



## Dangerous Goods - Hazardous Materials Group & Network Release 2012 – 812 Newsy Stuff

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

**February 19 2012**



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### USA, CO, WALSH, JANUARY 9 2012. RESIDENTS RETURN HOME IN WALSH AFTER TANK RUPTURE

 **Watch the Video** <http://denver.cbslocal.com/2012/02/08/10-homes-evacuated-in-southeastern-colorado-after-tank-rupture/>



Dozens of residents in a small southeastern Colorado town are now allowed to return home. They were evacuated following an ammonia spill this morning, the Colorado Division of Emergency Management says. The ammonia tank was secured and the valves have been plugged. It's been loaded onto a trailer and is being moved to a safe location. Riley Frazee, a representative for the Division of Emergency Management, says the chemical involved is considered an extremely hazardous substance by the EPA. It is called anhydrous ammonia, and is used as a fertilizer. It can cause death if inhaled in large quantities, but luckily everyone in the area evacuated immediately. There were no injuries. Frazee says the tank was being pulled behind a pickup truck for delivery to a farm south of Walsh. The front axle of the trailer broke, and the tank slammed into the pavement. Two valves on the front of the tank broke, allowing the chemical to leak out and form a hazardous cloud.

Reports have indicated the tank had an estimated capacity of between 500 and 1,000 gallons. About 700 people live in the Town of Walsh. The leak was centered near where South Illinois Street merges with County Road 44.

[http://www.kktv.com/news/headlines/10\\_Homes\\_Evacuated\\_in\\_Walsh\\_after\\_tank\\_rupture\\_138937329.html](http://www.kktv.com/news/headlines/10_Homes_Evacuated_in_Walsh_after_tank_rupture_138937329.html)

### USA, IN, TERRE HAUTE, FEBRUARY 9 2012. CITY CLEANS UP CONTAMINATED TONEY PETROLEUM SITE

*brittany earl*

 **Watch the Video** [City cleans up contaminated site](#)

A contaminated site that sits along US 41 in Terre Haute faces demolition. Along US 41 located on the Northwest corner of Indiana State University's campus, drivers can find a vacant building. The former Toney Petroleum Inc. was first condemned back in 2007. Pat Martin, Terre Haute Chief Planner says it's not the most welcoming view. "Going by, looking at it thinking, this is typical of Terre Haute, but it's not typical of Terre Haute. So therefore we would love to get rid of it in an eye sore aspect," said Martin. Tuesday, Martin asked Vigo County Commissioners to transfer the site to the city, to remove the property from a pending tax sale. "The ownership is important for us because of grants funds, potential grant funds that we can get for demolition for the facility it's self," said Martin. Martin says, the city plans to tear down the property, eventually making it into a parking lot for Indiana State University because that's the only thing the property can be turned into due to chemical hazards. "The building is highly contaminated as in terms as to what was in there. We sense taken that out but contamination is still presents. It's a nuisance, an eye sore," said Martin. Martin says outside they found tanks filled with petroleum, below groundwater with sixteen percent diesel fuel and inside hazardous chemicals. But come March 2012, Martin says he hopes to change all that. "City would require the property, the city would do the demolition, do the clean up off the property and then eventually sell the property or convey the property to Indiana State University," said Martin. The cities already spent more than \$40,000 to clean up the site but Martin says they city has a long way to go before the project is complete. When the city finally owns the property, they can start to work with the U.S. EPA and IDEM to receive funding to complete the clean up process.

<http://www.wthitv.com/dpp/news/indiana/city-cleans-up-contaminated-toney-petroleum-site>

### USA, CT, GROTON, FEBRUARY 9 2012. 1,200 GALLONS OF HEATING OIL SPILL IN TANKER CRASH ON I-95 IN GROTON

 **Watch the Video** [Tanker gets cut off, spills 1,200 gallons of oil](#)



A home heating oil delivery truck collided with three cars and overturned on I-95 on Wednesday, spilling hundreds of gallons of oil and closing a section of the highway between exits 88 and 89 northbound. State police reported minor injuries among drivers and passengers, but didn't say how many people were involved. One of the cars involved burst into flames, but the fire was contained and didn't spread to the truck, police said. The accident was reported before 3:30 p.m., and by 5 p.m. Roughly 1,200 gallons of oil spilled below the truck, a state Department of Environmental Protection spokesperson said. Crews were working to transfer the



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remaining oil into another truck. The entrance ramp at Exit 88 was closed after the crash. Two lanes remained closed past 8 p.m. The area reopened overnight. Cleanup crews remained at the scene of the crash early Thursday.

<http://www.courant.com/community/groton/hc-groton-tractor-trailer-accident-0209-20120208.0.521630.story>

### AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA, BONNIE DOON, FEBRUARY 9 2012. MAN FIGHTS FOR LIFE AFTER GAS BOTTLE EXPLODES

*megan levy*

A man is fighting for his life after a gas bottle explosion in Victoria's north-east this morning. The 31-year-old was placed on life support and flown to The Alfred hospital in Melbourne in a critical condition after the accident at a Bonnie Doon service station. Ambulance Victoria spokesman John Mullen said paramedics were called to the Mansfield Medical Centre at 9.15am where a man was suffering from burns to his face, arms, legs and airways. A WorkSafe spokesman said the 33-year-old man had been installing a deep fryer when gas was released and ignited. The man was taken to Mansfield Hospital and was put in a coma. He was later flown to The Alfred hospital where he is being treated in the burns unit. WorkSafe is investigating the accident.

<http://www.theage.com.au/victoria/man-fights-for-life-after-gas-bottle-explodes-20120209-1m0d.html>

### USA, UT, RIVERDALE, FEBRUARY 9 2012. CREWS CLEANING UP OIL SPILL IN WEBER RIVER

*brittany green-miner*

 [Watch the Video Riverdale Fire Investigating Source of Spill](#)



Crews are monitoring the Weber River after an oil spill was spotted in Riverdale on Wednesday afternoon. Dean Gallegos, Interim Fire Chief for Riverdale City, said that a passerby had noticed a substance coming out of a drain near the river shortly after noon Wednesday. A cleanup company and public works employees arrived on scene to find an oil spill. Cleanup crews worked to contain the spill. They set up four different cleanup spots and have used specialized materials that allow water to pass through but trap the oil. "The fuel's in here, the petroleum's in here. We catch it in every part we can and now we'll contain it as it goes. There's no quick fix here," said Rusty Glover, Lincoln Environmental Services. Public works employees

worked on tracking the source. They still don't know the exact source, but have narrowed it down. "The public works department has to actually get some specialized equipment out here, cameras and go down the drains to find the source of where this is coming from," said Gallegos. The cleanup company will be out until they're sure they've gotten all the oil. They will then take water samples from along the river to be sure.

<http://www.fox13now.com/news/kstu-oil-spill-crews-cleaning-up-fuel-spill-in-weber-river-20120208.0.1075875.story>

### USA, CT, GREENWHICH, FEBRUARY 9 2012. HUNDREDS OF GALLONS OF DIESEL FUEL SPILL INTO GREENWICH POND



*An environmental clean up operation in the Greenwich section of the pond adjacent to Reckson Executive Park at 1100 King St., Rye Brook, N.Y., Friday afternoon, Feb. 3, 2012*

A tank at a Verizon facility on King Street leaked nearly a thousand gallons of diesel fuel into a nearby pond that straddles the Connecticut/New York border, prompting a cleanup response from both states, a Connecticut official said Friday. Dennis Schain, spokesman for the [Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection](#), said the tank feeds a backup generator at the facility, which is located at 1090 King St. in Rye Brook, N.Y., just across the state line from Greenwich. Between 500 and 900 gallons of diesel fuel leaked from the tank, the contaminant lapping up near the shore on the Greenwich side of the pond, Schain said. The leak

was stopped sometime in the afternoon. The department first received a report of the spill Thursday afternoon after residents began to see a sheen on the pond, and DEEP has since been monitoring cleanup efforts by [AARCO Environmental Services Corp.](#), a Lindenhurst, N.Y.-based environmental contracting firm hired by Verizon, Schain said. Located north of the Merritt



