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ADEQ Sees Progress, Selects Groundwater Cleanup Plan for Tyson Wash Site in Quartzsite

PHOENIX (July 7, 2009) – The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality announced today that two cancer-causing chemicals are being removed from 1.7 million gallons of groundwater treated annually beneath Quartzsite as part of a state-sponsored cleanup program.

ADEQ released what is formally known as the Record of Decision (ROD), a long-term plan of action to clean water and protect public health at the 12-acre Tyson Wash Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund (WQARF) site in the Town of Quartzsite. The Arizona WQARF program is also known as the state Superfund program.

The ROD, a report that documents the remedial action being taken to clean up the site, concludes that the cleanup is proceeding successfully and that ADEQ should continue to monitor the groundwater in the area until it is free of contamination from tetrachloroethene (PCE), a solvent used in dry-cleaning operations, and trichloroethene (TCE), an industrial degreaser. The cleanup could last until 2032, according to technical studies. A total of 5 million gallons of groundwater has been treated to date.

“Our cleanup plan is good news for Quartzsite. The treatment system is working and the groundwater will continue to get cleaner over time,” said ADEQ Director Benjamin H. Grumbles.

The goal of the project is to bring the area groundwater within state and federal water quality standards of 5 parts per billion of both PCE and TCE. Readings as high as 200 ppb have been recorded in the area in past years. The Tyson Wash WQARF site contaminated groundwater plume is bounded by West Sunset Street to the north, Oregon Avenue to the west, Main Street to the south, and North Central Boulevard to the east.

The contamination was first discovered in the groundwater in 1993. After conducting an extensive investigation, including the installation and operation of a groundwater pump and treat and injection system, ADEQ officially added the site to Arizona's WQARF list in 1998. PCE and TCE have been linked to cancer and nervous disorders.

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The treatment system, which is operated by MACTEC Engineering and Consulting, Inc., of Phoenix, pumps and cleans about 4,590 gallons of water daily. ADEQ has spent \$568,317 to clean up the site since it was added to the WQARF Registry in 1998. The ROD estimates that completely cleaning the site could cost an additional \$1.6 million.

Those interested in the project can review documents at the Quartzsite Public Library, 465 N. Plymouth Ave., or at ADEQ's records center in Phoenix, 1110 W. Washington Street.

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