

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region V
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, May 24, 2004

From: Jon Gulch

To: Tracy Kecskemeti, MDEQ

Subject: POLREP #1-Initial POLREP

Mystery Oil Spill-Rouge River Upstream

Rouge River-Upstream of Schaefer Street, Dearborn, MI

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	Z5ER
Reporting Period:	05/22/04 - 05/23/04	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	5/22/2004	Response Authority:	OPA
Mob Date:	5/22/2004	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:		Reimbursable Account #	05F0XER302D91C
FPN#	E04515		

Site Description

The site is located in Dearborn, Wayne County, Michigan. The impacted area begins about ¼ mile north of the Severstal North American Inc. (Former Rouge Steel) Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) outfall on the west side of Schaefer Road and continues south down the Rouge River.

Current Activities

On Saturday, May 22, 2004, EPA received notification that a sheen was observed on the Rouge River. START was deployed to Severstal WWTP to observe boom that was placed in the river on Thursday, May 20, 2004. The Severstal boom was washed-out due to extremely heavy rains in the area. In addition, a larger oil sheen with tar/petroleum odor was visible under the Schaefer Street Bridge, Dix Street Bridge, and Fort Street Bridge, but was not seen at the Greenfield Street Bridge (which is north/upstream of the Severstal WWTP). START met with the USCG and verified the sheen seen at Dix Street was the same sheen seen at Schaefer Street. The sheens were identical and flowing consistently. USEPA arrived and met with START and a representative of the Severstal WWTP. All parties observed a small sheen passing through the system into the Rouge River.

OSC Gulch directed Severstal WWTP to mobilize their emergency response contractor (Youngs Environmental) to the WWTP to place more absorbent boom in between the outfall baffles and to recover sheen on the Rouge River. Severstal agreed to place more absorbent boom at their outfall, but declined from doing any type of recovery on the Rouge River. The OSC mobilized a Basic Ordering Agreement (BOA) contractor (Marine Pollution Control) to the site to investigate other potential sheen sources.

ERRS, EPA, MDEQ, and START observed the Rouge River by boat and discovered that the sheen was originating upstream from the Severstal WWTP outfall. The biological/petroleum sheen appeared to be intermittently discharging from the bottom of the Rouge River. This biological/petroleum The BOA contractor personnel were unable to absorb any of the sheen with oil absorbent boom. A sheen sample was collected utilizing a United States Coast Guard (USCG) sheen sampling kit and will be sent to the USCG Marine Safety Laboratory for analysis.

OSC Justice and START drove north along Greenfield Street to identify those company's along the Rouge River and verify their discharges. They were closed but contact information was provided by security.

On Sunday, May 23, 2004, START mobilized to the site. Sheen was still visible at the Schaefer Street and Dix Street bridges. The amount of sheen was greatly reduced and the river was flowing slower. The sheen at Fort Street Bridge was minimal.

Planned Removal Actions

None

Next Steps

A sample was collected and will be sent to the U.S. Coast Guard Marine Safety Laboratory for identification.

Key Issues

U.S. Coast Guard mobilized a helicopter to investigate sources of a sheen on the Trenton channel of the Detroit River. The initial notification was received by the NRC from State Representative Kathleen Law.

Research will attempt to determine the source of the sheen that appears to be entering the Rouge River via the river bottom groundwater vents.

response.epa.gov/rougeriverupstream