Field Demonstration of the Solvent Extraction Residual Biotreatment (SERB) Technology

Introduction to the Problem
Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) is a dense nonaqueous-phase liquid (DNAPL) that was widely used as a degreasing agent and in dry cleaning processes. Because DNAPLs may be trapped in the pore space as a separate phase contaminant, they can serve as a long-term source of contamination to the aquifer. The physical/chemical properties of PCE and its daughter products have resulted in the chloroethenes being the most commonly detected class of organic contaminants in ground water. Parent chloroethenes can become human health hazards after being processed in the human liver or via reductive dehalogenation in the environment.

Background
The former Sages Dry Cleaner site in Jacksonville, Florida, was selected for remediation of a PCE source zone by co-solvent extraction with ethanol. Ethanol was selected as the co-solvent because it has been shown to be an acceptable electron donor for indigenous microorganisms from other locations to support reductive dechlorination processes. This project was designed to investigate the potential for merging two synergistic technologies—enhanced source remediation by in situ flushing and bioremediation by reductive dechlorination—into a treatment train to develop a comprehensive approach for site restoration.

Objectives
- Evaluate enhancement of subsurface microbial processes following co-solvent extraction with ethanol
- Assess extent and rates of reductive dechlorination transformations

Approach
Application of the solvent extraction residual biotreatment (SERB) technology was conducted by characterization of the source area and design of the co-solvent flushing pilot test to remove a significant portion of the PCE DNAPL. Following the co-solvent flushing test, areas of residual DNAPL were exposed to ethanol that was left in the subsurface. Indigenous microorganisms can use the ethanol as an electron donor for reductive dechlorination processes.
electron donor and produce hydrogen, which may then be used as a direct electron donor by organisms capable of partial and complete reductive dechlorination. Bioactive zones in the subsurface were created and monitored to determine the capacity for transformation of PCE to non-toxic products, such as ethene.

**Accomplishments to Date (Summer 2003)**
The co-solvent flushing pilot test was conducted during August 1998 and quarterly sampling and analysis of ground water was conducted until April 2003. Ground water samples were analyzed for PCE and daughter products, dissolved gases, ethanol, and additional parameters to monitor changes in contaminant concentrations and geochemistry. Evaluation of ground water results indicates that reductive dechlorination was enhanced in areas exposed to ethanol both in the source and downgradient areas. Ground water samples collected four years after the co-solvent flushing pilot test from the source zone tested positive for three out of three primers for Dehalococcoides (the only known microorganism to dechlorinate PCE completely to ethane). Transformation rates calculated from site data, based on changes in mass estimated from contour plots, were:

- 0.75 year$^{-1}$ for cis-dichloroethene
- -0.50 year$^{-1}$ for PCE
- -0.33 year$^{-1}$ for ethanol

**Future Tasks**
Biannual sampling and analysis of ground water will continue for evaluation of long-term performance of the SERB technology. Ground water flow and transport modeling of the site data will be conducted to better evaluate transformation rates and the impact of the drainage canal on ground water flow. Laboratory studies are planned to evaluate the impact of ethanol on microbial communities.

**Publications**


Presentations


Posters


Investigators
Susan C. Mravik
A. Lynn Wood
U.S. EPA
Ground Water and Ecosystem Restoration Division
Ada, Oklahoma 74820
580-436-8553

Collaborators
Michael Annable
University of Florida
Gainesville, Florida

Guy W. Sewell
East Central University
Ada, Oklahoma, 74820

Randall K. Sillan
Levine Fricke Recon
Tallahassee, Florida