

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IX
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, February 16, 2007

From: Robert Wise

To:	Joshua Curtis, CADFG-OSPR	Steven Hsu, RHB
	Denise Klimas, NOAA	Denise Steurer, USFWS
	Glen Forman, DTSC	Jeff Philips, USFWS
	John Fassell, CADHS	John Cubit, NOAA
	Katherine Pease, NOAA	Keith Duval, VCo. APCD
	Kurt Zimmerman, NOAA	Marilyn Levine, CADOJ
	Mitch Disney, VCoDA	Michael Lombard, CADHS
	Morgan Wehtje, CADFG	Paula Rasmussen, RWQCB
	Phil Blum, DTSC	Robert Montgomery, City of Oxnard
	Rod Nelson, RWQCB	Rich Sherwood, DTSC
	Sayareh Amirebrahimi, DTSC	Steve Koyasako, DTSC
	Steve Pay, CADHS RHB	Steve Mattern, City of Oxnard
	Tracy Woods, RWQCB	Barbara Hamrick, CADHS RHB

Subject: Continuation of Action
Halaco Engineering
6200 Perkins, Oxnard, CA
Latitude: 34.1389000
Longitude: -119.1819000

POLREP No.:	7	Site #:	09X6
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	2/5/2007	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	2/5/2007	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

Halaco Engineering Company began operation as a metal reclaiming facility at 6200 Perkins Road in Oxnard in 1965. The approximately 38-acre facility consists of two separate parcels on either side of the Oxnard Industrial Drain: a smelter and a waste disposal area (which includes the waste management unit, or WMU). Different types of waste were deposited on the WMU including heavy metals and radioactive contaminated slag (a byproduct of the smelting process). It is estimated that more than 710,000 cubic yards of waste make up the WMU. Halaco also deposited waste in the area north of the WMU. The smelter itself contains in excess of 5,000 cubic yards of waste similar to the waste at the WMU.

Halaco's waste disposal practices have been cited by federal, state and local authorities for many years. The facility received various orders and notices of violation from EPA, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Health Services Radiological Health Branch, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the City of Oxnard Fire Department.

In 2002, Halaco filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. In 2006, after Halaco ceased operations, the bankruptcy was converted to a Chapter 7 (liquidation) bankruptcy. Later that year, Chickadee Remediation Co purchased the waste management area and assumed the lease to the former smelter property. Alpha and Omega Development LLC subsequently acquired the waste management area from Chickadee.

Current Activities

The ERRS contractor installed an access road on the southern toe of the WMU above the interface with the Ormond Beach Wetlands. The area beneath the road was graded to a 3:1 slope. Upon completion of grading the southern toe, the interface between the wetlands and the pile will be covered with rip-rap to

prevent erosion of the WMU. The ERRS is grading the slope above the road to a 3:1 slope. The waste process solids removed during the grading are being placed in the former pond areas in the middle of the WMU. The ERRS also has begun grading the southern and western slopes of the WMU to a 3:1 grade. During the grading process, air surveillance has detected ammonia up to 30 ppm. As a result, all excavation operations will be conducted in Level C protection.

The U.S. Navy Seabees provided technical assistance to the OSC and ERRS in the evaluation of the type of bridge needed to span the Oxnard Industrial Drain. ERRS has issued an RFP for a bridge rental.

An ERRS subcontractor conducted a 3-D survey of the Site and surrounding area. The survey has documented a waste volume in the WMU of approximately 710,000 cubic yards, up from the original estimates of 400,000 - 500,000 cubic yards. The survey has documented that the WMU has heavily encroached into the Ormond Beach Wetlands.

The START and the Pacific Strike Team continued to implement the air surveillance plan. Due to ammonia odors, ammonia was added as a target contaminant. The air surveillance program consists of personal analytical samples for heavy metals, area analytical samples for heavy metals, area samples for radioactive particulates, and monitoring for LEL, Oxygen, carbon monoxide. The radioactive particulate samples will be first analyzed on-site using a wipe counter. Those samples that are twice background will be sent to the lab for isotope identification. Starting next week, both personal and area samples for ammonia will be collected.

The START also collected samples of suspect material in the Ormond Beach Wetlands that appears to be process waste solids. The samples will be submitted to an analytical lab for heavy metals analysis.

Starting on February 12, 2007, the Office of Radiation and Indoor Air conducted radiation surveys on Ormond Beach for residual radiation. Three areas will be investigated over a 3.5 mile stretch of beach extending south of the Ormond Pier (control area 1), past the Halaco Beach site area to the beach front just north of Mugu (control area 2) airfield runway. The three beach areas to be investigated will extend approximately 2000 feet in length along the high tide crest line and inland to a width of about 60 feet.

The purpose of this investigation is to evaluate and compare three beach areas in order to determine if anomalously high locations of gamma-ray activity is present. Collect information useful to the identification of radioactive sources and radioactive exposure rates in the beach areas.

The main equipment to be used in the investigation and evaluation of the beach areas is a specially designed scanning detector system mounted on compact utility tractor, referred to as the ERGS (Environmental Radiation Ground Scanner). This detector system consists of an array of eight large NaI detectors collimated with lead for scanning a finite footprint 6 feet wide when traversing 15 inches above the ground. The scanning speed is about 2 feet per second or little less than 1.5 miles per hour. When traveling between scan areas the ERGS tractor travel speed will be about 5 miles per hour. The ERGS tractor is articulated, weighs about 10,000 pounds, 19 feet in length and is 7 feet wide with eight tires. See the Halaco website for photos of the ERGS. The other instrument to be used in the investigation and evaluation of the beach areas is a push buggy mounted "high resolution" In-situ Gamma-Ray Spectrometer system for isotope identification and an approximation of the relative activity. A tripod mounted PIC (Pressurized Ionization Chamber) will be used to record a whole body equivalent gamma exposure rate at selected locations. These systems will be used to evaluate selected anomalous areas identified with the ERGS.

On February 15, 2007, the ERGS broke an axle and is out of commission for at least 1 week. The other surveys will continue.

Planned Removal Actions

EPA began stabilization actions February 5, 2007 on the Halaco site. EPA surveyed the WMU to prepare a grading plan. The WMU will be graded to stabilize the slopes of the WMU using excavation equipment. Once the slopes of the WMU have been graded, natural fiber matting will be placed on the slopes to minimize erosion of waste process solids into the surrounding wetlands and waterways. Upon completion of the stabilization action, EPA will upgrade the fencing surrounding the WMU and post signs advising the public of the hazards present and to remain off of the site.

EPA will be transferring the waste process solids from the smelter facility to the WMU for temporary storage. This will include any waste process solids stored in the smelter structures, storage containers, or in the yard. This process is being undertaken to consolidate the waste process solids to one location.

Next Steps

1. Complete the grading of the WMU.
2. Install the bridge of the OID.
3. Transfer the solids from the Smelter to the WMU.

Key Issues

The contractor (Chickadee Remediation) for the land owner and the leasee (Alpha-Omega Development) has been banned from the site for failure to comply with health and safety rules. The site is attracting a lot of media attention. There have been three articles in the Ventura Co. Star, one in the LA Times and TV spot.

[response.epa.gov/Halaco](https://www.response.epa.gov/Halaco)