



**The U.S. EPA's Oil Program Report**

January 2004

**Contents**

FSS 2004 in New Orleans ..... 1

2005 International Oil Spill Conference ..... 1

The National Response Plan and the On-Scene Coordinator ..... 2

EPA Fines Local North Dakota Business ..... 2

U.S. and Russian Federation Technical Exchange on Oil Spill Prevention and Response ..... 3

\$5 Billion *Exxon Valdez* Award Overturned ..... 3

New EPA Paper on the Characteristics of Oils ..... 4

Mock-Disaster Helps Responders Plan for Real Catastrophes ..... 4

Rescued Tundra Swan Returned to Wild ..... 5

Tanker Truck Crashes in Elma, Washington ..... 5

Hot Springs Oil Refinery Contamination ..... 5

Diesel Spill into the Lochsa River ..... 5

Pipeline Leak in Barataria Bay ..... 6

Duck River Diesel Fuel Spill ..... 6

Boats Polluting Alaskan River ..... 6

Homeland Security Great Lakes Region Conference ..... 7

**Coming Events**

FSS 2004 in New Orleans

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Oil Program will host its 2004 Freshwater Spills Symposium (FSS 2004) in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 6-8, 2004. Focusing on issues of current and critical nature, the plenary sessions are entitled "Homeland Security and a New National Response Plan: Implications for Freshwater Spills, Preparedness, and Response" and "Trends in Oil Spill Prevention and Preparedness." Breakout sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday will include the following:

- Advanced Planning Cycle;
- Biological Countermeasures;
- Case Studies;
- Geographic Information Systems;
- Information Technologies in Spill Response;
- New Concepts in Planning;

- Oil Spill Response Organizations;
- Planning and Preparedness;
- Prevention through Enforcement;
- Response Strategies;
- Response and Prevention Technologies;
- Restoration and Oiled Wildlife; and
- Oil in Freshwater Environments

This year, attendees will have the opportunity to attend two special sessions. "Seat-of-the-Pants Science" will be a discussion of simple response techniques presented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and "Tank Talk" will be hosted by the EPA Oil Program and cover tank technologies, regulations, and spill prevention measures. In addition, FSS 2004 will include an on-water demonstration of oil spill response equipment (location and weather permitting) and an extra meeting of interested parties to plan a workshop on dispersants for later this year. The dispersant workshop planning meeting

**2005 International Oil Spill Conference**

Preparations are underway for the May 15-19, 2005 International Oil Spill Conference (IOSC). Next year's 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial IOSC will be hosted at the Miami Beach Convention Center in Miami, Florida. The upcoming event's theme will be "Prevention, Preparedness, Response & Restoration - Raising Global Standards." The IOSC attracts more than 2,000 attendees and more than 250 exhibitors. IOSC is sponsored by several oil-related organizations, including the EPA Oil Program. Check the conference website at <http://www.iosc.org> for updated information and the forthcoming "Call for Papers." (Source: [www.iosc.org](http://www.iosc.org))

will be hosted by the EPA Oil Program on the morning of April 8, 2004.

The location for FSS 2004 is the city-centric Hilton New Orleans Riverside Hotel. For more information on the symposium, onsite registration, and session information, visit the FSS 2004 website at [www.freshwaterspills.net/fss2004](http://www.freshwaterspills.net/fss2004) or contact:

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(Source: EPA Oil Program)

## Recent Developments

### The National Response Plan and the On-Scene Coordinator

The National Response Plan (NRP) mandates that all federal agencies and departments develop initiatives to improve multi-agency/multi-jurisdictional response to domestic incidents. The NRP outlines a unified approach to incident management to ensure that all levels of government work together to develop a common operational framework, and coordinate and cooperate throughout the life cycle of an incident.

Under the NRP, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will designate a Principle Federal Official (PFO) to oversee the coordination of deployment and application of federal assets and resources in support of the on-scene commander. The PFO will do this by coordinating with federal officials under existing response plans, such as the FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer, the FBI Special Agent-in-Charge, and the EPA or Coast Guard On-Scene Coordinator (OSC).

