



Oil Spill Program Update

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

ABOUT THE UPDATE

EPA's *Oil Spill Program Update* is produced quarterly, using information provided by EPA Regional staff, and in accordance with Regions' information needs. The goal of the 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 distributed in hard copy and is available on the Oil Program homepage at www.epa.gov/oilspill.

Oil Removals in Region 1

EPA Region 1 covers the six state area—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont—commonly referred to as New England. The Regional office is located in Boston, Massachusetts. The Region 1 Oil Program resides in the Emergency Response Section. The Emergency Response Section has eight on-scene coordinators (OSCs) who perform a variety of duties including inspecting facilities for compliance with Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures, and Facility Response Plan regulations; participating in contingency planning; conducting drills and exercises; and responding to oil spills and hazardous substance discharges.

The New England area has a long history of industrial development. Starting in the 1700s, textile mill complexes were built along New England's rivers. Originally these facilities depended on the rivers for

the power they needed to operate. Over time, however, most of these facilities converted to other sources of energy, including oil. Many of these industrial sites are now closed and some have left behind a legacy of environmental problems. Region 1 frequently conducts Superfund removal actions to address chemical contamination at abandoned mills; more recently the Region 1 Oil Program conducted several removal actions to contain and or prevent the discharge of oil from abandoned mills. The following are brief case studies of two recent actions.

Royal Mills Site, West Warwick, Rhode Island

The Royal Mills complex in West Warwick, Rhode Island was built in the 1870s and was an operating textile mill until the 1960s. Several businesses occupied the complex until 1993. The mill has been vacant since that time. Originally, water from the Pawtuxet River was

diverted through the facility to power the facility's machinery. Eventually the mill converted from water power to No. 6 oil as its primary fuel. About one dozen tanks were used to store fuel at the mill site. The tanks ranged in size from 1,000 gallons to approximately 400,000 gallons. The larger tanks, including the 400,000-gallon aboveground storage tank and three underground storage tanks, were located on a hill above the facility. Oil was conveyed to the mill's boiler through a piping system. When the mill closed, oil was left behind in the tanks.

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In 1998, the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) received a report of a light sheen in the facility's tailrace (part of a water diversion structure where water that was diverted into the mill re-enters the river). DEM responded and deployed booms and sorbents to contain the sheen. Subsequently, DEM notified EPA of conditions at the site. An OSC responded to the site and determined that the oil in the tanks and associated piping presented a significant threat of discharge to the Pawtuxet River. EPA and DEM negotiated a scope of work for the site, and EPA issued a Pollution Removal Funding Authorization to DEM to remove the oil.

During the summer of 1999, EPA and DEM worked together to remove approximately 400,000 gallons of oil from the tanks and piping at the site. Approximately 300,000 gallons of No. 6 oil in the



Oil is pumped out of an abandoned tank at the Royal Mills site in Rhode Island.

large aboveground tank were found to be in useable condition. The recovered oil was sent to an oil terminal where it was blended and sold as fuel. The proceeds from the sale of the oil offset some of the response costs.

Hull Dye Site, Derby, Connecticut

In August 1994, EPA and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) responded to a report of oil bubbling up from sediments and polluting the Housatonic River. The area where the discharge occurred is a site where a power plant has been in operation since the 1890s. In the 1970s, the site was also home to Hull Dye, which operated a fabric printing operation there. The Hull Dye facility was powered by hydroelectric turbines and an oil fired boiler. In 1981, a fire destroyed the main factory building. Oil has not been used at the site since the fire. The power plant operations currently consist of a storage facility and an operating hydroelectric plant.

Because the current owner of the site did not have the financial ability to conduct cleanup operations, EPA and DEP initiated a removal action. Response operations were complicated due to the topography of the site, and because the river is influenced by tides in this area. A coffer dam was installed, and the river bank and sediments from the river were excavated. The removal action recovered an estimated 15,000 gallons of liquid oil and an additional 15,000 gallons of oil tied up in sediment. A recovery system was installed as part of the initial removal action and has been in continuous operation since that time. The system has recovered more than 5,000 gallons of No. 6 oil. The source of the oil is believed to be a 500,000-gallon aboveground oil storage tank and a 20,000-gallon underground storage tank, which provided oil storage for the Hull Dye boiler room. The large tank was found to be empty; the underground tank was full of oil soaked sand, which was later removed.

