Fact Sheet for Groundwater Remedial Action Plan and Water Replacement Contingency Plan

Former Nestlé USA, Inc. Facility
Ripon, California

March 2025

This notification is being provided to nearby landowners and residents/occupants, and those interested in the Former Nestlé USA, Inc. Facility (Site). This Fact Sheet describes the background, past work to investigate and cleanup Site contamination, proposed final remedy, and how to obtain more information.

BACKGROUND

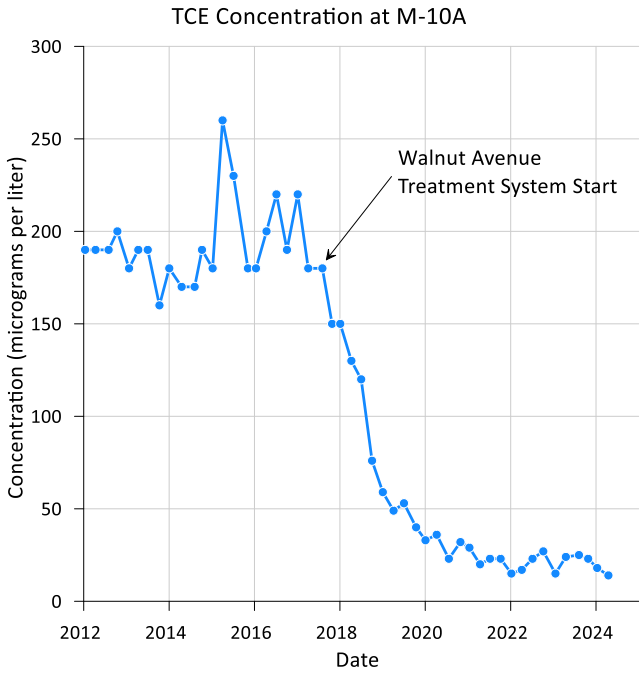
Nestlé USA, Inc. (Nestlé) operated a plant in Ripon that used trichloroethene (TCE), primarily in the 1960's, as part of its operations (Figure 1). Testing conducted by Nestlé in the late 1980's confirmed that TCE was found in soil and groundwater near the plant. While there could be multiple possible industrial or commercial sources for the TCE in the groundwater, Nestlé completed extensive efforts to remove TCE and its breakdown products from soil and groundwater since the 1980s, in coordination with the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) and the City of Ripon. The Water Board is the lead regulatory agency overseeing groundwater investigation and cleanup activities in and around the former plant. This Fact Sheet provides information on the proposed final remedial actions for groundwater, as described in the Remedial Action Plan.

SITE INVESTIGATION AND REMEDIATION

In 1986, Nestlé began a robust series of investigation and remediation activities that are ongoing. Nestlé continues to conduct an ongoing groundwater monitoring program that includes over 170 wells at the Site. The monitoring has shown that soil and groundwater remediation efforts have translated to substantial progress towards Site cleanup. Concentrations of TCE and related compounds have declined in several monitoring wells.

Nestlé currently operates two groundwater treatment systems: the Walnut Avenue System and the North Area Treatment System, which are shown in Figure 1 (at the end of this fact sheet). The current groundwater treatment approach for these systems involves groundwater extraction, carbon filtration, and aquifer replenishment by re-injection of treated water. Water treated by the North Area Treatment System is also used to supplement the irrigation supply.

The Walnut Avenue System began treating the upper portion of the groundwater aquifer in 2017. Since then, TCE concentrations have greatly decreased in the upper portion of the groundwater aquifer north of the Site – for example, the TCE trend for nearby monitoring well M-10A at right:



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The North Area Treatment System began treating groundwater in a lower aquifer in the area north and west of the Site in October 2023 and is successfully treating the water to non-detect levels. It currently supplies clean water for irrigation to Ripon Public Schools, with excess treated water reinjected to replenish the aquifer. Other existing mitigation measures include provisions for providing alternative sources of drinking water when necessary, monitoring for new water supply wells that may be installed, and sealing historical wells and other vertical conduits that could allow chemicals of concern to migrate downward to the lower aquifer, which is a potential source of drinking water. A recent study approved by the Water Board showed there was no risk for the Site's chemicals of concern to migrate from groundwater into vapors that could impact air quality inside buildings in the investigated areas (a process called vapor intrusion).

