

# Dunsmuir Railyard environmental cleanup and restoration project

Union Pacific Railroad  
North Fueling Facility, Dunsmuir Railyard, California

## Introduction

Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) is conducting environmental cleanup activities at the Dunsmuir Railyard, North Fueling Facility located at 5750 Sacramento Avenue in Dunsmuir, California. This work is being completed under oversight by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Office of Spill Prevention and Response (CDFW-OSPR).

## History and Operations

The Dunsmuir Railyard has operated since the early 1900s. Prior to 1955, the facility (then operated by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company) was equipped with a steel tank with a capacity of 2.1 million gallons. The tank held Bunker C fuel to power steam locomotives. It was replaced by a 200,000-gallon diesel tank in 1955. UPRR acquired the property in 1996. In the years that followed, UPRR transitioned away from fuel storage and fueling operations at the site. By 2003, most of these activities had ceased.

Unknown amounts of Bunker C and diesel fuels have seeped into the soil, groundwater, and Upper Sacramento River. Several attempts have been made over the last century to stop contamination from migrating into the river. Current response activities stem from a citizen report of oil along the riverbank near the facility in 2018. Since then, environmental response actions have included:

- Additional site investigation to support design and implementation of site cleanup activities
- Excavation of impacted material along the surface of the riverbank and partial riverbank restoration
- Installation of oil barriers in the river and along sections of the concrete walkway adjacent to the river
- Installation of containment boom in the river

## Regulatory Oversight

Response activities are being conducted under a Unified Command that includes the EPA, Water Board, CDFW-OSPR, Siskiyou County Environmental Health, and UPRR. The Water Board issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order to address sitewide contamination, including oil discharged to and discharging to site groundwater and oil migrating through groundwater to the Sacramento River. Additionally, the EPA issued a Clean Water Act Order requiring response actions to remove the discharge or to mitigate or prevent the substantial threat of a discharge of oil to the Sacramento River. Response Actions discussed in this public notice will be completed under EPA oversight as required by the EPA Order and, in part, by the Water Board Cleanup and Abatement Order.

CDFW-OSPR has monitored the waterway since 2018 and has not observed impacts to wildlife. Additionally, the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) assessed the river and recommended (as recently as May 2022) that the fishery remain open, after concluding that the situation did not reach the threshold of being a threat to public health.

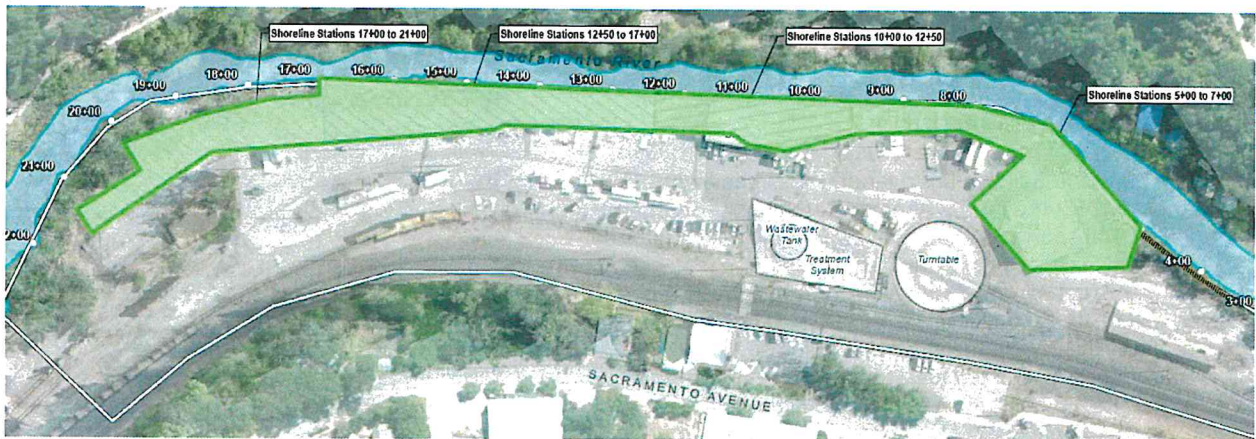


## Planned Response Actions

UPRR will continue response actions through 2023 to comply with the EPA Clean Water Act Order; in part, these response actions also comply with the Water Board's Cleanup and Abatement Order. EPA is lead oversight agency for the following planned response actions:

- Removal of retaining walls and the adjacent walkway
- Excavation of oil-impacted soil along 1,000 feet of shoreline
- Riverbank restoration along that shoreline to increase river capacity and create additional habitat for birds and fish

Due to the extent of planned response activities and seasonal work limitations, these response actions are anticipated to occur through 2023. The planned cleanup activity areas are shown in the photo below.



Planned Response Action Areas

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Will the river be accessible during construction?

For safety reasons, the public is strongly recommended to avoid the section of river adjacent to the site during the 2022 and 2023 construction seasons (July – November). During the 2023 season, access to the river adjacent to the site will be restricted.

### Is it safe to eat the fish from the river?

Yes. The state Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) found there was not likely a public health threat associated with consuming fish as a result of petroleum releases into the river. That recommendation was renewed in May 2022, as there currently is less oil entering the water column than in 2018 when the OEHHA finding was made.

## Contact

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## Learn More

Project updates will be posted on:  
<https://calspillwatch.wordpress.com/tag/dunsmuir-historical-oil/>

Documents related to this project are also available at:  
[https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile\\_report?global\\_id=T10000005772](https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/profile_report?global_id=T10000005772)