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In August 1999, an oil sheen was again observed at the facility. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and EPA responded. With the assistance of the EPA Environmental Response Team, several monitoring wells were installed to better define the extent of the oil contamination and its pathway to the river. The oil appears to have been migrating under the building and under the tailrace to the river. Operation of the turbines to generate electricity appears to have scoured out the bottom of the tailrace, leading to the recent discharge.

A second phase of operations began in December 1999. The work involves the physical removal of the tanks and excavation of a trench. Data from the recent investigation indicates that a significant amount of oil is still present in the area. While the trench is being excavated, liquid oil and oil-saturated soil will be removed. The trench will be used to install an additional oil recovery system.

EPA and DEP are considering taking additional actions to prevent and/or contain the discharge at the tailrace. These actions may include dewatering the tailrace and resealing its base, and installing an underflow weir.

Removal actions at the Hull Dye site and the Royal Mills site are characteristic of the oil spill response actions that EPA has conducted at several mill sites in Region 1. Because many mill facilities in the Region have closed, EPA is likely to encounter similar sites in the future.

Barge Spills Oil on Delaware River

A stretch of the Delaware River, between New Castle and Reedy Point, was the scene of a small-volume oil spill on October 27, 1999. The responsible party estimated the amount of oil spilled at 1,000 gallons; the U.S. Coast Guard set the figure at 4,900 gallons. Observers noted that economic and environmental effects have been minor.

A barge owned by Bouchard Transportation of Long Island, New York spewed vacuum gas oil while it was being loaded at a Motiva Enterprises dock on the Delaware side of the river in Delaware City. The U.S. Coast Guard discovered the spill at about 4:00 a.m. on October 2.

Motiva, Bouchard, and the Delaware Bay & River Cooperative responded quickly to the spill. Booms were quickly set up around nearby Pea Patch Island. The Delaware Bay & River Cooperative dispatched five oil-skimming boats that towed additional absorbent booms to soak up the oil. Cleanup was not expected to take more than a day.

Because weather conditions on the morning of the spill were favorable, the oil had only a minimal impact on the surrounding environment. Some pooling of oil was expected between large boulders on the gravel beaches bordering the Delaware and New Jersey sides of the river. The oil

was also expected to penetrate some sand and gravel beaches. Shoreline plants, entering into their winter dormancy at the time of the spill, should recover almost fully by next spring's growing season.

Some larval and juvenile fish may have been sublethally and lethally impacted by the spill, with most adult fish remaining unaffected. Shellfish were also thought to be largely unaffected, with a slight possibility of some tainting of oyster beds if oil was to collect over the beds.

A number of ducks were coated with oil. However, potential rescuers, including the Tri-State Bird Rescue team, were unable to capture them. Luckily, at the time of the accident Pea Patch Island was not occupied by many of the birds that commonly nest there, but migratory and overwintering waterfowl may have been exposed to some oil.

Waterfowl are especially vulnerable to oil spills because they spend most of their lives in water. When birds are oiled, their buoyancy, ability to repel water, and feather insulation are reduced, which can lead to hypothermia or drowning. If the birds preen their oiled feathers, they may experience irritation, sickness, or death.

Similarly, riverine mammals, such as racoons, mink, muskrats, and river otters, that ingest oil while grooming may also experience irritation, sickness, or death. Some sea turtles may have been impacted by the ingestion of tar balls that can block their intestinal tracts.

The Delaware Estuary, which the Delaware River empties into, stretches 134 miles from Cape May, New Jersey to Cape Henlopen, Delaware. The estuary transports 70 percent of the oil that arrives on the East Coast and has, therefore, been at high risk for oil spills for as long as oil has been shipped. In 1985, a Panamanian tanker hit a rocky shoal and spilled 435,000 gallons of oil. Cleanup of that spill involved 4,000 people and 22 companies.

Oil spills to the Delaware River, and in the United States in general, have been on the decline for the last three years. Part of this encouraging trend can be attributed to strict federal legislation that imposes heavy penalties on refiners and transportation companies. Even fewer opportunities for oil spills may exist after safer hull provisions and prevention programs are triggered by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

Tire Fire Extinguished After Five Weeks; Oil Spill Risks Minimized

Lightning from early morning thunderstorms started a five-week tire fire in California's northern San Joaquin Valley on September 22, 1999. The tires are part of what may be one of the world's largest waste tire piles, estimated at 40 million tires. The tires are owned by Edward Filbin, who started using the 40-acre site for tire

disposal beginning in the 1950s. The site is approximately 100 miles from Sacramento, near the farm town of Westley.