Under the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP), the OSC is identified as the single federal agent with the authority to direct and coordinate responses to discharges of

### Examples of OSC Authority, Roles, and Responsibilities:

- Primary on-scene decision maker for the National Response System, required under the NCP;
- Mandate to direct responses to spills that pose a substantial threat to public health or welfare;
- Federal Incident Commander in a Unified Command for an incident within the jurisdiction of CERCLA, OPA, and the NCP;
- Senior official in charge of worker safety, and health and training requirements at a response scene, and responsible for assuring compliance with OSHA;
- Authority to activate national and/or regional level support and resources from the National Response Team and Regional Response Team member agencies during an emergency response;
- Provide technical advice and assistance to the FBI during the crisis management phase of a response to a terrorist incident and to FEMA during the consequence management phases;
- Procure resources and services when emergency response contractors are not immediately available;
- Independent Warrant Authority to approve and initiate clean up actions (up to \$250,000) in an emergency situation;
- Activate NCP Special Forces, such as the Coast Guard Strike Teams that comprise the National Strike Force and EPA's Environmental Response Team and Radiological Emergency Response Team;
- Activate EPA's Emergency Community Outreach Team, to handle community and media relations and set up a Joint Information Center within a Unified Command Structure;
- Work with federal, state, and local officials to prepare Area Contingency Plans and to develop and deliver major training exercises; and
- Assist in the implementation of EPA's Incident Management Assistance Teams, a national back-up cadre of Incident Command System-trained staff to supplement regional incident management teams for nationally significant incidents.

oil and releases of hazardous substances. Over the past three decades, EPA and Coast Guard OSCs have directed major responses to thousands of incidents involving oil discharges and hazardous substance releases that posed imminent and substantial danger to public health, welfare, and the environment. With their skills, knowledge, and experience, OSCs are important to DHS development of a credible and successful NRP and a National Incident Management System (NIMS).

The OSC has the authority and responsibility to coordinate all federal assessment, containment, removal, and disposal efforts and resources during a major incident per the NCP, and to conduct pre-incident planning and preparedness at the local, state, and

federal levels. (Source: Daniel Shaye, OSC, EPA Region 9)

### EPA Fines Local North Dakota Businesses

In September 2002, EPA conducted 44 Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) inspections at facilities in eastern North Dakota. The facilities chosen for the surprise inspections all store, distribute, or use oil. Nineteen facilities received major fines and twelve received minor penalties. Total fines levied against the companies exceeded \$400,000. The proposed fines ranged from \$8,192 to \$35,747 per company, based on oil-storage capacity and extent of the violation. The biggest fine went to a company that had repeatedly failed to have adequate SPCC

plans in place at the time of an inspection. A fine of \$33,617 was levied against another company for spilling 100 gallons of diesel fuel into the English Coulee River via storm sewers and not having an appropriate SPCC plan. These two companies had 30 days to accept EPA's proposed penalties or request a formal hearing. For more information, contact Jane Nakad, EPA Region 8, 303-312-6202, nakad.jane@epa.gov. (Source: Grand Forks Herald)

### U.S. and Russian Federation Technical Exchange on Oil Spill Prevention and Response

On December 4, 2003, in Moscow, U.S. Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow and Russian Energy Minister Oleg Georgiyevich Gordeyev opened the first U.S. and Russian Federation interactive workshop on oil spill prevention and response. This workshop stemmed from agreements signed by the U.S. Department of Energy and the Russian Federation in September 2003. Approximately 80 attendees participated in the two-day workshop to facilitate technical information exchange and mutual assistance in preventing oil spills and improving response efforts. The U.S. delegation was comprised of representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Pipeline Safety, EPA, and members of U.S. oil companies.

The workshop consisted of a series of panel presentations and discussions. The U.S. and Russian Federation presenters stressed that the investment in spill prevention was the most cost-effective approach to managing the environmental issues associated with the production, transportation, and use of oil.

David Evans, EPA Oil Program, presented "EPA's Role under OPA 1990." The presentation highlighted the Oil Pollution Act's (OPA) statutory preparedness and response authorities and EPA's primary activities to implement the law. Mr. Evans also provided an overview of the spill prevention and regulatory approach under Section 311 of the Clean Water Act.

