### Contaminant Plume Behaviour in Fractured Sedimentary Rocks

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> Flowpath – Hydrogeology Pathways University of Bologna, Bologna Italy June 20, 2012



CHANGING LIVES



percorsi di idrogeologia

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- Many research associates, technicians and students:
  - Chapman, Meyer, Pehme, Quinn, Munn and others
- Site owners, consultants and regulators

### This Talk Shows...

 An example of an intensive field study of chlorinated solvent contamination in fractured Cretaceous sandstone

• Strong plume retardation and attenuation due to matrix diffusion

#### Judge's Ruling Goes Against Neighbors of Rocketdyne

 Litigation: Decision says suit alleging contamination doesn't meet strict class-action requirements, but allows a chance to amend the action.

#### By MACK REED TIMES STARE WRITER

A federal judge in Los Angeles on Monday shot down attempts by Rocketdyne's neighbors to press a class-action iswauit for property damage, but she left the door open for the plaintiffs to amend their complaint.

U.S. District Judge Audrey Collins ruled that the stat alleging that Rocketdyne's Santa Susana Fleid Lab and three San Fernando Valley facilities have contaminated nearby homes and businesses was too broadly focused and inadequately supported for the narrow legal constraints of class-action law, But Callins also gave some weight to the

plaintiffs' claims that off-site ground water contains traces of hundreds of thousands of

By Christopher Noxon Daily New Staf Writer

Rockwell International Corp., which owes Rocketdyne, is opening

the gates of the high-security facility

in an attempt to reassure the public about the thoroughness of the \$55

community to be them know we do enre about their concerns."

A training program is still in the works, but preliminary plans include more than 20 hours of

so far for the tour

#### Ecology: They accuse That offer prompted several in the audience of about 60 to scoff The FBI is still looking into possible criminal charges against state environmental under their breaths during the other Rocketdyne employees in meeting, which was often marred agency of approving connection with the blast. ublic wary of EPA's reply by bickering and accusations from As Thursday's meeting wore on, Rocketdyne's plan before cleanup coalition members critithe residents. cized Cal/EPA for backing out of a promise to give them copies of letters to and from Rockstdyne informing the public. Rocketdyne's predecessor, North American Aviation, opened the lab in 1948 and over the years B-MACH BEED Los Angeles Times VC/CC† TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 1997 E Agency increased cketdyne Field Lab Neighbors Sue Boeing in cleanup.

ion: Residents file a class-action suit against the parent over contamination and health risks posed by research.

LEY-Neighbors of Rocket-Susana Field Laboratory sued side still runs. firm's parent company in Monday, alleging that decsar and chemical research at medical fund for future treatment of the top complex poisoned their cancer that the plantiffs say they and their r and caused them to contract neighbors have and radioactive

Rocketdyne

opens doors

for cleanup

It asks the court to order Rocketdyne to make public all past and present risks of contamination posed by the field lab's research into rocket engines and atomic **Engelors** And it cites a laundry list of maclear

meltdowns, chemical explosions and taxie releases that Rocketdyne allogedly allowed to foul the air, water and land around the field lab ever since it opened in 1946 to during the first U.S. rocket engines. Plaintiffs' attorney Tina Nieves

brought on mainly by radiation exposur-"They all live at opposite ends of the Santa Surana Pasa," she said, referring to the road that hugs the hill where Rocket-

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1407 / F

#### State Begins Study of Field Lab's Toxic Path

to releatless pres-

emmunity activists,

aronmental Protec

Health: Investigators want to know if contamination reached areas such as Chatsworth and West Hills.

#### By KATE FOLMAR

radioactive contam ation from the called "exposure assessment," is far from ortials, it could be an impor-tant first step toward a long-awalted community health survey. An environmental health invest An environmental health inves-ingater with the California Depart-ment of Health Services an-nounced late Wednesday that her department, would examine pas-sible "pathways of contentination" from the field lab near the bedge of Los Angeles and Ventura com-lies to homes near nice area.

possibly real to a null-follows com-munity beach, survey if strong evidence of off-site contamination is found, said Marilyn C. Under-wood, a bocknikegist with the Envi-ronmental Health Investigations Branch of the state bealth depart-ment.