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Parkway across the street from Shemin Nurseries in Greenwich, the pond leads into a series of brooks and streams on the Connecticut side of the state line. "The outflow is on the Connecticut side of the border," Schain said. "There was an oil sheen on the surface of some of the streams." A resident of nearby Willow Run Road, who wished not to be identified, said the smell of fuel was strong near the pond and stream. When asked about the size of the spill, Schain said "it's significant," but added that there will be no adverse health consequences for residents. Officials have not yet determined how long the tank was leaking for, said Schain, who couldn't elaborate on how far downstream the fuel traveled. A phone message seeking comment was left for a Verizon representative. Yellow and white booms from AARCO blocked off the northeast corner of the pond on Friday afternoon. Additionally, AARCO crews placed absorbing booms in the streams and cleaned the fuel from spots where it contacted stream banks, Schain said. Work on the Connecticut side of the pond was completed by late Friday afternoon, he said. The [New York Department of Environmental Conservation](http://www.greenwichtime.com/policereports/article/Spill-cleanup-ongoing-at-Greenwich-pond-on-NY-2997006.php) was continuing to monitor cleanup efforts on the New York side, he said. "You hate to see any contaminant get into the environment, but they are going to recapture most of it," he said. "The rest will be washed downstream and diluted fairly quickly." Most of the pond lies in Rye Brook, N.Y., but the environmental firm's booms were lined up in the small section in Greenwich. An AARCO representative would not comment other than to confirm that company employees were working at the scene and had been contracted by Verizon. When reached by phone Friday afternoon, a representative from the nursery declined to comment.

<http://www.greenwichtime.com/policereports/article/Spill-cleanup-ongoing-at-Greenwich-pond-on-NY-2997006.php>

### NEW ZEALAND, DACRE, FEBRUARY 9 2012. DIESEL SPILL CREATES HIGHWAY FLAMES

*alex fensome*

A fireball was narrowly averted outside Dacre yesterday after a trailer carrying 3000 litres of diesel came loose and spilled across the road. Edendale deputy chief fire officer Scottie Cameron said the contractor's trailer was on a straight section of State Highway 1 south of Dacre about 8.30am when it detached from the vehicle towing it. Although the safety chain held in place, the cap on the diesel tank fell off and fuel began to spill over the road. Then, with the trailer dragging on the road surface and creating sparks, the back end of the vehicle caught fire and petrol from a pump and the leaking diesel ignited. With the vehicle stopped and ablaze, another motorist came to the rescue. "People following the vehicle said they couldn't see the back of it, the flames were so big," Mr Cameron said. "It was put out by a passing motorist who thankfully had a fire extinguisher." Remarkably, the vehicle had sustained only minor damage, he said. "The contractor was very thankful." The fire crew closed off one lane of the road while the trailer was removed. Fulton Hogan arrived to spread grit over the slick. "We'll keep pushing it around until it's a bit safer," Mr Cameron said.

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/news/6387025/Diesel-spill-creates-highway-flames>

### USA, PA, HARRISBURG, FEBRUARY 10 2012. DEP FINES CHESAPEAKE APPALACHIA \$565,000 FOR MULTIPLE VIOLATIONS

The Department of Environmental Protection has fined Chesapeake Appalachia LLC a total of \$565,000 in civil penalties and reimbursement costs for erosion and sediment control violations, wetland encroachment violations and an April 2011 well control incident. "The governor and I expect the highest standards to be met and when they are not, we take strong enforcement action," DEP Secretary Mike Krancer said. "We will continue to be vigilant on that front. The protection of the state's water is paramount."

#### West Branch Township, Potter County

DEP fined Chesapeake \$215,000 for a March 2011 incident in West Branch Township, Potter County, where sediment discharged into a stream classified as high quality. High-quality streams receive some of the highest levels of protection in the state, and operators are expected to ensure their work does not negatively affect them. In late February and early March, heavy rain caused significant erosion to an access road and Chesapeake's Beech Flats gas well pad, both of which lacked sufficient controls in place to prevent the run-off. As a result, significant amounts of sediment entered the Right Branch of Wetmore Run, a high-quality stream. An inspection found that accelerated erosion had occurred at several spots on the access road and the well pad because the operator failed to construct adequate controls to prevent the run-off of sediment. The sediment traveled downstream and impacted Galetton Borough Authority's water treatment filters. Chesapeake has since paid \$190,000 to the authority to repair and upgrade the water supply facility and has made assurances it will reimburse the authority any additional costs associated with this incident. DEP issued a compliance order that required Chesapeake to cease all activity at the site that would disturb earth, such as road maintenance and grading; movement of rock, soil or earth; and



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activity associated with gas drilling and extraction. Chesapeake was also ordered to implement additional measures designed to lessen environmental impact and submit a revised erosion and sediment control plan. Soon after that, the company installed silt fences, silt socks, gravel surfacing of the access road and a storm-water capture ditch, and it submitted the revised plan. Follow-up inspections determined that the violations were corrected. The authority thanked DEP for taking immediate action.

#### Leroy Township, Bradford County

In addition, Chesapeake paid \$190,000 as part of a consent order and agreement after the operator lost control of a well head during hydraulic fracturing of the Atgas 2H Well in Leroy Township, Bradford County, on April 19, 2011. Fluids from the well mixed with rainwater and entered a nearby unnamed tributary to Towanda Creek and Towanda Creek itself. On April 20, DEP detected levels of total dissolved solids, chlorides and barium that were higher than background levels at the mouth of the tributary, where it enters Towanda Creek. Subsequent testing further downstream and on the following days showed these levels returned to normal background levels. Chesapeake took two days to stop the flow from the well and four days beyond that to bring the well fully under control. At DEP's request, Chesapeake suspended completion activities at well sites across the state for approximately three weeks while assessing its equipment's integrity, containment mechanisms and procedures. Chesapeake's payment includes a \$67,000 reimbursement for costs associated with the agency's response. The company must also conduct further testing, using an independent laboratory, of five groundwater monitoring wells from the surrounding area to ensure there were no impacts to groundwater from the release. Samples of the five monitoring wells taken in July, August and October 2011 showed levels consistent with regional groundwater quality.

#### North Towanda Township, Bradford County

In connection with a third site, DEP fined Chesapeake \$160,000 as part of a consent order and agreement resulting from violations in 2010 of impacting a wetland and allowing sediment to enter Sugar Creek in North Towanda Township, Bradford County. Part of a well pad was built in the wetland. It was constructed with extremely high, steep slopes which, after significant precipitation, caused additional sediment to slide further into the wetland and the nearby stream. A series of site inspections in July 2010 found that the well pad had been constructed partially in a wetland and the construction activities deviated from the site's erosion and sediment control plan, rendering the site vulnerable to erosion. DEP issued a notice of violation for encroaching on wetlands without a permit and failing to implement best management practices. A follow-up meeting also directed Chesapeake to develop a remediation plan. By constructing the well pad in that way, the company filled a third of an acre of wetlands without authorization. There were additional temporary impacts to the wetland through erosion and tree clearing and in October 2010, heavy rains caused the middle portion of the pad's fill slope to fail and sediment to enter Sugar Creek and an unnamed tributary, as well as further impact the nearby forested wetland. In addition to paying the penalty, the company has removed the fill from the impacted wetland and must construct 2.55 acres of replacement wetlands. The company is also required to submit regular, detailed wetlands restoration monitoring reports. Chesapeake's actions constituted violations of the Oil and Gas Act, Clean Streams Law and the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act. To view all the documents, visit [www.dep.state.pa.us](http://www.dep.state.pa.us) and click on "Regional Resources," then "North-central Region" and "Community Information."