Several international organizations presented information on international oil spill authorities, resources, and technical assistance systems. Representatives from the International Tanker Owners Pollution Federation (ITOPF) and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) focused on the technical expertise the international oil industry has gained through collaborative associations and agreements. At the time of this workshop, Russia had not joined ITOPF, IPIECA, the International Funds for Compensation from Oil Spills, or other international forums related to oil resources management. As Russia increases its international oil sales, the U.S. Department of Energy believes Russia should commit to joining these international groups.

The Russian presenters demonstrated a sound understanding of spill prevention and preparedness activities, risk assessment/management, and spill response. One of the best presentations was from a Russian pipeline company representative which focused on uses of state-of-the-art pipeline spill detection robotic equipment and methodologies.

Norway and Finland presenters stressed the importance of strong marine spill prevention and preparedness systems due to sensitive ecological resources, cold climate, and long periods of winter darkness in the Baltic and Barents Seas.

A joint declaration was signed at the end of the successful workshop committing each country to follow-on actions and formalizing the U.S. Department of Energy-Russian Federation agreement. For the U.S., the primary follow-on action was to plan for future cooperation by the U.S. in the semi-annual technical exchange workshops by establishing an Interagency Coordinating Committee. Secretary Abraham announced that the group, chaired by the U.S. Department of Energy would be comprised of the U.S. Departments of Transportation, Commerce, and Energy; EPA; and the U.S. Coast Guard. The kickoff meeting for the Interagency Coordinating Committee has been set for January 15,

2004. David Evans has agreed to serve as EPA's representative to this committee and, if requested, coordinate EPA's active participation in future workshops.

The next workshop has been scheduled concurrently with the Inter-Spill conference for June 2004 in Trondheim, Norway. (Sources: David Evans, EPA Oil Program, 703-603-8760, evans.david@epa.gov and US DOE)

### \$5 Billion Exxon Valdez Award Overturned

After a three-judge panel overturned the original \$5 billion verdict in the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill a year ago, U.S. District Court Judge Russel Holland reduced the punitive damages award to \$4 billion. However, on Friday, December 5, 2003, nearly 15 years after the spill occurred, the 9<sup>th</sup> U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ordered Judge Holland to again reconsider the damages.

In 1994, a jury in Anchorage, Alaska had ordered Exxon to pay the original award to thousands of plaintiffs composed of commercial fisherman, Alaskan natives, property owners, and others harmed by the worst oil spill in the nation's history. The plaintiffs still believe they should have received \$5 billion in punitive damages to punish the oil company. However, Exxon argued that it learned its lesson in paying more than \$3 billion to clean up Prince William Sound and consequently should not have to pay any punitive damages.

At the time, \$5 billion represented the largest punitive damage award in history and was equal to one year of Exxon's profits. Exxon attorneys argued that the Supreme Court case, *State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company vs. Campbell*, supported their claim that the original award was excessive. In that case, the Supreme Court ruled that the \$145 million award to punish State Farm was excessive since actual damages were only \$1 million. The Supreme Court held that a ratio of 9-to-1 should not be exceeded in determining punitive to actual damages and that juries could not award

huge sums of money just to punish companies that are considered big, wealthy, or distasteful. Furthermore, Exxon's attorneys argue that the tanker spill was an isolated, unintended incident, which should translate to a ratio of 1-to-1 or less.

Commercial fisherman and local Alaskans, who were most impacted by the spill, tell a different story. A local fisherman in Cordova, R.J. Kopchak, said that he was very angry with the Court's reducing the punitive damages award. He said no herring remain in the waters at or near Prince William Sound and few salmon are left. Kopchak, whose herring fishing operation is now defunct, said, "We no longer can make a living commercial fishing." Other plaintiffs noted that, in addition to severely damaging fishing and hunting grounds, the spill also reduced property values along the 1,500 miles of coastline affected by the 11 million gallon spill. The plaintiffs also allege that the captain of the *Valdez*, Joseph Hazelwood, was drunk when he ran the ship aground and that Exxon allowed him to operate oil tankers despite knowing of his drinking problem.

