

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/DangerousGoods/>

USA, TX, HOUSTON

APRIL 25 2013.

NO INJURIES IN 2 HOUSTON OIL STORAGE TANK FIRES

Investigators say lightning sparked an oil storage tank fire in Houston that spread to another tank before both blazes were extinguished. The Houston Fire Department says nobody was hurt in the fires early Wednesday at Southwest Terminal Mineral Oil Co. Fire officials say the insulation burned in both containers and the tanks were not breached. Firefighters remained on the scene as the smoldering insulation was removed. The company says the tanks hold non-toxic mineral oil used in the automotive industry.

<http://www.myfoxboston.com/story/22064858/no-injuries-in-2-houston-oil-storage-tank-fires>

USA, AKA, NORTH POLE

APRIL 25 2013.

PAST, PRESENT OWNERS OF NORTH POLE REFINERY CLASH AGAIN IN COURT OVER GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION

Tim Ellis

Teams of lawyers representing the past and present owners of the North Pole refinery are preparing for the next round in court while awaiting rulings by a Fairbanks judge after a weeklong hearing in the long-running legal fight over who's responsible for tainting North Pole's groundwater with an industrial solvent, and who should pay for helping area residents whose drinking water has been fouled by sulfolane.

A half-dozen lawyers argued for five days over arcane legal issues in the latest proceeding of a case pitting North Pole refinery owner Flint Hills Resources-Alaska against the previous owner, Williams Alaska Petroleum – a case that's outlined in 25 thick volumes of documents, perhaps the biggest case file at the state courthouse.

Superior Court Judge Michael McConahy summed up the issues when he said early on that the focus of the proceeding week before last was "What did you know and when did you know it?"

Williams' lawyers argued that Flint Hills cannot force Williams to compensate Flint Hills for what Flint Hills officials say was "tens of millions of dollars" in remediation and payments to dozens of area residents in cash and in the form of payments to provide a clean source of drinking water.

The Williams' lawyers say that's because Flint Hills officials knew in 2004, when they bought the refinery from Williams, that an industrial solvent known as sulfolane had leaked from the refinery and infiltrated the area's groundwater. The lawyers say that McConahy should dismiss the case because Flint Hills sued years after the state's statute of limitations deadline.

But Flint Hills spokesman Jeff Cook says the company didn't know much about the extent of the sulfolane contamination until five years after the purchase.

"When Williams sold their refinery to Flint Hills in 2004, Williams told Flint Hills that sulfolane in the groundwater was limited to an area on the refinery property," Cook said. "It was not until 2009 that Flint Hills discovered that sulfolane was actually offsite at the time of the sale and had been for years."

Cook says Flint Hills officials argue that the statute of limitations doesn't apply because they say Williams knew, but didn't reveal, the full extent of the contamination when it sold the refinery.

"Williams did not disclose everything to Flint Hills when it sold the refinery, because it did not disclose any

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offsite contamination,” he said. “Williams is arguing that a jury should not be allowed to hear the case, because Flint Hills should have discovered the true extent of the contamination earlier.

A spokesman for Williams declined to comment, citing company policy against talking about ongoing legal issues.

According to the state Department of Environmental Conservation, sulfolane leakage was first detected during a two-year study that began in 2000.

Cook says Flint Hills wants Williams to reimburse the company for the remediation and to compensate it for the diminished value of the refinery caused by the sulfolane contamination.

Experts don't yet know enough about the health effects of sulfolane to label it as for example a hazardous substance, but as a precaution the DEC in February approved a very low cleanup threshold of 14 parts per billion. Some area wells have shown sulfolane levels exceeding 400 parts per billion.

So far, only one person has sued over the potential health threat posed by the sulfolane contamination – that's North Pole resident James West, who settled his case in May 2011 for an undisclosed sum.

Fairbanks lawyer Jason Weiner, who represented West, says it's not unusual that the Flint Hills vs. Williams case has gone on so long, because oil companies *often* undertake expensive and lengthy litigation.

“When you're dealing with, like, the Exxon Valdez case, people ask ‘Well, why would the (companies) spend so much money?’” Weiner said. “And the fact is, let's say they were spending a million dollars a year for attorney's fees. If they're still fighting over \$600 million, and you're going win a \$200 million reduction, it still worth it to fight it for 10 years. Because, I mean, economically it makes sense.”

Cook says Flint Hills officials think the case will go to trial next year.

While the two companies battle in court, one area resident, Robert Bradley, says he and many others who've also been affected by sulfolane contamination will be keeping an eye on the case.

“Well, as a matter of fact, we're following it quite closely,” he said.

Bradley is a 60-year area resident who owns 70 acres in North Pole, which includes six houses and two rentals, and he says the sulfolane contamination has caused his property values to fall. Bradley says he won't be accepting the remediation payments offered by Flint Hills, because they require homeowners to forego suing the company.

“I for one haven't settled,” he said. “And I know of numerous other individuals who haven't settled either. So we're waiting and watching, and our attorneys are doing the same thing.”

That may well mean that sulfolane cases will be argued in court for years to come.

<http://fm.kuac.org/post/past-present-owners-north-pole-refinery-clash-again-court-over-groundwater-contamination>

USA, MN, VIKING, APRIL 26 2013. ENBRIDGE INVESTIGATES SMALL OIL SPILL IN NW MINNESOTA

Enbridge Energy Partners says it's investigating the cause of a crude oil leak at its pumping station in the northwestern Minnesota town of Viking. The leak was discovered Tuesday afternoon. Enbridge spokesman Larry Springer says a little less than 600 gallons spilled on the ground, or 14 barrels. He says it was completely contained within a protective barrier inside the pumping station perimeter. Springer says the leak involved a 2-inch pipe that's part of the pressure measurement system, not the main pipeline itself. However, he says, the main pipeline was shut down for a little over five hours as a precaution while the source was confirmed and repairs began. He says crews will have to dig up about 50 cubic yards of soil and take it to a disposal facility

<http://www.grandforksherald.com/event/article/id/262114/group/homepage>

USA, MN, SHAKOPEE

APRIL 26 2013.

BLAST SHAKES UP SHAKOPEE, BUT INJURIES ARE AVOIDED

Susan Feyder and Paul Walsh

Amy Johnson had just settled in with a book Thursday afternoon when she heard a tremendous boom outside her Shakopee apartment.

“I looked out my window and saw a shock wave coming toward my building,” the 26-year-old said. “It hit my window, and the whole apartment building just shook. It was like something out of a movie.”

Luckily, there was a happy ending.

The explosion that rocked an energy plant nearby shook buildings and forced a few evacuations but injured no one, officials said.

The blast occurred where Koda Energy and Rahr Malting operate in a joint venture, at 800 1st Av., just south of the Minnesota River near downtown Shakopee.

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All the employees at the site were safely led from the scene, company officials said. The cause of the explosion has not been determined.

Shakopee Fire Chief Jake Theisen said that a fire was contained by 3 p.m. but that fire containment and prevention efforts would continue for as long as several days.

In a statement released by Scott County, he stressed that no hazardous materials had been released.

Fire crews and other emergency personnel were called to the area shortly before 1 p.m. Crews were still training their water hoses on the source of the explosion into the evening.

Mike Marsollek, an executive with Koda Energy, said he heard two loud bangs about 12:40 p.m.

The company said in a statement Thursday night that the fire caused damage to two biomass fuel silos and their conveyor system, as well as a truck unloading facility. Koda said it was too early to assess the full extent of the damage.

Koda Energy derives its power from the burning of agricultural and plant seed byproducts, meeting its own energy needs as well as those of Rahr Malting. The materials being burned at the time were wood and oat hulls, Marsollek said.

Rahr Malting is a family-owned company that began in 1847. It produces and distributes malt and industry-related brewing supplies. It has been cited for a total of four workplace safety violations on two occasions in 2008 and 2009, according to Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) records.

