

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, May 2, 2005

From: Art Smith

Subject: Well Plugging Efforts Unsuccessful So Far
Fordsville Abandoned Oil Well
Fordsville, KY
Latitude: 37.6753000
Longitude: -86.6775000

POLREP No.:	2	Site #:	
Reporting Period:	04/28/2005 to 05/02/2005	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	4/26/2005	Response Authority:	OPA
Mob Date:	4/26/2005	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:		Reimbursable Account #	Z4HJ
FPN#	E05408		

Site Description

On April 23, the Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KYDEP) responded to a report of an oil spill in Dry Branch (a/k/a Dry Fork Creek) near Fordsville, Ohio Co., KY (NRC #756642). Dry Branch is a tributary within the watershed of the Green River, a navigable water of the U.S. KYDEP responders observed crude oil in the creek caused by an abandoned production well. Sorbent boom was placed in the creek at multiple locations in an attempt to contain the oil spill. On April 25, KYDEP notified the EPA Region 4 Duty Officer and requested federal assistance, citing the inability to finance the required removal activities. OSC Smith was dispatched to respond and mitigate the oil discharge into surface water. Observations by the OSC onscene indicate that the release is a minor discharge as classified under the NCP, and that less than 100 gallons of oil has impacted surface water.

Current Activities

On April 28, well plugging activities funded by the The Kentucky Department of Mines & Minerals, Oil & Gas Division began. Due to an excess pressure condition, the well was allowed to vent overnight. On April 29, significant pressure remained. The drillers elected to cement the surface casing, and return on May 2 to complete the well abandonment procedure.

On May 2, the plugging process resumed. Initially it appeared as if the plug would hold, but by late afternoon, the seal had been breached as evidenced by the re-appearance of gas bubbling through the wet concrete.

From April 28-29, EPA activities included removal of greater than 800 gallons of crude oil from a sump built to hold liquids blown out of the leaking well. The underflow dam was reinforced in advance of an anticipated heavy rain threat for the evening of April 29. EPA and it's contractors demobilized the site on April 29 and re-mobilized on May 2.

Upon arriving at the site on May 2, an inspection of the entry point to Dry Branch revealed that the seep had subsided greatly since the end of the previous week. However, the rain event on April 29 washed out the underflow dam, resulting in a loss of an estimated less than 100 gallons of oil product. Surveys at the KY 261 bridge on Dry Branch about 2 miles downstream of the entry point showed no adverse effects on water quality due to the loss of containment.

Planned Removal Actions

Planned EPA removal actions for the near term are to maintain recovery of oil product from the sump to prevent a further discharge of oil into surface water. The oil seep in Dry Branch will be monitored to evaluate the need for additional removal actions necessary to stabilize the subsurface flow of oil to the creek.

Next Steps

EPA is awaiting information from the KY Oil & Gas Program regarding the continued efforts needed to plug the problem well.

Key Issues

EPA submitted a Removal Project Plan to the USCG National Pollution Funds Center to increase the project ceiling. The increase was approved on April 29, raising the budget for this removal action to \$145,000.

response.epa.gov/fordsvilleabandonedwell