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## **Biological Remediation of Contaminated Soils** at Los Angeles Air Force Base: Facility Design and Engineering Cost Estimate

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by

C**.**D**.** M**on**tem**a**g**no**a**n**d **R.**L**.** Irvine

#### **Abstract**

This report presents a system design for using bioremediation to treat contaminated soil at Fort MacArthur near Los Angeles, California. The soil was contaminated by petroleum products that leaked from two underground storage tanks. Laboratory studies indicated that, with the addition of water and nutrients, soil bacteria can reduce the petroleum content of the soils to levels that meet regulatory standards. The system design includes soil excavation, screening, and mixing; treatment in five soil-slurry*/*sequencing-batch reactors; and dewatering by a rapid-infiltration basin. System specifications and cost estimates are provided.

### **1 Introduction**

The Fort MacArthur facility of Los Angles Air Force Base (LAAFB) is located on the crest of a hill adjacent to the Pacific Ocean in Southern California (Figure 1). During World War II, the fort was used as a harbor defense and anti-aircraft artillery post. In 1982, the Fort MacArthur facility was transferred to the U.S. Air Force and is currently a residential and support facility of LAAFB. In 1985, base personnel discovered two abandoned 20,000-gal concrete underground storage tanks (USTs) at Fort MacArthur. It is thought that the U.S. Army installed the USTs during World War II as a fuel supply for a nearby bunker.

During preparation of the site for closure in 1988, two soil samples were obtained from between the tanks at a depth of 25 ft and analyzed for total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH) concentrations. The TPH contents of the samples ranged from 300 to 900 **m**g*/*kg of soil. 1 Based on these results, the *L*os Angles Fire Department issued a safety*/*life violation and instructed the Air Force to assess the site to determine the extent of contamination in both soil and groundwater and to recommend a cleanup action.

Phase 1 and 2 site assessments determined that about 1,000  $yd^3$  of contaminated silty clay soil was generally contained in a zone 10 ft thick at depths of 25-35 ft below the ground surface.<sup>2,3</sup> The extent of contamination was found to be limited to the soil near the USTs. No contaminants were detected in any of the monitoring wells drilled around the site.





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The applicability and effectiveness of in-situ bioremediation techniques were assessed in initial treatability studies at Argonne National Laboratory (ANL) and the University of Notre Dame (UND). For these studies, a 20-ft continuous soil core sample (sectioned into clear polyvinyl chloride [PVC] casings 15 in, long and 5.25 in, in diameter) was obtained from the contaminated zone (Figure 2).<sup>4</sup> A composite sample containing drill cuttings from the most contaminated soils was also obtained for study.

In the laboratory, the sectioned core samples were first characterized in terms of TPH concentration, hydrodynamic and physical properties, chemical characteristics, microbial content, and degradative activity. Among other things, the results from these analyses showed that the soils with moderate TPH and nutrient levels also possessed a relatively large and active microbial population. From gas chromatography (GC) scans of soil extracts, it was determined that the primary source of contamination was most likely from weathered leaded gasoline.



FIGURE 2 Locations of Soil and Groundwater Sampling at the Fort MacArthur Remedial Action Site (Source: Adapted from Ref. 4)

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Following the initial characterization of the soil, the soil cylinders were converted into physical models for evaluation of in-situ treatment potential. During the study period, a progressive reduction in hydraulic conductivity was observed for each pore volume\* of water passed through the system. *T*he conductivity was further reduced by precipitates that formed after nutrients were added. These observations, coupled with results of field pump tests that indicated the presence of soil fractures and discrete flow patterns, led to a decision to abandon the in-situ treatment option and to begin investigating the feasibility of using an on-site soil slurry treatment system.

\*Pore (or void) volume is the volu*m*e of space between soil particles.

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### **2 Laboratory R**e**sults of Soil Slurry Treatment**

The composite soil sample containing the drill cuttings was used for ali slurry reactor studies. Analyses were performed at AN*L* and UND for the parameters listed in Table 1. The slurries were created by combining 1 kg of moist soil with 4 L of tap water and thoroughly mixing for 8 h. Of the resulting dilute soil mixture, 0.5 *L* (12% by weight soil to water) was distributed to each of five slurry reactors. Mixing and oxygen were provided with a Phillips and Bird paddle flocculation mixer run continuously at 100 rpm. During sampling, the mixing speed was increased to 300 rpm. The conditions established in each of the five slurry reactors were as follows:

