

## CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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May 25, 2000

TO: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

FROM: Jaime C. Kooser, Deputy Director  
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Dan Chia, Coastal Program Analyst

SUBJECT: **Guadalupe Oil Field Spill Remediation Status Report – June 2000**

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**Staff Note:**

*This status report provides an account of abandonment and cleanup activities occurring at the Guadalupe site for the period April 17, 2000-May 15, 2000. 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.*

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**SITE ACTIVITIES, APRIL 17, 2000-MAY 15, 2000****Activities Occurring in San Luis Obispo County's Coastal Permit Jurisdiction****C8 Excavation**

- In May 2000, County and Coastal Commission staff gave Unocal final plan approval to begin excavation activities at C8, located in the County's jurisdiction in the northwestern part of the oil field.
- **Fencing:** Unocal completed the fencing of the C8 site the second week of May. The entire site was fenced except for the two areas where secondary sheetpile walls will be installed to support slopes on the northern and southern limits of the site. At the on-scene environmental coordinator's ("OEC") request, construction fencing in proximity to the wetland along the southern boundary of the site was reconfigured to create a larger buffer area between the wetland and the construction zone.
- **Topsoil:** Unocal has completed topsoil clearing at the C8 site (both south and north cells) in preparation for excavation activities. Approximately 12 inches of topsoil and vegetative

material was excavated from the site and hauled to the C6/C7 stockpile area. The topsoil was stockpiled in piles less than four feet high in accordance with the legless lizard survey protocol. Any areas containing contaminated soil were avoided during the initial topsoil removal. Contaminated soil was then later excavated and hauled to the TB8 Stockpile site where it will be screened to remove vegetative material (to be potentially used during restoration efforts in the area).

Unocal botanical monitors conducted some minor plant salvage prior to topsoil removal efforts. Approximately 20 to 30 wallflowers, Blochman's leafy daisy and dudleya plants were removed from the site for use in future restoration efforts.

- ***Legless Lizard Relocation Efforts:*** The intent of the legless lizard relocation effort was to carefully remove the top 12 inches of the clean soil from the site with the goal of capturing the major portion of the legless lizard population onsite. Special care was taken to handle the topsoil as little as possible to avoid disturbing the legless lizards within this layer of soil. The removed topsoil was hauled to the C6/C7 stockpile area where the soil would be monitored and sprayed with water on a regular basis to keep moist. At the end of the excavation activities at the C8 site, the topsoil material (and accompanying legless lizards) will be used to cover the appropriate portions of the site.

During the topsoil removal at the C8 site, Unocal had between 5 and 20 staff raking the disturbed areas for legless lizards. Raking consistently occurred within 1-3 hours after topsoil had been removed. The topsoil removal process (using an excavator to excavate material and haul soil to the C6/C7 stockpile area, as opposed to pushing the soil with bulldozers into piles to be removed) was, in part, successful in removing legless lizards from the site and keeping them alive during the excavation and hauling procedure.

In all, fifty live legless lizards, six dead legless lizards, three snakes, five western fence lizards, a meadow vole, a shrew and two western toads were successfully captured and relocated out of harm's way during the raking and monitoring of the topsoil removal. All wildlife captured during the raking and monitoring of the site was relocated within 250 feet of the site in suitable habitat. In addition, the raking efforts revealed five Native American artifacts and two clutches of lizard (unknown species) eggs. The Native American artifacts were handed over to Unocal's archaeological monitor who was present on-site throughout the site clearing.

Due to the presence of the Native American artifacts found during the topsoiling activities, the Unocal archaeological monitor excavated two test pits and collected soil from the site to conduct a soil analysis to determine the presence of any additional significant material. There was no additional cultural resources material found and excavation activities continued on the site.

### **Other Activities**

- Unocal received a 2081 Permit from the California Department of Fish and Game for incidental take of La Graciosa thistle (LGT) among other State-listed plants at the site. This allowed Unocal to relocate the two LGT at the TB8 stockpile area before the species became Federally listed, requiring a Section 7 Consultation from the USFWS. Although only one of the two plants at the TB8 area survived, both plants and their seed banks were salvaged from the site. The living individual was repotted and given nutritional and hormonal growth supplements to increase its likelihood of survival before future relocation. The seed bank from the dead individual was screened in order to salvage any seed from last year's flowers. The original location of both individuals has been paved and claimed as part of the greater TB8 Stockpile Area.
- Unocal has removed approximately 2,200 feet of a 4-inch decommissioned water line that had been located along the Main Road. This PVC piping was relocated to the B Road between the B5 retention pond and the C8 site where it will be recycled and used during future dewatering efforts at the C8 excavation site.
- The TB8 Retention Ponds and the gates into the ponds have been frog-proofed using gravel and netting attached to wood barriers as of May 3. Unocal monitors will continue to monitor the site to ensure the effectiveness of fencing efforts. On April 26, a juvenile California red-legged frog was found at the TB8 East Retention Pond in the contaminated water. The frog was captured and relocated to the Marsh pond.

On April 24, 2000 six California red-legged frogs were observed at the P1 pond during a night survey of the lease (conducted during the lease-wide inventory of biological resources). There were four red-legged frogs relocated to the site earlier in the year from the TB8 Retention Pond. The two additional frogs are believed to have moved into the wetland naturally.