In the 2009 incident, a worker was injured in a fall. The company paid a total of \$2,535 in fines for the violations. A 2004 inspection found no violations.

<http://www.startribune.com/local/south/204718501.html?source=error>

USA, OH, PUTNAM CO

APRIL 26 2013.

FARM FUEL TANK RULES

James J. Hoorman

Many farmers are getting notices from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) about complying with farm fuel storage requirements. Farms with more than 1,320 gallons of fuel above ground or 42,000 gallons of below ground storage of oil or oil products need to file a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) plan (Ohio Ag Manager). In addition, these farms need to have secondary containment for all fuel or oil storage in case of a spill.

Two other requirements have to exist before a farm needs to fill this plan. First, fuel must be used for non-transportation (for example farm use). Second, there must be possible discharge to waters of the State of Ohio (shoreline, road ditch, stream, rivers). Some farmers think that they are not close to any major surface water, but a simple grass waterway or road ditch is enough to activate this rule. Farmers will have until May 10, 2013 to file the SPCC (Ohio Country Journal, Mid April, 2013).

USEPA has had these laws on their books since 2011 but is now getting serious about enforcing the rules. Many farmers are confused about the rules because they are now getting notices about enforcement. Ohio Fire Marshall Rules state that farmers may have 5,000 gallons of fuel stored above ground before secondary containment is required. These new USEPA rules are much more restrictive and are now being enforced by USEPA.

http://www.delphosherald.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=11583:farm-fuel-tank-rules&catid=31:general&Itemid=44

CANADA, ALBERTA, EDMONTON

APRIL 26 2013.

OTTAWA WON'T INVESTIGATE SUNCOR SPILL DESPITE TOXIN FINDINGS

Bob Weber

Environment Canada has ruled out any further federal investigation of a recent toxic spill from Suncor's oilsands plant into the Athabasca River, despite suggestions from an Alberta investigation that laws may have been broken.

"Environment Canada's enforcement branch conducted a thorough review of the circumstances surrounding the Suncor spill," said spokeswoman Jirina Vlk in a three-sentence email.

"There was not sufficient evidence to indicate a violation of the Fisheries Act. The file has been closed."

Her statement came in response to a letter from an environmental law firm asking what actions the federal government was taking over the spill. The letter to Environment Canada came after a provincial investigation

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concluded that the spilled wastewater was toxic to fish.

"It indicates that a violation of the Fisheries Act has occurred," said Melissa Gorrie of Ecojustice, who wrote the letter on behalf of Greenpeace, Keepers of the Athabasca, the Council of Canadians, Public Interest Alberta and the Sierra Club.

On March 25, a wastewater pipe at the Suncor plant near Fort McMurray froze and burst open, sending process-affected water into a partially frozen outfall pond containing treated water.

An investigation by Alberta Environment found undiluted samples from the spill killed rainbow trout fingerlings exposed to it. The investigation concluded that the fish were probably killed by high levels of naphthenic acids, chemicals that occur naturally in bitumen.

The undiluted samples were also found to contain levels of salts and ammonia above provincial guidelines. Metals including selenium, boron and arsenic were found at twice the recommended levels for long-term exposure.

The provincial investigation concluded that by the time the water spilled from the outfall pond into the Athabasca River, it was probably too diluted to pose a health threat to humans.

In her letter, Gorrie points out the Fisheries Act specifically forbids releasing any "deleterious substance" into fish-bearing waters. She writes that the offence exists whether or not waters become toxic as a result.

"It is our position that the substances released into the Athabasca River as a result of the spill are clearly deleterious," the letter says.

Gorrie pointed out Alberta continues to investigate the spill and said it was "amazing" that Environment Canada reached its conclusions so quickly.

"I'd be interested to know a bit more about their rationale," she said. "It's interesting Environment Canada has shut the door on the possibility of prosecuting."

The department has not responded to her letter and made its decision known in response to a question from The Canadian Press.

Gorrie said the groups are considering a private prosecution under the Fisheries Act.

"If the federal government doesn't act, we would consider our options in moving this forward through a different avenue."

The full lab results from Alberta's investigation into the spill have not yet been released.

Suncor was recently given until the end of April to fix a separate problem with one of its wastewater treatment ponds, which leaked toxins into the Athabasca in March 2011.

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/business/Ottawa+should+investigate+Suncor+spill+into+Athabasca/8294596/story.html#ixzz2TxgAM1XM>

USA, ILL, ROLLING MEADOWS

APRIL 27 2013.

NO DANGER FROM OIL LEAK DURING FLOOD

Workers are still cleaning the area where oil was found coming out of the ground at LaMirage Restaurant in Rolling Meadows. Officials were in the area checking for flood waters at about 11 a.m. on Thursday, Apr. 18 when they noticed an oil leak. The product was coming from the ground along the west side of the restaurant at 3223 Algonquin Rd. Public works crews responded and used sand and absorbent booms to keep the oil from running further into the creek and sewers. The city contacted the Ill. Emergency Management Agency, the Ill. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. SET Environmental, a private cleanup company, later took over the scene and was continuing the clean-up efforts as of Tuesday night. Officials said there was no danger to the public from the oil. They believe an old underground storage tank may be the cause of the leak.

http://www.journal-topics.com/news/article_378cbdc2-aea1-11e2-b484-001a4bcf6878.html

CANADA, ALBERTA, EDMONTON

APRIL 27 2013.

PLAINS MIDSTREAM CHARGED FOR LARGEST ALBERTA OIL SPILL IN DECADES

FINES COULD BE AS HIGH AS \$1.5M IF FOUND GUILTY

Matt McClure

As the province announces a pipeline giant could face fines of up to \$1.5 million in connection with Alberta's largest oil spill in over three decades, it faces fresh accusations its regulation of the industry is inadequate.

The province issued a news release Friday revealing that Plains Midstream Canada ULC has been charged with three counts of violating environmental protection laws in connection with the April 2011 release of 4.5 million litres of
956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964

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light crude near a First Nations community in northwest Alberta.

The charges relate to the spill itself, failing to take all reasonable measures to repair the problem and not pursuing all steps possible to remediate and dispose of the oil that contaminated over three hectares of beaver ponds and muskeg in a densely-forested area.

The charges were filed in Peace River's provincial court mere days before a two-year limitation period expired and a year after another Plains pipeline ruptured and released nearly a half million litres into a central Alberta river.

Environmental advocates criticized the Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development's response as slow.

"Plains had another spill on another pipeline while this government decided whether to lay charges," said Nathan Lemphers, a policy analyst with the Pembina Institute.

"The delay suggests the province doesn't have the resources it needs to enforce the law even as it ramps up production in the oils sand and allows the expansion of pipelines to carry that resource."

Department investigators were unavailable, but a spokesperson defended the time it took to lay charges, "It's important we determine all the facts and ensure the enforcement steps taken are appropriate," Nikki Booth said.

The charges come two months after Alberta's energy regulator issued a scathing report that found the company appeared to place a higher priority on keeping the pipeline running than on any concerns about the leak.

The Energy Resource Conservation Board cited Plains for inadequate leak detection and response, after finding an employee at the company's control centre in Olds restarted the pipeline several times after the initial break.

The ERCB report also found the 45-year-old Rainbow pipeline — which Plains purchased from Imperial Oil Ltd four years ago for \$544 million — began leaking when a sleeve used for corrosion repair failed.

Board investigators said workers did not properly inspect the weld on the sleeve when the pipeline was excavated a year before the spill. Plains also failed to properly backfill and compact soil around the pipe, resulting in additional stress that contributed to the weld's failure.

Greenpeace said in a release Friday that documents it obtained under freedom of information legislation show that ERCB investigators recommended a public inquiry into the spill, but the proposal was rejected by the board's chief operating officer.

