



# **NRC 1158584, Pelham Pipeline Spill Pelham, Shelby County, Alabama**

## **SITUATION REPORT #5**

1800 CDT, September 14, 2016

### **INCIDENT DESCRIPTION**

On September 9, 2016, at 1449 hours, Colonial Pipeline reported a gasoline spill from a 36” subsurface transmission line to the National Response Center. The gasoline traveled overland for approximately 500 feet to a pond that feeds into Peel Creek (which is a tributary of the Cahaba River). The initial report to Colonial was made by the property owner, but there was no volume estimate. The exact amount of the release was unknown; however, Colonial Pipeline initially reported to the responding OSC that between 1,000 and 2,000 gallons of gasoline entered the pond (the spill volume has been updated to 235,000 gallons – See “Current Operations” for more information).

The local fire department responded and established a secured zone around the spill site. Dangerous explosive gas levels have been detected around the spill location. Shelby County Emergency Management responded and confirmed that there are no public or private drinking water sources threatened by the spill. Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has integrated into Unified Command and is coordinating with State and County Agencies. An Incident Command Post was established in Hoover, Alabama. The spill location is in a remote area and no evacuations are necessary. The nearest residential neighborhood is located two miles from the spill location.

Colonial Pipeline has confirmed that the impacted transmission line is shut down. Environmental contractors for Colonial Pipeline are on site to conduct air monitoring and remediation activities. Work to remediate the spill is delayed due to the high concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOC) emitted for the large areas of pooled gasoline.

Threatened and endangered (T&E) species in the area of the spill have been identified and communicated to Unified Command. No T&E species have been reported impacted from the spill, although several common species have been impacted.

At this time, a Regional Response Team 4 (RRT4) activation is not planned. The appropriate members were engaged during the initial response notification process. A RRT4 call will be held if conditions change.

### **INCIDENT MANAGEMENT**

On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Chuck Berry remains integrated into Unified Command, which includes EPA, Colonial, ADEM, and Shelby County. OSC Garrard and four US Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team members remain deployed to assist within field observations. A Public Information Officer (PIO) was requested and will assist in the Joint Information Center (JIC).

OSC Garrard was mobilized to the site to overlap with OSC Williamson today, he will assume responsibilities for Operations. OSC Tripp mobilized to the site to serve as the EPA Situation Unit Leader. OSC Williamson demobilized during this operational period.

Current number of EPA Personnel Assigned: 4

Current number of United States Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team (USCG GST) Members: 4

### **REPORTING SCHEDULE**

Situation Reports (SITREPS) will be delivered 1800 CDT daily.

### **CURRENT OPERATIONS**

Both stopples are in place. Colonial is actively vacuuming out product and pressuring the line with nitrogen to increase recovery. The pressurization of the line increase the rate of discharge at the break. LEL levels at the break are too high to recover product at the break before it discharges to the stream and then into the pond.

The high level of explosive vapors continue to be the greatest limiting factor to recovery operations. Colonial contractor CTEH remains on site providing air monitoring services. They continue monitoring the AreaRAE network and providing roving air monitoring and escort services for personnel working inside the hot zone. Action levels for benzene, VOCs and explosive vapors remain as previously established. Work interruptions continue due to excess benzene and LEL readings. Today's highest VOC level peaked at 989 parts per million (ppm). The highest benzene level recorded was 17.5 ppm. LEL levels were reported to be in the 41% range.

Colonial has managed to remove approximately 178,217 gallons of liquid from Pond 2. Of that volume 48,125 gallons of fuel has been recovered and 130,092 gallons of mixed oil/water remain.

Colonial has performed an initial mass balance calculation and determined an estimated volume of 235,919 gallons of fuel was discharged. They are estimating 144,035 gallons of fuel evaporated as of 9/13/16. These numbers are approximate and Colonial will perform a final mass balance after all product is recovered.

The diversions designed for Pond 3 are in place. They include a substantial underflow dam at the pond outfall. Colonial continues to monitor the Pond 3. No oil sheening has been seen along the shoreline. The UC will be notified if any petroleum is noted. No adverse weather impacts are expected from the tropical system off the coast of Georgia.

EPA/GST remains incorporated into Operations and air monitoring. OSC Garrard and two GST members continue to provide oversight of site safety and monitor the operations progress. Two GST members continue to observe night operations.

James Pickney arrived at Incident Command Center and integrated into JIC. The JIC set up two interviews with all members of UC, including OSC Berry. The Birmingham, AL news outlets were WBRC and AL.com. Additionally, Colonial visited 15 homes nearest to the spill site, they were able to discuss the situation with 9 households as well as handout fact sheets.

The fire chief deemed the transfer of product from the pipeline to frac tanks was to high risk, therefore operations changed to direct tanker to tanker trucks. Scrubbers were used on the vacuum trucks while the vacuum trucks pumped product from the pipeline to the transport tanker trucks to reduce the gasoline vapors. The tanker trucks are making a round trip to Colonial's Pelham Junction facility to off-load.

OSC Garrard called the Federal Aviation Administration to request an aviation floor restriction of 2,500 feet in a 3-mile radius around the work site.

UC learned during today's UC meeting, Colonial contractor began collecting water sampling on Saturday when the sample results were presented during the UC briefing. 9 sampling locations have been

established, two water sample collected from Pond 3 had benzene detected at 90 mg/L and 98 mg/L the other 7 were below detection limits.

### **PLANNED RESPONSE ACTIVITIES**

Due to the ongoing response efforts and unknown timelines, the EPA OSC will make a request to the National Pollution Fund Center (NPFC) to increase the site ceiling from \$45,000 to \$100,000.

Because UC learned during today's UC meeting, Colonial contractor began collecting water sampling on Saturday when the sample results were presented during the UC briefing. EPA OSC has requested two START contractors and an Environmental Unit Leader to monitor Colonial Pipeline's sampling efforts.

- Continue to participate in UC
- Monitor removal activities
- Monitor safety air monitoring
- Participate in the Joint Information Center
- Prepare for and coordinate a transition to a removal phase
- Perform water sampling