Tire fires often require oil spill response methods because tires release pyrolytic oil when they are burned. The average tire can release one to two gallons of this motor oil-like substance. Usually in a tire fire the oil builds up under the tires, but due to the topography of the Westley site, oil flowed away from tire piles. Heat from the tire fire ignited some of the oil, resulting in separate blazes.

The burning tire pile at Westley, which was as high as a six-story building, sent black smoke 3,000 feet into the air and sprinkled soot for miles. Concern about the toxic and irritating smoke prompted local officials to declare a state of emergency and to set up air monitoring stations around the blaze.

Often tire fires are left to burn themselves out, but that can take a long time; a tire fire in Tracy, California is reportedly still burning 15 months after it started. The size and intensity of the Westley tire fire, its propensity to cause environmental damage, the proximity of the fire to populated areas, site topography, and local residents' concerns prompted local officials to call in special firefighters from Texas to extinguish the blaze. Nearly 80 percent of the 7 million tires in one pile were burned or partially burned by the time the fire was extinguished.



Pyrolytic oil flowing from the Westley tire fire.

The relatively rapid success of the fire fighting effort may be due in part to the fact that pyrolytic oil flowed away from the pile rather than remaining trapped beneath it. Burning oil trapped beneath a burning pile can spread fire through the whole depth of the tire pile, making it more difficult to put out. In this case, most of the fire was concentrated within several feet of the tire pile's surface.

Smoke from the fire provoked complaints from many local residents. Tire smoke contains hydrocarbons and some trace elements of hazardous materials, such as benzene; therefore, inhaling particulate matter is a health concern. Residents complained of breathing problems, bloody noses, and burning eyes. A westerly weather front pushed the smoke plume away from the town and dispersed the smoke. As a health precaution, air monitoring stations were set up in the vicinity of the fire.

In order to reach the blaze with firefighting equipment, response

workers and firefighters had to bulldoze paths to the fire through the piles of tires. Response workers used bulldozers and backhoes to reach the blaze, then used foam and water to extinguish the fire. To contain the oily runoff, workers built pond traps around the site. Skimmers and booms were used to recover the pyrolytic oil from the ponds.

Once the fire was under control, infrared thermal imagery was used to identify remaining hot spots. Firefighters used more than 38,000 gallons of foam to extinguish the fire. Burned debris was stockpiled and removed, though unburned tires were left in place.

On-going response actions at the site include building check dams to control runoff from expected winter precipitation, as well as preparation for long-term response. The State of California will decide whether the remaining tires will remain onsite, be covered with soil, or be subject to other actions. The oil that was produced by the tire fire was collected and taken

offsite. The oil will be recycled by Romic Environmental Technologies, and then sent to Fredonia, Kansas to the Systech cement kiln and used as a blended fuel source for cement kiln operations. A total of 250,950 gallons of oil was removed from the site and sent to Romic for recycling.

Atlas Refining Corrects SPCC Violations

In a settlement with EPA, Atlas Refining, a Newark, New Jersey company, has agreed to pay \$32,000 in penalties and correct violations of the spill prevention provisions of the Clean Water Act. The settlement closes out a complaint issued to Atlas in March of this year for not preparing and implementing a Spill Prevention Countermeasure and Control (SPCC) plan at its Lockwood Street facility. Atlas has agreed to pay \$32,000 for its past violations,

has since developed an SPCC plan, and has agreed to take actions necessary to minimize the risk of an oil spill at its facility. EPA recently settled with another Newark company, Hudson Tank, for similar violations. (See *Oil Spill Program Update*, October 1999, for more information on the Hudson Tank settlement.)

“These plans are critical to efforts to protect our waterways because they prevent spills and help contain and control them if they do occur,” said Jeanne M. Fox, EPA Regional Administrator. “Spills are certainly easier to prevent than to clean up. A few relatively simple preventive measures taken now can avert a lot of headaches in the future.”

In addition to paying the \$32,000 penalty, Atlas Refining has capped pipelines that are no longer in service or are on stand-by service for extended periods of time, and is in the process of building secondary containment, usually consisting of a cement berm, around all of its large storage tanks. In addition, Atlas will replace its wooden fish oil tanks and perform upgrades of various pipelines.

