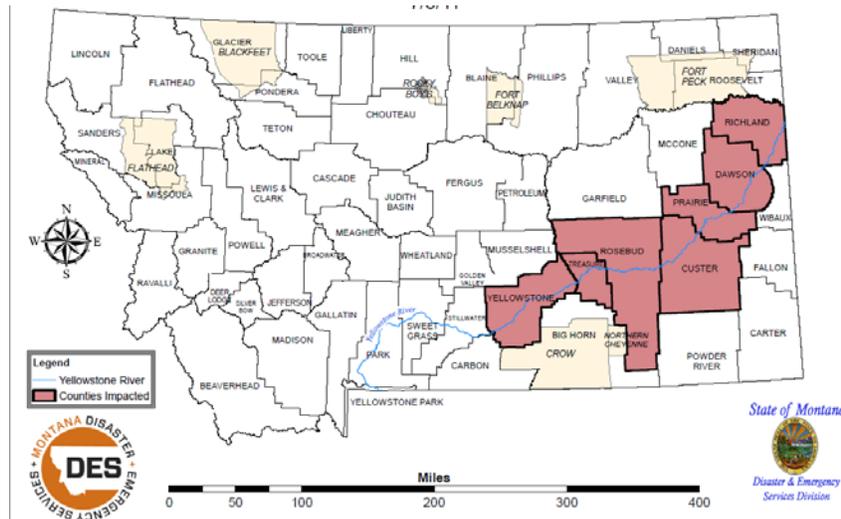


Update: Emergency Exists along the Yellowstone River in Treasure, Rosebud, Custer, Prairie, Dawson, Yellowstone and Richland Counties due to Oil Spill (Thursday 7/11/2011 12:15 PM).
Cecil Tharp, Pesticide Education Specialist, Montana State University



A break occurring in the Silvertip pipeline owned by Exxon Mobil released 1,000 barrels of oil (according to latest estimates released by Exxon Mobil) into the Yellowstone River approximately 20 miles upstream of Billings, MT. The 70 mile Silvertip Pipeline transports crude from south-central MT to Billings where it supplies a 60,000-barrel-a-day Exxon Mobil refinery and a 61,000-barrel-a-day refinery operated by ConocoPhillips (Bloomberg data). This spill occurred at approximately 11:00 PM on Friday, July 1st.

EPA Response

As of July 6th, approximately 440 responders are on the scene conducting cleanup activities. This has increased to 750 personnel on site with 540 currently in cleanup and sampling activities as of July 14th. Responders are using over 36,000 ft. of absorbent booms, 260,000 absorbent pads as well as 46 boats. In addition, a total of 7 Shoreline Cleanup & Assessment Technique teams (SCAT) continue to carefully assess and clean up the most heavily affected areas of the spill and comb the riverbanks. These, 'SCAT' teams will work on clean up while minimizing further impacts to ecosystems.

The river was initially separated into 4 zones for cleanup activity, with responders concentrated in division A and B – from Laurel to Duck Creek Bridge and Duck Creek Bridge to Johnson Lane. Zone C segment is from Johnson Lane to Miles City and Zone D is from Miles City to Glendive. To better allocate ground resources, the affected areas of the river have been further subdivided. Zones A and B remain the same. Zone C now ends at Yellowstone County line instead of Miles City. Zones D through H correspond with county lines moving east to Glendive, MT.

Distribution of Oil

An aerial assessment by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service personnel assessed the distribution of oil deposited along the Yellowstone River. Most of the oil was identified within 30 miles of the spill, while a pocket of emulsified oil has been identified approximately 80 miles downstream (as of July 10th according to reports by EPA).

EPA has released a map which contains both drinking water and air monitoring data at <http://www.epa.gov/yellowstoneriverspill/data/index.htm#water>. This data confirms preliminary reports indicating the oil is not above EPA drinking water standards and shows no elevated levels above instrument detection for volatile organic compounds.

Health Effects.

Residents along the Yellowstone River should be aware of strong smells which mimic a 'gas-station-like' odor. This odor may be the result of volatile organic compounds such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene.

- **Inhalation:** The smell of these compounds does not mean the compound is at a level that would cause long-term health concerns. Over-exposure to these compounds may cause headaches, dizziness, nausea or vomiting. Sensitive individuals should close windows and doors and remain inside, or if driving, turn your air conditioner on and set it to recirculation mode.
- **Ingestion:** Seek medical attention if you accidentally drink some oil contaminated water, and experience nausea, vomiting, or dizziness. Do not ingest fish with an oily residue.
- **Dermal Contact:** Avoid contact with water or sediments that may potentially be contaminated. If exposure has occurred, immediately wash with soap and water (do not use gasoline, solvents, or industrial cleaners). Children should be restricted from playing in or around contaminated areas, and they should not be involved in cleanup efforts.

Exposure to oil residue may also be detrimental towards wildlife. Always keep your pets from entering oil contaminated areas. Contact the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks at (406)247-2940 or the Wildlife Hotline at 1-800-259-0596 if you see any harmed or dead wildlife or fish.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: See the EPA news release at [EPA NEWS RELEASE](#), or see the EPA Yellowstone Oil Spill webpage at (<http://www.epa.gov/yellowstoneriverspill/>). The Montana DEQ encourages people to call the Governor's information line at 406-657-0231 with questions, concerns or comments, or visit www.yellowstoneriveroilspill.mt.gov.