Diesel Fuel Spills along the Lower Colorado River
Diesel Fuel Spills along the Lower Colorado River

*Presented by:*

Jeff B. Smith
Regional HAZMAT Coordinator
Lower Colorado Region
Phone: (702) 293-8060
Email: jbsmith1@lc.usbr.gov
100+ Years of Water Management


Dam Construction
Indian Tribes
Hydroelectric Power
Conservation
Recreation
Water Delivery

RECLAMATION
Reclamation has the West Covered

Working as a team to ensure Reclamation-wide programs and activities exceed our customers’ expectations.
Colorado River “Water Master”

- Reclamation acts on behalf of the Secretary to **fulfill** Water Master’s role

- Water Master role stems from Boulder Canyon Project Act and Supreme Court Decree in Arizona vs. California

- Water and power contracts and deliveries
• Complex body of laws, court cases, and regulations that *guide use of river water and the operation of dams*

• **Colorado River Compact of 1922**
  – Divided the basin into two halves
  – Established apportionments between the upper and lower basins
  – Provided legislation for river regulation and development

• **Vehicle used to meet water obligations and manage challenges**
Water Delivery

- Annually delivers 9 million acre-feet (maf)
- Irrigates 3 million acres
- Serves 20 million people
Hydroelectric Power

• Powerplants in Lower Colorado generate **6 billion Kwh/yr** of electricity

• Equivalent to **11.4 million barrels of crude oil**

• Has the capacity to serve at least **2 million people**
Recreation

15 major recreation areas

- Reservoirs and Trails
- Wildlife Viewing Preserve

12 million visitors each year

- Fishing and Hiking
- Horseback Riding
- Water Sports
Cultural Resources

- Four National Wildlife Refuges
- Cultural Sites Stewardship
- Enhance and protect fish and wildlife habitat, natural, cultural and recreational resources
Flood Control and Drought Protection

Summer 2004
• Key Objectives:
  – Carry out Secretary’s role as watermaster of the lower Colorado River in consultation with lower Colorado River Basin States
  – Provide operate and maintain the lower Colorado River
  – Meet water delivery requirements

• Administer agency programs
  – Lower Colorado River Response Plan
  – Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program (MSCP)
Multi-stakeholder effort that will provide ESA coverage for 50 years

- Conserve and protect endangered species and their habitat
- Protect environment while ensuring continued water and power operations (Section 7/10 covered actions)
- Prevent future listings of additional species
MSCP Overview

Conservation Goals Include:

- Stock 660,000 sub-adult Razorbacks and 620,000 Bonytail Chubs
- Restore 8,100 Acres of Riparian and Aquatic Habitat
- Research and Monitoring
Spill Site
City and County Response Agencies

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
- Fire Department
- Environmental Health

IMPERIAL COUNTY
- Fire Department
- Sheriff’s Office

LA PAZ COUNTY
- Fire Department
- Sheriff and Board of Supervisor
- Health Department
- Administrator
- Public Works

CITY OF YUMA

YUMA COUNTY
- Sheriff’s Office

HELP!
State Response Agencies

CALIFORNIA

ARIZONA

RECLAMATION
Federal Response Agencies

- Bureau of Reclamation - Yuma Area Office
- Colorado River Indian Tribes Police
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Cibola and Imperial National Wildlife Refuges
- Bureau of Land Management
- Environmental Protection Agency - Region 9
- Marine Corps Air Station - Yuma, Arizona
Other Interested Agencies

- Irrigation Districts
- News Media
- Environmental Protection Agency - Region 9 Cleanup Contractor
- Marine Owners and Operators
3,000 – 4,000 Gallon Tanks
Source of Release
Intake Pump
Sheen at Spill Site
All-American Canal Headworks
Looking at Top of Imperial Dam (East)
Collection Site

Oil being collected and skimmed
Recovery Equipment (Rotary Drum Skimmer)

Skimmer removing oil from river
Recovery Equipment
(Pump for Drum Skimmer)
Lessons Learned

• Lower Colorado River Response Plan
• Communication and Planning
• Unified Command
• Resources
• Funding
• Natural Resource Damage Assessment
• Spill Prevention Control and Counter Measures
During the incident it was realized that the lower Colorado River Response Plan was outdated.

The current plan is dated July 1993.
• There has been **very little planning with other federal, tribal, state and local agencies for spills that occur on the lower Colorado River**

• **Communication with these agencies only occurs when there is an incident**

• Also, with a plan in place, agencies along the lower Colorado River would know who is in charge of an incident and where the resources are located
• Who is in charge during an incident on the lower Colorado River?

• Large impact - Many agencies with resources that could be affected – multi-jurisdictional

• Numerous action plans and support personnel engaged
Centralized Command Authority and Coordination

*many agencies...one voice...one goal*

Common set of objectives and Strategies

Coordinates multi-agency resources and personnel
During the incident many resources were needed.

Typical questions were:

- Who has swift water spill boom?
- Who has oil recovery equipment?
- Can we borrow a boat?
- Where can we get trained personnel?
During the response, EPA provided funding through the **Oil Pollution Liability Trust Fund** administered by the Coast Guard
1. **Contact the National Response Center (NRC) to report the spill at (800) 424-8802**
   - Get a report number from the NRC
   - Specifically request a Federal On Scene Coordinator (FOSC) from your EPA Region

2. **Contact the FOSC**
   - Request a Federal Pollution Removal Number (FPRN). This is the number that opens up the Oil Liability Trust Fund and allows for spending (This funding comes from the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard will work with the Responsible Party for cost recovery)
3. If the situation warrants, EPA will show up on site and/or send out a STARC contractor to monitor cleanup activities

4. The cost documentation package prepared by the DOI (lead Federal Agency) must be sent through:
   - DOI-Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) for completeness
   - Then sent forward to EPA for approval of cost
   - EPA will forward package to the Coast Guard
   - Coast Guard will send funds to the lead Federal Agency
5. For assistance contact:

Mr. Jeffery B. Smith
Regional Hazmat Coordinator
Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado Region
P.O. Box 61470 LC2640
Boulder City, NV 89006
Office: (702) 293-8060  Cell: (702) 378-2400

Help is also available from DOI-OEPC Oakland
Office: (510) 817-1477
• It was determined by the Department of the Interior Bureaus that there were no damages to natural resources during this incident
• With this incident EPA took the opportunity to look at SPCC issues along the lower Colorado River, to including portable pumps for irrigation intake and fueling operations along the river
Freshwater Spill Symposium

Questions?

RECLAMATION