

# Cleanup continues on oil pipeline break

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*The cleanup from the broken oil pipeline near Robertson continues as a huge mound of earth is stockpiled for disposal. The cleanup effort also includes digging trenches for the oil to pool in to help mitigate the damage from the oil. PIONEER PHOTO/Virginia Giorgis*

Cleanup from the broken pipeline, owned by Bridger Lake, LLC., near Robertson is an on-going matter as the company tries to mitigate the problems created by the break, according to Keith Nichols, a senior project manager for C-K & Associates, LLC of Louisiana.

Nichols is the incident commander for the site near Robertson for Bridger Lake, which is part of C-K & Associates. He said the company knows 2,000 barrels of oil was spilled. He said it could be as high as 5,000 barrels, but would not know the actual amount until all of the data is compiled.

As to the tons of dirt being removed and taken off site for disposal, Nichols said, the company would have no way of knowing until the removal was completed. The oil has seeped three feet below the surface.

The primary focus at this point, Nichols said, "is the most efficient containment and recovery of the oil." At some point after the data has been compiled, the company will know how much oil was lost and how much soil was removed.

The cleanup operation includes the removal of the soil and the digging of trenches in which the oil can pool. The contaminated soil is being hauled off site and disposed of at Calpet, a certified disposal facility, in Evanston. This process has already been approved by DEQ. The yardage, Nichols said, is measured when it is unloaded at Calpet.

In-situ burnings are being used as the oil pools in the trenches. Nichols said the ground water helps with moving the oil into the trenches. The company's concern is to clean up the area so there is no damage to the ground and water and leave the site clean.

The hay bales are used as a containment wall in case the oil oozes out of the piled soil. In addition, the hay can be used "as an organic fuel source so the oil will burn better" in the trenches.

The trenches might be left open for some time, according to Nichols, to ensure the area has been completely cleaned. The company has to "confirm the area is clean before restoration." Then, they will fill the trenches with soil and re-slope the landscape.