

HAZCO HAPPENINGS

August 2005 Wabamun derailment

By Eri Michaelsen, project team mentor

On August 3, 2005 a CN train derailed at Wabamun Lake, Alberta spilling roughly 770,000 litres of bunker "C" into the lake along with a small amount of pole treatment oil. One of the first responders to this emergency was the Hazco environmental people out of Edmonton. The size of this spill was more than anything people had seen before. There would need to be a massive deployment of people and equipment and we managed, as never before, mostly thanks to Jim Rose.

Brad Dlouhy was the first person on site and quickly assessed the area. The mass confusion was as big a problem as the spill itself, but our people managed to get things organized. It took about a week and there were very few hours of sleep involved. Everyone excelled and to this day CN thanks us for our efforts. The crash site produced an incredible 26000 tonnes for our landfill at Tower Road. They had never dealt with a volume that large before but they rose to the challenge and made it



Above: Derailment site from the helicopter.

Below: The decontamination facility at the marina cleaning boom contaminated with bunker "c" oil. The helicopter was landing at the staging area after surveying lake hot spots where workers were bagging contaminated boom and reeds.



Photo by Mark Gibson

possible for us to give CN the service they were expecting.

Currently, the waste services group is hopping. The site can produce anywhere from 100 to 200 bags a day, seven days a week and they now have figured out what to do with the spill contaminants.

Kevin Bloom, from the Vancouver branch, is overseeing the lake clean-up and managing the whole site. Bloom has the pleasure of looking after all the sub-contractors, (about 150 people) boats, vacuum trucks, labour supply people and of course all the negotiations with CN. Again another excellent effort.

The project has been an exciting and a terrific experience. Thanks to all for the effort they put forth and the personal sacrifices they endured to pull this project off.

As of today (day 52) we are now over 70,000 (35 man years) labour hours of
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Tanker rail cars with pools of bunker “c” oil.

Safety side note

work performed without a lost time incident. The average person works approx. 2000 hours/year. We have had our share of knicks, cuts and sore muscles but overall everyone is to be commended for their excellent work in keeping the work place incident free. There have been some very unique issues for the safety department to address. From 55 people out on the lake (each with a Mustang survival suit) to working heavy equipment and trucks in close proximity to one of the busiest rail tracks in Canada. In addition, we are using a helicopter to lift the soil bags full of oil boom and pom pom’s (more accurately known as *all snares* which are placed on the shoreline to catch the oil and look exactly like cheerleading pom poms) from remote and inaccessible areas of the lake to a staging area for shipment back to the Edmonton transfer station. The helicopter

presents unique safety issues, most of which we had not encountered before. The Alberta division of Hazco owes a big thank you to James O’Dwyer from Vancouver who dropped what he was doing and flew in to implement an effective safety program.

Hazco would like to thank the individuals who played key roles and contributed to the success of this, sometimes, overwhelming but very rewarding project: Brent McLeod, Freeman Murdoch, Graham Sharpe, Greg Thompson, Jack Watt, Kevin Lemoal, Mark Gibson, Mike Irving, Rob Watt, Ronda Bertram, Travis McCollister, Trevor Asseltine and Vince Gracie.

Two photos below: Workers cleaning boom at decontamination facility

