

**United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Region IV**  
**POLLUTION REPORT**

**Date:** Wednesday, January 31, 2007

**From:** Rick Jardine

**Subject:** Interim POLREP

Explorer Transport Oil Spill  
Highway 75 North, Hiawassee, GA  
Latitude: 34.8150030  
Longitude: -83.7426420

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	3	<b>Site #:</b>	Z4HK
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	JUN06 to JAN07	<b>D.O. #:</b>	N/A
<b>Start Date:</b>	4/28/2005	<b>Response Authority:</b>	OPA
<b>Mob Date:</b>	4/28/2005	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #</b>	None - RP clean-up
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>		<b>Reimbursable Account #</b>	05HR04R0XHK 302D91C Z4HK
<b>FPN#</b>	E05409		

**Site Description**

On 28 April 2005 at approximately 09:30 EDT, a highway tanker ran off of GA Highway 75 and overturned down an embankment onto the National Forest impacting headwaters to the Hiawassee River. The tanker contained 9200 gallons of gasoline, on- and off-road diesel fuel. Approximately 800 gallons of gasoline was transferred from the wrecked tanker into a sound tanker. The rest of the product was discharged to the environment. Some oil ran overland to streams, some seeped into the soil and was observed weeping out into several springs within 100 yards of the impact site.

Responders included the local Fire and EMA Team, USFS, GA EPD, EPA, GA F&W, and several contractors and consultants for the Responsible Party (RP). Efforts, initially led by the Forest Service and local emergency response, effectively contained the majority of the oil. Contractors for the RP reinforced the containment effort and began recovery of the oil.

The RP continued to maintain the oil recovery and monitoring effort for the next 12 months. By June 2006 observations of significant oil weeping into the surface waters of the National Forest had ceased. The RP continued to monitor the wells and surface water including laboratory analysis of the ground water. Water levels were approximately 11 feet below land surface(BLS) and BTEX concentrations ranging from non-detect to the single digits PPM.

**Current Activities**

In the Spring of 2006, the Unified Command, consisting of the EPA, GA EPD, USFS, and the RP convened to develop a strategy to achieve final Site restoration. UC sought continued monitoring through the Summer and Fall rains to verify a stabilized Site; leading to restoration during late fall. The restoration period was selected upon the advisement of the USFS - to optimize on regrowth and minimize on stream washout during the refurbishment.

In SEP06 approximately one and one-half inches of free product off-road diesel fuel was discovered in well #3. The water level was approximately 16 feet BLS - the lowest level observed during the monitoring cycle. EPA halted the final Site restoration to determine whether the finding is significant enough to form an alternate strategy. OSC Jardine was assisted by ERT Hydrogeologist Powell who developed a strategy to truth the findings and provide further scientific basis upon which to proceed with appropriate field activity.

In December of 2006, the UC reconvened to discuss the strategy for project completion. Based upon the discussion, the RP drafted a plan which has been approved with comment by the UC.

**Planned Removal Actions**

The planned removal actions include dismantling the underflow dams and providing for disposal of potentially contaminated soil spoils from the dam walls, closure of all wells except MW-3, passive bailing of any potential fuel that may reappear in MW-3, provide any sample of fuel to EPA, restore stream to USFS specification, installing passive soil gas monitors in a grid pattern surrounding MW-3.

**Next Steps**

Begin with soil excavation and disposal as allowed by freeze-thaw cycles. Restore the stream beds. Install the passive bailer and soil gas detection grid.

**Key Issues**

Alternative oil recovery method of installing an intercept trench is extremely unpopular due to 16 foot (or greater) depth to apparent oil capture zone. The magnitude of the trench would impose harsh scarring and tree removal in this otherwise pristine natural forest. Additionally, the UC have agreed that it is impossible to determine the quantity of oil still unrecovered. Remaining oil currently appears to be of minor significance.

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