The groups says the documents released also show that when three more spills — including the second Plains Midstream release — occurred, Alberta's energy minister worked closely with the oil industry to ensure a review of pipeline safety would be acceptable to pipeline companies.

"A public inquiry into the Rainbow spill could have helped prevent those spills," said Melina Laboucan-Massimo, a Greenpeace campaigner from the affected community of Little Buffalo.

"The government needs to worrying about bad public relations for pipeline companies that are cutting corners and focus on how to protect the public."

Provisions in Alberta's environmental legislation allow for fines of up to \$1 million in cases where a company knowingly allows a release or spill.

In this case, the maximum fine on each charge is only \$500,000 as prosecutors are only alleging the release occurred or was permitted to happen.

Filings of Plains publicly-traded parent indicate the company has spent \$70 million to clean up its mess northeast of Peace River and suffered a \$21-million loss in revenue while the pipeline was shut down for three months following the disaster.

In response to a Herald query, the company issued a release saying it has received and is now evaluating the charges.

"We will be reviewing them with our counsel and the Crown, and will respond formally with our position in due course," the release said.

Plains has been summoned to make its first appearance in court on June 17th.

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/business/Plains+Midstream+charged+largest+Alberta+spill+decades/8300811/story.html>

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

USA, PA. TUNKHANNOCK

MAY 1 2013.

SPILL AT WELL SITE SEEPS INTO HOUSE, MINIATURE HORSE FARM

Laura Legere

Briny waste fluid spilled from a natural gas well site in Wyoming County on Tuesday morning and flowed onto a miniature horse farm and into the farmhouse basement and garage before it could be contained, the state Department of Environmental Protection said.

The spill at the Mazzara well site along Sickler Road in Washington Twp. was the second in fewer than two months at a Carrizo Oil and Gas well pad in the municipality.

Approximately 9,000 gallons of filtered waste fluid spilled at the site beginning about 9 a.m. after a hose came loose on a tank, DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly said.

Brine from another gas well was being transferred from a truck to a storage tank on the site for reuse in an upcoming fracking operation, Wyoming County Emergency Management Agency Director Eugene Dziak said.

An unknown amount of the fluid escaped the pad, flowed down a hill, crossed a road and entered the basement and garage of a nearby farmhouse, Ms. Connolly said. It soaked property at the horse farm, whose owners were out of state, but a farmhand kept the animals safely away from the fluid, she said.

A second residence was also impacted by the spill, she said, but it was not clear how.

The fluid was contained and the flow was "reduced to a trickle" by around 3 p.m., she said. Cleanup crews were working on site to remove the spilled fluid and Carrizo arranged to provide fresh water for the horses to drink as regulators and company contractors test nearby water supplies.

Mr. Dziak said the company moved quickly to stop the spill and clean it up.

"There wasn't any period of time that the public was in any danger because of the brine solution," he said.

An equipment breach during fracking at Carrizo's nearby Yarasavage well pad on March 13 caused about 220,000 gallons of fluid to flow from the well, most of it captured in tanks. That incident led to the overnight evacuation of three families and shut down Carrizo's fracking operations in the state for three weeks before regulators cleared the company to resume work.

Efforts to reach a Carrizo spokesman were unsuccessful on Tuesday evening.

<http://thetimes-tribune.com/news/dep-spill-at-well-site-seeps-into-house-miniature-horse-farm-1.1481928>

USA, OH, BRISTOL

MAY 2 2013.

OIL SPILL TROUBLES NEIGHBORS

FIRE CHIEF: LEAKING TANK REPORTED EARLY WEDNESDAY

Joe Gorman and Raymond I. Smith

Will Yonker, 746 Mahan Denman Road, said he is worried that runoff from a Wednesday morning oil spill will cause significant damage to his 50-acre farm, the stream that runs through his property and perhaps to his drinking well.

"I'm one property downstream from where the spill was located," Yonker said. "From what I've been told, someone left a valve open on a tank in which the oil was held."

The spill was initially reported at about 9:45 a.m. at 655 Mahan Denman Road, according to township fire Chief Roger French. It was crude oil that leaked into a nearby creek, where it traveled one mile downstream.

French said crews from the state EPA and the Trumbull County Hazardous Materials Team were called to help contain the spill with booms and absorbent pads.

"We found out about the spill because someone from the Hazmat team knocked on my door to ask my wife, Anita, if they could come on our property," Yonker said. "She called me at work."

The Yonkers purchased their property about three years ago.

"The creek runs through our property and is about 800 feet from our house," Yonker said. "When we're near it, the smell is pretty bad. We have four kids who love going to the creek. We're now going to have to keep them away."

Yonker planned on planting a fruit orchard on the property. He now is worried they will not be able to do the planting.

"We don't know the level of damage," Yonker said. "We're going to have to test our well water to make sure oil is not seeping into it. We will keep testing it. The well is our only source of water."

In the meantime, the family will use bottled water for drinking and cooking.

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The Yonkers decided not to sell the mineral rights to the property because they wanted to preserve the land and were worried about a spill.

"We're getting the downside of it," he said.

EPA officials are looking for a firm to handle the cleanup, but French said he did not know how long that will take.

EPA spokesman Mike Settles said it is estimated about 1,600 gallons of crude oil leaked out of the tank. He said a company called Chemtron to help with the cleanup.

Settles said the cleanup is expected to last a couple of days. He said investigators on the scene said there was a sheen of oil on the water and other oil was clumped around rocks in the creek.

French said it is not clear how the valve on the tank, which is located between two houses, was left open. He said Hazmat will be investigating to see how that happened.

"I was frustrated because no one will tell us what company owns the tank," Yonker said.

No roads were closed in the area and no one was evacuated, French said.

<http://www.tribtoday.com/page/content.detail/id/586919/Oil-spill-troubles-neighbors.html?nav=5021>

ENGLAND, BRISTOL

MAY 3 2013.

OIL LEAK INTENTIONAL

SHERIFF: VALVE WAS LEFT OPEN; NO CHARGES YET

Joe Gorman

A leak at a Mahan Denman Road oil storage tank that spilled into a nearby creek was caused on purpose, police said.

Trumbull County Sheriff's Office Maj. Thomas Stewart said Thursday that investigators have determined a valve on the well was turned on and left on, which discharged more than 1,600 gallons of crude oil onto the ground and into a nearby creek.

"Someone definitely turned the nozzle on," Stewart said.

Stewart said family members have been arguing over royalties at the well, and that may have been why the valve was opened. No charges have been filed at this time.

According to a sheriff's office report, deputies on Wednesday responded to a neighbor dispute at 655 Mahan Denman Road. Deputies said they identified the parties involved as Michael Tenney, 60, of 670 Mahan Denman Road, Bristolville, and William Tenney, 48, of 405 Greenville Road, Cortland.

Deputies said the dispute was over the oil spill on the property at the 655 Mahan Denman Road. The property is owned by Percy Tenney, who was in the hospital recovering from surgery.

The leak was reported about 9:40 a.m. Wednesday and crews from the Trumbull County Hazardous Materials Team, the state Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio EPA were on the scene investigating.

The report states that William Tenney received a call from his father that something was happening at the farm and he wanted him to check it out.

William Tenney told deputies that when he arrived at the well, a valve was opened and a cap on the cover was also removed, allowing oil to drain into the pit and overflow into the adjacent creek, the report states. HazMat crews at the scene found that someone had opened the valve again, letting more oil out.

Michael Tenney then went to the property and started arguing with William Tenney that he wasn't getting free gas for his residence anymore, the report states.

A subcontractor for Parrot Energy, which leases the well, reported that there was approximately 400 gallons of oil in the tank, which is equal to 40 barrels, when he last checked the well in December. The estimated value of the oil is between \$3,800 and \$4,000, the report states. Percy Tenney would have received a percentage of the oil price based on his contract with Parrot.

