



Tar Creek Oil Spill Update **February 1, 5 p.m.**

- What:** An oil spill within the Los Padres National Forest boundary involving seven-to-10 barrels (42 gallons each) of oil and 80 barrels of groundwater has occurred in Tar Creek near the Sespe Condor Sanctuary and Sespe Wilderness in northern Ventura County.
- Who:** Vintage Production California LLC, the facility operator, reported the break in a 2-7/8 inch waste water line the afternoon of January 30 after a routine inspection. The pipe break apparently was due to expansion and contraction in the recent cold weather. Federal and state agencies including the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources and California Department of Fish and Game are onsite monitoring the company's cleanup operations.
- Where:** The oil lease is located in a developed oil field area northwest of Hopper Mountain. The lease area includes both federal land and private land inside the forest boundary.
- Background:** The oil migrated about two miles down Tar Creek. That is about four miles upstream of the confluence of Tar Creek and Sespe Creek where condors are known to drink. The spill has not impacted threatened or endangered species.
- The oil is a light grade, similar in consistency to motor oil. The groundwater has a high concentration of dissolved minerals, but the oil is the main environmental concern. While Tar Creek does have naturally occurring "tar seeps" in its waterway, and the spill was caught early and is relatively small, the incident is significant given the importance of the Sespe Condor Sanctuary in recovery of the endangered California condor.
- Status:** Vintage contract crews are using earthen berms, suction trucks, absorbent pads and flotation devices to contain and remove the oil. About 20 people initially were working on the spill and additional resources are being brought in to take advantage of the dry weather. Full cleanup is expected to take two to three weeks.
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