

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

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June 22, 2000

TO: Coastal Commissioners and Interested Parties

FROM: Jaime C. Kooser, Deputy Director
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SUBJECT: **Guadalupe Oil Field Spill Remediation Status Report – July 2000**

Staff Note:

This status report provides an account of abandonment and cleanup activities occurring at the Guadalupe site for the period May 16, 2000-June 19, 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.

SITE ACTIVITIES, MAY 16, 2000-JUNE 19, 2000

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

C8 Excavation

- Unocal's contractor, Diani Construction, began excavating affected material from the C8 North site on June 6, 2000.
- The vegetated topsoil layer removed from the C8 site was hauled to the C6C7 stockpile area and placed in rows less than five feet in height. This stockpiled soil will remain at this site until the end of summer when it is expected to be moved back to the C8 excavation site. To ensure that any legless lizards potentially present in this stockpiled material have suitable moisture, Unocal has monitored the moisture content of this stockpiled material and the natural surrounding habitat. The C6C7 stockpile was watered (via a water truck and hoses) within the last two weeks. Unocal plans to monitor the moisture of this material on a weekly basis.

- Twelve extraction wells were installed and operated within the excavation to dewater the cell, allowing Unocal to excavate the affected soil several feet below the ground water elevation without the use of the dredging system. By June 9, approximately 6,000 bbl of ground water and 200 gallons of product have been extracted and disposed of in Unocal's on-site deep well injection system.
- Soil samples were collected for onsite and offsite (duplicate and independent) analysis. Approximately 10% of the samples were collected for duplicate analysis and verification at the RWQCB contract lab. Additional samples were collected from the stockpiled affected soil at TB8 for quantification purposes. Of the 23,000 cubic yards of soil removed, as of June 9, the average total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH) value was 15,000 ppm.
- During the excavation of the C8 North site, bird hazing includes the use of Zon-guns, loud music during the night, ropes with mylar strips placed every ten feet and several plastic owls and falcons. The purpose of the hazing is to keep birds from contacting contaminated soil or water in the open pit. Unocal does not plan to net the open excavation pit during the evenings.
- On June 13, 2000, Diani Construction completed the excavation of affected material from the C8 North cell. The average TPH level from soil samples collected was less than 10 ppm. None of the samples exceeded 700 ppm TPH. The RWQCB approved backfilling of the site on the same day.
- The source of backfill material is overburden material originally cleared from the entire C8 site (including overburden from the C8 South cell) and stockpiled on the C8 South cell. Unocal does not anticipate the need to haul in borrow material from the Q4 Borrow Site for backfill of the C8 North cell.
- Contaminated soil located on the upper C8 pad site was excavated to a depth in excess of five feet and the site was filled and covered with clean material (clean overburden from the C8 site). This material was then covered with a layer (one to two feet in depth) of clean vegetative material originally removed from the C8 site during the topsoil removal. The entire site was then sprayed with Soil Sement to prevent wind from eroding topsoil away before final restoration efforts can be completed at the end of this year.

Other Activities

- Unocal contractors have begun hauling soil from the Q4 Borrow Site to the E4A stockpile area, use of which was approved by relevant agencies, including Commission staff. By stockpiling borrow material at E4A, which is in closer proximity to the beach, Unocal will be able to expedite backfilling operations in order to ensure that work activities are completed before the snowy plover nesting season begins. Hauling of the Q4 borrow material to E4A began on Friday, June 16.
- Unocal has installed six stakes on the down-wind side of the E4A stockpile site and four stakes on the down-wind side of the blowout area immediately south of the E4A site. These stakes will allow Unocal to monitor sand movement on the stockpile site and compare it to a natural blowout. Unocal is currently installing a water system to regularly water the E4A stockpile.

- Unocal plans to commence the hauling of contaminated material from one of the stockpiles located at the TB9 area during the next week. Unocal plans on having 20 dump trucks taking two trips per day (for a total of 40 trips a day) to Buttonwillow for approximately 25 working days.
- Unocal plans to begin installing 19 new wells (16 ground water wells and 3 soil/gas wells) at the O13 phytoremediation site during the next week. All but two of these wells will be located inside the fenced area. Unocal also plans to cut 975 new willow cuttings from the Santa Maria River to plant within the phytoremediation site. Unocal botanists and wildlife biologists will monitor both of these activities. Unocal also plans to conduct surveys for yellow warblers (a California Species of Special Concern) in the areas possibly affected by willow cutting and will avoid those areas in which possible yellow warbler nesting is identified.
- Unocal contractors continue to abandon pipelines south of E4A in the area of the E3 area. Unocal contractors have completed pipeline abandonment activities at the O4 site and have begun removing pipeline at the R1 pad restoration site.
- The presence of red-legged frogs at the LTU drainage basin has prompted Unocal to redesign the current drainage system for the beginning of the upcoming rainy season. Currently, Unocal is out of compliance with Biological Opinion #1-8-99-F/C-99 that states that "*For all areas where rainfall is affected by contaminated stockpiled soil, runoff and ponded water shall be controlled, and to the maximum extent practicable, California red-legged frogs and their prey shall be prevented from making contact with this water.*" Steve Henry with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service visited the site with Unocal's Ecological Coordinator and the OEC to discuss options for compliance. It was decided that until Unocal can reconfigure the drainage system at the LTU, the existing water in the basin would have to be removed.
- Unocal plans to conduct one last night survey at the LTU retention pond and then remove the remaining water from this pond after ensuring that there are no red-legged frog tadpoles in the basin.
- Unocal monitors report that seven western snowy plover nests are currently active at this time in the Unocal project area. Several of these nests are located near or on the A Road, 7X Road, 5X Excavation site and the parking lot north of the 6X Road. One additional nest located on the beach was reported to have contained one dead chick and one unhatched egg. Unocal monitors reported that the mortalities may have been due to human disturbance (such as surf fishermen).
- Between 14 and 28 snowy plovers were observed by Unocal biologists during the ongoing monitoring of the beach.