<http://www.marketwatch.com/story/dep-fines-chesapeake-appalachia-565000-for-multiple-violations-2012-02-09>

#### AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, PILLIGA, FEBRUARY 10 2012. TOXIC CHEMICALS FOUND IN NTH NSW SOIL



*Contaminated water has leaked from one of Santos's coal seam gas drilling site in northern New South Wales.*

The NSW government should suspend all coal seam gas (CSG) exploration licences following reports toxic chemicals were detected in Pilliga State Forest, the opposition says. Soil and water samples taken six months after a 10,000 litre saline water spill at Pilliga Forest, in northern NSW, showed high levels of a number of metals, the ABC reported on Wednesday. The samples, taken by the Wilderness Society and tested by an independent lab, showed lead at five times the acceptable drinking water standard, arsenic at twice and chromium at 3.74 times the acceptable standards. Last month, mining giant Santos reported 10,000 litres of saline water leaked in June 2011 at the Narrabri Coal Seam Gas Project, which was operated at the time by Eastern Star Gas. The incident south of Narrabri was not reported by Eastern Star Gas, despite its obligation to do so under the conditions of its Petroleum Exploration Licence. Santos took over Eastern Star Gas in November, and a subsequent review of its records



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identified the pipeline failure. Opposition leader John Robertson said NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell needed to heed the warning from scientists, experts and local communities and suspend all CSG exploration licences in NSW. 'The impacts of coal seam gas mining on the environment are still not fully understood and the government needs to hit the pause button on this industry before it's too late,' Mr Robertson said in a statement. Santos said it was conducting its own tests and would rehabilitate the affected land. NSW Minister for Resources and Energy, Chris Hartcher said the department was conducting its own testing of soil samples to determine what, if any, contamination had occurred. 'The department will also investigate whether any other incidents of this nature have occurred and any other related circumstances,' Mr Hartcher said in a statement. 'All available enforcement responses will be considered when the full facts are known'

[http://bigpondnews.com/articles/National-Regional/2012/02/09/Toxic\\_chemicals\\_found\\_in\\_Nth\\_NSW\\_soil\\_716576.html](http://bigpondnews.com/articles/National-Regional/2012/02/09/Toxic_chemicals_found_in_Nth_NSW_soil_716576.html)

### AUSTRALIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, COWRA, FEBRUARY 10 2012. LEAKS AT BP & SHELL FUEL DEPOTS



*The Reliance Petroleum fuel depot in Cowra. The EPA is assessing the Cowra Fuel Depot after fuel contamination was detected at the site.*

Fuel contamination detected in groundwater off the Cowra Depot fuel station in Campbell St has prompted the Environmental Protection Authority to assess the site. The assessment comes as the EPA monitors the results of efforts to remedy fuel contamination at the decommissioned Shell fuel depot site at 34 Brougham St. The two sites appear on an EPA list of contaminated sites notified to the authority, dominated by service stations and fuel depots in NSW. An EPA spokesperson said groundwater monitoring in 2008 showed a localised plume of fuel impacted groundwater adjoining fuel tanks at the Cowra Depot, owned by Reliance Petroleum, a wholly owned subsidiary of BP. The EPA has said contamination occurred mainly on the site with minor contamination detected off site in groundwater. The authority expects to finish assessing the site following the next round of monitoring results due early this year. Routine monitoring detected small quantities of hydrocarbon [fuel] in samples collected from a monitoring well located near a diesel dispenser on the site at Campbell St, a BP spokesperson confirmed. BP said it is monitoring the situation and is keeping the EPA fully informed. BP will develop and implement a remediation program of extraction events to remove the fuel, and will continue with monitoring of the groundwater in order to check that the plume doesn't migrate towards the site's adjacent creek, the EPA said.

*The decommissioned Shell fuel depot in Brougham St, which is being regulated by the Environmental Protection Authority.*



Meanwhile the authority is regulating the Shell fuel depot site, owned by Shell and now decommissioned, at 34 Brougham St after remediation was largely completed in July 2009. "The effectiveness of the remediation is being monitored to determine if it reaches its end point," the EPA spokesperson said. "The purpose of post-remediation monitoring, which is the current stage of the site, is to gather adequate

information over time to confirm the residual site contamination no longer poses an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment." She said groundwater monitoring results indicate the hydrocarbon [fuel] groundwater will not discharge into Waugoola Creek. "Waugoola Creek and the adjoining areas have been monitored extensively before, during and after the active remediation. "Information made available to EPA to date does not suggest the site contamination has adversely impacted on the creek." She said Shell has complied with the voluntary remediation proposal it made for its decommissioned fuel depot, and used several well-established environmental consultants during the remediation. The onsite groundwater contamination area has shrunk substantially and appears to be stabilised, subject to ongoing monitoring, the spokesperson said. "The offsite plume has been in the form of pockets of localised contamination due to the geological conditions of the area. "These pockets of localised contamination have also shrunk during the course of the remediation." The EPA said it is satisfied with the site's stabilisation subject to ongoing monitoring. "Once EPA is fully satisfied the site residual contamination poses no unacceptable risk to human health or the environment, we will formally conclude our regulation of this site. "Otherwise we may enter into new [voluntary management proposal] with Shell to address any residual issues." A Shell



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spokesperson said the company has a thorough process to assess if remediation is needed at decommissioned sites. "If remediation is needed the company develops clean up plans which meet regulatory requirements," he said. "Shell is working closely with the company's environmental consultant and an accredited auditor to satisfy the requirements of that plan."

<http://www.cowraguardian.com.au/news/local/news/general/leaks-at-fuel-depots/2451281.aspx?storypage=0>

#### USA, CA, MERCED CO, FEBRUARY 10 2012. MERCED CITY WINS CONTAMINATION BATTLE

*ameera butt & mike north*

The city is almost \$3 million richer today -- at least until any appeals may be filed. A verdict was reached Thursday in a groundwater contamination lawsuit that Merced City brought against several major oil companies. A jury found three oil companies that went to trial liable for damages to the city, which total \$2,977,000. The contamination was caused by methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), a fuel additive that was used in the '90s to help fuel burn cleaner and cut down on air pollution. However, the city's lawsuit alleged the oil companies sold the fuel with MTBE to local gas stations between 1992 and 2002, and the MTBE leaked into the ground because of negligence. The chemical has been linked to health risks, including cancer. The city was awarded \$859,000 from Shell Oil Co., \$1,918,000 from Chevron Corp. and \$200,000 from Exxon Mobil Corp. Shell and Chevron, which also supplied fuel to other locations, were found not liable on two other counts. Oil company ConocoPhillips settled with the city in November for \$1.25 million. The oil companies had claimed they did nothing wrong by including MTBE in their gasoline, and that there was no evidence the chemical has harmed anyone in Merced. City officials, on the other hand, maintained the oil companies needed to be held accountable. Curtis Smith, a Shell spokesman, said in an email that his company disagrees that there is an ongoing or future threat to the local water supply, "especially in light of regulatory agencies determining there are not ongoing effects." One of the gas stations that Shell supplied is the Beacon 3-505 on G Street. "In regards to the Beacon 3-505 Ultramar/Valero Station, it's difficult to understand how a jury determined Shell should be held partly liable for negligence in storing and distributing a legal petroleum product that, once transferred, is the responsibility of a licensed, independent retailer," Smith wrote in the email. Representatives from the other oil companies couldn't be reached for comment by phone. The trial, which has lasted more than three months, produced somber feelings after the verdict was read between the jury and Judge Carol Ash, who was brought to tears because of the working relationship that formed between her and the jury. Several jury members, a few of whom were also emotional, discussed some of the details of the trial with attorneys after they were dismissed. A hearing has been set for Feb. 27 so parties can advise a judge on what post-trial motions they might make, said Evan Eickmeyer, an attorney for Miller, Axline and Sawyer law firm, which represented the city. Post-trial motions can include requests for a new trial or a verdict to be overturned.