REMEDIAL ACTION PLAN

Nestlé prepared a Remedial Action Plan that describes final remedies to address chemicals of concern in groundwater. The overall objective is to restore groundwater contaminated with the Site's chemicals of concern to levels that are protective of human health and the environment in the long term. Until that objective is achieved, Nestlé established Remedial Action Objectives, such as capturing and containing chemicals of concern in groundwater, and mitigating potential human exposure to those chemicals.

The final remedy proposed in the Remedial Action Plan includes the following components:

1. Extracting, treating, and reinjecting groundwater to constrain the movement of contaminants of concern, mass removal, and aquifer restoration.
2. Monitored natural attenuation for assessing the natural, intrinsic degradation processes for chemicals of concern.
3. Decommissioning conduit wells as needed.
4. Institutional and administrative controls (as described below).

As part of the final remedy, Nestlé will continue to operate and optimize the two groundwater treatment systems until concentrations and trends of chemicals of concern indicate that there is no unacceptable risk to future receptors, and that Monitored Natural Attenuation processes are sufficient to achieve the overall remedial objective. Optimization activities may include increasing the groundwater extraction rate and/or adjusting the injection well network at one or both systems and extending the Walnut Avenue System extraction into deeper aquifers. These adjustments will be made as appropriate, based on system operational data and numerical modeling simulations, in coordination with the Water Board.

Monitored Natural Attenuation evaluations will be performed every five years to assess the effectiveness of Monitored Natural Attenuation as a component of the overall groundwater remedy. If concentrations of chemicals of concern in wells near the two treatment systems decrease to below two times the drinking water standard, and the trends continue to be stable or decreasing, Nestlé will discuss transitioning from active remediation to Monitored Natural Attenuation with the Water Board.

Nestlé will continue to use institutional and administrative controls to mitigate potential exposure to chemicals of concern in groundwater. These include water replacement and/or treatment as needed for private and public supply wells, sealing any vertical conduits that are discovered that could allow chemicals of concern to migrate downward to the lower aquifers, and monitoring for new well installations. There is also a City of Ripon ordinance that prohibits installing new water supply wells on properties that can be served by the city's potable water supply (City of Ripon Ordinance 222 Section 4, City Code 13.16, 1973).

WATER REPLACEMENT CONTINGENCY PLAN

The methods that Nestlé will use to evaluate groundwater quality and the follow-up actions that will be taken to ensure protection of human health, including the water replacement and/or treatment described above, are specified in the Water Replacement Contingency Plan. The Water Replacement Contingency Plan is an important element of the Remedial Action Plan.

NEXT STEPS

Nestlé submitted draft final versions of the Remedial Action Plan and the Water Replacement Contingency Plan to the Water Board for consideration. There will be an opportunity for the public to provide feedback on the two documents until April 13, 2025. Nestlé will also host a community meeting at the Ripon City Hall EOC Room, located at 259 North Wilma Avenue in Ripon, California on 25 March from 5:30 to 7:30 pm to discuss the Remedial Action Plan, Water Replacement Contingency Plan, and answer any of the public's questions or concerns. After incorporating comments and feedback from the Water Board and the public, Nestlé will submit final versions of the Remedial Action Plan and Water Replacement Contingency Plan. Once approved by the Water Board, Nestlé will promptly implement the elements of the final remedy (note that some components of the remedy, such as the groundwater treatment systems, are already in place).

Copies of the Remedial Action Plan and Water Replacement Plan are available for review and download at the following QR codes:

Remedial Action Plan

Water Replacement Contingency Plan

The Remedial Action Plan, Water Replacement Contingency Plan, and other Site-related documents are available on the State's GeoTracker website:

(https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report.asp?global_id=SL205012989).

