



McClellan: From Polluted Air Base to Productive Business Park

BY BARBARA ZUMWALT | DECEMBER 2018

By utilizing a first-in-the-nation method of land transfer, the [Department of Toxic Substances Control](#) is speeding up the process of turning the former McClellan Air Force Base from a Superfund site to community asset.

DTSC helped facilitate the early transfer of lands with privatized remediation, which allowed for an accelerated cleanup. Under DTSC's oversight, much of the land on the former base has been cleaned up for commercial and residential uses, allowing [McClellan Business Park](#) to become an economic driver in the Sacramento area.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has taken notice.

DTSC Director Barbara A. Lee was on hand in September 2018 when the U.S. EPA gave one of four initial "National Federal Facility Excellence in Site Reuse" awards to the U.S. Air Force for this former base's rebirth. The award recognized the hard work, innovative thinking and cooperation among federal agencies, states, tribes, local partners and developers in transforming federal sites.

"McClellan is a model for how coordinating site cleanup with redevelopment plans can accelerate the return of land to productive reuse and provide more local control," Director Lee said. "DTSC is proud to have played a role in restoring this land to benefit the community, the regional economy, and future generations."

The 3,452-acre site was once home to McClellan Air Force Base, an aircraft repair depot [CONTINUED >](#)



SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA

ABOVE: Aircraft of the 55th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron at McClellan AFB in the 1960's.

RIGHT: The Headquarters building as it appears today.





and supply base established in 1935. When it closed as part of the Base Realignment and Closure process in 2001, it had grown to be one of the largest employers and industrial facilities in California. At its peak, some 26,000 civilian and military personnel worked at the base.

DTSC is overseeing cleanup of the site, which was named a Superfund site in 1987. The department's involvement began when DTSC was a part of the California Department of Health Services, which administered hazardous waste cleanup issues at McClellan Air Force Base as early as 1983.

DTSC identified more than 350 contaminated areas on the former base, including soil contaminated by releases of industrial solvents, radium paint, combustion waste product, pesticides, toxic metals, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), as well as fuel spills and other pollutants. Cleanup includes ground-water remediation, soil vapor extraction and protective capping.

This enables the beneficial reuse of the site.

"Working cooperatively, we have managed to move forward to clean up, consolidate and cap the most significantly contaminated sites on this property, and achieve Operating Property and Successfully status on the groundwater remedy," said Engineering Geologist Stephen Pay, who is the site manager for DTSC. I am proud to have been able to lead the DTSC team in this successful endeavor."

DTSC's team included Franking Mark, the lead project manager for the privatized cleanup; Lora Jameison, who provided technical support for groundwater and soil cleanup; Peter Gathungu, who provided lead engineering support for the McClellan landfill disposal sites; Barbara Renzi, the lead toxicologist providing regulatory oversight of risk assessments; and Isabella Alasti, lead attorney for the site.

As of September 2018, 86 percent of total acreage of the base had been transferred to McClellan Business Park, where 8 million square feet of all sorts of building space housed more than 300 businesses and provided close to 17,000 jobs. The park had generated \$580 million in public and private investment and has entitlements to construct an additional 6 million square feet of new buildings.

It also has a fully-operational airport, a commercial hotel, a fitness facility and a rail system. McClellan Business Park officials say that when it reaches full capacity, it could employ up to 35,000

DTSC has played a significant role in this quick turnaround from base to business park. Normally, when federal land is transferred to local entities, it must first be cleaned, a process that is sometimes slow. But DTSC helped facilitate the early transfer of the site with privatized remediation, which was the first time in the nation this process has been used. This allows greater local input into remediation decisions that better reflect community priorities.

Because of DTSC's work, McClellan Business Park can be the home for thousands of jobs and can generate more than \$6.6 million in property tax revenue and \$1.1 million in sales tax revenue, helping fuel the region's economy.