

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 Fourth Quarterly Status Report: October-December 2001**

This status report provides an account of abandonment and cleanup activities occurring at the Guadalupe site for the period October 2001-December 2001. 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 2001-DECEMBER 2001**Activities Occurring in the Coastal Commission's Permit Jurisdiction**

- Unocal biologists have begun this year's restoration efforts at the beach sites and other inland remediation sites. Restoration activities include the following efforts:
 1. Reinstalling the straw plugs at the beach sites (5X, A2A, LeRoy 6, and 8X) between the created berms; these areas showed the most sand deposition during last year's winds.
 2. Seeding the coastal scrub areas at the beach sites with a seed mix consisting mostly of mock heather and buckwheat seed, but also includes dune sedge, Blochmann's leafy daisy, coast golden bush, and lupine.
 3. Planting at the beach area foredunes over 2,000 stock plants grown at the Unocal Growing Facilities. Stock plants being planted include Blochmann's leafy daisy, purple sand verbena, beach dunedelion, and saltbush.
 4. Planting of over 250 stock plants of coast silver weed at the Loop Road.

Activities Occurring in the County's Permit Jurisdiction

- As reported in previous status reports, over the past two rainy seasons, hydrocarbons have been seen floating on the water surface at the eastern end of the M12 wetland. Since a portion of this wetland is underlain by contaminated soil, as the water table rises,

contamination also rises to the surface. Unocal prepared a work plan to address this problem in the interim while site-wide remediation activities are suspended. San Luis Obispo County (County) approved this plan in consultation with Commission staff and other agencies. Unocal successfully completed the interim remediation work at M12 on November 19, 2001. After conducting California red-legged frog surveys and cutting back vegetation to increase visibility in the disturbance area, Unocal placed a layer of geofabric on the ground. This was covered with a six-inch layer of charcoal and then stapled together with another layer of geofabric. The charcoal layer was then covered with a six-inch layer of clean sand. No California red-legged frogs were observed within the work area and Unocal avoided disturbing nearby La Graciosa thistles.

- Unocal has nearly completed all pipeline removal throughout the former oil field. Unocal plans to complete their efforts by the end of the year. To date, Unocal contractors have removed more than 145 miles of pipe.

Other

- In March 2001, agency (i.e., San Luis Obispo County, Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Game, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and Unocal representatives formed a Restoration Working Group (RWG) to enhance coordination and communication during the review and oversight of restoration efforts at the former Guadalupe Oil Field. The goals of the RWG include:
 1. Facilitate coordination among agencies and stakeholders (including Unocal).
 2. Improve the agency review process of restoration plans and related issues.
 3. Assure common agreement on permit condition compliance and monitoring.
 4. Provide technical oversight of restoration planning, implementation, and monitoring.
 5. Resolve technical issues.

Over the past year, the RWG has primarily been involved in developing performance criteria for the restoration of the dune scrub community in the southern portion of the site since a large percentage of remediation activities affect this habitat type. The RWG determined that the development of performance criteria for restoration sites based on vegetation characteristics in good quality (i.e., minimally disturbed and little to no exotics present) habitat would better ensure that the requirements of relevant permit conditions would be met. Other tasks of the RWG over the past year included initiating discussion on developing a coordinated and consistent approach to review and approve restoration plans and offering specific recommendations to Unocal on the Quarterly Ecological Monitoring Reports and the Field-wide Exotic Species Management and Eradication Program. Future tasks include discussing Site-Specific Restoration Plans for future excavations or other remediation activities, Sensitive Species Management Plans, and developing performance criteria for the restoration of wetland habitat.

- As required by County and Coastal Commission coastal development permit conditions, Unocal must develop a Habitat Restoration and Revegetation Research Program that will

include specific practical techniques to foster the recovery of sensitive species impacted by remediation activities. In particular, this program will apply to species (*i.e.*, La Graciosa thistle) for which there are no established, field-proven methods of successful restoration. To this end, a Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) will be formed to guide and oversee research into restoration techniques for specific species. The SAP will be comprised of independent scientists nominated by the San Luis Obispo County, Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Unocal. Coastal Commission biologists have nominated Dr. Pete Raimondi of the University of California, Santa Cruz to chair the SAP.

