

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
West Creek Tanker Spill - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VIII

Subject: POLREP #2
Progress POLREP - West Creek Tanker - FPN E13803
West Creek Tanker Spill

Gateway, CO
Latitude: 38.6824780 Longitude: -108.9714690

To:
From: Craig Myers, OSC
Date: 2/11/2013
Reporting Period: 1/29/13 through 4/11/13

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Z8EK	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:		Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	OPA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:	EPA	Incident Category:	Removal Action
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	1/25/2013	Start Date:	1/25/2013
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	
FPN#:	E13803	Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency

1.1.2 Site Description

On January 25, 2013, at approximately 6 a.m. a tanker truck hauling 6,000 gallons of gasoline and 2,000 gallons of diesel went off Highway 141, flipped over the guardrail, and went down a steep embankment into West Creek, approximately 20 feet below the highway. Both tanks on the tanker were breached and a fire ensued. The Gateway-Unawep Volunteer Fire Department and the Grand Junction Fire Department responded to the accident and fire. Initial reports from the fire department indicated a three quarter mile running fuel fire down the creek. The fire department deployed sorbent boom at approximately 1 mile and established another boom location approximately 2 miles downstream. The product in the tanker was allowed to burn.

There was an initial fish-kill of approximately 200 fish according to the Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife(CDPW). On Monday, January 28th, an additional 50 fish (approximately) were recovered.

West Creek enters the Dolores River approximately 10 miles downstream from the site.

The site is located approximately 30 miles southwest of Grand Junction, Colorado.

1.1.2.1 Location

8 miles east of Gateway, CO.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

For the majority of the reporting period, there has been bank-to-bank rainbow sheen in the calmer areas of the river for approximately 2 miles downstream. Dissolved benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, and xylene compounds have also been detected at levels potentially harmful to fish and other aquatic life for approximately 3 miles downstream.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

EPA mobilized a portable gas chromatograph/mass spectrometer unit to the scene to provide rapid analysis

for BTEX in the river. Initial results showed elevated levels of BTEX compounds for approximately 4 miles downstream (approximately mile post 116 on Colorado Hwy 141). Daily samples have been taken at seven locations on the river and have been submitted for rapid turn volatile organic compound (VOC) analysis. Initial results indicate that there is still an impact from the spill at sufficient levels to be harmful to aquatic life from the crash site to the confluence of West Creek and the North Fork of West Creek. Sample results will be available in the site file and on the OSC website.

Additionally, at the request of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), a wipe sample was taken from the rock face where the tanker came to rest. This face was heavily impacted by the fire and smoke, and there was concern that the rock crevices could be holding petroleum that could be released into the stream during a rain event. The sample was analyzed on the HAPSITE, which did detect many BTEX constituents, indicating further release is a possibility.

Additional visual assessment of the river sediments indicate that significant amounts of petroleum hydrocarbons remain in the sediments within a few hundred yards of the accident site. Significant amounts for the purposes of this report means that the sediment has the potential to release a rainbow sheen for more than a few seconds after being disturbed. Additional assessment of the sediments below the bridge at mile post 120 is planned.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Containment and recovery sites have been established at 4 locations on the creek:

- 1.) Bridge Site - immediately below the crash site at Hwy 141 milepost 120
- 2.) Survey Marker Site - at milepost 118.8
- 3.) West Creek Picnic Area Site - at milepost 116.9
- 4.) Beaver Pond Site - at milepost 116.3

During the time period of this report, crews have been removing oleophilic materials (e.g. lichen/moss, near shore rootballs, and dead-fall) from the river channel, as they were heavily saturated with hydrocarbons and readily released oil when disturbed. Following behind the debris removal effort, a crew is moving downstream using a water pump to flush the impacted shoreline and move remaining product to a recovery area where it can be removed from the river using either vacuum trucks or sorbent materials. The water washing is also being used to agitate the shallow sediments and refloat the product so it can be collected and recovered. Aeration systems have been running during work hours for most of the period and appear to have been effective in refloating material before collection areas and driving off BTEX compounds, as water quality sampling through 2/3/13 shows very reduced levels of BTEX in the water. Sampling was discontinued after that point due to the lack of any remarkable hydrocarbon detections in the water column, even while crews were working in the river.

Crews also washed the impacted rock face and the bridge during this period. The rock face was washed as a precautionary measure from an oil discharge perspective as discussed earlier in this report as well as from an aesthetic perspective at BLM's request due to the road's status as a Scenic Byway. CDOT required the bridge to be washed as part of the clean up; the contractor elected to do that while there was containment in place below the bridge as a measure of prudence.

At the time of this report, approximately 250 yards of river has been flushed and had debris removed. At this time, approximately an additional 300 yards is planned, with additional removal operations pending a more detailed sediment assessment and evaluation of what, if any, impact higher flows in the spring have on the remaining product in the sediments ability to create sheens on the river. As it currently stands, one or two fishermen wading the stream could create substantial amounts of sheen and re-release hydrocarbons to the stream.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

Groendyke Trucking is the owner and operator of the vehicle that crashed.

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

Washing will continue to a suitable boom location approximately 250 yards below the bridge. Further remediation work is pending additional sediment assessment and analysis by the OSC, BLM and CDPW.

2.2.2 Issues

Weather will remain a constant issue on this site. The nearest town with lodging and support facilities is Grand Junction, close to a 60 mile drive. The roads from Grand Junction are typical mountainous two lane roads that meander through steep canyons. While conditions on site may be fine, the conditions on the 40 mile road between US 50 and the site may be treacherous, and vice versa. For the moment, much of the work will be taking place below the highway bridge and within the snowplow windrow - the area that a snowplow can be expected to throw a rock or other debris. At times when CDOT is actively plowing the highway, it will be unsafe for workers on site.

Cold weather also hampers the use of the water wash pumps and creates very icy and dangerous conditions for the workers on the rocky shoreline of the river. As such, work will be slow or stopped during periods where the ambient temperatures are near or below freezing on site.

2.3 Logistics Section

Not Applicable.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

Not Applicable.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

Not Applicable.

Responding Agencies:

Gateway-Unaweeep Volunteer Fire

Grand Junction Fire HAZMAT

Colorado State Patrol (CSP)

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)

Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife (CDPW)

U.S. Bureau of Land Management (USBLM)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

4. Personnel On Site

Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife - varies by day, up to 8

U.S. Coast Guard Strike Team - 2

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - 1

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - varies by day, usually 1

U.S. Bureau of Land Management - varies by day, usually 1

START - 2 (**Demobilized on 1/31**)

RP Contractor - varies by day, approximately 10.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

www.epaosc.org/westcreektanker

www.startview.org/wc

6.2 Reporting Schedule

The next report will be filed on February 25th, or when the OSC determines that further oiled debris removal and washing operations are complete.

7. Situational Reference Materials

www.startview.org/wc