EPA spokesman Mike Settles said a company called Chemtron is trying to clean the soil and water, but the cleanup in the water will be very slow. He said workers will be walking in the creek with absorbent pads to remove oil and they may not be done until sometime next week.

Settles said of the 1,680 gallons of crude oil spilled, about a third made it into the creek. Most of the oil that did not make it to the creek has already been cleaned up.

Will Yonker, who lives next to the well and who also has the stream run through the property, said he is concerned that if it rains, the creek will overflow and the oil in the creek can then be flooded onto the ground. He said the creek floods a lot during heavy rains because the ground is flat.

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Yonker said he was told by workers at the scene that the cleanup effort in the creek will depend on a heavy rain which will wash the oil downstream and dilute it.

Settles said if charges are filed officials can also file paperwork making whoever is responsible reimburse officials for the cleanup.

Neighbors were advised to contact the Trumbull County Health Department for testing if they have any smell, color or taste in the water.

<http://www.tribtoday.com/page/content.detail/id/586982/Oil-leak-intentional.html?nav=5021>

USA, LA, DENHAM SPRINGS

MAY 4 2013.

OIL TANK EXPLODES NEAR DENHAM SPRINGS, HOMES EVACUATED

Diana Samuels

An oil tank exploded near Denham Springs Thursday evening at around 10:30 p.m., shooting flames 30 feet high and leading officials to evacuate 30 to 35 homes in the area. No injuries were reported from the blast as of about 12:45 a.m. Friday, and officials said no one had reported damage to their homes.

The explosion was near Linder and Arnold roads. The fire was still burning about two hours after the explosion, as firefighters waited for Livingston Parish emergency personnel to arrive with firefighting foam. The foam began arriving at about 1 a.m.

The Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness was posting updates on its Facebook page.

Evacuated residents would be let back in their homes once the fire was out, said Mark Harrell, director of the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness in Livingston Parish, but he could not say how long that would take.

The fire was contained in about a 200-square-foot area, Harrell said.

Harrell said that there were two oil holding tanks at the scene that had a combined capacity of about 2,300 barrels of oil. One of them ruptured and caught on fire. The second tank had not exploded but was bulging slightly from the heat, Harrell said. He declined to release the name of the company that owns the tanks, and said it's not known why one of them ruptured and caught fire.

As of 11:30 p.m. the roadway was closed at Linder and Arnold roads. A column of smoke was visible from the area where emergency workers blocked the road, but no flames could be seen as of about midnight. The area is fairly rural and has mostly mobile homes.

Kim Bradley, who lives just outside of the area that was evacuated, said she and her neighbor thought a tree fell on their houses at first.

"It just blew up," Bradley said. "I was in my house when all of the sudden you felt the boom of it. It shook the windows."

Donald Davidson Jr., another nearby resident, said he was in his room playing video games when the explosion happened.

"The whole house started shaking and knocking stuff off the wall," he said. "At first, I thought it sounded like thunder so I walked outside and I saw a big old fireball coming up."

http://www.nola.com/traffic/baton-rouge/index.ssf/2013/05/oil_tank_explodes_near_denham.html#incart_river

USA, ARK, MAYFLOWER

MAY 4 2013.

ARKANSAS OIL SPILL SHATTERS AMERICAN DREAM OF FAMILIES STILL DISPLACED FROM NEW HOMES

Maria Gallucci

It has been more than a month now, and Amber Bartlett has had enough of hotels and apartments and trailer homes. Of crowded rooms whose thin walls amplify the bickering of her four children. Of piles of toys and clothes overflowing from drawers and suitcases. Of not knowing, day to day, where her life is headed.

She wants to be back in her five-bedroom, three-bathroom home at 16 Starlite Road North in Mayflower, Ark.

Ryan Senia, the Bartletts' next-door neighbor, is plenty ready to go home, too. For the past month the 29-year-old electrical engineer has been sleeping on a friend's couch instead of in his bed at 20 Starlite Road North. His power tools and equipment are gathering dust in his garage. His grill sits in his backyard, unused.

The Bartletts and Senia are among 21 families who were evacuated from their homes on March 29, after an ExxonMobil pipeline spilled at least 210,000 gallons of heavy Canadian crude oil into their neighborhood.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

For many of them, buying a home in the six-year-old North Woods subdivision was not only the biggest financial investment of their lives, but an emotional investment as well. North Woods would be a good place to live, they believed, with respected schools, sprawling yards and the convenience of being just a short drive from Little Rock, the state capital. It was a beautiful place, too—about 60 spacious brick houses surrounded by a thick forest of trees and creeks where children could play.

"A lot of people were ecstatic" about moving into North Woods, Senia said. "Now, people feel like that dream is shattered due to the uncertainty."

The North Woods families have been thrust into the national debate about the type of crude oil that spilled into their neighborhood—a heavy Canadian oil called diluted bitumen or dilbit—and about the safety of the pipelines that carry the oil. A 2010 pipeline spill that dumped dilbit into Michigan's Kalamazoo River is still being cleaned up today, almost three years later. Meanwhile, the Obama administration is deciding whether to approve the Keystone XL pipeline, which would carry millions of gallons of dilbit from Alberta, Canada, to the Texas Gulf Coast.

Until March 29, Good Friday, the North Woods residents hadn't been touched by this debate. Neither the Bartletts nor Senia had heard of dilbit or paid much attention to the controversy over the Keystone project. They didn't even know that an Exxon pipeline lay buried nearby until oil began flowing down their street.

She Was Reading a Book When the Phone Rang

Mayflower police got the first 911 call at 2:44 p.m. It came from Jennifer Dement of 50 Starlite Road North. "Caller adv that a pipe busted and oil is spilling throughout the neighborhood!!" the 911 entry says.

A 22-foot-long section of ExxonMobil's Pegasus pipeline had split open in front of two houses on Starlite Road North and in the forest behind the street. The 858-mile line carries Canadian dilbit from Illinois to Texas, and some of that oil was now blanketing backyards and spilling into the street, up driveways and around a cul-de-sac. Oil was flowing in the other direction, too—away from the neighborhood and into the tiny streams that feed into a swampy cove of Lake Conway, a popular recreation site about a mile away.

Dilbit is composed of a heavy oil known as bitumen that has been diluted with liquid chemicals—which can include benzene—so it can move through pipelines. Once dilbit is released from a pipeline, the chemicals gradually evaporate into the environment.

Amber Bartlett had just settled down to read "Crossroads," a Christian novel about a businessman and his near-death experience. She had driven the 20 miles to Little Rock that morning to speak about her IT job at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences with students in the school's medical records degree program. Her husband, Ches, a real estate appraiser for the state highway department, was still at work, and she was looking forward to a few minutes of peace before the kids got home from school.

The phone rang just after 3 p.m. It was Raegen, her 16-year-old daughter, calling from her car. Police had closed off the subdivision and wouldn't let her through the gated entrance.

"There's an oil spill," Raegen said. "In our neighborhood."

Bartlett ran to the front door. She saw oil rolling down the street in waves, lapping at the front yard and pouring into a storm drain near her driveway. An acrid stench filled the air.

By the time the police let Raegen through the barricade a few minutes later, the oil had formed a virtual moat between the Bartletts' home and the rest of the street. Bartlett threw her daughter a pair of boots, and Raegen waded through the oil to the house.

They were grabbing clothes and toiletries when the phone rang again. This time it was the principal at the elementary school that 11-year-old Kalob and 5-year-old Kaden attend. Their school bus couldn't get into the subdivision, so the boys were back at school, waiting to be picked up.

"If this [spill] would've happened 30 minutes later, our kids would've been outside playing," Bartlett said.

Ryan Senia was also stopped at the police barricade. He had been at work in Little Rock when a friend texted him about the spill. He immediately got in his Volkswagen Passat and headed home.

