



# Topock Community Newsletter

News and information about Pacific Gas and Electric Company's Topock Compressor Station and related environmental cleanup efforts.

June 2013

## Topock Groundwater Cleanup Plan Under Review

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) is committed to addressing environmental issues resulting from our historical operations at the Topock Compressor Station. As part of this commitment, PG&E has been working under the oversight of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and in coordination with local Native American tribal governments, to investigate and clean up hexavalent chromium in groundwater and soil.

Currently, PG&E is in the process of developing a plan to clean up the groundwater. This plan, called the Remedy Design, is in the intermediate stage, known as the 60% Design. On April 5, 2013, the 60% Design was submitted to the oversight agencies. It will be reviewed by the agencies, tribes and interested stakeholders and their feedback will help refine the cleanup design. Following the 60% Design, the plan will enter the pre-final stage, known as the 90% Design. Construction of the remedy components is scheduled to begin in late 2014.

Both DTSC and DOI have stated that there is no potential current risk of adverse health effects due to groundwater at the Topock site or potential for exposure. The local communities of Golden Shores and Needles are not impacted by PG&E's chromium contamination. Information about drinking water quality in these communities can be obtained by contacting the Golden Shores Water Company [\(928\) 768-8717](tel:9287688717) or the Needles Water Company [\(760\) 326-5700](tel:7603265700).



View of Topock Compressor Station near Needles, Calif., and the Colorado River.



## How will the groundwater cleanup work?

The groundwater cleanup method selected by federal and state regulators is a well-proven technology known as “In-situ Treatment with Fresh Water Flushing.” The in-situ process starts by injecting a food-grade material (such as grain alcohol) into affected groundwater to stimulate the growth of naturally occurring bacteria within the soil. The growth cycle of the bacteria creates conditions that convert hexavalent chromium to trivalent chromium, a naturally abundant substance. Once converted, trivalent chromium leaves the groundwater and becomes part of the surrounding soil. This cleanup technology has been used at numerous sites throughout the United States.



Approximate Area of Chromium Above Natural Background Levels in Groundwater (Underground).

## About the Topock Compressor Station

PG&E's Topock Compressor Station is located in eastern San Bernardino County, about 15 miles southeast of Needles, California just west of the Colorado River. Since 1951, the Station has compressed natural gas for transportation through pipelines to PG&E's service area in central and northern California. As natural gas is compressed, its temperature increases and it needs to be cooled.

From 1951 to 1964, cooling water containing a corrosion-preventing substance with chromium compounds was disposed adjacent to the compressor station, consistent with industry practices of the time. Later, the water was treated to remove the chromium before disposal. PG&E discontinued the use of hexavalent chromium at the station many years ago.

Over time, the hexavalent chromium seeped into the groundwater and created a zone of contamination, known as a plume. Groundwater impacts have been defined based on detailed investigation. Those impacts are localized and do not extend north of National Trails Highway or across the Colorado River.

## Soils Cleanup Plan

PG&E is also working with DTSC and DOI in planning work to further investigate soils at and adjacent to the compressor station. The soils work plan will assess impacts to soils or sediment that may have resulted from PG&E's historical operations. The work plan is currently undergoing regulatory review. DTSC will be preparing a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for public comments prior to the investigative work. Circulation of the draft EIR is anticipated in late 2013.



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## PG&E Sponsoring Construction and Maintenance of Local Playground

PG&E is providing support to two local mothers in their effort to build a new playground in the Topock/Golden Shores community.

Recognizing the need for recreational opportunities for children in the area, local residents Autumn Boyle-Robinson and Rebecca Vaughn worked with the Kiwanis (Noon) Club of the Colorado River to begin fundraising for Project Playground last year. By October, the two hope to have built a new playground on a one-acre site located at Tule Drive and Golden Shores Parkway, adjacent to the Topock Elementary School.

PG&E is a primary sponsor in the effort, which is receiving double matching funds from the BHHS Legacy Foundation, a charitable foundation supporting community-based improvements in health. Several other local companies have also contributed funds.

"I'm honored to be a part of this incredible project and am extremely proud of PG&E's support for the community," said Chris Smith, Senior Environmental Inspector for PG&E. "My hat's off to Autumn and Rebecca, who are the driving force behind Project Playground on top of everything else they do for the community."

In addition to providing funding for the project, PG&E personnel from the Compressor Station, along with cleanup contractor CH2M Hill, have volunteered to provide long-term operations and maintenance support for the playground. This support is a joint effort between PG&E and Topock Unified School District Superintendent John Warren.

Donations for Project Playground can be sent to P.O. Box 996, Topock, AZ., 86436 (please make checks payable to Kiwanis/Project Playground).



Future home of Project Playground, adjacent to Topock Elementary School.



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## Contact Us

PG&E encourages anyone with questions or feedback about the Topock Compressor Station to contact our environmental remediation hotline at **1-866-247-0581** or email us at **[remediation@pge.com](mailto:remediation@pge.com)**. More information can also be found on DTSC's project website at **[www.dtsc-topock.com](http://www.dtsc-topock.com)**.