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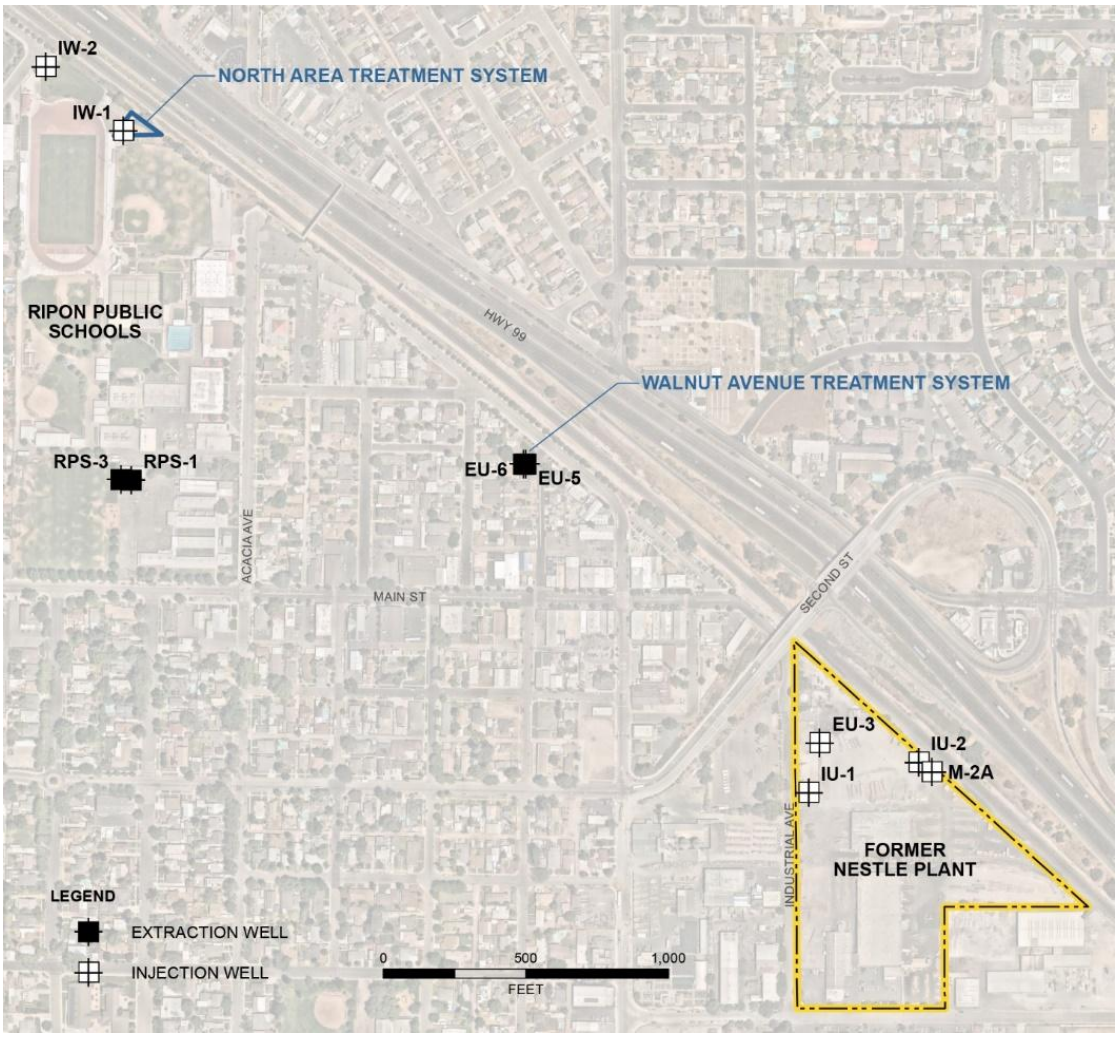

Figure 1: Site plan showing location of treatment systems and wells.