Since December 1998, facilities across the Region have been issued or paid fines for a total of \$335,000 for violations of the SPCC requirements of the Clean Water Act. Any facility that stores more than 1,320 gallons of oil or oil derivative in aboveground storage tanks must develop plans to prevent spills from occurring, and must implement these plans by installing secondary containment around storage tanks and other areas where oil could be spilled.



More than 38,000 gallons of foam were used to extinguish the tire fire near Westley, California.

These plans must be certified by a professional engineer and must be reviewed at least once every three years.

For more information contact Mary Mears, U.S. EPA, Region 2, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, 290 Broadway, New York, NY 10007-1866, at (212) 637-3669, or at www.epa.gov/region2.

Koch Industries Settles Complaints Covering 310 Spills

Koch Industries agreed to pay \$35 million in penalties to settle 2 federal lawsuits covering 310 oil spills. The spills released an estimated 75,000 barrels of oil into navigable waterways and wetlands in Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Alabama, and Kansas. The lawsuits, involving 15 spills in Oklahoma and 295 spills in Texas, were to be tried on October 25 and in late November, 1999, respectively, but have been pulled from court calendars. A separate federal grand jury is investigating whether criminal charges should be filed.

Koch Industries recognized that it was in violation of the Clean Water Act and would have to pay fines, but expected the amount not to exceed \$7.5 million (\$100 per barrel spilled). Koch officials stated that they have reduced pipeline leaks by 96 percent over

the past 10 years and have consistently met Department of Transportation standards. Government attorneys could have sought damages of up to \$3,000 per barrel, for a total of \$225 million.

Government officials allege that Koch failed to take proper safety precautions when transporting oil through environmentally sensitive areas. Department of Justice environmental attorney Michael Goodstein reported that three pipeline experts reviewed Koch Industries records and concluded that the company has not met industry standards for pipeline operations. Court documents show that over 60 percent of the spills were caused by corrosion and could have been prevented. Government attorneys also are questioning the accuracy of Koch Industries' statements regarding how much oil was spilled.

Koch Industries is also embroiled in allegations of oil theft from Indian and federal leases through mis-measurement of purchases from 1986 to 1992. Bill Koch, suing through a "whistle-blower" law that allows him to receive one-third of any settlement payments, alleges that the company intentionally mis-measures—taking



more oil than it actually pays for. In 1998, Bill Koch was fired from Koch Industries after claiming that he was cheated when he sold his shares back to the company.

Conoco Tank Explodes During Inspection

An aboveground storage tank at Oklahoma's largest oil refinery exploded and burst into flames on October 28, 1999. The tank at Conoco refinery in Ponca City held approximately 50,000 barrels of a mixture of heavy and light gas oils. It was being inspected for insulation repairs by two Conoco employees when it exploded. The two employees suffered second and third degree burns and were taken to an Oklahoma City hospital for treatment.

An EPA on-scene coordinator and a Superfund technical assistance and response team were dispatched to the site to conduct on-scene monitoring. Damage to the tank raised the possibility of an oil discharge into the nearby Arkansas River, but no oil spill was observed. Environmental impacts consisted of a heavy smoke plume over the nearby city of 23,500 residents. The local fire department advised area residents to stay indoors until the fire was extinguished and the smoke cleared. In addition to the smoke, the fire released burnt particles and pieces of the tank's foam insulation; debris was scattered up to five miles away. A preliminary



Quick response to the Conoco tank fire minimized impacts on the environment.

damage estimate of \$1.5 million was given by the refinery manager.

A quick response to the explosion helped to minimize its impacts to safety and the environment. City police and fire departments, and sanitation workers had cordoned off surrounding streets within minutes of being notified of the explosion. Conoco and Ponca City firefighters extinguished the flames within four hours. The cause of the accident was initially unknown, spurring investigations by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, EPA, and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.

Region 5 Responds to LPG Leak

On August 13, 1999, firefighters responding to a brush fire at the Lake Underground Storage site in Painesville Township, Ohio noticed an oil leak at the site. The leak was detected in pipe fittings between two of the four abandoned liquified petroleum gas (LPG) tanks on the site. The 4 tanks were estimated to contain 70,000 gallons of LPG.

On August 16, 1999, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Office Cleveland, the Lake County Health Department, and the Painesville Township Fire Chief visited the site to observe the leak. On September 16, 1999, equipment and personnel were mobilized on the site to begin removal of oil from the tanks. Actions at the site should prevent the leak from reaching the nearby Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve, which feeds Lake Erie.

