

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, March 27, 2008

From: Perry Gaughan

To: Miguel Bella, USCG NPFC

Subject: Well Fire Extinguished

Oliver Springs Oil Well Fire

Cove Lane Road, Oliver Springs, TN

Latitude: 36.0708000

Longitude: -84.3569000

POLREP No.:	5	Site #:	Z4MT
Reporting Period:	March 25, 2008	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	3/19/2008	Response Authority:	OPA
Mob Date:	3/19/2008	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Assessment
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:		Reimbursable Account #	
FPN#	E 08430		

Site Description

At approximately 6:30 am, Wednesday, March 19th, the Partin No. 5 Oil Well caught fire during drilling operations northwest of Oliver Springs, Tenn. Apparently, a large zone of natural gas was hit and the blow off preventer failed resulting in a substantial fire and release of approximately 2000 barrels of crude oil to a secondary retention pond. According to TDEC a small amount of crude oil found its way to an unnamed tributary of Indian Creek. Local fire and hazmat arrived on scene, placed boom at several locations along the creek, and evacuated a few homes in the vicinity of the well. The responsible party, Walden Resources has hired Wild Well Services of Houston, Texas to assess and extinguish the fire at the well head. The OSC continues to work within a unified command structure with the local EMA coordinator, TDEC and TEMA. EPA, with START contractor support, will conduct air monitoring and site oversight as needed throughout the response.

Current Activities

Walden Resources contractor, Wild Well Services were eventually successful in capping the well head today. The fire at the well head was extinguished using a combination of water and a 12 foot venturi tube. High pressure cannon water was passed over the bottom and top of the venturi tube resulting in a vacuum at the well head and elimination of oxygen from the fire, thus extinguishing the flame. Subsequent efforts to cap the free flow of gas and crude oil from the well using several thousand gallons of heavy water (highly concentrated calcium chloride solution) were unsuccessful. This resulted in site conditions which posed a threat to residents in the area. At approx 4:30pm, TEMA and Anderson County EMA ordered an evacuation of the residents in the vicinity of the well, because it looked as if site conditions would require the lighting and flaring of the well head again in order to stabilize conditions and to control the flow of natural gas and crude oil from the well. At 5:25pm, efforts by Wild Well using a traditional "stabbing" method by simply placing a valve assembly over the high pressured flow of free crude and gas (pressures exceeding 1300 psi) were fortunately successful. Once the flow of gas and crude oil was stopped, EPA and START monitored volatile organic and explosive limit values for one hour prior to County EMA and TEMA lifting the evacuation notice.

Anderson County EMA, TDEC, TEMA and EPA worked in a unified command structure. EPA and START contractors continued air monitoring efforts. EPA, TEMA and Anderson County EMA provided updates to the residents at 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm and a public meeting was held at 7:00 pm to summarize the days events and answer public concerns. Media interest remains high.