

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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TO: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

FROM: Jaime C. Kooser, Deputy Director
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SUBJECT: **Guadalupe Oil Field Spill Remediation Status Report – December 1999**

Staff Note:

This status report provides an account of abandonment and cleanup activities occurring at the Guadalupe site for the period October 9 – November 15, 1999. Some of these are ongoing activities authorized under San Luis Obispo CDP/DP D870558D, and others began following Coastal Commission approval of CDP No. E-99-009 on November 3, 1999.

SITE ACTIVITIES, OCTOBER 9 – NOVEMBER 15, 1999

Activities Occurring in San Luis Obispo County's Coastal Permit Jurisdiction

- Pipelines and expansion loops were removed along the B road, the 8X access road, and TB9.
- Surveys at the 8X site for silvery legless lizards were conducted by six Unocal biologists and County monitors; no lizards were found.
- Installation of wildlife exclusion netting over the TB8 drainage basins began.
- A water vault at the water plant that regularly attracts tree frogs was demolished. Tree frogs were removed prior to the vault's demolition.
- Removal of contaminated material to three feet below ground surface at C6/C7 stockpile area began (the area is to be used as stockpile for clean overburden). The excavated area was backfilled with clean overburden to ground surface level. Dune mint plants growing in the area were salvaged by botanical monitors prior to disturbance.

- A rubber-tired beach cleaning vehicle at C6/C7 was tested for its ability to remove oil layers and pieces of asphalt from sand.
- The beach cleaning vehicle was also used to auger holes for the 8X sheetpile installation; the extension of the 8X access road to accommodate the beach cleaning vehicle resulted in several feet of disturbance along portions of the access road. No sensitive species were disturbed.
- County monitors provided independent surveys of access corridors at the 8X site to verify if impacted habitat is being properly recorded and documented. County monitors identified several surf thistle plants near the road that had not been marked by Unocal.
- High tides and stormy conditions resulted in waves entering the 8X work area before excavation activities began.
- An additional lens of oily sand and drilling mud, with a layer of overlying asphaltic material, was discovered on the northwestern side of the 8X excavation. Sampling of the excavation bottom demonstrated that nondetectable levels of TPH were reached; the RWQCB approved backfill of the excavation. Discovery of this additional contamination extended the sump boundary an additional 80 square feet to the east.
- The 8X sump excavation was completed on November 5, 1999 and 8X sheetpile was removed on November 9-10. Fencing along the access road will remain in place for use by monitors until all re-contouring is completed.
- Five snowy plovers were observed within 50 feet of 8X worksite during installation of the sheetpile wall. The independent Onsite Environmental Coordinator reported that the birds did not appear affected by the loud noise level associated with this activity.
- Recent surveys are indicating fewer California red-legged frogs at the TB8 ponds than in the past.

Activities Occurring in the Coastal Commission's Coastal Permit Jurisdiction

- Unocal contractors began working five 10-hour days per week.
- Remediation activities began at the 5X site, including removal of wells, pipelines, vegetated overburden and clean overburden. Areas of darker thermally desorbed sands (used as backfill during past emergency excavation actions) is stored separate from other sands, and will be placed deepest in the excavation pit during future backfilling of 5X.
- Unocal discovered a thick petroleum hydrocarbon layer east of the A Road turn-around. The layer extends over a 40 x 60 foot area, is over three feet thick in places, and extends beyond the eastern fence line.
- Unocal plans to begin sheetpile installation at the 5X site during the week of November 22.
- Unocal plans to submit an application for an Immaterial Amendment to E-99-009 to construct a cattle-exclusion fence at the southwest corner of the oil field to prevent grazing cattle from entering wetland areas.