Testing Spill Response Tools at Ohmsett

Where can you test oil spill response systems, skimmers, booms, and oil spill detection devices? Ohmsett, the National Oil Spill Response Test Facility, located in Leonardo, New Jersey exists just for that purpose.

Ohmsett is a Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service facility, which is maintained and operated by a private contractor.

The main feature of the Ohmsett facility is a concrete tank that can be filled with 2.7 million gallons of brackish water from a nearby bay. The tank, which is above ground and is approximately 200 meters long, is capable of testing towing equipment at speeds of up to 6.5 knots. The tank's wave generator is capable of creating waves up to three feet high and can also create a harbor chop. A centrifuge system is used to recover and recycle test oil from the tank.

In addition to providing a testing ground for oil spill response equipment, oil spill response training can also be provided at Ohmsett for some techniques and equipment. Training is provided through the National Spill School at Texas A&M University, a recognized leader in hazardous material spill training.



Aerial view of the Ohmsett oil spill test facility in Leonardo, New Jersey—its 2.7 million gallon tank can simulate a variety of response conditions.

Actor and entrepreneur Kevin Costner was recently on hand at Ohmsett for a demonstration of the facility's new oil purification system. The system enables the oil used in tank tests to be more effectively recycled. The main part of the new system is the Costner Industries Nevada Corporation (CINC) V-10 oil separator. CINC, owned by Kevin and Dan Costner, was established in 1993 after the brothers became interested in cost-effective oil/water separator technology.

For more information on Ohmsett's testing or training, see the facility's web site at www.ohmsett.com, or call Bill Schmidt, the program manager, at (732) 866-7183.

Recent Oil Spill News

Jet Fuel Spill in Alaska

An estimated 7,000 gallons of aviation jet fuel was spilled October 31, 1999, when 10 Alaska Railroad cars, each containing 20,000 gallons of the fuel, derailed north of Talkeetna.

Because of a railroad spill plan mandated in 1998, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation personnel and railroad crews were on-scene and taking measures the day of the spill. Fuel was pumped from the remaining tanks, including the damaged one, and the spill was contained quickly. The spill preparedness plan was mandated after a similar but more severe 166,000 gallon fuel spill in 1990 to

sensitive wetlands, when it was discovered the railroad was then exempt from submitting a spill response plan to the state.

Absorbent material and a vacuum truck were used to contain the spill. Railroad officials reported the damaged tank was leaking at approximately four gallons a minute. The last 10 cars that derailed for as yet unknown reasons were part of a 46-tank train carrying the jet fuel from the Williams Refinery in North Pole to Anchorage.

Vancouver Harbor Canola Oil Spill Threatens Birds

As much as 20 metric tons of canola oil was spilled into Vancouver Harbor on November 21, 1999. Experts predict that the spill could kill as many as 2,000 sea birds. A spokesman for one wildlife rescue agency speculated that up to 400 oiled birds might be captured but "the majority will die before anybody will ever reach them." Because winds blew most of the oil away from the shoreline, the birds that were primarily affected were sea-going grebes, which are very unlikely to come to shore where they can be captured. A similar canola oil spill that occurred in the same area in October 1998 killed at least 350 migratory birds.

Rare Pelican Rescued from Oil Spill

A rare white pelican that was exposed to oil from a spill at the Industrial Highway site near the

Gary, Indiana Municipal Airport is being rehabilitated and readied for return to the wild, according to EPA sources. The pelican was captured November 19, 1999, after spending six days at the site.



The bird had toxic pH levels from exposure to a crude oil and water mixture. The pelican was transported by a private airline to Orlando, Florida for rehabilitation, where it will receive additional care for several weeks by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It will be released when its flock arrives in the Orlando area. Pelican rescue, transport, and rehabilitation was performed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Pan Am Airlines, and McAfee Animal Hospital.

Human Error Significant Factor in Tank Farm Accidents

A recent study states that the rate of accidents at breakout tanks and long-term storage terminals over the last 10 years has remained relatively constant, and that operator error accounted for 22 percent of the accidents. Breakout tanks are used for temporary storage of oil products along pipelines. Both breakout tanks and storage terminals associated with pipelines are regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The study was performed by EFA Technologies using data from the U.S. Department of Transportation. Using data from 312 accidents at tank farms over a 10-year period, investigators revealed that 55 percent of the accidents were attributable to tank failure, 22 percent to operator error, 10 percent to valve failure, 4 percent to pump failure, and 3 percent to bolted fitting failure. The investigators concluded that the accident frequency rate of breakout tanks and certain long-term storage terminals shows no statistically significant changes.