<http://www.mercedsunstar.com/2012/02/09/2224486/merced-city-wins-contamination.html>

#### USA, CA, LOS ANGELES, FEBRUARY 10 2012. CAL/OSHA FINES 3 BUSINESSES MORE THAN \$500K FOR SYLMAR BLAST

*dana bartholomew*

Three businesses behind the alternative fuel blast that rocked Sylmar and dismembered two men last summer have been fined more than \$500,000 by the state. Cal/OSHA fined three companies doing business at 12349 Gladstone Ave., where an Aug. 9 hydrogen fuel explosion blew the roof off the rented building, the state worker safety agency reported Thursday. Both Timothy B. Larson, then a 42-year-old Los Angeles firefighter on medical leave while working at his family firm, and 66-year-old consultant William Stehl, lost limbs. The state fined Realm Catalyst Inc., Rainbow of Hope Foundation, and Strategic Sciences Inc. a combined \$540,890 - a hefty penalty levied because it was the second violent explosion the companies had created while experimenting with an alternative energy scheme. A 2010 blast in Simi Valley had killed one of the owners' sons. "There were 'willful serious' citations issued for failure to follow safety protocols recognized by Rainbow of Hope and Strategic Sciences when dealing with this type of gas," said Erika Monterroza, a spokeswoman for the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health, otherwise known as Cal/OSHA. "The companies had a similar incident in the past, and ignored it." The thunderous detonation occurred at 4:20 p.m. Aug. 9, nearly leveling the 7,400- square-foot single-story building and blowing out doors and windows in nearby offices and cars. Scores of workers were evacuated from the industrial park north of the 210 Freeway. A month later, federal environmental officials shut down the freeway as they blew up at least one canister of the explosive hydrogen gas. State industrial safety regulators blamed the explosion on three intertwined companies linked to a suspected New York con artist and a San Fernando Valley attorney whose company's alternative energy experiments killed



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one son and seriously injured another. Realm Catalyst was owned by Timothy A. Larson, a lawyer based in Mission Hills, and father of Timothy B. Larson who lost an arm and a leg in the explosion last summer. Cal/OSHA cited the company for killing his younger son, 28-year-old Tyson Larson, in a similar blast on June 17, 2010, at its now-shuttered Simi Valley plant. The newly wed UCLA graduate had just won a patent with William A. Stehl for a way to create energy from water by using electricity. Authorities said the Simi Valley explosion that killed him was caused by a pressure tank used to heat water in an attempt to generate hydrogen. Stehl was present during that explosion as well. Realm Catalyst was cited for three violations, with fines nearing \$5,700. The company was dissolved in November 2011, according to the California secretary of state. Timothy A. Larson of Simi Valley did not return a request for comment. The explosion that occurred a year later in Sylmar was caused by a dangerous hydrogen extracting process now being pursued at great risk by some alternative fuel companies. Known as Brown's gas - and dubbed "boom gas" by its German inventors - it electrolyzes water into oxygen and hydrogen and can combine the two with fatal results. A Cal/OSHA report said that the Aug. 9 blast occurred as Timothy B. Larson and Stehl were preparing equipment for an upcoming sales demonstration for Strategic Sciences. They allegedly had hoped to promote the benefits and properties of the so-called TyLar gas experimental fuel, which they made. A TyLar gas cylinder blew up while in the process of "being handled in the non-intrinsically safe work area, resulting in severe burns and serious multiple amputations to the two employees," the report said. The agency concluded that flammable levels of the gas, handled in non-explosion-proof environments, contributed directly to the blast. It concluded that both oxygen and hydrogen were incompatibly stored in the same tanks. Two of the companies received \$67,500 fines for handling flammable gas near electrical equipment in a hazardous location. Cal/OSHA issued citations to the companies Monday and Tuesday. They have 15 days to pay or appeal the proposed penalties. Rainbow of Hope is registered to the Oxnard home of Stehl, who was present during the Simi Valley blast and who had pleaded not guilty to federal charges in New York of having fleeced more than 300 people out of \$7 million who had invested in an alternative energy scheme. Stehl, who lost an arm in the explosion, could not be reached. Strategic Sciences listed a Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles address. Its CEO was Dale Zuehls, who, according to Cal/OSHA, was also the president of Realm Catalyst. Zuehls, a Los Angeles certified public accountant, said his only work for the companies was to register and dissolve them. He said Strategic Sciences, which dissolved in California in 2008, was now a registered company in Nevada. The Cal/OSHA spokeswoman said the agency's Bureau of Investigation may be conducting a criminal investigation, with any evidence turned over to the Los Angeles district attorney. Monterroza said the nearly \$6,000 fine following the death of the younger Larson was ramped up to more than \$500,000 "because the hazard existed, and they ignored the hazard. "They did not follow the protocols they had already put in place that an officer (of both companies) said needed to be followed."

[http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci\\_19929302](http://www.dailynews.com/news/ci_19929302)

#### USA, TX, BAYPORT, FEBRUARY 10 2012. COAST GUARD RESPONDS TO BARGE ACCIDENT, FUEL SPILL

The U.S. Coast Guard was still at the scene of a fuel spill Thursday after a barge ran aground Wednesday near Bayport. Watch-standers at Sector Houston-Galveston were notified Wednesday that the TM3, a barge that was being towed by the UTV Louis Vincent, had run aground. The master of the Louis Vincent reported diesel fuel leaking from a tank on the left side of the barge. Working with the Texas General Land Office, Talen Marine and ES&H, responders deployed about 6,400 feet of sorbent boom around the barge to minimize the environmental impact. A lightering barge was brought to the site of the accident Thursday morning to remove the fuel from the barge. Officials estimated that 500 gallons of fuel leaked into the water before the lightering operations were completed. Once investigators confirm that there is no further leakage, the barge will be taken to the Texas International Terminal in Galveston. "Through quick reaction from our local partners and the responsible party, we were able to minimize the environmental impact of the spill and ensure the remaining fuel was safely offloaded from the barge," said Capt. James Whitehead, commander of Sector Houston-Galveston. The Coast Guard was investigating the cause of the incident.

<http://www.khou.com/news/neighborhood-news/Bayport-Coast-Guard-responds-to-barge-accident-fuel-spill-139028239.html>

#### USA, ILL, MADISON CO, FEBRUARY 10 2012. ROXANA AREA RESIDENTS SEEK MONITORING AND CONTAMINATION CLEANUP; NEW SUIT FILED AGAINST SHELL, BP AND OTHERS

andrea dearden

Several Roxanna and South Roxanna residents say the value of their homes has been damaged by the local oil refinery. Jason and Emily Thatcher, William R. and Diana Greenlee, Garth and Julie Akal and Christopher Brobst filed a consolidated



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compliant Feb. 1 in Madison County Circuit Court against Shell Oil Company, BP Products North America Inc. and ConocoPhillips Company. WRB Refining LLC and URS Corporation were also named as defendants. According to the lawsuit, the owners and operators of the refinery knowingly released the chemical benzene and other benzene-containing pollutants into the land and ground water surrounding its Wood River Refinery. Multiple violations allegedly happened during the refining process conducted there since the 1980's, including a 290,000-gallon spill of unleaded gasoline. The homeowners argue benzene has long been known to cause certain forms of leukemia. The Illinois Department of Public Health allegedly concluded in its study of the adjoining neighborhoods' soil vapor tests that benzene and hexane vapors are continuing to enter homes in the Roxanna community. The residents claim contamination, known as the Benzene Plume, allegedly caused by the defendants has greatly diminished the value of their properties. They ask to be awarded economic damages for the lost value of their properties and their use of them. The group also wants the owners and operators of the refinery to pay for an extended medical monitoring program, which would include the treatment of symptoms or conditions likely caused by benzene exposure. They also want to see money put toward medical research on the topic. The residents are also asking the defendants be ordered to pay for cleaning up the contamination site.

