

Area History

Groundwater contamination was first discovered in the Chico area in October of 1984. Eventually eight contaminated areas (plumes) were defined (see map insert). Those areas with their contaminants in parentheses are: The Central Plume (tetrachloroethylene/PCE), North Valley Cleaners (PCE), Louisiana Pacific Plume (pentachlorophenol/PCP), North Central Plume (PCE), Southwest Plume (PCE), Chloroform Plume (chloroform), Victor 20th Street Plume (trichloroethylene/TCE), and the Chico Airport (TCE). Following these discoveries, public water supply wells showing contamination above state standards were taken out of service.

Central Plume

DTSC has been involved in investigating and remediating this plume since 1986. In July of 1995, DTSC conducted an Interim Remedial Measure (IRM) which consists of two groundwater extraction wells and a granulated activated carbon

Since 1999, the responsible parties acting under the direction of DTSC have reinstated quarterly groundwater sampling and have increased the number of monitoring wells in the intermediate aquifer from 18 to 21. They have also increased the number of monitoring wells in the deep aquifer from 3 to 22. The additional wells and frequent sampling provide confidence that the nature and extent of contamination is known. DTSC expects to proceed with the selection of a final remedy within the next year. The area of the plume appears to have stabilized and the concentrations of PCE are diminishing.

Within the Central Plume is the Chico High School Irrigation Well (Well). The Well was originally constructed without any casing and produced water from both the Deep and Intermediate Aquifers. The Well was located in the area of high concentrations of PCE in the intermediate aquifer and because of the way it was constructed DTSC felt the well was acting as a conduit for spreading contamination into the Deep Aquifer. The Well was only used for irrigation and the school had no other readily