



# SANTA SUSANA

## FIELD LABORATORY

The modern world has been substantially shaped by technological breakthroughs at the site of the former Santa Susana Field Laboratory. A rocket engine test and energy research site for federal government programs, Santa Susana was where thousands of workers tested rocket engines used to defend the country, land on the Moon, and launch satellites for GPS and cell phones. It was also a test site for advanced energy research programs. After more than 50 years of operation, rocket engine testing ceased in 2006. Nuclear research ended in 1988.

These past operations, which occupied approximately one-fifth of the 2,850-acre site, left residual chemical and radiological contamination in soil and groundwater. Numerous health studies conducted by government agencies, university researchers and others have examined cancer rates in the communities surrounding Santa Susana. Taken together, the studies do not support a link between an increased incidence of cancer and past operations at the site.

Boeing, NASA and the Department of Energy have conducted thorough environmental investigations in preparation for the cleanup of the Santa Susana site beginning next year. They

also have addressed contamination in soil, groundwater and stormwater with interim cleanups, furthering progress toward restoration.

Boeing performs investigation and cleanup work pursuant to the 2007 Consent Order under the direction of the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC); the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board regulates the site's stormwater permit compliance.

Boeing's goal is a cleanup that is protective of both human health and the environment, consistent with the land's future use as open space habitat. The cleanup will protect everyone who visits Santa Susana for recreational purposes and our neighbors in the surrounding community, as well as preserve unique wildlife habitat and protect important Native American cultural resources. The company regularly consults with community members, elected officials and environmental groups to achieve this goal.

In April 2017, Boeing recorded a conservation easement covering its nearly 2,400 acres of the site to ensure Boeing's property is never developed for residential or agricultural use, and is forever preserved as open space habitat.

### WHAT

Santa Susana Field Laboratory, a 2,850-acre former rocket engine and energy test center

### WHERE

Simi Hills, 30 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles

### WHO

The Boeing Company, NASA and the Department of Energy

### WHEN

Interim soil and groundwater measures are ongoing and the final soil and groundwater cleanup is slated to start in 2020

### WHY

Protect human health and the environment and preserve open space to protect natural and cultural resources

# FAQs

## What is Boeing doing to clean up the site?

Boeing is conducting extensive investigations and has conducted interim cleanup measures while building the scientific basis for cleanup pending final regulatory approval. Boeing has removed or treated 45,000 cubic yards of soil; analyzed 38,000+ soil and groundwater samples; drilled 260 groundwater monitoring and extraction wells; and dismantled more than 300 structures. In addition, Boeing has:

- Installed a state-of-the-art groundwater treatment system.
- Built stormwater containment and filtration systems designed in consultation with a panel of stormwater experts to meet water quality standards that in many cases are stricter than drinking water standards (although there is no human water consumption).
- Restored 900 acres of land.

## What is the timeline for Boeing's cleanup?

In 2007, Boeing, NASA and the DOE signed a comprehensive cleanup agreement (consent order) with the DTSC. Boeing continues to meet all of its obligations to implement the consent order. Efforts to remove contamination from the site began three decades ago and the final soil cleanup is slated to start in 2020.

Here are key next steps in the process:

- DTSC issues a certified, final sitewide Programmatic EIR.
- DTSC approves the investigation reports previously submitted by Boeing.
- Boeing is preparing risk assessment reports for DTSC approval.

- When risk assessment is approved, Boeing will prepare a Corrective Measures Study for DTSC approval.
- When the CMS is approved and finalized, DTSC will issue a Statement of Basis outlining the final cleanup plan.
- Boeing begins long-term groundwater cleanup and monitoring.
- Boeing completes soil cleanup.



## What happens after cleanup of Boeing's property?

North American Land Trust holds a conservation easement that permanently preserves Boeing's nearly 2,400 acres of the site as open space habitat. This will benefit local plants and animals and allow for the protection of cultural resources.

## Is Santa Susana safe?

Yes. Based on thousands of soil and groundwater samples, Boeing has determined that the site is safe for onsite workers and members of the public who participate in Boeing-led tours or events.

In addition, a 2007 study that compiled existing off-site data found no evidence of offsite chemical or radiological contamination related to site activities. In an April 2013 letter to the mayor of Simi Valley, the DTSC stated, "To date we have not found evidence of



off-site contamination from SSFL that would pose a risk to human health or the environment." More recently, DTSC stated in the Biannual April 2018 public meeting that "DTSC has not found any evidence that contamination from [historical] operations at SSFL has posed or would pose a threat to human health or the environment outside the SSFL site boundaries."

## Is the site radioactive?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) completed a \$42 million radiation survey of Area IV, the parcel of land that the DOE is responsible for cleaning up. The survey found low levels of residual contamination from past nuclear energy research in approximately 40 acres in Area IV. Measurements show that the radiation levels are often lower than naturally occurring levels measured in nearby off-site background locations. No samples exceeded the EPA acceptable risk range for open space land use. To read the EPA's study, visit <http://1.usa.gov/13XFe6C>.



# FAQs

## Is Boeing's property suitable for open space habitat?

Yes. Santa Susana — with its sandstone cliffs, oak woodlands, meadows, hills and streams — provides a rare and vital habitat and a crucial wildlife linkage in Southern California. The site has a unique history of Native American use and aerospace technological achievements. Because the site has these characteristics, in 2017, the North American Land Trust recorded a conservation easement to permanently protect the Boeing-owned land as open space habitat.

Boeing has partnered, and will continue to partner, with established organizations that share its open space vision. In addition, leading universities are engaged in environmental research at Santa Susana. Ventura County recently included the site in the Regional Wildlife Corridor and the Simi Hills Critical Wildlife Passage Area. And the National Park Service included the site in its Rim of the Valley Resource Study, recommending that Santa Susana be added to the existing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.



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Front page photo courtesy of  
John Luker, SSMPA.



## Will the cleanup be enough?

Yes. We remain committed to a cleanup that is fully protective of human health and the environment, consistent with the land's future use as open space habitat. Our cleanup will protect everyone who visits Santa Susana for recreational purposes and our neighbors in the surrounding community, as well as preserve unique wildlife habitat and protect important Native American cultural resources.



**45,000** cubic yards of soil removed or treated



**38,000+** soil and groundwater samples analyzed



**260** monitoring and extraction wells installed



**300+** structures dismantled



**3** stormwater treatment systems built



**900** acres of land restored



**1** groundwater treatment system built