

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, December 8, 2008

From: Nicolas Brescia

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

POLREP No.:	5	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 #	2009HR 06L0XK3 302D91C Z6K3
FPN#	N01139		

Site Description

On November 28, 2000, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) notified EPA Region 6 of a discharge of crude oil which was seeping into Chiltipin Creek from its banks on the north side of the town of Sinton, San Patricio County, Texas. The seep was first discovered in July of 1986, and was reported to be the result of poor historic oilfield practices. The seep site lies within the old West Sinton oilfield, and is also within a residential area of Sinton. The creek flows directly into Copano Bay, an inlet in the Gulf of Mexico north of Corpus Christi, Texas.

Since the seep was first discovered, the RRC has conducted numerous, extensive investigations and removal actions on its own. In January 2001, EPA issued a Pollution Removal Funding Authorization (PRFA) to the RRC for the purpose of conducting additional assessments and installing a passive recovery trench. The trench was installed along 350 feet of the creek bank to intercept the oil and keep it from discharging into Chiltipin Creek. Construction of the trench was completed in May 2003 and has been actively intercepting crude oil and oily water. Discharges of oil into Chiltipin Creek along the trench length have completely ceased. In fact, over 980 barrels of crude oil have been recovered from the trench since 2003.

In 2005, well after the installation of the trench, two additional breakouts of crude oil were discovered discharging very small amounts of oil from the creek's banks both upstream (west) and downstream of the trench's terminus'. Please see previous Polreps for a full discussion of the sites history and actions taken.

Current Activities

The RRC continues to remove oil and oily water from the trench recovery wells, as well as conduct mop up along the creek bank and stream bed. The most recent removal of oil from the trench was conducted December 1, 2008. Oily soil at the downstream breakout was excavated and removed as well (see Polrep No. 4). This breakout and the other oil breakout mentioned previously are being actively monitored, but no other action is being contemplated at this time at these locations.

Although the previous Polrep No. 4 stated there was no further need for mop up in the creek bed and bermed collection area at the toe of the bank, this was erroneous due to the fact that small amounts of oil continue to leach from older, previously saturated sands and discharge into the creek.

Approximately 982 barrels of crude oil have been recovered from trench since its installation, but the volume of oil recovered appears to be declining. Previously, the RRC was investigating the feasibility of installing an active pump system and storage tank to recover and store oil from the trench, but the RRC has decided not to install such a system at the current time due to the decline in volume of recovered oil. Vacuum trucks remove oil and oily water on a monthly basis and transport it to a Class II disposal facility for re-injection. Road repair is also conducted occasionally at the site to allow transport trucks continued, safe access to the trench wells.

Next Steps

The RRC will continue to assess, monitor, and remove oil from the site. Also, OSC responsibility for the site and FPN will be transferred from OSC Franklin to OSC Nicolas Brescia, effective immediately. EPA and the RRC will also re-evaluate the need for funding under the current PRFA and move to a claims-based approach. The RRC will submit cost documentation to the OSC for recent removal actions.

response.epa.gov/ChiltipinCreekSeep