2025

YEAR in REVIEW

NASA SANTA SUSANA FIELD LABORATORY

NASA oversees about 450 acres at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL), which includes two areas historically used for rocket engine research, development, and testing related to programs like Apollo and the Space Shuttle. This Year in Review highlights significant progress in environmental cleanup at SSFL over the past year as NASA continued to work with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), Tribal partners, and the community on measures involving groundwater, soils, cultural resource management, and demolition. These efforts demonstrate NASA's ongoing commitment to a protective, science-based cleanup and long-term stewardship of the land.

GROUNDWATER CLEANUP

In 2025, NASA reached a major milestone in groundwater cleanup when DTSC released the Draft Statement of Basis for NASA's Phase 1 Groundwater Corrective Measures Study (CMS). The proposed Phase 1 remedy aims to treat high-concentration source areas using multiple technologies suited to site conditions, including pump-and-treat, bedrock vapor extraction (BVE), and enhanced in situ bioremediation (EISB). DTSC opened a 45-day public comment period on April 29, and over 60 participants attended the May 13 public meeting to learn about the proposed remedy and provide comments. NASA is awaiting DTSC's release of the the Final Statement of Basis for Phase 1, which will include responses to public comments received. The Final Phase 1 CMS Statement of Basis is anticipated in early 2026. Release of the Final CMS will initiate the the Phase 1 Groundwater Corrective Measures Implementation (CMI) plan, which outlines in detail how NASA will implement the selected cleanup remedy.

NASA also advanced its assessment of completed groundwater pilot studies this year. The final EISB evaluation report was submitted to DTSC in March, and the final BVE report in September, both of which are now under review. Quarterly groundwater monitoring continued throughout 2025, with all data and reports submitted to DTSC. All documents are available online in DTSC's SSFL Document Library.

In addition, DTSC approved NASA's Coca/Delta and Northern Area of Impacted Groundwater (AIG) modeling reports in October. Developed over several years, these models offer more detailed, site-specific evaluations of groundwater flow and contaminant behavior at SSFL. The models help determine whether TCE plumes could migrate offsite, support the design of monitoring networks for the groundwater remedy, and guide key decisions for future remedial design and implementation. Together, the AIG models reinforce the technical basis for NASA's groundwater cleanup planning and long-term decision making.

SOIL CLEANUP

In 2025, NASA completed its portion of backfill source sampling in response to a request from DTSC, continuing the effort to identify soil that meets both the 2010 Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) cleanup standards and the ecological restoration requirements for post-cleanup site recovery. NASA is working with the Department of Energy (DOE) and Boeing to develop a report assessing data from multiple potential backfill source sites across the region. Laboratory results will be reviewed once all responsible parties' data are available.

Also in 2025, DTSC introduced a Multiple Lines of Evidence (MLE) technical framework to address technical and implementation challenges associated with the AOC for soil cleanup. NASA is reviewing the updated technical memorandum released by DTSC in August and evaluating how the MLE approach may help inform future soil cleanup decisions.

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DEMOLITION

In December 2025, NASA completed the structural demolition activities for Phase 6 at the Coca Test Area, including the removal of the remaining portion of Coca Test Stand 4. All work was carried out with appropriate cultural and environmental monitoring to protect sensitive habitats and cultural sites.

Post-demolition efforts, including site stabilization and compliance inspections, will continue into early 2026. With the completion of Phase 6, to date, NASA's demolition program has resulted in the removal of more than 75,000 tons of steel, concrete, and asphalt, and restored more than 22 acres of the site to its natural habitat.

NASA also assessed options for the next phase of demolition activities under Phase 8 to remove remaining concrete pads, foundations, and asphalt across the Coca Test Area. After reviewing available resources, NASA postponed Phase 8 due to budget limitations and will reevaluate timing and implementation once additional funding and priorities are clarified.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

This year, NASA's Cultural Resources Management (CRM) Team received a NASA Agency Honor Award for its leadership in Tribal consultation and cultural resource protection at SSFL. The team's efforts help protect and preserve important Native American cultural resources, including the Burro Flats Traditional Cultural Property and multiple other archeological sites throughout NASA's areas at SSFL.

Throughout 2025, NASA continued its consultation with tribal partners and coordinated Native American monitoring for all ground-disturbing activities, including demolition, to protect sensitive cultural sites. NASA also advanced updates to its Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP), which guides how cultural and Native American resources are identified, evaluated, and protected during environmental cleanup activities.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

In early 2026, NASA is anticipating DTSC's release of the Final Statement of Basis, with response to public comments on NASA's Phase 1 Groundwater CMS. Once the Final Statement of Basis is issued, NASA can begin developing the Corrective Measures Implementation (CMI) plan for Phase 1 of the groundwater cleanup. The CMI will detail the corrective measures to be taken, the implementation timeline, and associated costs, and completion of the CMI will enable NASA to proceed with Phase 1 of the groundwater remedy. NASA will also finalize its evaluation of backfill sampling results in coordination with DTSC, DOE, and Boeing, and continue post-demolition stabilization and restoration after Phase 6. Quarterly groundwater monitoring and Native American monitoring during ground-disturbing activities will continue to support the protection of cultural and tribal resources.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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