A "sulfur smell" hung in the air, Senia said. Breathing it gave him the sensation you get "if you tried to spray paint in an enclosed room. You get a headache. That's how I kind of felt."

Senia couldn't persuade the police to let him through the blockade. So he went to a friend's house near the town of Sherwood, about 40 miles away.

The next afternoon, Exxon held a meeting in the Mayflower High School cafeteria, which residents learned about through word of mouth. Company representatives gathered phone numbers and email addresses from the displaced families and promised to pay their hotel bills and other living expenses.

Senia didn't want to stay in a hotel. So he went back to his friend's place in Sherwood.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Life Became More Hectic by the Day

At first, the Bartlett children were excited about staying in a hotel and eating at their favorite restaurants every night. They splashed in the indoor pool and loaded up their plates at the breakfast buffet. It was almost like being on vacation, with ExxonMobil footing the bill.

"They saw it as an adventure," Bartlett said.

But with six people crowded into two hotel rooms, life became "more hectic by the day." The baby of the family, three-year-old Aluren, needed to go to bed earlier than the older children. And being away from the bus route meant that Kalob and Kaden had to be driven back and forth to school.

The adventure quickly deteriorated into "'I want my own room,'" Bartlett said. "They're arguing and bickering worse than they normally do."

To get the kids out of the cramped quarters, the family began spending weekends at Ches's mother's house, 60 miles away. Or at Amber's mother's home, 90 miles away.

On April 14, Exxon notified the Bartletts by email that it would pay each evacuated family \$10,000 (in addition to their hotel bills and other expenses) for the inconvenience they had suffered, a check they've since received. The email also said the company would buy homes damaged by the oil at their pre-spill value.

The Bartletts immediately decided to accept the offer.

Amber Bartlett said she and Ches just wouldn't feel comfortable letting their kids play in the yard or in the woods where toxins and chemicals had spilled.

Exxon and local health authorities have assured the people of Mayflower that air quality tests show the air is safe to breathe. Still, Bartlett worries about the long-term effects of the oil.

In the first weeks after the spill Kalob and Kaden had diarrhea and vomiting. She wasn't sure if it was something they picked up at school or a reaction to the oil.

Raegen and Aluren have been okay. But when Amber returned to the house the week after the spill she quickly became nauseated and vomited. In mid-April, she visited the house again, so consultants from the Arkansas Attorney General's office could get inside to test the air. By the time she left, an hour later, she had a bad headache and itchy, burning eyes.

Last week when she and Ches stopped by again, she was fine. The smell was all but gone.

The family member whose health has been most affected by the spill is Charlie, their four-year-old dog, who is staying in Mayflower with Amber's sister.

A few weeks after the spill, Charlie's back legs were temporarily paralyzed after he got loose and ran through an oily patch. Exxon paid for the three days Charlie spent with a veterinarian neurologist.

"I'm just fortunate that it wasn't one my kids," Bartlett said.

From Hotel to Apartment to Trailer

In late April, representatives from Crawford & Company, an Atlanta-based claims management firm Exxon hired to help compensate families, told the Bartletts it would be "quite a bit longer" before they could move back home and offered to help them find an apartment.

On April 26, the Bartletts moved into a three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment in the town of Maumelle, about 10 miles away. It was unfurnished, so Exxon paid for furniture, cookware and other necessities.

In an interview on her first day in the new apartment, Bartlett said it was "doable," even though it was much smaller than their house on Starlite Road North.

But just five days later, the Bartletts had to move again, after other tenants in the apartment complex complained that their kids were too loud. Exxon quickly offered to pay for the family to return to their hotel, and to let them to keep the lease on the apartment.

Instead, the Bartletts accepted a friend's offer of a fully furnished trailer home in Mayflower, about two miles from their house in North Woods. They moved in on Tuesday.

"We feel like gypsies, like vagabonds," Bartlett said Wednesday morning, her voice tinged with fatigue. "My children are beginning to have a real difficult time with it. Nothing is routine or familiar to them. I just want it to be over."

For Ryan Senia, the hardest part of this experience has been his feeling of displacement.

Every other day or so he goes back to pick up the mail or gather more belongings or, sometimes, just to sit on his own couch in the comfort of his own home. He had been planning to sell the house before the spill, so he could move to a younger, hipper neighborhood in Little Rock. But he didn't want the move to happen like this, with the stigma of spilled oil tarring the neighborhood's reputation—a place he called a "high-quality neighborhood for middle class people."

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Now, his once-quiet neighborhood is groaning with the sounds of the heavy trucks that are sucking up oil and tearing up and replacing streets and concrete curbs. Oil-soaked trees and grass have been torn from their roots.

"Even though I had it up for sale, it's still where I was hanging my hat," Senia said. "I think about home a lot."

Living in Limbo

Today, almost five weeks after the spill, the 21 families evacuated from the North Woods subdivision in Mayflower, Ark. are still living in limbo.

On April 29 ExxonMobil announced that it would begin a "reentry plan" for them to return home in the next few weeks, a process that includes air sampling by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Exxon's offer to buy the 11 homes closest to the spill, including the Bartletts' and Senia's, still stands. The company has a slightly different plan for the 10 other homeowners who were evacuated but whose property wasn't touched by the oil. If they put their houses up for sale and can't find buyers—or if the best offer comes in lower than it would have before the spill—Exxon will either buy the house or make up the difference in the sales price.

Exactly how and when these plans will be executed still isn't clear.

Senia said a Crawford & Company representative told him the homeowners should "expect to receive a 130-page document in the near future" that the firm will deliver in person. Exxon spokesman Russ Roberts told InsideClimate News that "specific details of the plan will be shared with [homeowners] in the coming days."

The objective of the compensation program is to make residents "whole as a result of the pipeline incident," Roberts said.

That's the same promise Amber Bartlett remembers another Exxon employee making the day after the spill occurred.

She said the man seemed very sincere when he said the company would "'make our family whole again.' And I believed him, because I take people at face value."

But Bartlett is no longer sure Exxon can actually fulfill that promise. Even if the company pays them enough to build a new house as big as their old one, in a neighborhood with schools as good as those her children now attend, where will her family live for the many months it will take for it to be built? In their friend's trailer?

Money alone "does not compensate us for what we've had to go through," she said.

Bartlett said her Christian faith and the members of her First Baptist Church have helped keep her grounded during this difficult period. She said she's come to put the pipeline spill into perspective, and is grateful that her family, while displaced, is still together and healthy.

"Yes, we're out of our home," she said. "But we're all okay. And we're all going to be okay."

Senia's experience has led him down a slightly different path. He's thinking more about pipelines these days, and about the research he'll do before he buys his next house. And he wants to know what can be done to keep another spill from happening in some other neighborhood. "What would need to be different in the future?" he asks.

On Wednesday a friend called Senia to tell him that the next leak has already happened. It was a small one—only 40 gallons—on a section of ExxonMobil's Pegasus line that cuts through a neighborhood in Ripley County, Mo.

"It's just upsetting," Senia said. "Now it's leaking somewhere else."

<http://insideclimatenews.org/news/20130502/arkansas-oil-spill-shatters-american-dream-families-still-displaced-new-homes>

USA, UT, DUCHESNE COUNTY, MYTON

MAY 10 2013.

BLAST, FIRE AT EASTERN UTAH OIL WELL SITE KILLS 1, HURTS 2. INVESTIGATION

OSHA, STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS BEGIN PROBE INTO TRAGEDY.

Bob Mims

A multi-agency investigation began at dawn Wednesday into what caused an explosion that killed one man and injured two others at an eastern Utah oil well site.

The Uintah County Sheriff's Office identified the deceased victim as Tyson Boren, 28, of Neola. Boren was a contracted welder at the site.

