Center for Spills in the Environment

Oil Sands Products Training

FACT SHEET

Oil Sands Products Training

On December 4 – 5, 2012, The University of New Hampshire's Center for Spills in the Environment conducted a training on oil sands products, sponsored jointly by Maine Department of Environmental Protection, Response Services and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 1. It was held at the University of Southern Maine's Abromson's Conference Center in Portland, Maine.

The goals of this meeting were to learn the basics of oil sands products: What are they? What are their characteristics? How are they transported by rail? Once these basics were known, the next step was to answer: What are the fate, behavior and modeling associated with potential spilled oil sands products? What are the effects of oil sands products on the natural environment? The 2010 Enbridge/ Kalamazoo pipeline spill in Michigan provided a case study with which to consider potential response options and damage assessment strategies.

Over 60 participants from Maine, New Hampshire, Washington and Canada attended, including responders from federal and state environmental agencies, the U.S. Coast Guard, oil spill response organizations, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, and the transportation industry.

Invited speakers who contributed valuable information included Randy Mikula of Kalium Research, Heather Dettman of Natural Resources Canada, William Fairfield of Canadian Pacific Railroad, Bruce Hollebone of Environment Canada, Peter Hodson of Queen's University, Lori Muller of USEPA, Region 5 and Jessica Winter of NOAA's Office of Response & Restoration. The second day of the training was devoted to discussions on response to a potential railway spill of oil sands products highlighting the sensitive resources potentially at risk. The participant group discussions responded to several key questions (i.e., potential scenarios, response challenges/issues specific to oil sands spill, and what information is needed to improve this response).

A report on this meeting is forthcoming and additional information and presentations are posted on the meeting website>> http://crrc.unh.edu/workshops/oil_sands/index.html or contact Nancy Kinner, director of Center for Spills in the Environment at 603.862.1422 or nancy.kinner@unh.edu.