U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
SW Energy Ruby Ranch Road Blowout - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VIII

Subject: **POLREP #2**
Progress
SW Energy Ruby Ranch Road Blowout
Z8FF
Green River, UT
Latitude: 38.8099500 Longitude: -110.0616400

To: David Ostrander, EPA
Laura Williams, EPA

From: Curtis Kimbel, OSC
Date: 5/28/2014
Reporting Period: 5/21/2014 - 5/28/2014

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Z8FF	**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:	5/21/2014	**Start Date:**	5/21/2014
Demob Date:		**Completion Date:**	
CERCLIS ID:		**RCRIS ID:**	
ERNS No.:		**State Notification:**	
FPN#:	E14810	**Reimbursable Account #:**	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Removal action.

1.1.2 Site Description

The site is well pad GOVT SMOOT 3, located in the Salt Wash Field of the Paradox Basin, an arid, desert region of eastern Utah. The well blowout occurred sometime during the evening of May 20 when a plug on the well head piping failed resulting in an uncontrolled release of crude oil and production water at an estimated rate of 100 bbs./hr. (The oil/water ratio was unknown.)

The spill was tracked for about 2.5 miles down a 4.5 mile dry wash that is a tributary to the Green River. OSC Merritt arrived on scene and instructed the responsible party to procure the services of an OSRO contractor and oversaw initial response efforts consisting of the construction of a series of berms and a pair of underflow dams and the strategic placement of boom. OSC Merritt supervised the installation of the first underflow dam and carefully walked through the construction process and location for the second underflow dam. OSC Merritt and Bart Kettle (UTDOGM) were satisfied the initial response efforts were adequate to keep the spilled material from reaching the Green River and returned to their respective offices. Unfortunately, the second underflow dam was not completed on Friday, May 23. An unusually extreme rain/hail storm occurred on the night of Friday, May 23, that resulted in a small amount of material reaching the Green River. As a result, OSC Kimbel was deployed to the site. On Saturday, May 24, the second underflow dam was completed. Another rainstorm Saturday night moved much of the material again but was contained in the second underflow dam and did not reach the Green River. Had the second underflow dam been completed Friday, May 23, per OSC Merritt's instructions the material would have been contained in the dry river bed and would not have reached the Green River.

SW Energy consists of five children who inherited several wells from their father when he passed a few

years ago. The family has never experienced a spill event and thus have very little knowledge of spill related techniques and methodologies. The family has relied heavily on the expertise of the federal and state representatives involved and have been extremely cooperative during all phases of the response.

1.1.2.1 Location

The well pad is in a remote area of Utah. The site is 14 miles southeast of Green River, Utah, and 165 miles southeast of Salt Lake City

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The spill occurred in a dry wash that flows 4.5 miles to the Green River. According to Don Stephens, Natural Resources Specialist for BLM who walked the area on Sunday, May 25, and Monday, May 26, the dry wash contains no endangered or threatened species. Very little spilled material reached the Green River, which was flowing at 8,000-14,000 CFS, though the town. Green River has a drinking water intake on the river and the area of the river potentially impacted is rich with sensitive habitats and contains endangered environmentally sensitive areas. This is a critical time period for spawning for the endangered and sensitive sucker species and their larvae. OSC Kimbel, Bart Kettle (UT DOGM) and Rosanne Smoot (RP) visited the only nearby property owner, Curtis Rozman of Ruby Ranch, and were told the ranch imports drinking water for the family from a town 15 miles away and does not use drinking water wells on the property.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

When OSC Steve Merritt arrived on the day after the spill occurred, May 21, two ponds had been built 300 feet from the well to capture the fluids. Crews were pumping out the ponds into holding tanks near the site and additional quantities of fluids were taken to Danish Flats. Equipment arrived at 6 p.m. that evening to kill the well and stop the flow.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

The well was capped by mid-day on May 22. The owners quickly contacted two contractors; Custom Environmental Services (CES) and KSue, a local construction company. The contractors arrived on site and built a series of berms and a pair of underflow dams (as discussed above). In addition CES placed boom strategically throughout the dry river bed and at the confluence of the dry river bed and the Green River. OSC Kimbel arrived the morning of Sunday, May 25. A formal Unified Command was created with representatives from SW Energy, EPA, BLM and UT DOGM and CES that met each morning and evening. The site was broken up into four sections consisting of the well pad and the upper, middle and lower sections of the contaminated riverbed. Strategies were developed for each section, which differed greatly due to rough terrain, ledges and difficult access, and workload was divided among the contractors based on training and capability. Appropriate equipment was identified and ordered, which was complicated by the Memorial Day holiday. Mechanized excavation of contaminated soil began on the accessible areas though much of the original work in the dry riverbed requires hand clean up. Contaminated material was collected in a bermed area lined with plastic. Samples were taken of the contaminated material and disposal options are being identified.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

EPA, UT DOGM, BLM, SW Energy and CES have walked the entire site each day to review progress, develop mutually agreeable strategies to address the remaining material, and to ensure all parties agree on the level of cleanup required. Walking the site each day allowed Unified Command to create accurate projections of time required to complete the cleanup, costs, equipment and manpower requirements, and potential motorized vehicle access points to the dry river bed that would increase effectiveness and speed up the cleanup process.

As of Wednesday morning, May 28, cleanup is progressing rapidly and barring unanticipated events, cleanup should be complete in approximately 7-10 days. OSC Kimbel will return to Denver on May 28 and Bart Kettle of UT DOGM will oversee day-to-day activity on the site. OSC Kimbel is scheduled to return to the site on Tuesday, June 3, to walk the entire area with Cliff Giffen of BLM, representatives of Unified Command and CES to review status of the cleanup. Upon completion of the clean up, the Emergency Response phase will be complete and EPA will transfer oversight to BLM and UT DOGM for any additional work required on the well and surrounding area.

OSC Kimbel briefed UTDEQ Water Quality (John Whitehead) and UTDEQ Emergency Response (Dale Urban) on Tuesday, May 27.

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

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

Waste Stream	*Medium*	*Quantity*	*Manifest #*	*Treatment*	*Disposal*

2.2 Planning Section

No information available at this time.

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

US EPA, Curtis Kimbel (OSC) and Steve Merritt (OSC)
SW Energy (4 members of the Smoot family led by Rosanne Smoot)
BLM (4 individuals from their Moab, Price and Monticello offices)
UT DOGM (Bart Kettle)

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

EPA
BLM
UT DOGM
UTDEQ Water Quality

4. Personnel On Site

In addition to UC above:

Custom Environmental Services (OSRO), 8 personnel
KSue Construction, 2-3 personnel
Various contractors cleaning up equipment at the well head, 6 personnel

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.