January 2003

FIELDSTONE PROPERTY
COUNTY OF ORANGE, CALIFORNIA

News about PCBs at the Fieldstone Property

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

The Fieldstone property looking northeast

PCBs found on the Fieldstone property and in the yards of nearby houses

As you may know from our June 2002 letter, our agency is investigating the Fieldstone property next to Huntington Beach. At issue is soil contamination, mostly from a group of chemicals called PCBs. This fact sheet tells you what we've found so far, what we plan to do next, and how you can get more information.

Our agency is the Department of Toxic Substances Control. Our role is to protect public health and the environment. We are overseeing the testing and any future cleanup at the Fieldstone property.

The 42-acre Fieldstone property is between the Bolsa Chica wetlands and Graham St., Bankton Dr., and Falkirk Lane. The site is open, undeveloped land. It is bordered by houses on the northeast side, and by an operating oil field on the west and south sides.

Soil samples taken in the past by other agencies found PCBs at the Bolsa Chica wetlands, including the Fieldstone site. We don't know the

PUBLIC MEETING

Thursday, February 13, 2003

6:00-6:30 p.m. – Open House
6:30 p.m. - Meeting
Huntington Beach Library Auditorium
7111 Talbert Avenue

We invite you to come to our open house and public meeting to get more information about the Fieldstone site.

source of the PCB contamination. These studies found two "hot spots" on the Fieldstone property that had high levels of PCBs. The highest level was 3,220 parts per million. This level presents a risk to human health and the environment in the Bolsa Chica wetlands. We consider 0.2 parts per million or above to be of concern.

PCBs are polychlorinated biphenyls (polly-KLOR-a-nay-ted by-FEEN-ills). They are a group of chemicals used in electrical transformers and hydraulic fluids. They can cause cancer and other health problems, as described later in this fact sheet.

We plan a full investigation for PCBs and other chemicals on the Fieldstone property

We are working with the property owner, Hearthside Residential Corporation, to conduct a formal study called a "Remedial Investigation." The Remedial Investigation will include taking more samples at the Fieldstone property to look for PCBs and other chemicals on the site, and determine where they are and in what amounts. With this information we can design a proposed plan for cleaning up the contaminated areas for your review and comment.

We found PCBs in the yards of 4 homes near the site

In July and September 2002 we took soil samples from the yards at five homes that are next to the site's two known "hot spots." We found PCBs in the soil at two of the homes. The highest level was 200 parts per million. This concentration is enough to be a potential risk to the people who live in the homes if they are in direct contact with the dirt in their yards over a long period of time. Since then we have taken further samples at these two houses, and sampled three more houses. At two of these three houses we found PCBs. The highest level was 5.6 parts per million. As stated above, levels of 0.2 and higher are considered to be of concern.

We will take more samples at the nearby houses to find out where and how much soil contamination we need to clean up

We are going to take soil samples at five additional homes, and do further sampling of the last two homes where PCBs were found. We plan to do this in late January. Based on what we have found so far, the data suggest a potential for health risk from long-term exposure. Our goal is to find out the location, extent, and level of PCB contamination. After we have evaluated this information, we will remove the contaminated soil. Since the soil is in people's yards, we will remove it without using heavy equipment. We will work with the homeowners to make sure we disturb the yards and plants as little as possible.

Once our sampling is complete we will notify you of the results and of our plans for the cleanup at the residences.

Possible health effects of PCBs

The following information is a general summary of possible health effects based on information from the U.S. EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and the U.S. Public Health Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). For more detailed information please see their web sites, which are listed at the end of this fact sheet.

According to the U.S. EPA, everyone in the general population has been exposed to PCBs in the environment, so everyone will have some of these chemicals in their blood. If you are concerned about yourself or your family members, you can get a test to measure PCB levels in your blood. The test can determine if you have unusually high levels.

Information on the health effects of PCBs comes mainly from two sources: laboratory studies on animals, and observed effects on industrial workers exposed to PCBs on the job. PCBs are known to cause cancer in laboratory animals, and the U.S. EPA believes that they can also

cause cancer in humans. The most common non-cancer health effect is skin rash. Other possible health effects are nervous system (neurological) problems that affect behavior, immune system disorders, thyroid function, and reproductive system disorders.

The type and severity of health effects is related to the level of exposure people might have to PCBs. Most of the reported effects come from eating food, especially fish, contaminated with PCBs. In the case of soil contamination such as at the Fieldstone site, exposure can come from getting the soil on your skin, breathing dust from the soil, or ingesting (eating) the soil. Ingestion can happen by getting soil on your hands and then handling food, or by putting the dirt in your mouth as some children do.

Most of the reported health effects of PCBs are related to long-term exposures, typically on the order of many years, or to high concentrations in food.

Risk from PCBs on the Fieldstone property

Because the effects of PCBs depend on how a person is exposed, at what age, for what period of time, and at what levels, it is not possible to specify an exact concentration in soil which will be "safe" in all situations. However, based on U.S. EPA and ATSDR health effects reports, we don't believe that the soil concentrations we've found so far are likely to pose serious health effects for short term exposures.

We will keep you up to date about the Remedial Investigation at Fieldstone and the sampling at nearby homes

We will send you more fact sheets like this one and will hold public meetings as we go along. Our first meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2003 (see box on first page).

We also invite you to contact us at any time if you have questions or concerns.

More Fieldstone information at the library and our agency's office

All the reports and other documents about the Fieldstone property will be at the reference desk of the Huntington Beach library at 7111 Talbert Avenue in Huntington Beach. Call the library at (714) 842-4481 for business hours. We also have the documents at our agency's office at 5796 Corporate Avenue in Cypress. Please call Julie Johnson, File Room Coordinator, at (714) 484-5337 for an appointment.

Who to call at our agency

If you have questions or comments about the investigation at the Fieldstone property and nearby houses, please call or email either of these two people at the Department of Toxic Substances Control:

Dr. Yasser Aref, Project Manager
(714) 484-5349
email: yaref@dtsc.ca.gov.

Kim Foreman, Public Participation Specialist
(714) 484-5324
email: kforeman@dtsc.ca.gov

For Media Inquiries:
Jeanne Garcia
(818) 551-2176
jgarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov

For more information about DTSC you may visit our website at www.dtsc.ca.gov.

Web sites with information on PCBs

EPA: http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/pcb/index.html
ATSDR: http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts17.html

If you don't have internet access, please call Kim Foreman at the phone number listed above to find out how to get a copy of this information.

Kim Foreman
Dept. of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630

INSIDE: Information on the Fieldstone Property