Exxon has already paid \$3.2 billion in cleanup costs, settlements, and other fees and penalties. Judge Holland said he would attempt to reach a decision by the end of January 2004. (Sources: The Associated Press, Fairbanks Daily News, The New York Daily News)

## New EPA Paper on the Characteristics of Oils

In continuing efforts to provide data on oil fate for response applications, EPA has published a new report, "Characteristics of Spilled Oils, Fuels, and Petroleum Products: 1. Composition and Properties of Selected Oils." In conjunction with the National Exposure Research Laboratory and Environment Canada (EC), EPA has documented the characteristics and composition of ten "typical" petroleum products that commonly compose spills. The ten products listed in the report include: Alaskan North Slope Crude, Alberta Sweet Mixed Blend, Arabian

Light, Sockeye, South Louisiana, West Texas Intermediate, Fuel Oil No. 2 (diesel), Fuel Oil No. 5, Heavy Fuel Oil 6303, and Orimulsion-400.

The characteristics measured for each of the ten products are: American Petroleum Institute (API) specific gravity, density, sulfur content, water content, flash point, pour point, viscosity, surface and interfacial tension, adhesion, evaporation prediction equation, emulsion formation, and simulated boiling point distribution. These properties, along with the chemical compositions recorded for the products, will be incorporated into EC's oil properties database. EC has catalogued the physical and chemical properties of oil and petroleum products in this database since 1984. It now houses data on over 400 globally found oils.

The data found in this report and EC's database are not typically available in scientific literature. However, its usefulness, and primary point of interest for EPA, is realized in oil fate modeling. Oil fate modeling allows oil spill responders to develop better answers to questions such as "How far will a particular oil spill migrate?" and "How long will a certain oil persist in an environment?" Plugging the data on characteristics and composition of oil from the EC database into fate models will allow for more refined and accurate answers which will, in turn, allow responders to target their efforts where they will be most effective.

The data in this report and the oil properties database will also be helpful in planning for and preventing oil spills. So that industry responders and planner may also benefit from this information, it will be made available online at [www.etcentre.org/spills](http://www.etcentre.org/spills). The EPA report is online at [www.epa.gov/athens/publications/reports/EPA-600-R03-072-OilComposition.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/athens/publications/reports/EPA-600-R03-072-OilComposition.pdf). (Source: EPA/600/R-03/072, July 2003)

## Mock-Disaster Helps Responders Plan for Real Catastrophes

A mock-disaster was staged along the Delaware River in November 2003. Spill

exercises are required every three years under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. This worst-case-scenario drill began with a terrorist running a front-end loader into an above-ground fuel tank at the ConocoPhillips refinery that sent oil flowing into the river. While responders were working on the tank rupture, a call was received from a person threatening another round of attacks at the ConocoPhillips plant. To further complicate matters, a second caller reported seeing a suspicious person with a backpack near the perimeter of the plant. As the day went on, additional elements were combined to make the exercise as complex as possible.

With each component of the mock-disaster requiring different emergency responders, the drill was designed to practice coordinating a response to an oil spill with the U.S. Coast Guard and multiple agencies with whom ConocoPhillips' personnel typically do not work with. For example, the FBI and law enforcement agencies are responsible for searching for suspects and gathering evidence while the Coast Guard is tending to the spill. But in the end, the foremost goal of the exercise is the development of a quick, seamless response plan to prepare for a real catastrophe.

In addition to notifying the necessary authorities, one of the first steps taken in the exercise was setting up an incident-command system. One component of the system is an organizational chart with a list of defined responsibilities for each responder. "Incident command could be comprised of three people for a smaller problem or it could be something like this where everyone has a role to play," said Patrick Prosser, ConocoPhillips spokesman.

The makeshift incident-command center set up at the airport Embassy Suites Hotel is where all decisions were made. Dozens of responders from agencies, including the Department of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Coast Guard, FBI, and ConocoPhillips, joined together at the command center to create a

comprehensive action plan. "When that nightclub pier collapsed in Philadelphia a few years ago, there were five different command posts giving five different sets of instructions," said U.S. Coast Guard Senior Chief Robert Ward of the Marine Safety Office in Philadelphia. "What we are trying to do is set up a unified command-and-control structure to manage the environmental and security operations."