A tank near the bore hole of Newfield Exploration Co.'s Odekirk 436-817 oil well exploded during routine maintenance operations about 8:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Newfield employee, identified as 32-year-old Rusty Harris, suffered non-life threatening injuries and remained hospitalized Wednesday at the Uintah Basin Medical Center in Roosevelt; and a third unidentified contract employee was treated for minor injuries at the scene.

"Our thoughts are with their families. This is a tragedy," Newfield spokesman Keith Schmidt said Wednesday.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

"We'll be conducting a full investigation into this. The fire was put out last night and the scene is cleared. We were out there at sun-up."

Sheriff's Cpl. Brian Fletcher said that Boren's remains were removed late Wednesday morning from the well site, 16 miles south of Roosevelt, and turned over to the State Medical Examiner's Office.

Along with Newfield investigators, the explosion will be probed by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, Utah State Fire Marshal's Office and the Uintah County Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff's deputies, firefighters and paramedics from both Uintah and neighboring Duchesne counties rushed to the scene of the explosion Tuesday night. The fire ignited by the blast did not burn the well drilling equipment itself, but was contained to the nearby 400-gallon holding tank containing crude oil and other, unspecified equipment, Schmidt said.

The Woodlands, Texas-based Newfield Exploration is the leading player in eastern Utah's petroleum development industry. As of late 2012, the company had invested more than \$1.7 billion in its Utah holdings. The company has more than 230,000 acres with either operating wells or under development.

In 2012, Newfield reportedly was producing about 30 percent of all Utah crude oil — twice the amount of the second- and third-ranking companies. The company also operates well sites in The Midwest, Texas, Malaysia and China.

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/news/56279151-78/utah-oil-newfield-site.html.csp>

ENGLAND, PETERBOROUGH

MAY 11 2013.

PETERBOROUGH: CHEMICAL COMPANY FINED

A Peterborough company has been ordered to pay almost £100,000 fines and costs, after leaking chemicals polluted more than 30 miles of the River Nene.

According to The Environment Agency, thousands of fish died and thousands more were damaged by agricultural chemicals that leaked into the River Nene in Peterborough and today (Friday) the company responsible was ordered to pay £92,000 by Peterborough Crown Court.

Some of the fish were bleached by the chemicals and others leapt from the water and died along the affected 50km stretch of water.

Chemical manufacturer and packaging company Safapac pleaded guilty at an earlier court hearing to causing the pollution on 18 June 2012 and claimed vandals damaged containers allowing 5,000 litres of three chemicals to get into drains.

Today the crown court fined the company £50,000 and ordered them to pay £42,000 costs.

Mark Watson, prosecutor for the Environment Agency, told the court that the company reported the spill to them on a day when they had also taken 15 calls from people about distressed fish in the river.

Investigators linked the two incidents.

Drainage plans held by the company at their Orton Southgate site and initially shown to environment officers showed a drain on site led to a foul sewer.

Further investigation by the company identified that it was, in fact, a surface water drain which discharged to the river.

All three chemicals, an insecticide, a fungicide and a disinfectant, are known to be very toxic to aquatic organisms and can cause burns, drowsiness or dizziness to people.

The effect on the River Nene was seen as far as Wisbech and cockle fishing in The Wash was quarantined and closed 19-21 June by the regulatory authority.

Mr Watson said that a survey at this time showed a 'clear and substantial' impact on all living things in the Orton Brook and River Nene for at least 14.7km.

The pollution had an impact along 46km of the brook and river.

Peterborough and District Angling Association had to cancel fishing matches and members also cancelled because of the pollution, costing the club £928.

Two cockle fishermen claimed they lost more than £10,000.

The total cost to the members of the Greater Wash Fishing Industries Group was estimated to be £216,772 as a result of the pollution.

Mr Watson said the pollution could have been prevented if the chemicals had been stored securely.

He said: "Bulk containers containing the chemicals were stored in external bunkers near to the road.

There was no bunding and no secondary containment in case of spills.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

There was an open drain in the storage area and another just outside."

He told the court that Safapac's high level risk assessment had failed to identify vandalism as a risk but on the morning of the pollution staff had arrived at work to find taps on the storage containers had been opened and a ladder had been used to get in.

Police records showed that the company had made five reports of criminal or anti-social behaviour directed at the company or in the immediate area since 2010 involving youths causing damage to or trespassing on Safapac's property or metal theft.

A Safapac manager told investigating environment officers that staff had closed an emergency valve within 15 minutes of discovering shattered valve caps and police and the Environment Agency notified.

He said CCTV at the site was not recording at the time and the ladder used to get in had been stored on top of a container at the site.

Chemicals are now stored in locked shipping containers.

Judge Madge said: "The environment is a precious heritage and we need to preserve it for the future.

Companies need to keep premises safely."

After the hearing Environment Agency officer Adam Shamma said: "This case should serve as a reminder to companies who handle chemicals to ensure their storage arrangements are adequate.

Safapac would have prevented this incident if their chemicals had been stored in a secure, bunded area."

<http://www.heart.co.uk/peterborough/news/local/peterborough-chemical-company-fined/>

USA, WYO, CHEYENNE

MAY 11 2013.

NEW EPA FARM FUEL-TANK REGULATIONS START MAY 10

Those who store fuel, oil, crop oil, hydraulic oil, surfactant, adjuvant and other materials on farms or ranches must comply with EPA-mandated Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure plans by May 10.

The EPA's new SPCC rule includes requirements for oil spill prevention, preparedness and response to prevent oil discharges to navigable waters and adjoining shorelines.

"The SPCC regulations apply to any farm if an oil spill from your farm could reasonably be expected to reach water," said Sandra Frost, UW Extension educator. "Many farmers and ranchers will find it simple to comply with EPA regulations while others, with larger tanks on one parcel of land, will have to hire a certified engineer and build berms or dikes."

Those who store more than 1,320 gallons in aboveground tanks (55 gallons or more each), or 42,000 gallons in buried tanks on one parcel of land, are subject to SPCC regulations.

"Do not add together the storage capacity on different parcels you own or lease," said Frost. "A farm may have a plan for each parcel where storage exceeds 1,320 gallons."

The plan includes requirements for measures such as security, employee training, overfill prevention (alarms), system inspection, emergency contacts and secondary containment (dikes, remote impoundments, or double-walled tanks) if required.

"In many cases, farmers can write a simple plan by writing down what they already do and have in place," said Frost.

Tier I farms and ranches are those with 10,000 gallons or less of aboveground storage capacity and in the three years before developing and certifying a plan had no oil spills to water larger than 1,000 gallons in a single spill or 42 gallons each from two spills within any 12-month period and that have no aboveground oil storage containers with a capacity greater than 5,000 gallons.

"You may use the short SPCC Plan template to create your SPCC Plan and self-certify," said Frost.

Tier II farms and ranches are defined the same except they have aboveground tanks larger than 5,000 gallons requiring certification by a professional engineer.

"Create a full SPCC Plan and self-certify," said Frost. "Tanks larger than 5,000 gallons will require emergency berms, dikes or other containment systems."

For sample forms and blank templates for Tier I and Tier II farms and ranches, go to epa.gov and type SPCC for Agriculture in the Search field. Click on the SPCC for Agriculture link.

"Sign and put the plan document in your office desk drawer," said Frost. "This written plan must be reviewed and updated when your farm fuel equipment changes. Employee training and inspections must be logged on it. It must be reviewed at least every five years."

<http://www.hpi.com/archives/2013/may13/may13/0307NewEPAFarmFuelRegulationsr.cfm?t=New-EPA-farm-fuel->

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

[tank-regulations-start-May-10](#)

USA, WYO, SUBLETTE COUNTY

MAY 11 2013.