- Reactor 1 -- Slurry only
- Reactor 2 -- Slurry plus 2 mg*/*L ammonia added on days 0 and 1
- Reactor 3 -- Slurry plus an acclimated seed (*5*0 m*L* of a 10% slurry obtained from a reactor containing organisms grown in soil containing hydrocarbons)
- Reactor4 -- Slurry plus acclimated seed (as above) plus 2 mg*/L* ammonia added on days 0 and 1
- Reactor 5 -- Slurry plus 30 mL sulfuric acid ( $pH = 2.6$ )

As shown in Figure 3, the microbial populations present in Reactors 2, 3, and 4 reduced the TPH concentrations in the initial slurry from over 400 mg*/*kg to below 100 mg*/*kg in less than 3 d and to less than 30 mg*/*kg in less than 4 d. (In Reactor 5, TPH levels decreased somewhat due to heat generated by acidification.) Evidence of biodegradanon in these reactors was obtained by monitoring oxygen uptake rates (OURs) of the slurry. The OURs typically ranged from 1 to 3 mg*/*L.h during the study period. Asdemonstrated by the gas chromatography scans shown in Figure 4 for Reactor 2, the soil micro*b*es consumed virtually all of the identified (i.e., numbered) hydrocarbons present in the soil without producing residual or recalcitrant compounds. The GC scans shown in Figure 5 show that essentially no removal of hydrocarbons was observed in the control reactor (Reactor 5). Similar results were obtained (data not shown) in eariier reactor studies where *5* g*/L* of sodium chloride was added to simulate possible high salt concentrations that could exist in the reactor as a result of using groundwater at the treatment site as process water for making the soil slurry. In conclusion, the laboratory data demonstrate that soil slurry bioremediation is an effective means of treating the TPH-contaminated soils.



TABLE 1 Analytic Results for a Composite Soil Sample from the Contamination Zone and a Sample of Site Groundwater

aE, cept as noted for hydraulic conductivity, cation exchange capac<sub>ity</sub>, and pH.



FIGURE 3 Removal of TPH by Soil Slurry Reactors

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FIGURE 4 GC Chromatograms of Gasoline Standard and Reactor 2 Slurry

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FIGURE 5 GC Chromatograms of Gasoline Standard and Reactor 5 Slurry

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### **3 Slurry Reactor Field Design and System Description**

The proposed remediation plan calls for excavating  $1,000$  yd<sup>3</sup> of contarninated soil at the Fort MacArthur site and transporting it to nearby Edwards Air Force Base (EDAFB), where it will be treated using a slurry-phase bioremediation system that will be constructed within the confines of EDAFB. Included in the remediation effort will be the complete restoration of the Fort MacArthur site to its original condition and ground surface elevations.

Off-site treatment of the soil was deemed necessary for two reasons. First, limited space at the Fort MacArthur site and the residential character of the area prohibited construction and operation of an on-site treatment facility. Second, ED*A*FB personnel have expressed interest in having the treatment system constructed at their base so that it will be available for future use.

The soil-slurry bioremediation system depicted in Figure 6 consists of the following components: a vibrating screen with hopper, elevator, and wash system for removing aggregates larger than 0.5 in. in diameter, a 4,000-gal (20-yd<sup>3</sup>) steel mixing tank for initial slurry preparation; five 24,000-gal (119-yd 3) welded-steel soil-slurry*/*sequencing-batch reactors (SS*/*SBRs); a lagoon for slurry dewatering; and a steam-cleaning ar,'a for washing contaminated soil aggregates and returning the wash water to the SS*/*SBRs for treatment.

#### **3**.**1 Soil Screening and Slurry Mixing Tank**

As ill**u**strated in Figures 6 and 7, the first steps in the treat**m**ent process are the screening of the soil to remove large aggregates and the preparation of a soil slurry**. T**he contaminated soil is loaded into a hopper using a front-end loader and fed via an elevator to a vibrating screen with water spray bars. The double-deck vibrating screens are supported by the elevator and positioned directly over the mixing tank so that soil pa**r**ticles less than 0..5 in. in diameter will be washed through the screens directly into the mixing tank below. Gravel and aggregates larger than 0.5 in. will be diverted via a chate away from the mixing tanks and onto a concrete pad for subsequent washing and disposal. The volume of water added to the screens and to the mixing tank will be adjusted to yield the desired soil:water ratio of about 1:3 by volume. After screer  $\cdot$  g and water addition, the slurry will be continuously mixed for an additional 10 min using a pivoting-shaft, propeller pit mixer (5 hp) before being pumped to one of the reaction tanks for treatment.