Once the incident-command center is set up, the emergency is monitored in the operations room, where objectives and ideas are discussed and passed on to the personnel in the planning room. Then the objectives are put down on paper, a strategy is drawn up, and directives are given to responders at the scene of the disaster. Vests are worn by those working in the command center that identify their job specialty to prevent confusion. "When you are dealing with an incident of this magnitude, you have to delegate and let people do the jobs they are trained to do," Prosser said. "If our company or any of these agencies tried to go it alone, the job would be overwhelming." (Source: Delaware County Times)

### Rescued Tundra Swan Returned to Wild

Researchers released a tundra swan at the Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge in Maryland, months after it had been rescued from an oil pit in Alaska. The swan became trapped after landing in an oil impoundment at Prudhoe Bay Alaska. She was initially treated at the International Bird Rescue Research Center in Anchorage. When rescuers realized the swan would not be healthy enough in time to rejoin the migrating swans, the swan was transferred (air freight paid by the BP Oil Company) to Delaware's Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research Center. The swan was released in the Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge in hope that it would join the other tundra swans presently in the refuge, a major stopover in the migratory path to the Carolinas. Researchers are hopeful that the swan will learn to migrate to the summer breeding grounds by mimicking the behavior of the other birds in the flock.

The swan was fitted with tracking devices that will monitor the bird's location for up to 18 months following its release. This project, coordinated by Cornell University, is the first project involving a rehabilitated tundra swan. Tracking costs are expected to be around \$10,000, with some of the cost being paid by corporate donors. The information obtained from tracking the swan may give vital clues to the behavior and movement of other tundra swans. For more information, visit [www.tristate.org](http://www.tristate.org). (Source: Baltimore Sun)

## Spills & Releases

### Tanker Truck Crashes in Elma, Washington

Around 6:45 a.m. on November 28, 2003, a tanker truck owned by Reinhard Petroleum crashed in Grays Harbor County. The tanker was carrying 11,000 gallons of gasoline at the time of the accident and the explosion resulted in a fire that burned for several hours. The fire was so intense that the fire crews had to withdraw and let it burn.

Sandy Howard, spokeswoman for the Washington State Department of Ecology said, "all the gasoline stayed pretty contained and burned, which is a good thing." State Patrol spokesman, Glen Tyrrell reported that "there's nothing left of the trailer, except for a little bit of chassis. The fire consumed the truck's tanker and the trailer it was towing."

The cause of the crash is under investigation. The truck was traveling from Tacoma to Aberdeen when it swerved across the median of the eastbound lane of Highway 8 and went down the hill in flames. Seattle's KOBO Television reported that witnesses confirmed that the roads in Elma were icy on Thursday morning. Highway 8's two westbound lanes were closed for several hours after the crash. The company operations manager for Reinhard Petroleum, Phil Dorr, declined to comment about the accident, driver, or company. (Source: Associated Press)

### Hot Springs Oil Refinery Contamination

Utility companies installing fiber optic cables and water lines encountered contamination believed to be from the former Hot Springs Oil Refinery in Hot Springs, South Dakota. The Hot Springs Refinery opened in 1932 and was associated with the Osage oil fields of Wyoming. According to reports, waste products from refining processes were disposed in earthen pits, estimated to be 20 feet by 30 feet (depth unknown). Refining ceased in the 1940s but the site continued to be used as a bulk petroleum storage business for another 50 years.

The Fall River is approximately 550 feet from the site. The responsible parties did not conduct investigations to determine if the contamination has migrated to the river. EPA's START contractor installed groundwater wells, sampled existing wells between the river and the refinery, and sampled surface water from the Fall River. Free-flowing oil was encountered in one boring and samples from five of seven newly installed wells showed the presence of dissolved-phase petroleum. No petroleum was detected in the existing wells or the river. EPA's investigation did not demonstrate that the petroleum was migrating to the river. The state has initiated its own investigation and partial cleanup and accepted responsibility for the groundwater monitoring wells. No removal action was required, but EPA provided data to the state in the event that it takes an enforcement action under another statute.

