

Merrilee Fellows
NASA Management Office/Jet Propulsion Laboratory
Phone: (818) 393-0754

July 27, 2005

Lincoln Avenue Water Company and NASA Mark First Anniversary of Water Cleanup Plant

July 27, 2005 marked the one-year anniversary of the installation of a water cleanup system at Lincoln Avenue Water Company in Altadena to remove perchlorate from the groundwater. The NASA-funded ion-exchange system has pumped and treated approximately 685 million gallons of groundwater since going into service last year and has helped ensure that LAWC can supply clean drinking water to its customers.

The state-of-the-art ion exchange technology uses a perchlorate-selective resin to absorb or "capture" the perchlorate and remove it from the water to a non-detectable level. The new system is coupled with a NASA-funded liquid-phase granular activated carbon (LGAC) system that has been removing volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from the LAWC wells for over a decade.

In the 1940s and '50s, liquid and solid wastes collected from some JPL laboratory drains and sinks were disposed of in ground seepage pits. This was a waste management practice that was common and acceptable at the time. Currently all chemical wastes from JPL activities are recycled or safely sent off-site to regulated treatment and disposal sites. Chemicals that were disposed of in the ground, such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and perchlorate, have traveled underground to deep groundwater and are affecting LAWC water wells. The NASA-funded treatment plant has been constructed to remove the chemicals from the LAWC water wells.

Since inception last year, the LAWC system has operated continuously and smoothly at a rate of up to 2,000 gallons per minute.

"The system operates as well as we had expected," said Bob Hayward, General Manager of LAWC. "We've had no major problems with the equipment or operation of the system, and our relationship with NASA continues to be cordial. They have always been responsive to our needs."

NASA Water Cleanup Remedial Project Manager Steve Slaten pointed to the effectiveness of this technology.

"The ion exchange system has been successful in reducing perchlorate to non-detectable levels," said Slaten. "By partnering with Lincoln Avenue Water Company, NASA is fulfilling its commitment to being a good neighbor."

-end-