

H.B. oil spill cleanup cost county \$1.5 million

Jaimee Lynn Fletcher, Orange County Register, 3-30-10

HUNTINGTON BEACH — Orange County put up \$1.5 million to clean an oil spill in Huntington Beach that contaminated 1.8 miles of the flood control channel in January.

Orange County Public Works on Monday released a report saying the county will look to be reimbursed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency for cleanup efforts after a petroleum spill was discovered on Jan. 22.

The 700-gallon spill contaminated the flood channel between Magnolia and Adams streets and infiltrated less than a half-mile of underground storm drains leading to the channel. No oil was leaked into the ocean or into the nearby 150-acre protected wetlands, the report says.

Thirty dead birds and one raccoon were recovered from the contaminated area but it is unclear if they died as a result of the oil spill, according to the state Department of Fish and Game. Six live oiled birds were also recovered and taken to a wildlife care facility.

The EPA issued a clean water act order to the facility responsible for the spill, which is not named in the report. The company will be expected to reimburse the EPA the \$1.5 million.

The county contracted with Ocean Blue Environmental Services for cleanup services and the contract will be in effect until Jan. 2011 or until the county terminates the agreement.

Fish and Game officials on Feb. 1 served a search warrant to Angus Petroleum at its Delaware Street facility. The company is suspected of being responsible for the spill, officials said. Angus Petroleum was searched after officials found oil in a storm drain near the facility.

DFG continues to investigate the source of the spill, officials said.

Crews used plastic barriers to contain the oil and vacuum trucks and absorbent materials were used to clean the oil.