<http://www.madisonrecord.com/news/241745-roxana-area-residents-seek-monitoring-and-contamination-cleanup-new-suit-filed-against-shell-bp-and-others>

#### USA, CO, DENVER, FEBRUARY 10 2012. UNION PACIFIC, EPA REACH \$1.5M SPILL SETTLEMENT



Federal officials and Union Pacific Railroad have agreed to a \$1.5 million settlement over oil and coal spills in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. The Environmental Protection Agency announced the settlement with the nation's largest rail operator on Thursday over eight spills in 2003 and 2004. Seven followed train derailments but one involved a discharge of oily water from a treatment plant at a Denver rail yard, EPA environmental scientist and enforcement officer Donna Inman said. The deal also settles allegations that Union Pacific didn't have adequate protections in place in case of spills and other problems at 20 rail yards in the three states. For example, Inman said UP's Rawlins yard, where trains fuel up, has tanks holding up to 3 million gallons of diesel fuel but still doesn't have an EPA-approved response plan in case of a spill. A spokesman for the Omaha, Neb.-based railroad said the company is committed to protecting the environment, including responding to disasters. "Union Pacific is working to ensure our response plans are up-to-date across our entire

network and that our derailment response is as swift as possible while at the same time conforming to all applicable environmental laws," spokesman Mark Davis said in a statement. The EPA said the Colorado rail yard violations happened at Denver 36th Street, Burnham, Denver North, East Portal Moffat Tunnel, Grand Junction, Kremmling, Pueblo and Rifle. In Utah, the alleged violations were found at the Helper, Ogden, Provo, Roper, Salt Lake City North and Summit yards. There were violations at the Bill, Buford, Cheyenne, Green River, Laramie and Rawlins yards in Wyoming. The EPA said all but \$100,000 of the fine would go to a federal trust fund used to respond to oil spills. The remainder would go to the government's general coffers. The settlement must still be approved by a judge.

<http://www.localnews8.com/news/30422010/detail.html>

#### USA, NEB, LINCOLN, FEBRUARY 10 2012. PURE ETHANOL SPILLS AT 14TH AND SALTILLO

 **Watch the Video** [Ethanol Spill Closes Lincoln Street](#)

Emergency crews reopened Saltillo Road after 100 to 150 gallons of pure ethanol spilled from a tanker truck being drained at a terminal at the South 14th Street intersection. The truck's drain valve stuck open shortly before 6 a.m., allowing the ethanol to leak out, Lincoln Fire and Rescue Battalion Chief Bruce Sellon said. The driver eventually got the valve closed. The area is protected by containment systems, including a closed-off cemented section where trucks are emptied, Sellon said. "It's not likely that (the ethanol) went anywhere." Still, he said, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department remained at the scene after 8 a.m. to help with clean-up. The main concern with the spill was the possibility of a fire, Sellon said.

"It's basically a rubbing alcohol."

[http://journalstar.com/news/local/pure-ethanol-spills-at-th-and-salttillo/article\\_9850bc1f-ef3b-5341-92f0-574508830807.html](http://journalstar.com/news/local/pure-ethanol-spills-at-th-and-salttillo/article_9850bc1f-ef3b-5341-92f0-574508830807.html)



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#### USA, MD, BALTIMORE, FEBRUARY 10 2012. COURT SENDS EXXON SPILL CASE BACK TO TRIAL >> JURY'S \$147 MILLION AWARD FROM 2009 IS IN DOUBT

steve kilar

**Maps:** [Jacksonville, 10, MD 21131, USA](#)



*In this 2006 file photo, contractors at the Exxon gas station in Jacksonville prepare the underground gas tanks for removal.*

The state's second-highest court has rejected much of a \$147 million jury verdict that was awarded to hundreds of northern [Baltimore County](#) residents whose groundwater was contaminated by a gasoline leak at an Exxon station. The Court of Special Appeals ruling could mean that some of the Jacksonville plaintiffs — who endured a five-month trial — will have to return to court. "It comes as a surprise to us, because we haven't been informed," said plaintiff Tresia Parks, reached by phone Thursday night. "We've been through a lot. All I can say is it hasn't been easy. ... I guess it's easier for someone else to sit in judgment. "They're not in our

shoes," she said. "They haven't had the sleepless nights." In a 322-page decision, a majority of the nine-member panel decided that the jury was right to consider awarding money — which, in the end, totaled more than \$70 million — for the mental stress residents suffered as a result of the contamination. But a different majority of the judges found "insufficient evidence of emotional distress for 53 Jacksonville residents," and reversed that part of the jury's damage award. For the remaining plaintiffs — about 150 people, according to their attorney — a new trial will be necessary to re-assess their emotional distress award amounts because the instructions given to the jury were imprecise, the court said. "It is very disheartening and totally unexpected," said Theresa Nickel, one of the plaintiffs whose emotional distress claim was erased, without an opportunity for a new trial. The court also took away any money given out by the jury for the residents' health checks. The only portion of the jury's award that was substantially allowed to stand was compensation for a loss in property values. "It scares the bejesus out of you when you think, 'What I have been drinking? What have I been bathing in?'" said Parks. "Who is going to walk in here and say, 'Sure I'll buy that house?'" Here's an example of how the ruling applies to an individual plaintiff: Steven Tizard, whose Robcaste Road home was behind the leaking gas station, was given \$1 million in emotional damages, \$700,000 for property damages and about \$290,000 for medical monitoring under the jury award, according to a 2009 report from The Baltimore Sun. The Court of Special Appeal's ruling lets stand the \$700,000 property award, eliminates the \$290,000 medical monitoring funds and cleans the slate for emotional damages, leaving them to be re-evaluated by Baltimore County's Circuit Court. The case stems from February 2006, when a Jacksonville gas station leaked more than 700 gallons of gasoline per day for more than a month before the spill was discovered and repaired. In all, 26,000 gallons of regular unleaded gasoline seeped into the groundwater that supplied wells in northern Baltimore County. The incident spurred several lawsuits. The first trial relating to the spill proceeded from October 2008 through the following March. A six-member jury stopped well short of the multibillion-dollar verdict sought by the plaintiff's lawyers because the four women and two men ruled that [Exxon Mobil Corp.](#) was not guilty of fraud, removing the possibility of assessing punitive damages. A second case against Exxon Mobil, which included roughly 150 plaintiffs and was brought by a different attorney, was tried in 2011 and resulted in a \$1.5 billion verdict. That case, unlike the previous case, awarded punitive damages — those intended purely as punishment, not to compensate the plaintiffs for losses and future expenses — that inflated the jury's award. Thursday's ruling affected only the first case. That jury wound up giving residents a damage award on several factors. "As for compensatory damages, the jury awarded the owners of each home 100% of the pre-leak value of their real property," Thursday's majority opinion states. "Most of the plaintiffs also received emotional distress damages totaling approximately \$1,000,000 per household. Finally, most of the plaintiffs received damages for medical monitoring ... depending on the degree of contamination." The complex appeals court decision included several opinions, with the majority view shifting on several issues. For example, the majority found that "under certain circumstances, Maryland law permits recovery for emotional distress related to reasonable fear of [cancer](#)." Likewise, a majority of the panel said it would recognize a damages award for medical monitoring under certain circumstances. However, a different majority found that the evidence was insufficient to support it in this case. Reached by phone, plaintiffs' attorney Stephen L. Snyder was confident that the emotional distress damages would be enlarged for plaintiffs whose claims were sent back for a new trial. "This is no victory for Exxon," Snyder said. "In the second round, the verdict will be higher for emotional distress damages than in the first." The plaintiffs will either



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file for reconsideration, he said, or ask the state's highest court to analyze the medical monitoring and emotional distress awards without touching the property damage awards. Exxon's attorney for both this case and last year's trial, James F. Sanders, did not return calls for comment Thursday night. His assistant said he was traveling and would be unavailable by phone. A call to Exxon was not returned. Attorneys from the Law Offices of [Peter G. Angelos](#), who are representing plaintiffs in the second trial, also did not respond to inquiries. The state also filed a \$12 million suit against Exxon Mobil stemming from the Jacksonville spill. It was settled for \$4 million in 2008, which was the largest environmental penalty ever levied by the state. Maryland's Department of the Environment allowed Exxon to halt the cleanup of the area in 2010, prompting Gov. Martin O'Malley to insist that the agency reconsider its decision.

