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## Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

# CLOSURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL CASE

This will serve as public notice that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region (Central Valley Water Board) is soliciting comments from the public regarding the pending closure of an environmental case associated with the subject site.

### **SUBJECT SITE:**

Almanor Sports and Spirits is located at 7640 Highway 147, Lake Almanor, Plumas County (Site) on Assessor's Parcel Number 106-060-004-000. It is presently owned and operated by Judith A. Tharp. The property was formerly owned by Nick and Kim Toms and formerly operated by Ron Longacre.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION COMMENT PERIOD:**

5 April 2024 through 4 June 2024.

### **SUMMARY:**

The Central Valley Water Board regulates an environmental case regarding the unauthorized release of petroleum hydrocarbons in subsurface soils. This unauthorized release was discovered in March 2010 when 8,000-gallon and 10,000-gallon underground storage tanks (USTs) and associated piping and dispensers were removed. Both tanks contained gasoline. Soil samples collected from the excavation revealed that subsurface soils were impacted from an unauthorized release.

Almanor Sports and Spirits was formally known as Sierra Superstop #7. It operated as a retail fueling station from approximately 1978 to 2008. In 2018, the Site was redeveloped, and retail fuel sales resumed after an aboveground storage tank (AST) was installed. Currently, the Site is an active fuel station (Texaco) that contains a convenience store with a restaurant/deli.

A mobile home is located on Site and the surrounding area consists of a mix of residential, timberland, and property owned by Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E). The closest surface water body is Hamilton Branch, a stream which flows into Lake Almanor. Hamilton Branch is located approximately 800 feet west of the Site.

## Responsible Parties

Central Valley Water Board staff has determined that Nicolas C. and Kimberly Toms, Judith A. and Bobbie E. Tharp, and Ron Longacre are the responsible parties for contamination at this Site. The Toms were the Site owners during UST removal. The Tharps purchased the Site from the Toms and are the current property owner. Prior to the USTs being removed and replaced, Ron Longacre operated them onsite.

## Remedial Actions and Investigations

**Tank Removal and Referral to Water Boards:** After the removal of the USTs and associated equipment in March 2010, six soil samples were collected from the excavation and tested for petroleum constituents. Maximum concentrations of total petroleum hydrocarbons as gasoline (TPH-g) and methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE) were 830,000 micrograms per kilogram ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ ) and 47  $\mu\text{g}/\text{kg}$ , respectively, exceeding the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board Tier 1 Environmental Screening Levels. Low levels of toluene, ethylbenzene, and total xylenes were detected in some samples while benzene was not detected. Groundwater was encountered at 10 to 12 feet below ground surface during tank removal, but no groundwater samples were collected. In June 2010, Plumas County Environmental Health Division (PCEHD) requested that the Central Valley Water Board become lead agency.

**October 2012 Preliminary Site Assessment and Sensitive Receptor Survey:** Multiple soil and groundwater samples were collected immediately downgradient of the UST excavation. Soil samples collected from six borings were tested for TPH-g, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, total xylenes, and MTBE. All constituents were below laboratory detection limits. Groundwater was encountered at approximately 18 feet below ground surface and grab groundwater samples were collected. Maximum concentrations of TPH-g and MTBE were 5,500  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$  and 5,200  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ , respectively. Benzene was not detected in any of the borings.

Soil and groundwater samples collected for natural attenuation analysis indicated anaerobic reactions were taking place within the groundwater plume and are generating metabolic by-products consistent with natural attenuation via biodegradation.

**Sensitive Receptor Survey.** A sensitive receptor survey conducted during the preliminary site investigation identified five domestic wells located generally cross gradient and downgradient of the Site. The two domestic wells located closest to the Site, Well 7541 and PG&E WSW, were focused on during subsequent site investigations.

**Groundwater Monitoring:** Three monitoring wells, MW-1 through MW-3, were installed in 2013 and periodically sampled until 2021 to establish plume stability and model degradation rates. Benzene was detected only in MW-2 at concentrations ranging less than 1  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ . MTBE was detected in each well with the most recent concentrations up to 220  $\mu\text{g}/\text{L}$ . Benzene and MTBE were detected below their respective Low-Threat Closure Policy (LTCP) criteria in all samples. Two offsite water supply wells (PG&E WSW and

7541) located generally cross and downgradient of the Site were sampled and no constituents were detected.

**Cleanup and Abatement Order.** On 11 December 2018, Central Valley Water issued Order No. R5-2018-0711 requiring the responsibly parties to fully delineate the extent of groundwater contamination.

**Additional Site Assessment.** An additional site assessment was performed in October 2020 to delineate the extent of residual petroleum impacts. No constituents were detected in any soil samples. One off-site grab groundwater sample was collected; petroleum hydrocarbons, including MTBE, were detected at low levels, but all constituents were below the LTCP criteria.

**Property Redevelopment:** In August 2018, PCEHD notified Central Valley Regional Waterboard staff that redevelopment on the Site had started. Development activities included the installation of a new manufactured home, an AST with dispensers and associated piping for retail fuel sales, and the opening of a convenience market which would ultimately become a restaurant. Additionally, a new water supply well was installed onsite upgradient from the former USTs. The former onsite water supply well was decommissioned in January 2019.

### **Rational for Closure**

Central Valley Water Board staff recommends case closure under **Class 5 of the LTCP** for the following reasons:

1. Lateral and vertical impacts of soil at the Site have been adequately defined. Maximum concentrations of petroleum constituents in soil are less than those listed in Table 1 of the LTCP for commercial/industrial use.
2. Lateral and vertical impacts of groundwater at the Site have been adequately defined. Benzene and MTBE were detected below their respective LTCP groundwater-specific criteria of 3,000 ug/L and 1,000 ug/L, respectively, in all samples and concentrations are declining with time.
3. The two nearest offsite water supply wells are within 1,000 feet of the defined plume boundary. No constituents were detected in samples collected from these wells.
4. The contaminant plume that exceeds water quality objectives is less than 1,000 feet in length.
5. There is no free product.

Staff has determined the Site is eligible for case closure based on the review performed.

**WHERE DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

Information regarding the Site can be obtained from the State Water Resources Control Board's Geotracker website: [Almanor Sports and Spirits](https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=T10000003222) ([https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile\\_report.asp?global\\_id=T10000003222](https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=T10000003222)).

All interested agencies, groups, and persons wishing to comment on the pending case closure must provide these comments in writing. The comments should be submitted by **28 June 2024** to the Central Valley Water Board's office at: 364 Knollcrest Drive, Suite 205, Redding, CA 96002.

For information, please call: Mey Bunte at (530) 224-2428 or contact her by email at [Mey.Bunte@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:Mey.Bunte@waterboards.ca.gov).