Human error was the cause of all the accidents that resulted in fatalities within the study period. Human error was also to blame for 88 percent of the stock loss and 87 percent of the property damage. Human error accidents often resulted from operator inattention or inadequate maintenance; common causes were tank overfills or safety violations. Study investigators suggested improvements in safety programs and ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Mystery Spill in California

A U.S. Coast Guard spokeswoman stated that the hundreds of gallons of crude oil that flowed into Ballona Creek in October 1999 were probably the result of runoff from a natural seep or a drainage system near the La Brea Tar Pits.

The Coast Guard stated that the oil may be coming from a malfunctioning sump designed to collect natural tar and oil runoff from areas with natural oil

deposits, and that the runoff may have accidentally flowed into a storm drain that emptied into a creek.

The oil was discovered October 11. Response workers collected approximately 500 gallons of oil from a drainage pipe that drained into Ballona Creek. Ballona Creek empties into Santa Monica Bay near Marina Del Ray. Workers plugged the pipe and set up barriers to prevent the oil from reaching the ocean, then collected the oil. There has been no reported damage to the wetlands or ocean, according to the Coast Guard, though officials were unsure whether wildlife was impacted.

Texas Refiners Fined for Pollution Violations

The Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission ordered two Corpus Christi refiners to pay fines of more than \$928,000 for environmental violations at their facilities. The fines are a result of the TNRCC's Refinery Row initiative, directed at cleaning up groundwater contamination at Corpus Christi refineries and their surrounding areas.

CITGO Refining and Chemicals Co. L.P. was fined \$650,000, but the penalty was offset in return for the company's agreement to contribute \$325,000 to the Nature Conservancy; Amerada Hess Corporation was fined \$278,000, but the penalty was offset in return for the company's agreement to contribute \$139,000 to the Coastal Conservation Association. Both companies were cited for groundwater and wastewater

discharge violations, and are required to bring their refineries into compliance with state and federal laws.

Coordinated Response Works Well in Simulated Spill

The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Air Force Reserves, Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Division, and private contractors practiced air and sea oil spill response actions in the Gulf of Mexico off Texas in August 1999. The exercise was designed to practice the logistics of coordinating different response resources. Participants used the Marine Spill Response Corporation-owned 210-foot Lone Star Responder, Coast Guard Helicopters, an Air Force Reserve C-130 airplane, and a contractor's DC-4 airplane to spot and respond to a simulated oil spill, composed of biodegradable green dye. The exercise "slick" was 20 yards wide by two miles long; aircraft sprayed fresh water on the "slick" to simulate dispersant application.

Pump Detects Oil, Shuts Off

SEewater Inc.'s industrial pump may prevent future oil spills. The company's Oil Smart® switch senses the presence of oil on the surface of water and automatically shuts off the water pump it is attached to before the oil is discharged. The switches have industrial, commercial, and private applications. For more information, go to the SEewater web site at www.breath-of.com/seewater/page3.



Sensitive beach environment near Guadalupe, California.

Beach Cleanup May Damage Coastal Environment

The California Coastal Commission is considering a plan to clean up an oil spill that occurred over a 30-year period from the 1950s to the 1980s. The planned cleanup would seemingly violate the state's Coastal Act for shoreline protection. The beach in Guadalupe, California was once an active oil field, with 220 oil wells producing approximately 5,000 gallons a day for the Union Oil Company (Unocal).

Surfers discovered the oil leaks in 1988. In 1998, Unocal agreed to a \$43.8 million settlement; the company has also agreed to fund beach cleanup and reconstruction. The only way to clean up the pollution is to dig it up, according to the county planning department. The Guadalupe beachfront is currently considered a sensitive wildlife area and is home to 57 endangered species.

Oil Refinery Air Emissions Violations

EPA reports that between 40 and 50 percent of the oil refineries in the United States are violating the

Clean Air Act. EPA states that the troubled refineries are located throughout the country and are not concentrated in any specific Regions. Modifications to the refineries' cracking units, which process crude oil, are said to be the typical source of the emissions violations. EPA is holding settlement talks with several oil companies, and expects to settle many of the cases fairly quickly.