For more information contact the on-scene coordinator: Joyce Ackerman, EPA Region VII, Denver, Colorado, 303-312-6822, [ackerman.joyce@epa.gov](mailto:ackerman.joyce@epa.gov). (Source: EPA Pollution Report)

### Diesel Spill into the Lochsa River

On November 13, 2003, at approximately 6:00 a.m., a fuel trailer connected to a fuel tanker overturned on State Highway 12, about 30 miles northwest of Kooskis, Idaho. The accident resulted in the spill of 6,300 gallons of red-dyed diesel. The



Cleanup operations on the Lochsa River

spilled diesel migrated into a roadside ditch and seeped below the highway. The spill traveled 40 feet to the Lochsa River. Seeps were visible along approximately 350 feet of the riverbank.

This spill into the Lochsa River is of great concern because of possible contamination to municipal water supplies. Also, the river has been federally designated as a Wild and Scenic River and contains several endangered species including bull trout and steelhead. The ecosystem also supports Chinook, bald eagles, waterfowl, and an array of other wildlife. The impacted area of the spill has entered tribal lands owned by the Nez Perce Tribe.

The Idaho State Police and Idaho Transportation Department were the first to respond to the accident. Several truck loads of wood chips were used to absorb the spilled diesel along the highway. An EPA On-Scene Coordinator and two START contractors arrived on-site later that day. The responsible party, Tremper Distributing of Missoula, Montana, assumed responsibility for all cleanup activities. The work was contracted out to Maxim Technologies, Inc. Other subcontractors also assisted with cleanup efforts.

A unified command was established at the request of state and federal authorities. The unified command included Maxim Technologies, Inc., EPA, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries Service, Idaho Bureau of

Hazardous Materials, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Idaho State Police, Idaho Transportation Department, Idaho County Sheriff, and the Nez Perce Tribe.

Responders used a 400-foot boom to control the spread of the spilled diesel from the riverbank. Sorbent pads were used to

collect the diesel recovered by the booms. Maxim will excavate several hundred feet of contaminated soil along the highway. To date, an estimated 2,500 to 3,000 gallons of diesel has been recovered. All recovered diesel will be recycled and the excavated contaminated soil will be disposed of in an approved landfill.

Maxim will continue to excavate the contaminated soil along the highway. Booms and sorbents will continue to collect diesel that reaches the Lochsa River. Fines and costs of the spill are still pending. (Source: EPA Pollution Report)

### Pipeline Leak in Barataria Bay

ExxonMobil Pipeline Co. shut down two pipelines that deliver crude oil from wells in the Grand Isle area of the Gulf of Mexico after about 15,400 gallons of oil leaked from one of the lines. The company operates two pipelines, a 12-inch diameter and an 8-inch diameter line, in the area and was initially unsure which line had the leak. After examining both lines, the leak was located in the 12-inch diameter line.

The leak was spotted on December 2, 2003, by the U.S. Coast Guard about six miles north of Grand Isle during a routine flight over the coastal waters of Louisiana. More than 16,900 feet of boom was sent to the Barataria Bay to contain the oil. Oil reached small islands in the bay, but the spill caused "limited shoreline impact" near Raccoon Lake according to a combined news release from the U.S.

Coast Guard, ExxonMobil, and Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator, Roland Guidry.

Gulf of Mexico crude oil production has not been affected by the shutdown of the two oil pipelines because the crude oil was rerouted through other pipelines. Storage facilities can also hold crude oil while the pipeline is being repaired. ExxonMobil was not certain how soon it would be back in service. It will depend on how long it takes to test the line and get regulatory approval to put the line back in service. (Source: West Bank Bureau)

### Duck River Diesel Fuel Spill

On November 14, 2003, a 44,000-pound piece of construction equipment fell from a bluff approximately 100 feet, spilling an estimated 100 gallons of diesel fuel into the Duck River. The equipment, a heavy track hoe, was being used to dig water intakes for the Columbia, Tennessee water company at the time of the accident. The track hoe became lodged in the river after the fall and began leaking fuel.

Columbia Fire Department Assistant Chief Steve Cross stated, "the water quality people from the states are here, and we used floating booms to contain the oil spill." The man who was operating the equipment when it fell into the water was an employee of Burgin Construction of Birmingham, Alabama. Chief Cross added "he wound up having to swim out of the river once the equipment landed. But he wasn't injured and he even went out in a boat to help put the floating booms on the water."

