residential well near First Street and Temescal Avenue not shown on map

