
‘Tar balls’ being cleaned up on Highway 199

June 7, 2022



A cleanup contractor working under the guidance of a coalition of federal, state and local agencies has been successful in removing some of the asphalt-binding product that spilled into the Smith River from a truck incident last month.

Work conducted this week by Ancon Services focused on removing the tar-like material from the riverbank in the immediate spill area off Highway 199 near Gasquet.

Ancon Services also focused downstream cleanup efforts of tarballs within Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park, part of Redwood National and State Parks. All reported tarballs within the park have been removed.

As of May 26, the threat of release from the source location has been mitigated and we anticipate there will be no additional product entering the river.

Work near the incident site will pause for the holiday weekend to reduce traffic congestion, since a single lane closure has been required for worker safety. In the meantime, recovery of product will be focused on other parts of the river where product has been observed.

Much of what's been observed downstream is small pieces of product. OSPR is investigating potential wildlife impacts. The Oiled Wildlife Care Network has been notified and is prepared to deploy if warranted.

Anyone who observes tarballs in the river or riverbank should not attempt to pick them up and report the sighting to tarballreports@wildlife.ca.gov.