EPA will work with State water quality experts to decide whether or not Burgin Construction should be fined for the accident and resulting spill. (Source: Associated Press)

### Boats Polluting Alaskan River

Preliminary results from a water quality study performed by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) indicate a direct correlation between boat traffic on the Kenai River and the amount of oil found in the river's water. Sampling efforts



funded by ADEC in the years 2000-2002 showed measurable levels of oil in the Kenai, prompting the design of a more thorough and focused study of petroleum levels in the river for 2003.

ADEC took 284 river water samples from May to August 2003 in the lower section of the Kenai. The samples were collected at numerous locations: throughout the water column, under various conditions of watercraft traffic, and near other potential point sources. While only two of the samples contained petroleum amounts exceeding the water quality standard of 10 parts per billion, preliminary analysis indicates that boats are the primary source of oil pollution in the river and vessels may have discharged as much as 10,000 gallons of oil into the river in July 2003, alone.

ADEC personnel have further concerns. Higher than average flows in the Kenai have been reported in 2003, meaning that concentrations of oil may be even higher when the river flows at average levels. ADEC plans to work in conjunction with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, the agency governing boating on the Kenai, to find ways to reduce petroleum pollution due to river traffic.

For more information, contact Brenda Duty, Outreach Coordinator, ADEC, 907-269-6283. (Source: Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation)

## Homeland Security Great Lakes Region Conference

The first annual Homeland Security Great Lakes Region Conference, which was held in Huron, Ohio in August 2003, is expanding to include a weapons of mass destruction (WMD) scenario in 2004. The conference is an outgrowth of 26 years of inland spills conferences held annually in Ohio and sponsored by the Spill Control Association of America (SCAA). In 2003, SCAA made the decision to redesign the conference to better address the broad new hazards and security threats being faced in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The motto for the new conference is "an integrated approach to all hazards management," emphasizing the

importance of identifying the best available resources and ensuring the interoperability of governmental authorities and the private sector in emergency response.

The SCAA, founded in 1973, is a national association of organizations that respond to releases of hazardous substances including oil spills, biological contamination, and radiological incidents. Its members come from the private sector, bringing a broad spectrum of state-of-the-art equipment, and thousands of professional experts in emergency response and preparedness with knowledge of the complexities of specialized response management and contingency planning.

The mission of the new Homeland Security Great Lakes Region Conference is to provide a forum in which attendees can share and build networks of the most up-to-date information and advanced resources available to assist in emergency preparation, response, and recovery in the event of a domestic release of a hazardous substance. These resources are intended to encompass the demands posed by potential environmental threats, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, or other types of community emergencies. The conference will continue to be held annually throughout the Great Lakes Region.

The 2003 planning committee for the conference included representatives from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Coast Guard, local governments, the Great Lakes Commission, a major hospital association, and industry. Last year's conference, which hosted 300 attendees, included topic tracks involving planning and assessment, preparedness, emergency response, legal issues, new technologies, and public health, as well as indoor and outdoor exhibitions.

Planning is currently underway for a major WMD mock incident to be presented at the conference in 2004. Presentation of the scenario will be dramatic, with telecast coverage, to simulate the effect of a breaking news event. The workshops and sessions at the

conference will involve professional facilitators and subject matter experts who will address, in detail, the specific scenario and factors directly associated with such an emergency response. Conference exhibits are also intended to be dynamic, utilizing media resources to engage attendees. Exhibitors will have opportunities for involvement in the workshops in order to allow attendees to gain a more intimate knowledge of the technologies and services they offer.

In addition to enhancing participants' experience and level of engagement at the conference, the WMD scenario is intended as a training component that will contribute to participant retention, effective implementation of new strategies, and motivation to incorporate new strategies and benefits into the cultures of attendees' diverse organizations. (Source: Marc Shaye, SCAA at [marcs@scaa-spill.org](mailto:marcs@scaa-spill.org))

## About The Update

The goal of the EPA Oil Program Center *Update* is to provide straight-forward information to keep EPA Regional staff, other federal agencies and departments, industries and businesses, and the regulated community current with the latest developments. The *Update* is produced quarterly, using a compilation of several sources. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the US EPA.

