

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, February 25, 2002

From: Nicolas Brescia

To: Ragan Broyles, Superfund Division

Subject: Chiltipin Creek Seep Site
N. Rachel Avenue, Sinton, TX
Latitude: 28.0425000
Longitude: -97.5103000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	NRC#549425
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	6/4/2001	Response Authority:	OPA
Mob Date:	6/4/2001	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:		Reimbursable Account #	
FPN#	N01139		

Site Description

I SITUATION

On November 28, 2000, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) notified EPA Region 6 of crude oil seeping from the banks of Chiltipin Creek into the creek itself, in the town of Sinton, San Patricio County, Texas. The seep was first discovered in July of 1986, and was purportedly the result of historic oilfield practices. The seep site lies within the West Sinton oilfield, which is located on the north side of Sinton. The site is also within a residential area of Sinton. The creek flows into Copano Bay, in the Gulf of Mexico. Since the seep was first discovered, the RRC has conducted numerous and extensive investigations and clean up actions. These actions include comprehensive studies by RRC contractors and the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology (BEG), installation of monitor wells, soil sampling, plugging of several abandoned oil wells in the immediate area, and mop up and removal of oil from the creek. Although there were several possibilities of the source of the seep, none have been confirmed.

The RRC has also conducted a full investigation of potentially responsible parties to determine liability for the seep. The RRC pursued several potentially responsible parties, including the oil operators of the abandoned oil wells, and oil-gathering pipeline companies who had pipelines serving the area. To date, there has been no clear determination of the responsibility party. However, at least two pipeline companies investigations have indicated that title and informational searches show that they did not have any pipelines, leases, rights-of-ways, or spills through or near the site, thus indicating they may not have liability for the seep.

II ACTIONS TAKEN

After notification of the seep, the RRC requested assistance from EPA in the form of a Pollution Removal Funding Authorization (PRFA) to further mitigate the spill. EPA assessed the information provided by the RRC, and the Federal On-Scene Coordinator (FOSC) opened the Federal Project Number (FPN) and initiated a PRFA. A second PRFA was also initiated with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to provide Federal On-Scene Coordinator Representatives (FOSC-Rs) to provide technical and management assistance to the FOSC. EPA and USACE representatives then conducted a site visit. A scope of work and cost ceiling for the project was established and agreed upon with the RRC, and the PRFA signed and authorized on June 4, 2001. Under terms of the PRFA, the RRC will continue to conduct removal and assessment operations at the site, with the goal of installing an interceptor trench to keep oil from flowing into the creek. Also, oil clean up and physical removal activities will continue as needed.

The RRC began an geotechnical assessment to determine best placement and installation of the recovery trench. The initial phase of the assessment will be finalized in February 2002, with modeling and

installation specifications to follow thereafter.

III FUTURE PLANS

The geotechnical assessment and specifications for installation of the trench will be finalized and completed this spring. Once this is completed, installation of the trench can proceed. Oil removal and clean up operations at the site will continue at the site from time to time to keep oil from flowing downstream. EPA will continue to monitor the situation and work with the RRC.

IV KEY ISSUES

- Crude oil is seeping directly into Chiltipin Creek, which flows into Copano Bay.
- Extensive work has been, and continues to be conducted by the RRC to mitigate the spill.
- Mitigation efforts have been designed to stay off of private property as much as possible. The site is within a residential area. A barn and other structures cover an area on a residential property north of the site where an oilfield production site once stood.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

response.epa.gov/ChiltipinCreekSeep

POLREP #1 Last Updated 1/9/2008