The screening*/*mixing tank system can be operated continuously or in batc*h*es. For batch operation, the volume per batch will be 4,000 gal (20 yd<sup>3</sup>) of slurry. Each batch will consist of about 3,000 gal (15 yd<sup>3</sup>) of water and 1,000 gal (5 yd<sup>3</sup>) of contaminated soil. A total of five slurry batches will be required to fill one reaction tank. *T*he 30-min batch mixing operation can be broken down as follows:

- Screening -- 10 min for a production capacity of 0.5 yd<sup>3</sup>/min
- Mixing -- 10 min (includes nutrient addition)
- Pumping to reaction tank -- 10 min at 400 gal*l*min

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**Slurry Dewatering Lagoon** 



FIGURE 6 Plan View of the SS/SBR System Design



FIGURE 7 Elevation View of the SS/SBR System Design

Since each slurry batch will require about 30 min preparation time, the minimum time required to fill each reaction tank will be 2.5 h. The minimum required water supply rate (pumping rate from supply well to screens and mixing tank) for this operation is 150 gal/min if all needed water is added during screening and mixing. The slurry pump will have a design capacity of 400 gal/min at 30 ft total dynamic head and will be driven by a 20-hp, gasoline-fueled engine.

The mixing tank will be the first system set up during the construction period. Initially, it will be used to establish an acclimated seed material while construction of the SS/SBRs and other system components is being completed.

#### **3.2 Reaction Tanks**

The SS*/*SBR system consists of five closed tanks constructed of welded steel 0.375 in. thick. The tanks will be placed on a reinforced concrete pad (6 in. thick by 116 ft long by 28 ft wide) that will have a 4.5-ft-high concrete wall on all four sides. The concrete pad and wall are designed to contain spills in the event of tank failure and are designed to hold about 1.5 times the volume of all five tanks. The tank interiors will be coated with a corrosion- and abrasion-resistant epoxy resin and the exteriors with red-oxide primer. Welded steel tanks were selected over the four other tank options (i.e., fiberglass, Nalgene, $\mathbb{M}$  bolted steel, and reinforced concrete -- see Sec. 4) because of their strength, durability, and relative ease of installation. Each tank is 15 ft in diameter and 18 ft high with a total capacity of about 23,800 gal  $(118 \text{ yd}^3)$ . The tanks will have a freeboard of at least 2 ft and a maximum operating volume of about 20,700 gal (102  $\text{yd}^3$ ). The tanks will be equipped with a conical roof 0.25 in. thick, a 24-in. manhole with gasket, 6-in.-diameter bulkhead steel pipe fittings, a mixer bridge and guide rail, a 24-in. cleanout, a drain, a level indicator, and a ladder. The headspace of the tanks will be vented by an activated-carbon air scrubber with saturation indicators and a 250-ft<sup>3</sup>/min blower for the removal and entrapment of volatile organics. A submersible propeller (7.4 hp) mixer will agitate and aerate the slurry.

The reaction tanks will be operated on a 7-d cycle, allowing for draw and fill on the first day followed by 6 d of reaction, as illustrated in Figure 8. During each day of the 5-d work week, only one reactor is drawn and filled. After the reaction period, ali but 6-9 in. of treated slurry will be withdrawn from the reactor and pumped to the slurry dewatering beds. The proposed design does not call for the recovery and recycle of process water. The slurry that is left in the tank



FIGURE 8 Operating Periods for the SS/SBR System (Notes: A 6- to 9-in. layer of slurry is left in bottom of each reaction tank at the end of draw cycle for seeding next slurry batch. Air scrubber system and mixer are on at all times.)

provides an acclimated seed material for the next reaction cycle. A continuous Supply and circulation of fresh air is maintained in the reactor headspace by the air scrubber*/*blower system mounted on the concrete pad and connected via PVC ducting to the top of each tank. The relatively long reaction period (over 6 d) will ensure essentially complete removal of ali targeted organics.

#### **3.3 Aggregate Steam Cleaning**

During initial soil screening, aggregates larger than 0.5 in. in diameter will be conveyed to a concrete pad (28 by 28 ft by 6 in. thick) for steam cleaning to remove organics. The pad will be sloped to divert the contaminated wash water to a 3,800-gal holding sump constructed on one side of the wash pad. The wash water will be pumped to the mixing tank and eventually to one of the reaction tanks for treatment. The area will also serve as a platform for cleaning residual organics from ali equipment, including the **fr**ont-end loader and dump trucks, after use.

