

OSPR Fact Sheet

OFFICE OF OIL SPILL PREVENTION & RESPONSE (916) 445-9338

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: Tuesday, March 4, 1997
TIME: 11:00 a.m.

Santa Fe Pacific Pipeline / Donner Summit Spill

SPILL: Discovered Saturday, March 1, 1997, in late afternoon, when skiers reported smelling diesel in a remote area. Officers from the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CDF), and the Nevada County Environmental Health Office investigated and found a petroleum sheen on a 6' x 12' pool in Summit Creek. The location is near Donner Pass Rd. (Old U.S. 40) and Summit Bridge, above the creek, near orange aerial post marker 42, at about 7,000 feet elevation. Weather is cold, with snow 10-12' deep, and high winds.

RESPONSE: The Dept. Of Fish and Game, Nevada County Environmental Health Office, and Santa Fe Pacific Pipeline formed a Unified Command, as prescribed in the State Oil Spill Contingency Plan.

Sorbent pads and boom in Summit Creek, to contain and absorb the spilled product. Sorbent boom is now in place at three locations (the meadows, Old Highway Bridge, and South Shore Bridge). Hard containment boom is in place at both bridge locations. No product has reached Donner Lake. Santa Fe Pacific Pipeline's (SFPP) petroleum line from the Bay Area to Reno—which was carrying diesel at the time — was shut down, Saturday night. An underflow dam is being constructed at Ute Street, and will be staffed 24 hours-a-day.

The exact source of the leak has not yet been found. The pipeline is underground (mostly granite rock), and under 10-12' of snow, making it extremely difficult to find the leak or break in the pipe. Responders are looking into the use of infrared technology to locate the leak.

WILDLIFE: There are no impacts to wildlife, as of this writing.

MEDIA: A Joint Information Center has been established within the Incident Command Post, now in a trailer at Truckee Forest Hospital (east of SR-89 and Donner Pass Rd., off Levone). On-scene Information Officers are Alexia Retallack for DFG-OSPR, and Jerry Englehardt for SFPP (phone 916-216-

1301).

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