POLLUTANTS DETECTED IN WATER WELLS IN SUBLETTE COUNTY'S GAS FIELDS

Willow Belden

Sublette County has been in the news a lot because of its air quality problems, which largely stem from natural gas production. But there's another issue too: Pollutants have been showing up in water wells. Wyoming Public Radio's Willow Belden reports.

WILLOW BELDEN: The pollutants in question are petroleum products like diesel-range organics and benzene. They first started showing up in water wells in the Pinedale Anticline gas field in 2006. That prompted the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Environmental Quality to call for extensive testing, and the following year, they detected hydrocarbons in 85 wells. Several were at concentrations exceeding the DEQ's limit for what's safe to drink. Since then, there have been dozens of detections each year, and each year, a handful exceed the legal limit. But nobody knows where the pollutants are coming from.

Merry Gamper is a scientist with the BLM. She says her agency is working with DEQ to try to find answers. But that's hard to do, because no testing was done before gas development started.

MERRY GAMPER: It's very difficult for us to come in after the fact and say, "It's this or it's this or it's this." We did a lot of investigative chemistry; there's a lot of geochemistry, a lot of analysis involved. ... It does become a little bit of forensic science.

BELDEN: Gamper says the hydrocarbons could have come from drilling mud, or from water or condensate that's comes up when you extract natural gas, or from any number of other sources. And the sources could be different for each well.

Until there are answers, DEQ is trying to make sure that the pollution gets cleaned up. Jules Feck is a project manager for DEQ's Voluntary Remediation Program, or VRP. She says if a well shows hydrocarbons over the legal limit, they talk with the company that owns the well.

JULES FECK: We say to them that they can either join the VRP voluntarily, or clean up the contamination under an administrative order. ... That's where we say, "Well, you need to clean this up," because we have a non-degradation policy for groundwater in our state, and we have cleanup standards that must be met.

BELDEN: Feck says companies have been very cooperative about joining the Voluntary Remediation Program.

FECK: I have issued five liability assurances, where they have cleaned up to our standards.

BELDEN: But in other wells, the contamination has not gone away. Feck says that means there's an ongoing source of pollution.

The BLM and the DEQ both emphasize that most of the hydrocarbon detections have been in industrial wells, not drinking water wells. And most detections have been very low, under the legal limit.

But some say that's not reassuring enough. Craig Thompson is a professor of engineering and earth science at Western Wyoming Community College, and he used to run the water quality lab there. He says Sublette County residents who get their drinking water from wells should be worried.

CRAIG THOMPSON: I'm bothered when someone passes off a groundwater source as, "Well this is just an industrial well" and, "This level of pollutant is below the action level." What they don't say in either one of those is, "This is pollution, and it could be a real problem. And we don't know what's going on. We don't know where it's coming from, and we don't know where it's going."

BELDEN: According to the BLM, industrial wells, stock wells, and domestic wells are all tapped into the same aquifer. The domestic wells are much shallower than the industrial wells, but Thompson says that doesn't necessarily mean they're safe.

THOMPSON: Benzene is a serious, serious pollutant. This is a carcinogenic compound that causes cancer. ... My concern is simply that none of these pollutant levels should be in any of this groundwater, whether they're using it for industrial purposes, for domestic purposes, or for stock watering.

BELDEN: Area activist Linda Baker with the Upper Green River Alliance has additional concerns. She points out that groundwater and surface water are connected in the area.

LINDA BAKER: We are at the headwaters of the Colorado River, and what we do to our water here affects seven million downstream users. So we have a responsibility to keep that water clean and to send it downstream clean.

BELDEN: So far, there's been no evidence that surface water has been affected. Still, Baker is concerned that regulatory agencies are not taking the issue seriously enough. She's frustrated that after six years of detections, DEQ 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

and BLM still have no answers about the source of the contaminants. And she's upset that some wells haven't been cleaned up yet. But Deborah Harris, who deals with groundwater pollution control for DEQ, says to be patient.

DEBORAH HARRIS: We do take this very seriously. Just the fact that it has taken a long time does not mean that ... the agencies are not taking it seriously.

BELDEN: DEQ and BLM have drilled special monitoring wells, to help them determine the extent to which the aquifers are affected. They've been doing more rigorous hydrologic mapping, to figure out how groundwater moves through the region. And they expect to complete their low-level hydrocarbon report – which will specify the sources of the contaminants – in June. Once that's out, the BLM says they'll consider adopting new policies to prevent future pollution. For Wyoming Public Radio, I'm Willow Belden.

<http://wyomingpublicmedia.org/post/pollutants-detected-water-wells-sublette-county-s-gas-fields>

USA, AKA, FAIRBANKS

MAY 12 2013.

CLEANUP PROJECT WILL HELP VILLAGERS IN ANAKTUVUK PASS REMOVE 50-YEAR-OLD FUEL CONTAINERS LEFT BY MILITARY

Tim Mowry

The rusty 55-gallon barrels sit on the tundra near Chandler Lake in the middle of the Brooks Range like a caribou herd scattered across the landscape, surrounded by rugged, snow-capped 6,000- and 7,000-foot-high peaks.

Unlike caribou, rusty barrels don't feed the people of Anaktuvuk Pass, and they aren't nearly as nice to look at, which is why residents in the village in the Brooks Range 250 miles northeast of Fairbanks want them gone.

The fuel drums, an estimated 130 of them, have been sitting there for more than 50 years, left by the Department of Defense when it did work in the area in the 1940s and '50s. In addition to the fuel barrels, there are 700 five-gallon fuel cans piled up, along with other miscellaneous debris that was abandoned when researchers ended their studies in the late 1950s.

Most of the debris is located on Native allotments or Arctic Slope Regional Corp. lands that lie within the boundaries of Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, which was created in 1980 by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act.

The village of Anaktuvuk Pass, which is located within Gates of the Arctic, has asked the National Park Service for permission to use Argos and snowmachines to haul the abandoned materials out of the area during the next two summers. The Park Service recently issued an environmental assessment of the proposed project and is taking public comment on it through the end of the month.

"People have gotten used to seeing them there, but it looks way out of place, especially in the summertime," Larry Burris, vice president of the Anaktuvuk Pass tribal council, said of the fuel drums and debris. "We're looking forward to having that area returned to its natural state."

History of use

The Chandler Lake area, which is about 30 miles west of Anaktuvuk Pass and commonly used for subsistence hunting and fishing by local residents, was used by the Defense Department between 1944 and 1958 for oil exploration and arctic research.

The U.S. Navy's Office of Naval Petroleum and Oil Shale Reserves explored for more than 10 years, starting in 1944. In addition, Yale University and the U.S. Office of Naval Research collaborated on research around Chandler Lake between 1951 and 1958, during which time researchers camped in the area for at least two summers.

The fuel barrels "are pretty much scattered all over in different places," Burris said.

The Department of Defense identified seven different areas with an estimated seven tons of military debris to clean up. Most of the material is around Chandler Lake. Some is near Little Chandler Lake, just to the north.

The Park Service's preferred alternative is to use eight-wheeled Argos — the only all-terrain vehicle permitted in the area by the Park Service — to reach the area in the summer on an existing trail. The debris would be gathered, cut up and stacked. Snowmachines and sleds would be used to haul it out to Anaktuvuk Pass before the snow melts in the spring. Under another alternative, aircraft would carry out the debris.

Even though the debris is within park and preserve boundaries, the Park Service can't use its funding to remove it because it's not on Park Service land, Gates of the Arctic Superintendent Greg Dudgeon said. The Park Service did help document how much debris is there, and the Department of Defense used that information to come up with the funding for the project, he said.

While local residents are allowed to drive their Argos on Park Service lands for subsistence purposes, the cleanup project is not classified as subsistence. That's why the National Park Service did an environmental assessment, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Dudgeon said.

Long process

Burris is one of the locals who brought the situation to the attention of the federal government more than 10 years ago when he was president of the village corporation. The bureaucratic wheels have been turning slowly ever since.