Jernsch of the state health depart-state. In the second state of the second ments' Underwood said after the quartery meeting of the Sacta Susani-Faid Lab Workgroup. Thi Could lead to hysicians edecation. It could lead to a which could be a leading to a which could be a leading the second second be leaded to the second be leaded to the second be leaded by the second be leaded by the second by the second by the leaded by the second by the second by the leaded by the second by the second by the second by the leaded by the second by the second by the second by the leaded by the second by the second by the second by the second by the leaded by the second by the sec research between the 1950s and 1950s and has long been used for recket-orgine research. For years, Rocketdyne critics have believed that church the second s that chemicals and radiation from "the Hill" have caused illnesses, such as cancer, among field inb

neighbora. Rockeidyne officials, however,

EPA: Rocketdyne cleanup OK'd

#### Continued from A1

SSFL in Public Eye

Simi Star November 12, 1996

cials charged with monitoring the cleanup, will meet at 7 p.m. Wednesday at Simi Valley City Hall to discuss the oversight project and other topics. in a series of requests, first in

him to the project.

Dempsey is director of the EPA's Center for Environmental Restoration Monitoring and Emergency Response with the Radiation and Indoor Environ-

Viene and conservices a staff

group saked the EPA to assign

ments National Laboratory in STAR.

#### VALLEY NEWS **Residents Criticize Pollution Study**

# FRIDAY, NOVEMBER & 1996 / F LA INCES

San Fernando Valley filed a class-action suit against Boeing North American Inc. which in December bought the 2.668-acre research complex that its Rocketdyne divi-The sist filed in Los Angeles demands

that Boeing pay damages and set up a

dyne sits, midway between Simi Valley and the San Fernando Valley. "We thought that was a evidence that there was not

going on up at Flocketdyne. reactor famility was betw cancer clusters we found "1

One woman named in the

#### **Rocketdyne** to face onslaught of lawsuits

**COMPLAINTS:** People living around facility allege chemical, radiation exposure.

#### By Brett Johnson Staff writer

company.

Susana Field Laboratory between Simi Valley and Canoga-Park. They allege damages from

from the longtime nuclear and scientific testing facility.

tion for loss of property value and related medical costs. A total

radiation and chemical exposure

The people seek compossa-

54

have organized a public meeting at 7 p.m. Friday at the Radisson

Plasse see ROCKETDYNE on AG



Rocketdvin



#### 





#### take soil and water samples themtake noil and water samples them-pelves, the added ! "As with most titles, a lot of that data down't already exist," and said. "We have idata from the [next-down] Brandes-Bardin camp and the Samta Mopica Mountains Conservancy, bud we'll look for whatever other data wirks he whatever other data might be

whatever other data might be needed from the bouth, east and west of jthe field inbj. We always press for more data." Recitedyous recently settled a lawait in which the Brandeis-Bordin Institute, a Jewish studies center, talamed nuclear and reciset

research polluted its land and water and lowered its property value

space neighbor.

District Court in Los Angeles against Rocketdyne's parent company, Boeing North American Inc. The cases, sparked by the re-"An attorney who represented scent release of a Rocketdyne a cultural center in a pollution worker health study also could lawsuit against Rocketdyne said 12 signal the start of another round Toesday she will file more than the legal action stemming from al-

.hisa

amount sought has not been

Public to tour Simi plant instruction from health and safety authorities with yours beginning in SIMI VALLEY --- Rocketdyne is January, offering to lead members of the public around its 2,600-sore halloop field lab used for nuclear and Rocketdyne has been cleaning radioactive and chemical pollution from the size since 1989, when a mutine survey by the U.S. Depenchemical experiments, and more than a dozen people have signed up contamination. Spokeswoman Lori Circle said

Environmental activists and some neighbors said the invitation was a public relations exercise which could easily backline on Rocketdyne.