#### Related Links

- [Vindication mixes with continued uncertainty for Exxon plaintiffs](#)
- [Damages in Balto. Co. Exxon leak suit rise to \\$1.5 billion](#)
- [\\$495 million award from Exxon in Balto. Co. gas spill could grow](#)
- [Verdict sealed in Exxon gas spill trial; proceedings continue](#)
- [Exxon Mobil accused of 'fraud' in Jacksonville gas spill trial](#)
- [Exxon fined \\$4 million for gas leak](#)
- [Arguments in Exxon lawsuit wrapping up](#)

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/breaking/bs-md-exxon-20120209,0,3551497.story>

## FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, CHUUK, FEBRUARY 11 2012. UNDERWATER TIME BOMBS - OIL LEAKS FROM WARTIME SHIPWRECKS



As the United States fought its way across Micronesia during World War Two, it launched a strike against Japanese naval forces that could hinder the US advance on the Japanese mainland. In February 1944, the US Navy mounted Operation Hailstone — a major naval and air attack against Truk Atoll in the Japanese territory of the Caroline Islands, the home base for Japan's Imperial Combined Fleet. Even though some ships escaped before the attack, the initial US air assault on 16 and 17 February 1944 sank a good part of Japan's remaining naval forces in Micronesia. More than 50 destroyers, cruisers, merchant ships and support vessels—including at least three oil tankers—were left on the bottom of Truk Lagoon. Today, Truk is renamed Chuuk, one of the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Nearly 70 years on, these shipwrecks are a looming time bomb for the environment and inhabitants of Chuuk Atoll. The shipwrecks are a major tourist attraction and Chuuk Lagoon is a paradise for divers. But decades of corrosion, shifting tides and storms have weakened many of the wrecks. There are already small oil leaks and growing concern that more oil contained in the ruined vessels will leach into the marine environment. Last September, FSM President Emmanuel Mori stood before the United Nations General Assembly and called for international support to address this looming environmental catastrophe. "More than sixty years ago, my island country, the Federated States of Micronesia, drew worldwide attention as a battleground in the Pacific conflict. "Today, the remnants of an estimated sixty shipwrecks

from that conflict are posing threats to the lives of our people, our environment and the marine ecosystem," he said. "Approximately 32 million litres of oil contained in the bellies of the wrecks are a ticking environmental time bomb. "Leading experts on underwater corrosion have warned that the shipwrecks will collapse and when they do, we believe oil from these wrecks could create a spill on a massive scale with an impact comparable to the disaster last year in the Gulf of Mexico."

#### Thousands of Shipwrecks

The Federated States of Micronesia is not the only Pacific nation to face this problem—there are over 3,800 World War Two (WW2) wrecks scattered throughout the region. During the Pacific War, American, Japanese, British, New Zealand and Australian ships were sunk in a number of battles. Many US and Japanese warships were lost in the open sea during the Battle of Midway and the Battle of the Coral Sea, but a range of naval and merchant shipping was sunk in more shallow waters in the north Pacific, including Pearl Harbor (Hawaii), Chuuk Lagoon (FSM), Betio, South Tarawa (Kiribati), and atolls across the Marshall Islands. In Solomon Islands, Japanese ships litter the area off Guadalcanal known as the Slot and the name Iron Bottom Sound reflects the tonnage of shipping sunk in these waters. Many vessels were also wrecked in waters off Papua



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New Guinea as US, Australian and Japanese forces fought for control of the islands. Recent maritime accidents—such as the break-up of the freighter *Rena* in New Zealand or the grounding of the Italian cruise liner *Costa Concordia*—highlight the risk of oil spills from beached or stranded vessels. But in a 2005 paper, marine researcher Rean Monfils Gilbert argued that “there is a significantly larger global marine pollution threat from the over 7,800 sunken World War Two (WW2) vessels worldwide, including over 860 oil tankers, corroding for over 60 years at the bottom of the world’s oceans”. “World War Two was the single, largest loss of shipping in a relatively short period of time the world has ever witnessed,” Gilbert says. With support from the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Gilbert compiled a database on WW2 shipwrecks across the Asia/Pacific region. The database shows that at least 3,854 sunken vessels with a total tonnage of more than 13.6 million tonnes are located across the Pacific Ocean. As well as aircraft carriers, battleships and smaller civilian and military vessels, there are at least 332 sunken fuel tankers and oilers on the bottom of the Pacific.

#### Threat to the Environment

The 1944 raid on Chuuk Atoll left one of the largest concentrations of sunken vessels. As evidence mounts that these vessels are beginning to leak oil into the lagoon, the FSM government is raising the heat, calling for support from the “flag nations”—countries like Japan and the United States that owned the ships at the time of their sinking and are still responsible for the vessels on the bottom of the ocean. Around the region, some of the more accessible underwater wrecks have important cultural and economic value. In recent decades, WW2 battle sites have been an important source of tourism as old soldiers tour the region where they fought as young men. The shipwrecks still have a historical and spiritual role as war graves. Many underwater wrecks in Micronesia (from the Second World War or ships sunk at Bikini Atoll during post-war nuclear testing) serve as important dive sites that attract tourists from around the world. The wrecks also retain important biological functions, acting as artificial reefs in lagoon environments and a vibrant source for marine biodiversity. In spite of these economic and environmental values, many vessels still contain fuel oil, other toxic chemicals or old bombs and ammunition (known as unexploded ordinance or UXO). These cargoes are potential hazards as saltwater corrosion is steadily weakening metal, wooden and rubber parts on the underwater wrecks. The rate of corrosion varies according to a range of factors. Wrecks in shallow lagoon waters are exposed to warmer temperatures and usually deteriorate at a faster rate than wrecks located in colder deep water locations. The stability of some shipwrecks is precarious, because submerged sites are vulnerable to damage that can breach fragile spots or expose fresh metal to corrosion. As well as storms and tidal shifts, wrecks are vulnerable to human impacts (boat anchors, shocks from dynamite fishing or tourists taking objects). For vessels carrying large amounts of fuel oil, known as bunker fuel, accidents or damage could cause catastrophic damage to the marine environment. Some oil products leaking from underwater sources will evaporate in the open air through wind and warm water, but remaining amounts can be carried by the wind and tide into sensitive environments, such as fishing grounds, reefs or beaches and mangroves of nearby islands. Speaking to *Islands Business*, corrosion expert Ian McLeod from the West Australia Museum agrees that the problem of oil leakage is urgent, as some shipwrecks could start to collapse over the next decade. “Without active management of the risk of oil leaks, there is a likelihood of fish breeding in mangroves being wiped out,” McLeod said. Anthony Talouli, the Pollution Advisor with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), agrees that there is a particular problem with bunker fuel, which is very slow to break down in the ocean environment. “Heavy bunker fuel is very persistent,” says Talouli. “It will last a long time in tropical waters. Some vessels are also sunk at very deep levels, so it’s not easy to extract the oil. It’s a very costly exercise.”

#### Leaks in Chuuk Lagoon

In her study of WW2 wrecks, marine researcher Gilbert notes: “The location of oilers and oil tankers, both military and merchant, is of prime concern. These vessels pose a higher risk due to the large quantities of oil carried on board at the time of sinking.” Amongst the shipwrecks in Chuuk Lagoon, there are three oil tankers named *Hoyo Maru*, *Shinkoku Maru* and *Fujisan Maru*. Over the last decade, the Chuuk Historic Preservation Office and Department of Marine Resources have worked with SPREP and overseas researchers to conduct technical studies of these vessels and determine the source of oil slicks found on the surface of the lagoon. With potentially millions of litres of fuel oil still stored in these vessels, researchers need to conduct costly assessments to determine the amount of oil aboard each vessel, the risk of leakage and the impact that this might have on the surrounding environment. In July and August 2008, a team from the environment group Earthwatch led by Dr Bill Jeffery conducted searches of WW2 wrecks in Chuuk and found that oil seemed to be leaking from two sites. In August 2008, a long slick was found to be coming from *Hoyo Maru*—an oil tanker with a carrying capacity of 95,000 barrels of oil. The ship is lying upside down on the seabed and the hull is broken near the bridge. On 8 August, a small slick was located south east of the island of Uman, near the *Rio de Janiero Maru*, a former passenger vessel that was converted to a support ship for



