

FieldNOTE

An Update on NASA's Cleanup Efforts at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory



Historic Test Stand Deferral

NASA shares with many in the community a desire to protect important cultural and historical resources at SSFL. Along with the California State Historic Preservation Officer and Consulting Parties, NASA considered the effects of demolition on cultural resources and how the effects could be mitigated. The result was a 2014 Programmatic Agreement that specifies saving at least one test stand for historic preservation, provided cleanup goals can still be met.

In July 2015, NASA agreed to defer demolition of the historic test stands, including those in the Coca Test Area, to allow the Executive Branch to consider a petition asking that the SSFL be designated a National Monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906. NASA stated that it would defer demolition for as long as possible without impacting cleanup responsibilities.

In order to maximize the time to consider the petition, NASA adjusted its demolition schedule to prioritize demolition activities in other NASA-administered areas where there are no test stands. In addition, NASA is investigating the feasibility of conducting a soil cleanup that meets the standards required by the state, without demolishing the test stands. NASA expects to make a determination about cleanup feasibility and test stand deferral in 2017. ■

NASA Demolition Work Continues

After completing the first phase of demolition, NASA is moving forward with the next phase to prepare the site for final cleanup.

The next phase of demolition focuses on areas outside of the historic districts where obsolete buildings and infrastructure still remain. Specifically, the following areas are part of Phase 2 demolition activities that will take place over the next year: the Alfa/Bravo and Coca/Delta Fuel Farms, the Sewage Treatment Plant and the Liquid Oxygen (LOX) Plant. [See map on page 2.]

All man-made structures and objects in these areas not essential for current or future cleanup operations will be disassembled, deconstructed, and removed from the site. Such objects include inactive power lines, pipeline, empty storage tanks, fencing, and concrete and asphalt.



Demolition crew members survey obsolete tanks and pipeline in the Skyline Area scheduled for demolition in Phase 2.

Phase 2 kicked off in March with pre-demolition activities such as staging of work areas and brush clearing to enable access by crews to the demolition areas. This preparatory work is expected to take several weeks. Once complete, actual removal of structures can begin.

Demolition work will begin in the Skyline Area, located in the southwest portion of Area II. The Skyline area consists of eight 100,000-gallon water tanks, one 470,000-

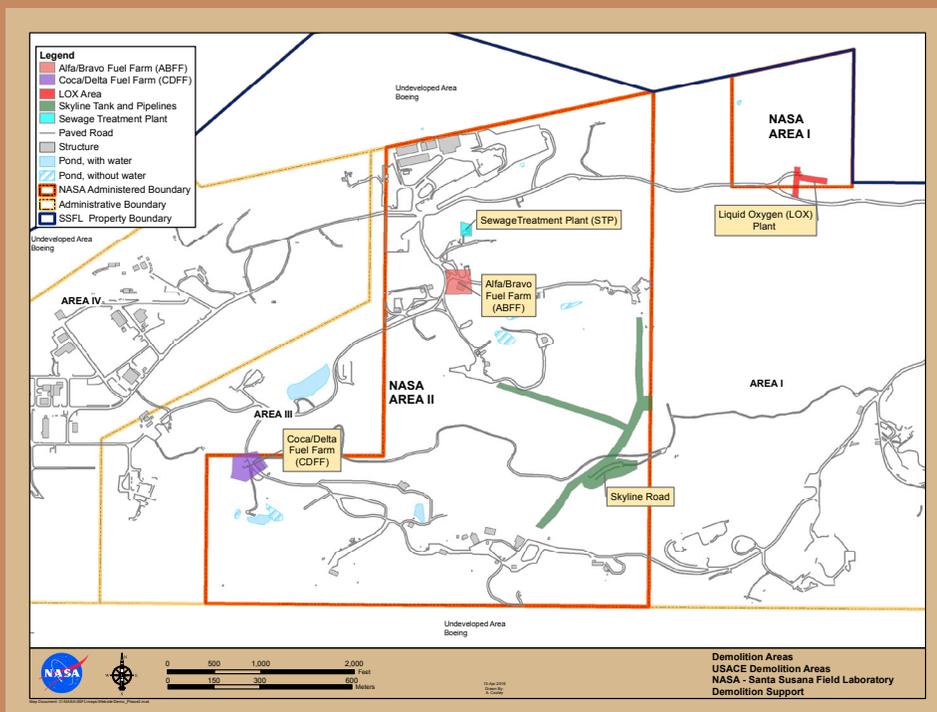
“NASA remains committed to meeting its cleanup obligations at SSFL and this demolition work brings us another step closer toward final cleanup.”

- Peter Zorba, NASA Project Manager

gallon water tank, a 1,000,000-gallon water tank, and associated pipeline. Historically the tanks were used to hold potable and non-potable reclaimed industrial water
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used in rocket engine testing. Demolition crews will remove all tanks and the associated pipeline leading to and from the Alfa, Bravo, and Coca Test Areas.

Demolition of structures in these areas marks significant progress toward meeting requirements defined in cleanup agreements NASA signed with the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). “NASA remains committed to meeting its cleanup obligations at SSFL and this demolition work brings us another step closer toward final cleanup,” said NASA SSFL Remedial Project Manager Peter Zorba. ■

Transportation

NASA understands that the community is interested in the truck traffic coming and going from the SSFL site during demoli-

tion. During high-volume traffic hours between 7-9 a.m. and 4-5 p.m., truck departures will be staggered at a minimum of 15-minute intervals. Outside of those times the interval between truck departures could be as few as five minutes, if necessary. Overall, NASA expects to send off no more than 35 trucks per day during the peak of demolition activities. All trucks related to NASA demolition activities are required to be covered before leaving the site, regardless of contents, to help prevent dust and debris from being blown out of the bins during transportation. As an extra measure, the material is wetted to further reduce the potential for dust. All trucks must go through a thorough inspection to ensure proper safety measures are in place before they are cleared to leave the site. ■

Prioritizing Health and Safety

NASA remains committed to prioritizing the health and safety of the community, workers, and the environment during demolition.

The demolition team will be operating under a work plan that describes how demolition will be conducted with health and safety as the top priority. A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) approved by the state of California also guides the demolition work. The SWPPP outlines erosion and sediment control measures that will be taken at each demolition worksite. In addition, a number of best management practices and mitigation measures will be employed throughout the demolition process. For example, regrading and hydroseeding once structures are removed promotes re-vegetation of native plants and reduces the potential for soil erosion and dust migration.

Protective measures will also be taken to safely manage demolition debris. Hazardous and non-hazardous materials will be handled, packaged and transported to the appropriate facilities in accordance with safety precautions outlined by local, state and federal regulations. Any materials that can be recycled will be recycled to reduce the amount being disposed of in landfills. ■

Protecting Resources

Demolition work is conducted in a careful manner in order to minimize disturbance to natural and cultural resources.

“NASA takes seriously its role as an environmental steward and we are working with local tribes and environmental stakeholders to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources found at the site,” said NASA SSFL Director Allen Elliott.

Before any demolition work can begin, a certified biologist must conduct a formal biological survey to look for sensitive plant and animal species, including nesting birds, in each of the demolition areas. Any sensitive species found would be documented and marked, as appropriate, so that appropriate management measures could be taken to ensure protection.

In addition, Native American Monitors must be onsite to oversee all fieldwork in archaeologically sensitive areas. Work would be immediately suspended if any cultural resources were encountered or at any time if the Native American Monitor raised any concerns. ■

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