"It's clear that the cleanup is separation down so that says a separation and designed to declare million observe operation now in its dirty ansa clean," said too be a set of the says and "It's important the community feels confident in the work with clear with overseeing the clean clean," Circle said. "This is soft on the says of the same clean with the same with the sightly support for them to get away community to be them know we do "It's clear that the cleanup is

Recketdyne made the invitation after being criticized at a meeting of

#### See ROCKETDYNE / Page 2



### **Site Location**



### **Located in Greater Los Angeles Area**



#### **Upland Site Between Communities**



#### Deep Marine Turbidite Deposit: Interbedded Sandstone and Shale

#### **Bedding Plane Fracture**





#### **Vertical Fractures (Joints**



# **Nature of the Problem**

# At first glance the site is complex:

- Fractures
- Faults
- Dipping beds
- Numerous contaminant input areas
- DNAPL

Value of site conceptual model approach

# **Study Area All Within Chatsworth Fm**



Simi Formation Conglomerate

TH.



Santa Susana Formation Sandstone



Chatsworth Formation Sandstone



Monterey Formation Sandstone



Sespe Formation Sandstone and Conglomerate

#### The Chatsworth Formation Turbidite

# High water table and groundwater flow in fractures



# Why does the SSFL groundwater level stay high above the surrounding valleys?



## Mountain Approximated as a Ridge



#### $K_b = R L^2 / h^2$

 $K_b =$  bulk hydraulic conductivity R = recharge rate (~ 10% ppt) L = width of mound h = height of mound at center

 $K \sim 10^{-5} \text{ cm/s}$ 

Groundwater mound forms a long ridge of constant cross section.

### Where does the recharge water go?

R = S+D

S

S

**S** = Discharge to seeps, springs and phreatophytes

D = Deep flow discharges beyond mountain

### **Regional Hydrogeologic Section**

- Minimal municipal groundwater use in both San Fernando and Simi Valleys
- Local private wells



# **Dual Permeability System**



Fracture Porosity: 0.01 to 0.001%

#### Fast Average Linear Groundwater Velocity in Fractured Rock



 $\overline{v}_{f}$  represents line path from A to B

# Virtually all groundwater is present in the low permeability matrix

#### Matrix porosity ~ 13 %

#### Matrix permeability ~ 10 <sup>-6</sup> to 10 <sup>-11</sup> cm/s



### **Two Primary Functions at SSFL**



#### Nuclear Research & Liquid Metal Research for DOE

- Nuclear Power Research: 1956-1983
- Ten reactors
- Sodium component test facilities
- DOE Program ends 1988

#### **Rocket Engine Testing for NASA**

- 1949-2006
- Six Test Stands 17,000 Rocket Engine & Component Tests
- Last test March 3, 2006



### How Did Contaminants Get Into SSFL Groundwater?

Water Infiltration **Leaching of Solids DNAPL** Infiltration Powder 0000 **Retention Pond** Septic System Plume Plume

**Trichloroethene** Perchloroethene Trichloroethane

Perchlorate (ClO<sub>4</sub>) Metals Nitrate Chloride **Tritium** Dissolved Solvents

#### **Surficial Media Contaminated Areas**



Areas recommended for corrective measures study based on suburban residential land use

# Bedrock Groundwater Monitoring Network



428 wells used to define extent of groundwater contamination

### Much TCE DNAPL Went into the Ground – What Happened to it?



## CH2M Hill Estimate (1993) ~ 500,000 gallons entered subsurface





Year

## Nature of Contamination in Fractured Sedimentary Rock



#### TCE is Most Mobile Contaminant Due to DNAPL



#### Rock Core Sampling to Find Contaminants



#### Rock Core Drilling at C-2, Canyon Test Stand

#### Rock Porewater TCE Profile 10<sup>3</sup> RD-35B



### **Total of 20 Coreholes at 18 Locations**



### **TCE Concentrations Decline with Depth**

> 7,000 Rock Core Samples in 20 Core Holes



Concentration ( $\mu$ g/L Porewater)