“It was a process to get this taken care of,” Burris said.

The two-year cleanup project, which will cost \$440,000, is being funded by a grant from the Native American Land Environmental Mitigation Program, an environmental program within the Department of Defense that works with federally recognized Native tribes.

The cost is high because of the area’s remote location, said Ron Lynn of NALEMP, who wrote the grant and is serving as project manager for the tribe.

“We have to fly everything in,” Lynn said.

A temporary labor camp must be built to Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s specifications, which includes a 12-foot-by-20-foot shed, he said. The cost of flying in the lumber for the building is \$10,000 alone, Lynn said.

Several permits were required from several agencies to get the project approved and an archeological survey of the proposed summer campsite still must be conducted because the area is home to archeological remains, Lynn said. The amount of red tape required for the project was surprising, he said.

“I couldn’t believe all the permits we needed to get just to pick up some garbage,” he said.

Lynn hopes to start the archeological survey as soon as Chandler Lake is ice-free, probably sometime in mid-June. Once that’s complete, workers will begin building the campsite.

The cleanup project, which is being overseen for the military by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Fort Richardson in Anchorage, is a good deal for the village, Burris said.

In addition to getting its lands cleaned up, the project will also employ several local residents who will be hired to gather and cut up the debris in the summer and haul it out in the winter. The plan calls for a team of four workers to be hired for the summer work and as many as 10 local residents will be contracted to haul the debris out by snowmachine in the winter. Of the \$440,000 dedicated to the project, an estimated \$120,000 will be paid to local residents hired for the work.

“It will be a nice opportunity for some local residents to make some money,” Burris said.

Contamination concerns

In addition to being a blight on their land, local residents were also concerned about environmental contamination.

Some elders in the village of 350 residents remember seeing planes dropping the fuel barrels from the air into and onto the lake in the summer and winter, Lynn said.

“The old timers said there were hundreds dropped in the water,” said Lynn, who wrote the grant for the project. “They would just fly by and drop them on the lake in the winter. When they were done with them, they would ax them and let them sink. We don’t know how many are in the water.”

Some of the barrels reportedly broke when they hit the tundra or ice, spilling contaminants such as aviation gas and diesel fuel onto the ground or into the lake, said Bud Rice, an environmental protection specialist for the National Park Service who is monitoring environmental compliance for the project.

The water in Chandler and Little Chandler lakes has been tested and no contamination has been found, but soil samples from several of the sites showed the possible presence of “petroleum-related compounds,” according to the Park Service’s environmental assessment.

“It’s so old, it’s hard to fingerprint and figure out what it is,” Rice said. “We’re pretty sure it’s from fuel, but we can’t say for certain.”

Workers will receive hazardous materials training before the cleanup, Lynn said.

“If they see any contamination they’ll note it, photograph it, GPS it, and environmental consultants will go take samples,” he said.

There are some fuel barrels on Park Service land, too, and the agency will sample them this summer for contamination, Rice said.

The Park Service is in the process of trying to get funding to clean up the fuel containers on its land, Dudgeon said. If the agency can do so, Dudgeon said, it would likely hire locals in Anaktuvuk Pass to do the work.

Win-win situation

Chandler Lake, which Burris said is full of big lake trout, is an important subsistence resource for the village, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

and the prospect of cleaning up the barrels and fuel cans has locals in the village of approximately 350 people excited.

"Let's go for it," said Kenny Mekina, who is on the tribal council board and city council. "People want that place cleaned up. That's where we hunt and fish in the summer and winter."

Mekina, 57, said the fuel drums on the tundra have been a part of his life "ever since I was a young kid traveling there on a snowmachine."

"From the hills, you can see all these black marks," he said.

Though local residents have grown accustomed to the sight, Mekina said, it will be nice to see the fuel drums gone.

"It'll be much better," he said. "Our land should be cleaned up."

Likewise, the Park Service is looking forward to getting the fuel drums and cans cleaned up, even though they aren't on federal land. It will make the landscape more appealing for locals and hikers who travel through the area in the summer.

"It's a win-win for everyone involved," said Dudgeon, the park superintendent. "This is a way to help local folks and help the park."

http://www.newsminer.com/news/local_news/cleanup-project-will-help-villagers-in-anaktuvuk-pass-remove/article_6bc7810a-ba11-11e2-b5d6-001a4bcf6878.html

USA, ILL, CHICAGO

MAY 14 2013.

OSHA CITES CONTRACTOR IN WHEELING TANK DEATH

Doug T. Graham

An industrial cleaning company could pay up to \$77,200 in fines over safety violations that the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration says contributed to the death of an employee last fall in Wheeling.

On Monday, OSHA issued citations for 28 safety violations it called serious against Phoenix Industrial Cleaning of South suburban Berkeley.

On Nov. 29, 2012, 37-year-old Bernardo Martinez of Cicero was cleaning a tank at Sunnyside Corp. at 225 Carpenter Road in Wheeling. He was inside the tank up high on a ladder when he was apparently overcome by methylene chloride vapors and fell to his death, according to an OSHA news release.

Wheeling Fire Chief Keith MacIsaac said the tank was 40 to 50 feet tall with one opening at the top that was about 28 inches wide.

When emergency crews arrived, Martinez was at the bottom of the tank, lying face down in "chemical sludge," and fire officials were sure he was already dead.

According to an online obituary he left a wife and children.

Martinez was wearing respiratory equipment, but it was the wrong type for this hazardous material, according to OSHA.

"No job should cost a person's life because of an employer's failure to properly protect and train workers," said Diane Turek, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's area director in Des Plaines.

"Phoenix Industrial Cleaning failed in its responsibility to evaluate working conditions and provide proper respiratory and personal protective equipment to workers cleaning storage tanks containing hazardous chemicals."

Spokesmen for either company could not be reached for comment Monday. OSHA did not cite Sunnyside, a manufacturer of paint thinner, cleaners and wood care products, according to its website.

Five of the violations deal with protecting workers from breathing hazards, including a failure to evaluate the hazards and select appropriate respiratory protection, to make sure the protection fit the worker and to train workers in how to protect themselves.

Eighteen of the violations deal with rules for working in confined spaces. The company failed to have a rescue plan or equipment ready for a worker caught in a crisis, OSHA officials said. It also should use testing and monitoring equipment for air hazards and provide a way for the person inside to communicate with an attendant, OSHA said.

In addition, Martinez should have worn a harness to protect against falling, said Burke.

OSHA said the company also failed to provide workers with information and training on the hazards of methylene chloride and to provide effective protective garments. Methylene chloride is used in consumer products like paint thinners.

OSHA defines a serious violation as one that occurs when there is a substantial probability that death or serious injury could result. A confined space has limited means for exit and is not designed for people to regularly occupy it.

Tank and Petroleum Use Mishaps

Phoenix Industrial Cleaning has 15 days to contest the citations or request a conference with OSHA.

OSHA said Phoenix performs industrial cleaning of cooking ventilation, tanks and silos. OSHA conducted four previous inspections, two of which resulted in citations for violating standards on confined spaces. The last OSHA inspection was in 2001.

<http://www.dailyherald.com/article/20130513/business/705139792/>

USA. N.Y, CAROLTON

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MAN BURNED WHEN ABOVE GROUND GAS TANK EXPLODES

A 75-year-old Orleans County man was severely burned when a gas tank he was attempting to weld exploded. Wesley Baes was flown to Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester after the tank exploded around 11:20 a.m. at a home on South Hillcrest Drive in the Town of Carolton. Authorities say Baes was attempting to patch a hole in the 200-gallon above ground gas tank when residual vapors ignited, causing an explosion. Baes suffered severe burns. His condition is not known

<http://www.wivb.com/dpp/news/orleans/man-burned-when-gas-tank-explodes>