

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: SANTA FE PACIFIC PIPELINE INCIDENT**

### SPILL BASICS

What was spilled?

The pipeline transports gasoline, diesel and jet fuel. Probably a mixture of the three was spilled.

How much was spilled?

The spilled quantity is unknown at this time. Once the plume has been officially defined, we will be able to start the process of estimating the amount of product released.

Where is the spill and how far has it traveled?

In headwaters area of Summit Creek, approximately three miles west of Donner Lake.

Is the pipeline still leaking?

The pipeline was shut down on March 1, the pressure was relieved by draining product into SFPP's Reno terminal. Spilled product is under the snow, and most is still in the Summit Creek headwaters area. The pipeline will not be reactivated until its integrity has been verified, following repairs.

What caused it?

The cause is under investigation at this time. However, preliminary indications are that a large rock impacted the pipeline, denting the pipe and damaging the outside protective coating. This still needs to be verified.

Who is working on cleaning this spill up?

Santa Fe Pacific Pipelines is coordinating with a number of federal, state and local environmental and health and safety agencies on the response. Together these agencies and SFPP have formed a unified response operation using the Incident Command System. Agencies involved include the California Department of Fish and Game, U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Nevada County Department of Environmental Health, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tahoe National Forest, Lahanton Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Department of Water Resources, Nevada County Sheriffs Department and the Town of Truckee. A command post has been established at the Tahoe Forest Hospital in Truckee at the intersection of Donner Pass Road and Levone.

How much product has been recovered and removed?

Much of what has been recovered to date is water. In order to provide an accurate measurement, the oil collected must be separated from the water. This has not been done yet, since the focus right now is on containment and recovery efforts.

How will the pipeline be repaired?

The portion of the pipe containing the leak has been removed and is being replaced with new pressure-tested pipe. The replacement section of pipe is approximately 30 feet long. Additionally, approximately ½ mile of pipe, including the replaced section, will be pressure tested to prove the line's integrity.

How much product is pumped from the SF Bay Area to Reno, in this pipeline?

Santa Fe Pacific Pipeline reports that this line carries an average of 2,000 barrels (bbl.) Per hour. With 42 gallons per bbl., multiplied by 24 hours per day, that equals an average of 1.6 million gallons per day.

## HEALTH

Will my children or my pets get sick or hurt if they get too close?

The area where the spill was discovered has been cordoned off along with other portions of the headwaters. People and pets should avoid contact with petroleum products since direct contact with petroleum may cause illness. Also, heavy equipment operating at the site presents potential safety hazards. Please keep your children and pets away from the site.

Is there any risk crossing the bridges over Summit Creek?

No. Air sampling results show no detectable levels of petroleum vapors that could pose a health risk.

Is there any risk if I ingest the water at the inflow of Summit Creek into Donner Lake?

Not based on current levels of contamination and water flow. However, natural protozoan contamination of surface water unrelated to the spill exists in stream waters, and normal appropriate precautions should be taken. Water sampling continues to be performed. Nevada County Environmental Health is monitoring the results closely.

Is there any inhalation hazard?

An air sampling program began on March 4 and is being conducted under the authority of Nevada County Environmental Health. Initial sampling results indicate no detectable quantities of vapors in the residential areas closest to the spill. The upper portion of Summit Creek, much of it under snow, has not yet been completely characterized. There may be inhalation hazards directly near the areas of the pipeline excavation. These areas have been cordoned with barrier tape and only trained professionals involved with the response effort are allowed to enter the area. The only inhalation hazards encountered thus far are at a few isolated spots that are in the restricted areas at the headwaters of Summit Creek. Safety officers are on-scene to monitor and advise the workers.

What are the short term effects/symptoms if I come into contact with the products?

As the area where the contamination is located is closed to the public, members of the

public should not be exposed. Short term effects depend upon which chemicals in the mixture one encounters. Generally, concentrations high enough to cause symptoms are very noticeable; a strong odor is one sign. Without proper health and safety precautions, the symptoms of exposure may include headaches, upset stomach, and dizziness.

Are there any long term health effects?

At levels monitored to date, we do not anticipate any long term effects. Workers have not been exposed to levels that would lead to long term health effects.

## WATER USE

Is water from local municipal water districts safe?

The spill has had no affect on local municipal drinking water. If you have concerns, you should contact your local water districts for more information.

Can I still use the water from the lake to irrigate?

Yes.

What will happen if the snow melts or it rains, and what actions will be taken?

Increased runoff increases the possibility of product moving downstream. Results could range from dilution to increased levels due to washing or thawing of frozen petroleum product. Containment dams have been constructed to capture contaminated water so that the product can be recovered by vacuum trucks which are standing by.

## ACCESS

Can we go to the spill site?

Not at this time. The area has been restricted because of safety regarding traffic hazards and interference with the work. There is no real view of the spill at the creek or lake.

The headwaters area of Summit Creek has been closed to the public.

How are those areas marked?

The area will be marked with “no parking” or “stopping signs” on Donner Pass Road from Rainbow Bridge east approximately two miles. Enforcement officials will patrol the area. The contamination area is marked with yellow or red barrier tape.

## RESPONSE

How long will testing go on?

Testing will continue as long as the responsible regulatory agencies, including Fish & Game, Lahanton Regional Water Quality Board, and Nevada County Environmental Health, have concerns about contamination in the area.

What and where will testing occur?

Water samples, using EPA-approved standards, are being taken twice daily on both Summit Creek and Donner Lake by environmental experts, under the supervision of the Fish & Game, Lahanton Regional Water Quality Control Board and Nevada County Environmental Health. Air samples are being taken in the same areas, as well as in the local residential areas.

How much is left in the pipe?

The pipeline has been shutdown and the pressure removed to facilitate containment efforts and pipeline repair.

Could the rest of the product in the pipe leak out?

No.

## ECONOMICS

How will it affect tourism?

No impacts are expected.

Will the Highway 40 (Donner Pass Road) road closure continue?

Highway 40 has been open since Wednesday and will remain open with traffic control in place over the stretch two miles downhill of Rainbow Bridge, until further notice.

Can I still go boating?

Yes. There is no restriction of boating on Donner Lake in relation to this spill incident.

Has the spill affected fish life?

Aquatic insects in the Summit Creek headwaters where the spill occurred have been impacted. There are beavers and trout in the lower portions of Summit Creek and Billy Mack Creek, which are showing no sign of stress from the product at this time. Department of Fish and Game biologists are monitoring the wildlife closely.

### END ###