#### Source Zone / Plume Evolution Conceptual Model

![](_page_31_Figure_1.jpeg)

DNAPL reaches stationary phase in fractures

Much DNAPL disappeared, diffusion into matrix in source and plume zones

No DNAPL remains and most mass occurs in the matrix, diffusion and other processes cause strong plume attenuation

#### Key Issues: How many active fractures? What is their Interconnectivity?

![](_page_32_Figure_1.jpeg)

#### Interplay Between Matrix and Fractures Controls Plume Behavior

![](_page_33_Figure_1.jpeg)

Same bulk K but dissimilar plumes

#### **Focused Look at Northeast Plume**

![](_page_34_Figure_1.jpeg)

![](_page_34_Picture_2.jpeg)

![](_page_35_Picture_0.jpeg)

#### **Source Zone Transect**

![](_page_35_Picture_2.jpeg)
#### Total Equivalent Porewater Concentration along Source Zone Transect



<sup>\*</sup>Ordinary kriging with anisotropy ratio = 5, anisotropy angle = 20 degrees

### Deep Marine Turbidite Deposit: Interbedded Sandstone and Shale

#### **Bedding Plane Fracture**





#### **Vertical Fractures (Joints**



# **Northeast Plume Longsect**



### **TCE Distribution along NE Plume Longsect** (estimated porewater concentrations from rock core VOC subsampling averaged over 6 m intervals)

#### **TCE Migration @ 60 yr since initial releases**



Total Equivalent Porewater Concentration along Plume Longsect Concentration averaged over 20 ft intervals (ug/L Porewater)

**Groundwater Flow** 

# **Concentrations Decline Rapidly with** Distance from Source



Maximum Equivalent TCE along Longsect



# Plume concentrations decline rapidly with distance in the direction of groundwater flow

# **Commercially Available DFN Models**

Windows 950/T/2000/XII

#### **FRAC3DVS**

FRAC3DVS is a 3D finite element model for steady-state/transient, variably-saturated flow and advective-dispersive solute transport in porous or discretely-fractured porous media

### FRACTRAN

FRACTRAN is a 2D finite element model for simulating steady-state groundwater flow and time-variant contaminant transport in discretelyfractured, fully-saturated porous modia











HydroGeoSphere

HydroGeoSphere A Three-dimensional Numerical Model Describing Fully-integrated Subsurface and Surface Flow and Solute Transport

B. Thuraner, Covennerd Lassa
 R.G. Millasher, Covennerd Warmacov
 E.A. Separat, Unremarky or Warmacov
 B.M. Partice, Brancoreace Int. (Covennerv or Warmaco)

SA. Borran, E.A. Falicity, R.C. Millaren Oroanfauter Steelatoria Group







Advanced 3D Finite Element Groundwater Flow, Heat & Contaminant Transport Modeling!



# Simulate Plume Using DFN Numerical Model







Drill Corehole in and Near Contaminated Area

#### **ROCK MATRIX**

Use rock samples from continuous rock core for property measurements:

- Contaminants
- Physical
- Chemical
- Microbial

#### **BOREHOLE**

Use the borehole to acquire hydraulic data and water samples

#### Conceptual and mathematical modeling

Prepared by B.L. Parker



# **Overview of DFN Methods**

- Rock Core Chemical Analyses
- Improved Borehole Geophysics
- Impermeable Flexible Liner (FLUTe<sup>™</sup>)
- High Resolution Temperature
  Logging
- Improved Hydraulic Tests Using Straddle Packers
- High Resolution Multilevel Monitoring Systems

Multiple — Methods Applied in Boreholes

# **Site-Derived Parameters**





## **FRACTRAN Domain: Vertical Cross-Section** Tailored to Conditions along Plume Longsect



## **Simulated Hydraulic Head Distribution**

Hypothetical Borehole X=500m



# FRACTRAN Contaminant Plume Averaged over 5 m Intervals

#### Original (point data) – 60 years



Averaged over 5m intervals



Point concentrations extracted at 50 m intervals along flowpath, averaged vertically over 5 m intervals and resulting dataset kriged.