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submarines. These two ships are not the only potential sources for leaks and there are other vessels at risk including the Fujisan, Nippo Maru, Kiyosumi Maru, Hanakawa Maru and San Francisco Maru. As noted in the 2008 Earthwatch report: "From the corrosion surveys, it can also be seen that some sites are receiving numerous and ongoing bangs from dynamite fishers. Coupled with impact from boat anchors and storms, the stability of some shipwrecks is precarious. If this included a full oil tanker, it would have major environmental consequences." In April 2009, SPREP's Talouli visited Chuuk and worked with FSM government staff to study some vessels. Talouli carried out a refresher course with the Chuuk oil spill response team and conducted a Shoreline Clean-up Assessment Technique (SCAT), involving visits to the wreck sites, studying ocean currents and then determining the direction of a potential oil spill. With marine experts Trevor and Gilbert, Talouli has prepared a technical assessment of the sunken tanker Hoyo Maru and found that if there were a serious breach, "the majority of the main islands of Chuuk Lagoon are at risk from an oil spill from the Hoyo Maru with the island of Fefan at most risk. Shoreline impacts are possible on the islands of Fefan, Dublon, Moen, Parah, Udot and Lidot". Their Strategic Environmental Assessment presented to the Chuuk Government notes: "Negative effect on this reef would cause a disruption of the fishery which in turn would affect the people of Chuuk Lagoon as their food source is disrupted. With the fishery disrupted, the locals of FSM would have to find alternative food sources." Researchers note, however, that there are methods available to delay corrosion rates, giving time to assess the threat of hazardous materials and find the technical and financial resources needed to remove them. "We know how corrosion works in these wrecks, and there are techniques for remediation," McLeod told Islands Business. "Corrosion rates drop with the water depth, so we're lucky and can focus on some wrecks in shallower waters where there's easier access. "The first step is that you need to look at each wreck and assess the options. In some wrecks, there may not be many problems, but those holding major reserves of fuel oil or unexploded ordinance may need urgent attention. After assessment, you can then decide amongst a range of options: in-situ bio-remediation (such as using bacteria to break down the oil); stabilising the metal by using anodes; and preparing the ships for a technique known as hot tapping." All this costs money! The high cost of removing oil from WW2 wrecks was highlighted in 2001-2003, when leaks from the sunken tanker USS Mississinewa in FSM's Yap State led to a costly clean-up and remediation effort. US Navy and salvage operators removed nearly 5 million gallons of oil from at a cost of more than \$5 million

#### Lobbying for Support

The 2001 Mississinewa disaster spurred action at regional level. At the SPREP meeting that year, the regional environment organisation was asked to formulate a strategy to address the pollution risk posed by the many shipwrecks across the Pacific. In 2002, under its Pacific Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme (PACPOL), SPREP developed a regional strategy "to address marine pollution from World War II shipwrecks and to assess and determine the extent of pollution risk posed by these vessels to the islands nations of the Pacific and their resources." A year later, however, SPREP member countries decided that the Apia-based secretariat would take no further direct action on the strategy and could simply offer technical assistance to member countries. Given the range of pressing environmental and economic pressures facing Pacific Islands Countries from climate change to unregulated logging and overfishing, the hidden time bomb of underwater wrecks is low on the regional agenda. The real work of removing oil would need to be carried out by the affected country and the flag nation responsible for the wreck. The core problem is that countries like Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and FSM lack the financial and technical resources to urgently address potential leakages. Beyond this, the legal responsibility for the sunken vessels and any remaining cargo in the wreck (whether a military or civilian ship) resides with the government that had control of that vessel at the time of its sinking. For this reason, the Japanese Government has sovereignty or ownership of more than 85 percent of the vessels sunk in the Pacific Ocean. Other "flag nations" with responsibility for many vessels include the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. According to Gilbert, these governments all accept that "the vessels and their contents are flag state (government) property no matter where they rest, and this sovereignty does not diminish with depth of water nor passage of time. These wrecks are also entitled to special respect as war graves and any attempt to interfere or salvage the vessel or contents without the expressed permission of the flag state would be regarded as a serious breach of sovereign immunity." In recent months, FSM President Mori has been at the forefront of efforts to spur action by the flag nations. In 2011, the FSM government formally wrote to the embassies of Japan and the United States, the two nations whose flag was flying over most of the vessels when they were sunk in FSM waters. The issue was then taken to the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in Auckland last August, to gain regional support. The 2011 Forum communique "noted the risk to the environment posed by oil leakage from WW2 shipwrecks in the region and called for the safe removal of oil from those shipwrecks such as in the Chuuk Lagoon in the Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands and the Marshall Islands." In response, at the post-Forum dialogue, Japan's Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Tsuyoshi Yamaguchi



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stated that "Japan, from an environmental perspective, will look into the possibilities of assistance on this issue. The Government of Japan is now considering what assistance we can do." At the Auckland meeting, Forum officials also launched a major report on unexploded ordnance in the Pacific, with detailed studies of the hazards of ageing explosives in four countries. In their communique, Forum leaders "expressed concern at the continuing existence of unexploded WW2 ordnance (UXO) which remains a human security problem for many members, as well as a threat to public health, safety and the environment. "They also recognised that UXO poses a serious obstacle to development. Leaders welcomed the development of the Regional UXO Strategy Framework as a practical approach to addressing the challenges of UXO in the region and called on the assistance of relevant international bodies and development partners in addressing this long neglected issue." In September, FSM President Mori stood before the UN General Assembly, highlighting the challenge of remediating shipwrecks at a time when there are a range of other pressing environmental challenges: "Oil from some of the shipwrecks in my state of Chuuk has already started leaking. Any disaster could have a devastating effect on the environment, our food chain, and the surrounding reefs that serve as breeding grounds for many fish species. It will also adversely impact our tourism industry which depends largely on coral and shipwreck diving." He added: "To avoid a major environmental disaster, I am now appealing to the international community for immediate assistance." The FSM government formally briefed US officials on the problem, at the annual US-FSM Joint Committee Meeting on 17 November. SPREP's Talouli stresses the need for co-operation between flag nations and the Pacific countries that host the wrecks: "The vessel owner and the state need to work together. Both legally and financially, Pacific islands countries can't do it alone. "The responsibility for clean-up lies with the vessel owner. FSM can't touch the vessels legally, as they belong to the flag state. Small Islands states have to plead with the flag nations to provide the necessary resources."

#### Rays of Hope

Talouli says other countries could assist: "We're looking to work with personnel from the Royal Australian Navy and Royal New Zealand Navy on this issue. We're hoping to do more in the coming year, asking them to do assessments of possible oil leaks when they deploy to the islands." With extra resources, there is real potential to address the looming problem. McLeod believes that Chuuk has real expertise that can be supported by outside governments and environmental organisations. "People should work in conjunction with the Chuukese heritage team to turn this into the best-managed WW2 undersea park, conserving the wrecks in-situ and preserving them indefinitely. There are rays of hope but we need money to move in this direction. "The object is not just to get rid of the oil, but to preserve these wrecks over time," says McLeod. "There's a cornucopia of marine life on these wrecks and they make wonderful artificial reefs and nursing grounds for fish and sedentary bio-forms. Old wrecks are good! With appropriate resources, we could turn an inherited nightmare into a real plus," he said.

**Related Links** [Oil Leak Threatens Chuuk Lagoon](http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=20028/overrideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl)

[http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands\\_business/index\\_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=20028/overrideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl](http://www.islandsbusiness.com/islands_business/index_dynamic/containerNameToReplace=MiddleMiddle/focusModuleID=20028/overrideSkinName=issueArticle-full.tpl)

#### **SOUTH AFRICA, PIETERMARITZBURG, FEBRUARY 11 2012. TANKER DRIVER KILLED IN FREAK ACCIDENT**

*kamcilla pillay*

A truck driver died on Thursday morning after the tanker he was driving plunged 25m down an embankment in Pietermaritzburg. Netcare911 spokesman Chris Botha said the 78-year-old man had been at a depot in Orthmann Road when the accident occurred at about 5.40am. "The depot runs on a split level and on the far end of those driveways, is about a 25m high embankment, under which the second level runs." Botha said when the driver realised the tanker would not stop, he jumped out in a bid to save himself. The man fell and was caught under the wheels of the tanker in the process and dragged down into the embankment

<http://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news/tanker-driver-killed-in-freak-accident-1.1231653>

#### **USA, MA, WAKEFIELD, FEBRUARY 11 2012. UPDATE: OIL LEAK AT CONCRETE CO. CLEAR OF RIVERS, WELLS**

*sara jacobi*

More than 1,000 gallons of oil that leaked out of an underground storage tank on New Salem Street on Jan. 3 did not contaminate area rivers, private wells, or utility tunnels, according to the DEP. One month after more than 1,000 gallons of oil leaked out of an underground tank at a Wakefield concrete company, state officials say no oil has leaked into the nearby Mill River, private wells, or utility tunnels in the area. "They haven't detected any large areas of oil within the soil, and they haven't



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found any evidence of any large contaminated pools near the tank that was pulled," said Joseph Ferson, spokesperson for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). "There's no evidence of contamination in any utility tunnels or lines or anything like that. There are commercial and residential properties nearby, but no private wells are affected, and the nearby Mill River is not showing any oil sheening or any visual signs of oil leaking into the river," he said.