Announcements

Freshwater Spills Symposium 2000

The Freshwater Spills Symposium 2000 will be held March 6-8, 2000, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The symposium is a joint effort of the U.S. EPA Oil Program Center Headquarters; U.S. EPA Regions 1, 5, 6, 7, and 9; the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality; the U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development; the U.S. EPA Environmental Response Team, BP Amoco, California Fish & Game; the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; the U.S. Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team; a NOAA/Scientific Support Coordinator; and the Department of Transportation's Office of Pipeline Safety. See the symposium web site at www.epa.gov/oilspill/fss for schedule information and a listing of the issues to be addressed. You can register on line at the symposium web site at www.epa.gov/oilspill/fss/register; by faxing your name, address, organization, phone number, and fax number to Amy Smidt at (703) 461-2020; by mailing your information to oilinfo@epa.gov

epamail.epa.gov; or by sending the information via regular mail to DynCorp, I&ET, Attn: Amy Smidt, 6101 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304.

Inland Oil Spill Training Planned for April

The EPA Environmental Response Team (ERT) hopes to present a five-day training course on inland oil spills in April 2000 at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The training will cover the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund, revisions to the National Contingency Plan, technical issues specific to inland spills, cleanup and treatment technologies, and oil spill prevention.

ERT will only present the course if a significant number of people are interested in attending. For more details about the training, or to express your interest in the inland spills course, please contact ERT at Environmental Response Training Program, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 26 W. Martin Luther King Drive (B-3), Cincinnati, OH 45268 or by telephone at (513)251-7769 or (513)569-7537.

News From the Minerals Management Service

New Technical Report - Oil Spills in Marshes

The latest technical report from the Minerals Management Service, *Effects and Management of Oil Spills in Marsh Ecosystems: A Review Produced From a Workshop Convened July 1996 at McNeese State University*, is now



available. The report contains titles such as "Effects of Oil on Marsh Macrophytes," "Effects of Petroleum Hydrocarbons on Coastal Marsh Biogeochemical Processes," and "Use of Cleaners in Removing Oil from Marsh Plants: Response of Selected U.S. Gulf Coast Species." Copies can be obtained by writing the U.S. Department of the Interior, Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, Public Information Office (MS 5034), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70123-2394, or by calling 1-800-200-GULF.

Oil in the Sea Update Effort

The National Research Council's Ocean Studies Board (OSB) has initiated work on updating its 1985 report, *Oil in the Sea; Inputs, Fates, and Effects*. Work on the report has been broken into two phases. The OSB has begun the first phase of the update—covering oil inputs to the marine environment. The second phase will update the sections on fates and effects of oil. The Minerals Management Service is looking for partners to co-sponsor the second

phase. Approximately \$450,000 is needed and can be spread over a few fiscal years. Firm commitments are needed by the end of February 2000. Ken Turgeon (ken.turgeon@mms.gov), Chief Scientist for MMS, and Dan Walker (dwalker@nas.edu), Project Officer for the OSB, are contacts for the project.

The Effects of Oil on Wildlife Conference

Tri-State Bird Rescue & Research, Inc. will host the Sixth International Conference on the Effects of Oil on Wildlife, March 30-31, 2000, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Topics to be covered include wildlife rehabilitation and research, standards for oiled wildlife care, international issues, and safety and training issues. Registration information will be distributed in January 2000. For more information, contact Dr. Virginia Pierce or Dr. Heidi Stout at Tri-State Bird Rescue, (302)737-7241 (telephone) or (302)737-9562 (fax).

New Address for EPA Headquarters

Effective January 1, 2000, the official EPA Headquarters mailing address will change to:
U.S. EPA
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Although the mailing address is changing, Headquarters mail will continue to be delivered to and sorted from the Waterside Mall facility. This will continue until

the Mail Room moves to the Interstate Commerce Commission Building in 2002.

Vendor and/or courier packages sent to any of the Headquarters buildings must continue to use the actual street address and room number of the employee receiving the package. These packages do not go through the Mail Room at Waterside Mall for delivery.

If you have any questions, please call Rich Lemley at (202) 564-2030.

New Region 6 Outreach Web Site Address

Outreach guides for Federal Oil Pollution Prevention Regulation can now be found at www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/sfsites/oil/. Please note the change in address.

NOTICE:

The *Oil Spill Program Update* and *The Oil DROP* will not be issued in April. Look for a special issue in May covering happenings of the Freshwater Spills Symposium 2000, which will be held from March 6-8, 2000, in Albuquerque, New Mexico.