

## NOAA Hazardous Waste Site Report

Coast Wood Preserving (IX-16)  
Ukiah, California  
April 13, 1984

### Location and Nature of Site:

Coast Wood Preserving is a wood treatment facility on a 7.5-acre site two miles south of Ukiah in northern California (Figure 1). Portions of the site are located over two streams approximately 0.5 miles upstream of the Russian River. The river supplies municipal, domestic and agricultural water in this region and is also known as a groundwater recharge zone. The groundwater also supplies domestic, agricultural, and industrial users.

As a result of past handling and storing practices, inorganic chemicals have contaminated soil, groundwater, and surface water. A study conducted by Coast Wood found elevated concentrations of chromium, arsenic, and copper in the soil and in the groundwater.

### Proximity of Chemical Hazard to Marine Resources:

Coast Wood Preserving is 21 miles inland from coastal waters. The release of chemical hexavalent chromium and other plant fluids has contaminated surface water and groundwater both on- and off- site. The most serious environmental problem is the contamination of drinking water supplies. In addition, it has been discovered that a groundwater plume is migrating toward the Russian River, a major recreational water source. The topography and soil type tends to prevent heavy erosion and transport of the contaminated soil although, during heavy flooding, some materials were lost from the site to the river. Sampling has indicated that dilution has reduced the contaminants' toxic effects as they move off-site.

### Marine Resources at Risk:

The Russian River, 0.5 miles downstream from the site, is the principle source of potable water for the town of Ukiah. The river serves domestic and agricultural needs as well. The river is heavily fished for coho salmon, steelhead trout, striped bass, Pacific lamprey, white sturgeon, and American shad. These aquatic and anadromous organisms use the river as a spawning ground and migratory area. Terrestrial organisms such as eagles and ospreys are also found in this area. Plants from the Figworts and Heaths families grow along the river and close to the site. Off-site migration of contaminants have been reported and observed reaching the Russian River, however, toxic effects on coastal waters have not been measured.

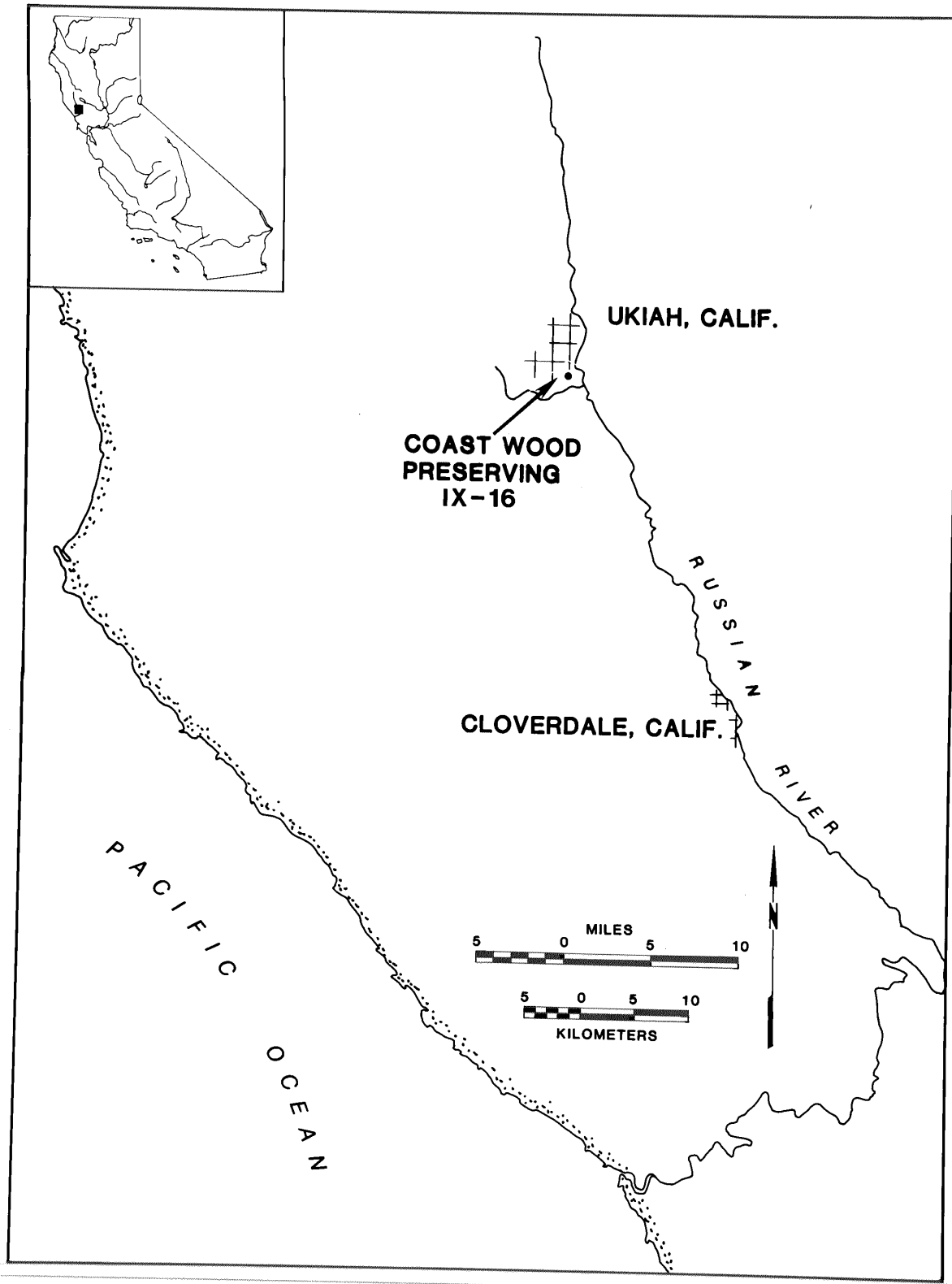


FIGURE 1. Site location.

The lower Russian River is spawning and nursery habitat for anadromous fish (Table 1). It is unknown to what extent these fish utilize the upper Russian River area.

The Russian River is a wintering and migratory area for bald eagles, waterfowl, and shorebirds, and has resident osprey and golden eagle populations (4). Nearshore marine waters support California sea lion, harbor seal, and elephant seal.

Table 1. Fishery Resources of the Lower Russian River (1-3)

Finfish Species	Adult Habitat	Spawning Area	Nursery Area	Comm. Fish.	Rec. Fish.	Migr. Route
<u>Anadromous</u>						
Coho salmon		x	x		x	x
Steelhead trout		x	x		x	x
American shad	x				x	
White sturgeon	x				x	
Striped bass	x				x	
<u>Shellfish</u>						
Freshwater shrimp	x					

Summary of Site-Related Actions:

The State of California has taken several enforcement actions against the Coast Wood Preserving company. In 1981, the State of California issued a Cease and Desist Order and later, a Stipulation for Preliminary Injunction was brought against Coast Wood. In July 1983, the company proceeded with an investigation to determine the full extent of the groundwater contamination. Proposed EPA remedial actions are aimed at removal of toxic waste and continued monitoring of irrigation, and industrial and domestic wells to determine acceptable levels of toxicity and potential impact to the environment.

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References:

1. National Marine Fisheries Service, 1977. Anglers Guide to the United States Pacific Coast.

References, cont.

2. Virginia Institute of Marine Science, 1976. Assessment of Estuarine and Nearshore Marine Environments.
3. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1981. Pacific Coast Ecological Inventory.
4. Varoujean, D. Seabird Colony Catalog: Washington, Oregon, and California. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.