

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Cheoah River Gasoline Spill - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region IV

Subject: POLREP #3
Progress
Cheoah River Gasoline Spill

Robbinsville, NC
Latitude: 35.3228660 Longitude: -83.8073990

To:
From: Kenneth Rhame, OSC
Date: 8/21/2016
Reporting Period: 8/20/2016 to 8/21/2016

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	V4CK	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:	8/16/2016	Start Date:	8/16/2016
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	
FPN#:	E16440	Reimbursable Account #:	V4CK

1.1.1 Incident Category

Oil discharge into surface waters.

1.1.2 Site Description

Gasoline from a suspected abandoned underground storage tank has caused a discharge to the Tulula Creek, a tributary of the Santeetah Lake and the Cheoah River.

1.1.2.1 Location

The North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality Water Resources (NCDEQ) staff responded and documented several seep areas along the left descending bank stretching for approximately 1/4 of a mile. The seep areas extended from just upstream of the Sweetwater Road Bridge that crosses the Cheoah River to Patton Street.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Residents that initially reported the spill were complaining of strong gasoline odors, nausea, burning eyes and throat. There is a public drinking water intake downstream of the spill that services the town of Robbinsville, NC.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

EPA received a report from the National Response Center (NRC), as well as a request for assistance from the NCDEQ Division of Water Resources Asheville Regional Office, to respond to a spill of an unknown amount of gasoline into the Cheoah River from an unknown source. NC DEQ Water Resources staff responded and documented several seep areas.

There is a public drinking water intake downstream of the spill that services the town of Robbinsville, NC. Notifications were made and the water intake was shut down. The town of Robbinsville has another water intake on a different watershed as well as some water wells that can meet the drinking water supply for the public demand.

The Graham County Health Department and Office of Emergency Management went door to door advising the public of the situation and offering alternative shelter to those that requested to be relocated due to strong vapors/odors.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Interior were notified; EPA was informed that there is a endangered mussel located downstream of the spill location.

Given the location and proximity of the spill to tribal lands, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians have been notified.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

EPA has deployed an Emergency Response and Removal Services (ERRS) contractor and the Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractor to assist with response actions.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Gasoline containment and recovery operations continue. Air monitoring of the creek and residential areas continue. START is conducting air monitoring along the creek and in the residential area.

On August 16, the Graham County Health Department advised nearby residents to stay indoors and to close windows; County officials also offered temporary relocation accommodations to residents. Four families have voluntarily relocated, two families on Patton went to a local hotel and two families on Jordan Street stayed with family members.. All families returned to their residence on August 17.

On evening of August 17, Graham County Health issued a drinking water consumption advisory to the customers of the Robbinsville municipal water distribution system, as it could not be determined when the discharge occurred and whether or not the downstream water intake may have been impacted. No complaints of odor, taste or visual discoloration had been received. EPA sampled the municipal water distribution system and delivered drinking water samples to Science and Eco-Systems Support Division (SESD) in Athens GA for expedited analysis. Bottled water was provided to residents during the drinking water consumption advisory by the County Emergency Management. Preliminary drinking water results were received on August 18. Based on the preliminary results and a recommendation from EPA Region 4 Technical Support Section, the drinking water consumption advisory was lifted by the Graham County Health Department.

August 17 and August 18, air monitoring results indicated elevated benzene in the containment/recovery area of the impacted creek bed as well as in some residential yards (end of Patton Street and Jordan Street) in close proximity to the creek. No elevated benzene results were observed in any indoor air monitoring. On the morning of August 18, an air monitoring team observed elevated benzene levels near the creek at the end of Patton Street. Elevated benzene levels were observed via indoor air monitoring at 125 Patton Street (windows were open). The resident was offered and accepted temporary relocation.

On August 20, air monitoring continued; elevated benzene levels were observed intermittently in the creek and at the 125 Patton Street residence. No elevated benzene levels were observed in the residential area (outside of the creek channel) of Jordan Street. PRP contractors continue to conduct containment and removal of gasoline.

On morning of August 21, air monitoring continued, no elevated benzene levels were observed in the creek channel or in the residential areas of Jordan Street or Patton Street. One resident (125 Patton Street) continues to be temporarily relocated due to intermittent elevated concentrations of benzene and her close proximity to the containment area and recovery operations.

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

On August 17, EPA and Graham County Health Department visited the Crown Food Mart (Gas Station), located at 272 Rodney Orr Bypass, the suspected source of the gasoline spill. One of the owners of Crown Food Mart conducted a inventory investigation and observed a 38 gallon product loss in a two hour time period. The loss was observed from a 3,000 gallon premium unleaded gasoline underground storage tank (UST). The owner pumped the product in the UST into a tank that did not have a observed inventory loss. EPA issued the owner a Notice of Federal Interest (NOFI). The Crown Food Mart is the suspected potential responsible party (PRP). The owner agreed to hire a contractor to transition and assume the containment and recovery operations from EPA's fund lead response to a PRP lead response. The transition would take place on morning of August 19. A Work Plan will be submitted to EPA for review. EPA will maintain oversight and continue to coordinate and provide technical support to local and state responding agencies.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Transition of containment and recovery operations to PRPs contractor. OSC to review Work Plan submitted by PRP contractor. EPA START will continue air monitoring operations.

EPA's Regional Readiness Center contractor will mobilize additional air monitoring equipment and the mobile command post to assist with coordination with on-site resources.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

EPA and NCDEQ will continue investigation operations to identify and address the source of the discharge.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

Continue response coordination with local and state.

2.2.2 Issues

The action level for benzene in the residential areas is "non-detect" (ND) at the closest entry point to the house. This is used as the decision point for a temporary relocation recommendation. The field instrument being used (UltraRae 3000) has a detection limit of 50 parts per billion.

Local school begins their fall session on Monday, August 22. The High School is located across the stream from the containment area. Air monitoring will be focusing on the school property to ensure no elevated benzene levels are observed.

2.3 Logistics Section

EPA contractors onscene - ERRS, START, RRC

EPA Region 4 and EPA ERT onscene

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

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3. Participating Entities

A Unified Command has been established.

EPA

NCDEQ

Graham County

City of Robbinsville

4. Personnel On Site

EPA - 2

ERRS - 5

START - 2

RRC - 2

5. Definition of Terms

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6. Additional sources of information

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7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.