



NASA Protects the Environment and Native American Resources at Santa Susana Field Laboratory

NASA is committed to using the best available science and technology to clean up the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL). NASA's overarching goal is to safely protect public health, the environment, and the Native American cultural legacy of the site.

Located on 2,850 acres, SSFL is 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles, California. NASA is responsible for 451 acres of the site, where test stands were used to test rocket engines that sent astronauts to space during the Apollo and Space Shuttle programs. Some chemicals have been found in the soil and groundwater on the grounds of SSFL. Primary contaminants include metals, petroleum products, and solvents. NASA has been rigorously investigating and conducting remediation activities where possible, since contamination was found in the late 1980s.



The overarching goal of NASA's cleanup efforts is to safely protect public health, the environment, and the Native American cultural legacy of the site.

SSFL has been recognized as a Native American Sacred Site where the ancestors of multiple tribes lived and worshipped. To this day, the site remains culturally and ceremonially significant to members of those tribes. For more than a decade, NASA has engaged with state and federally recognized tribes with cultural ties to the area, to better understand the significance of Native American cultural resources, and to work with tribes to protect their heritage and traditional cultural resources at SSFL during NASA's demolition and cleanup activities.

In August 2007, NASA, Boeing, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) signed an agreement to address the cleanup of soils and groundwater at SSFL. Subsequently, in December 2010, NASA entered into an agreement with DTSC with specific requirements to complete the characterization and cleanup of soils in NASA-administered areas.

In 2024, NASA completed the demolition of Coca Test Stands 1 and 2. Demolition of the remaining test stand and structures in the Coca Test Area will continue through 2027. NASA is currently operating two groundwater pilot studies and working with DTSC to finalize plans for the comprehensive groundwater cleanup, which is expected to begin in 2025. In addition, NASA is working with DTSC to resolve technical challenges associated with the soil cleanup. NASA continues to consult and collaborate with the Native American community to ensure the sacred nature of the site is accessible and respected.

Contact

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