#### **3.4 Treated Soil Dewatering**,

Several options are available for dewatering the treated soil. The first, simplest option is a shallow rapid-infiltration lagoon, or basin, sized to allow infiltration and evaporation of one batch of slurry per day (15,000 gal of water). Option 1 is the least expensive dewatering system, provided that there is no need to recover and reuse or treat process water and that soil infiltration rates are sufficiently high. The second option is Option 1 with a bottom seal and drain system to collect and recycle water. Option 2 would eliminate the discharge of process water into the ground. The third option consists of five sludge drying beds similar to municipal systems. Each bed would hold sludge from one reactor for one week*,* after which dewatered soil would be removed by truck and the bed refilled with sludge. Option 3 includes a drain system for water removal but assumes that the native soli would retain water sufficiently to serve as a bottom seal for the bed.

The proposed dewatering system is Option 1, the rapid-infiltration basin. The basin will have a total volume of  $1,000 \text{ yd}^3$  and dimensions of 100 by 100 ft by 3 ft deep. The basin will be large enough to accumulate all the soil to be treated. It is assumed that the proposed water-supply well will provide ali process water needed and that no recycling or treatment will be necessary. (Laboratory analysis of slurry water showed that:it typically contains less an 2 mg*/*L TPH and less than 10 mg*/*L chemical oxygen demand -- these levels meet both state and federal standards.) The final design of the system may change if the on-site soil cannot accommodate rapid infiltration.

#### **4 Project Costs**

Itemized costs for ali components of the treatment system are listed in Table 2. Estimates of the total capital and operating costs are shown in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. The estimates were developed through conversations with suppliers and contractors and review by a California architecture and engineering firm.5

#### **4.1 Capital Costs**

The capital costs listed in Table 3 have been summarized from the individual component costs listed in Table 2. The costs associated with some components, such as tanks, piping, and reinforced concrete work, include delivery*,* installation, and contractor profit. The total capital cost exclusive of salvage value is \$436*,*490.

Also listed in Table 3 are salvage values of some capital equipment. Mixing tanks*,* process tanks*,* and piping are considered to have a salvage value of one-half of their original cost. Other equipment, such as pumps, screen and elevator, and mixers, have a salvage value that is some fraction of the operating life remaining after treatment multiplied by the initial cost. For this equipment, the operating life after treatment is assumed to be 95.4 wk -- 104 wk (i.e.*,* assumed total operating life for the equipment) minus 8.6 wk (time in use for this project). The total salvage value of the equipment is \$197*,*740. Thus*,* the net chargeable capital cost for the remediation of 1,000  $\text{yd}^3$  of contaminated soil is \$238,750.

#### **4.2 Operating Costs**

Operating costs are listed in Table 4. Labor costs were based on an 8-h work day and 40-h work week for each of two system operators. The total number of hours for the ANL project supervisor includes time spent overseeing construction of the facility as general contractor plus time managing the operation of the facility. The total operating cost for the 60-d remediation period is \$187,100.

#### **4.3 Total Cost**

Table 5 provides the total cost of remediation of 1,000  $yd^3$  of contaminated soil.

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TABLE 2 Component Quantities, Specifications, and Costs for an SS/SBR System at Edwards AFB

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TABLE 2 (Cont'd)

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TABLE 2 (CCnt'd)  $\overline{\phantom{a}}$ 



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 $20\,$ 



TABLE 2 (Cont'd)

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cAssumes that native soil characteristics preclude need for bottom seal.

dDoes not include main power supply lines and poles at treatment site.

# TABLE 3 Capital Costs for an SS/SBR System at<br>Edwards AFB



<sup>a</sup>Salvage value = initial cost x (104 wk - 8.6 wk)/104 wk; assumed total operating life is 2 yr (i.e., 104 wk) and time in use for project is 60 d (8.6 wk).

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bAssumed salvage value of one-half initial cost.

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TABLE 4 Operating Costs for a 60-Day Remediation Period

alncludes 160 h for 20-d construction and startup period plus 480 h of project supervision and management during 60-d operating period.

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TABLE 5 Total Costs for SS/SBR Soil Remediation for the Fort MacArthur Site

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