# Comparison of FRACTRAN versus Field Results along Plume Longsect



Field and model show similar bulk plume style and extent



#### 200 years 200 100 0 200 400 x (m) 800 800 1000





### Simulated Northeast Plume No degradation included

# Plumes are nearly stable after 50 years







# FRACTRAN results suggest plume front nearly stationary (physical processes only)

**FRACTRAN Simulated Plume Front Velocity** 





## TCE Degradation

**Well-Interconnected Fractures** 



20 year DNAPL Source Degradation (5 yr half life) 50 years

# **Numerous Chemical-Use Areas**



Areas recommended for corrective measures study based on suburban residential land use

# **Mountain Scale 3-D FEFLOW EPM Model**





# Have plumes migrated to off-site receptors?





# Approach: Use Portable Drills to Instrument Seeps With Monitoring Wells





# Monitoring Well Design

- One well at the bottom of each corehole
- Hole fully sealed above well intake
- No grout escapes into fractures
- No sand pack around well screen

# **Monitoring Well Goals**

• To develop a better understanding of the origins of seeps water.

 To determine whether seeps with no SSFL contaminants have groundwater discharging to them carrying contaminants.

# Approach

- Advance coreholes to depths ranging from 5 to 54 ft using portable drilling equipment.
  - Shaw Portable Core Drill
  - Winkie Drill
- Installation of small diameter wells for:
  - water level measurements
  - sampling

# Winkie Drill <u>www.minex-intl.com</u> (sole manufacturer)



Fred Wink (1914-2007) Inventor of the Winkie Drill



1.1.1



DRILL

# Shaw Portable Core Drill www.backpackdrill.com

Depths: 20 to 40 ft Corehole Diameters: 1.65 or 2.00-inches Run Length: 1.5 to 2





# **Maximum Depths Drilled at SSFL**

## Shaw Core Drill

- Maximum depth drilled: 37 ft

# Winkie Drill

- Maximum depth drilled: 54 ft

# **Completed Cluster in Drainage**





## Seep Well Cluster: SP-890



# **Results of Groundwater Sampling for**



# VOCs SP-890 Cluster

Groundwater Sampling Dates

SP-890C  $\rightarrow$  July 5, 2011 SP-890D  $\rightarrow$  July 5, 2011 SP-890G  $\rightarrow$  September 12, 2011

FDP-890, Seep Sampling Results TCE: 200 μg/L cDCE: 440 μg/L tDCE: 18 μg/L VC: 1.0 μg/L



relic ocean salt

Schematic cross section with vertical exaggeration (Not-To-Scale) Prepared by SSFL Groundwater Panel December 2009

# **Summary of Key Findings**

- Diffusion of contaminants readily occurs in sandstone and shale and is a very important process at SSFL.
- Nearly all the contaminant mass is in the low permeability rock matrix.
- Most of the contamination is found close to where it went into the ground.
- Groundwater plumes are now stable and plume fronts are nearly stationary.
- Contamination has not been found at offsite seeps.
## **SSFL Groundwater Team**

#### **Property Owners**

The Boeing Company, NASA, and the US Department of Energy Boeing Project Managers (David Dassler, Michael Bower)

#### **Groundwater Advisory Panel**

John Cherry, David McWhorter, and Beth Parker

#### Consultants

MWH Americas (Richard Andrachek, Steve Reiners, Nick Johnson) AquaResource, Haley & Aldrich,

#### Research

University of Guelph G360 Centre for Applied Groundwater Research Steve Chapman, Amanda Pierce, several staff & students Clemson University (David Freedman)

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Bill Woessner, Mark Logsdon, Ross Wagner, Leo Lehmke, Sandia Laboratory (Bill Arnold and Scott James)

# **THANK YOU**

### **Questions?**