#### Background

The Wakefield company, [J.G. Maclellan Concrete Company](#), located at 1 New Salem Street in Wakefield, filled a 1,000 gallon underground oil storage tank on Tuesday, January 3rd. By the next day, the entire tank was empty, indicating the oil had leaked out into the ground. The company hired Commonwealth Tank to do an investigation and an excavation of loose underground oil, reportedly finding up to 200 cubic yards of contaminated soil, said Joseph Ferson, spokesman for the Mass DEP.

#### Month-Long Cleanup

Ferson said the company has already pulled the damaged tank from the ground, and they've hired other professionals to do additional probing of the soil and dig wells around the perimeter of the area to ensure all contaminated soil is removed. J.G. McLellan was not out of compliance with Massachusetts standards at the time of the accident, Ferson said, but the DEP will continue to look into the cleanup process and ensure it's done properly. "They have to submit an immediate response plan to us within 60 days, so we're continuing to monitor the situation," he said

<http://wakefield.patch.com/articles/update-oil-leak-at-concrete-co-clear-of-rivers-wells>

#### ZIMBABWE. HARARE, FEBRUARY 11 2012. ENGEN SEEKS DEALERS

*philip mangena*



Engen Zimbabwe (Engen), which recently acquired service stations from Caltex Zimbabwe, is seeking to appoint five dealers at some of its premises across the country. "Applications are invited from suitably qualified entrepreneurs to take up dealerships at Engen Zimbabwe service stations across the country," said the company in a statement, adding that the closing date for applicants was February 24. The African-based energy firm said potential suitors were required to have administration, accounting, retailing and oil industry experience among other skills. "Interested individuals or companies who have a minimum liquid operating capital of \$250 000... and are prepared to become full-time dealers, should submit their applications," added the energy giant. Engen, now part of an enlarged group comprising Croco Motors Chevron Zimbabwe, snapped up a majority share in the American company's local operation. The tripartite arrangement, in which Moses Chingwena's Croco holds 41 percent, Caltex Zimbabwe workers 10 percent and Engen 49 percent, came as Engen was seeking a new Harare deal as part of a regional package for acquiring Chevron's assets. Engen, a South African fuel retailer, is 80 percent owned by Malaysia's Petronas and operating in Zimbabwe

since 1996 and operates in 17 other African countries. Engen said, upon concluding its acquisition of Caltex assets in 2010, the deal would give it an additional 500m litres in fuel sales from 120 more outlets a year in the African market. Chingwena, one of Zimbabwe's wealthy individuals, also acquired the Mining Industry Pension Fund's majority stake in car dealers Duly's and Zincar. In recent years, he won the rights to distribute the exclusive Anglo-Indian Jaguar and Land Rover cars or marques through his Premier Auto Services Company. Apart from this, the reclusive millionaire owns several commercial buildings in Harare and co-owns agricultural implements supplier Bain Equipment with Energy minister Elton Mangoma, and Standard Chartered chief executive Washington Matsaira. Another global energy giant BP and Shell has also disposed of their assets to Masawara plc's FMI energy after decades of operating in Zimbabwe, as BP and Shell Marketing Services (BPSMS). Masawara acquired 70-plus retail outlets to its own name FMI Energy, as one of the conditions of the \$48m deal. Other assets in the FMI portfolio include 60-million-litre-storage tanks or depots across 10 strategic centres. Masawara funded the purchase through an \$8.2m cash consideration and third-party debt funding arrangements. BP had cited depressed volumes to sustain its continued presence in the country resulting in its decision to put the assets up for sale. The company said supply and funding constraints had reduced its market share significantly by the time it took the decision to pull out of the country. BPSMS was an



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established importer and distributor of petroleum products in the country. As at December 31, 2010, the unaudited value of the property, plant and equipment held by BP Zimbabwe, Shell Zimbabwe and BPSMS was \$48m, with total net assets of \$52m.

<http://www.zimbabwemetro.com/32858/engen-seeks-dealers/>

#### CANADA, SK, SASKATOON, FEBRUARY 11 2012. SASKATOON WORKERS EVACUATED AFTER SPILL



*Emergency crews were scrambling after a spill at a Saskatoon post office building Friday morning.*

Emergency crews in Saskatoon were called to a Canada Post building Friday morning after an unidentified fluid was spilled on a number of workers — but it turned out to be harmless. Investigators quickly determined it was hydrogen peroxide and there was no serious health risk — but for a while, crews were scrambling. The call came in around 8:15 a.m. CST from the Canada Post distribution building at 817 51st St. E. People at the building said a package was leaking a fluid onto letters in the mail-sorting area. Eleven workers got some of the

fluid on their hands and noticed their skin was turning white. The building was evacuated and employees were put onto buses to stay warm. None of the staff suffered from any pain or required any medical treatment, fire officials said. A good washing with soap and water was all that was needed. The Saskatoon fire department said Canada Post is planning to put out a statement telling the public that the mail that came in contact with the product may already be out through the delivery system. If anyone notices the product, which is similar to the texture of petroleum jelly, on packages or letters in their mail, they simply need to wash with soap and water, the fire department said.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/story/2012/02/10/sk-spill-saskatoon-1202.html>

**USA, GA, RABUN CO, FEBRUARY 12 2012. CREWS WORK TO KEEP TANKER SPILL OUT OF RIVER** A fuel tanker spill in Rabun County, has shut down part of Highway 76. Police in Oconee, South Carolina said traffic will be blocked for about eight hours to large trucks along Highway 76 from Westminster and across the state line into Rabun County. Officers are urging all travelers, though, to find alternate routes. Authorities said the tanker overturned just before 9 a.m., just over the state line from South Carolina. Crews from Oconee and Anderson counties responded to the spill. Oconee County Emergency Management and several area fire departments are at the scene. They're working to contain the hazardous materials from the tanker so that it doesn't reach the Tallulah River.

<http://www.wyff4.com/r/30435408/detail.html>

#### UGANDA, KAMPALA, FEBRUARY 12 2012. BUSHFIRE BLOWS FUEL TANKER TO PIECES >> THE TANKER WAS REDUCED TO ALMOST NOTHING



A diesel tanker belonging to a Kenyan businessman was Friday evening burnt to ashes by a wild bush fire along Lira-Kampala highway. The tanker, on its way to Juba in Southern Sudan from the Kenyan town of Eldoret, lost control and overturned at Agulurude in Loro sub-county in Oyam district. The accident happened in a wetland which made it very difficult for other vehicles to have enough grip to pull it out, the police said. The driver of the tanker registration KAL 338G, Hassan Ali said they took long at the scene of the accident because many heavy trucks which could have rescued them feared to get stuck. Another tanker registration KLA 319V was also trapped in an attempt to pull the blown tanker. According to the Officer-in-Charge of Kamdini police station in Oyam, George Willie Ocola, the fire which burnt the tanker, came from the northern direction at around 1pm when the driver and three other people in the travelling party were present. He

observed that no one could have been prepared for such an incident. "It happened when the police was not at the scene and no one would expect this kind of fire", Ocola said. This incident happened at a time when most leaders in Lango are advocating against bush burning. This is the second time in less than a month that fire destroys a vehicle. The first happened last Sunday night at Kitgum stage in Lira town.

<http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/628967-bushfire-blows-fuel-tanker-to-pieces.html>



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