

# January Newsletter

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Know Your Watershed

January 2020

## SCCWS given first hand opportunity to view training exercises to respond to oil spills

The oil and gas industry is an important part of our economy and life in southwest Saskatchewan. As with any activity, there are risks associated with industrial operations within or near our watershed. One risk is an incident involving upstream petroleum products either on land or in water. Such an event has the potential to impact the local ecosystem.

Due to these potential impacts and the oil and gas industries desire to be proactive and to protect the environment in the event of an incident, upstream oil and gas and pipeline companies work very hard to minimize the risk chances of spills occurring through preventative maintenance, route planning, integrity programs, and conducting exercises. When incidents do happen, responses must be quick, organized, and comprehensive to mitigate the risk to people, the public, and the environment. One of the tools for oil and gas companies to use is being a member in a local spill co-operative which is mandated by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Energy and Resources. Here in southwest Saskatchewan, the spill co-operative is known as the Area 3 Environmental Response Unit (Area 3 ERU). This organization works to provide specialized equipment and training for members to use in the event of an incident.



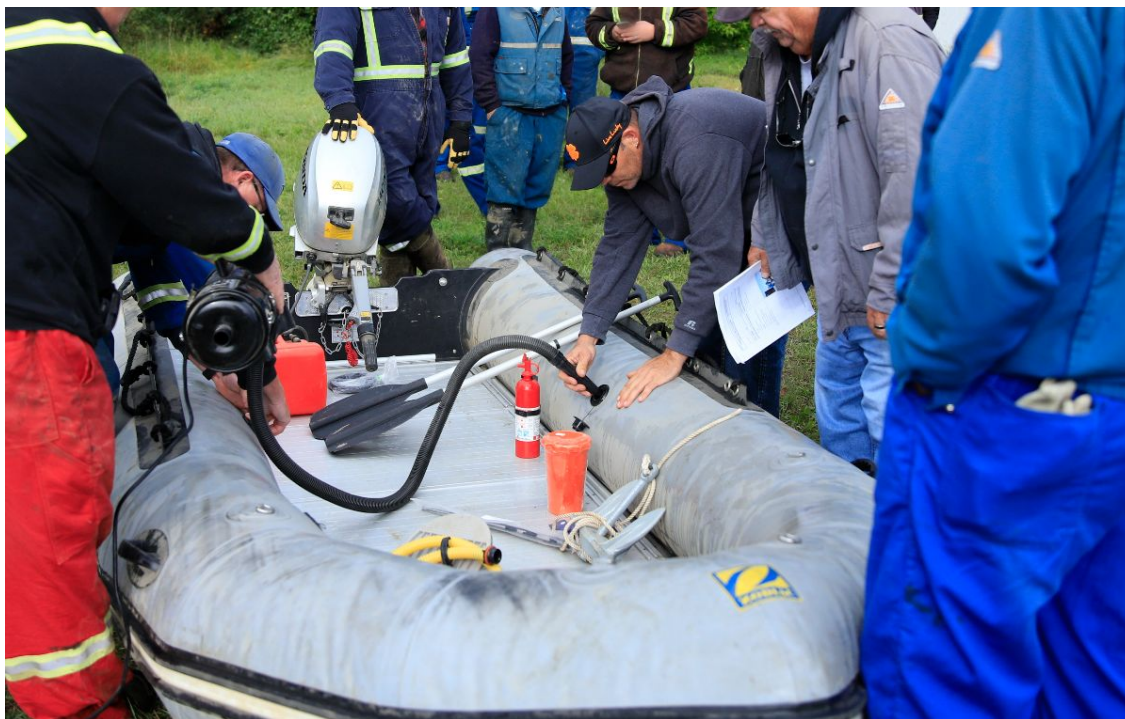
Area 3 Environmental Response trailer. This trailer houses all of the equipment and material needed to respond to a contaminant spill. It is housed in a central location and can be rapidly transported to where needed.

The Area 3 ERU is responsible for:

- Preparation and maintenance of the Southwest Saskatchewan Area 3 release contingency plan.
- Selecting and purchasing appropriate specialized equipment for responding to releases.
- Conducting annual training exercises for which all member companies are mandated to have at least one representative in attendance.
- Provide mutual aid in situations should they occur.

The Swift Current Creek Watershed Stewards (SCCWS) has formally been invited to observe these exercises for the past three years. The exercises have a short classroom component to inform attendees of their roles and responsibilities in the event of an incident. The second portion is a simulation and/or hands-on exercise to control, contain, and recover released fluids. Attendees assemble and use the equipment as part of the simulation to gain knowledge, expertise, and care of the very specialized equipment.





Area 3 Environmental Response Exercise participants getting jet boat ready to use

The Area 3 ERU maintains a jet boat and two trailers stocked with equipment and the necessary supplies for containing and recovering released fluids. For incidents on a waterway, this includes floating booms to contain releases and direct it to fluid recovery units. The trailer also has a compact zodiac watercraft which can be used to aid in boom deployment if the water body is posing a threat to personnel working in the water body. Once the containment booms are placed and the released product is contained, a skimmer unit is placed within the containment area to recover released product. The recovered product is then pumped from the skimmer to a temporary holding tank or directly into a recovery unit vacuum truck if the site is easily accessible.

This simulation/exercise is an annual requirement and has been active since the 1980's. This year, there were 82 participants representing 30 companies. The SCCWS is encouraged that these companies understand the sensitivities and importance of preparing for potential incidents and send participants to these exercises. The SCCWS thanks the Area 3 ERU for inviting us to be a part of their exercises as they show their commitment to protecting sensitive riparian areas.

## Upcoming SCCWS Events

SCCWS will be giving a presentation about the AgriEnvironmental Technical Services at the following Pioneer Co-op Forage Workshops

January 21 Frontier

January 23 Maple Creek

February 5 Swift Current

Contact the Pioneer Co-op in those centers if you are interested in attending

January 23 and 24 Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds Annual Convention

February 24 Invasive Weed Workshop Shaunavon (tentative)

March 17 Invasive Pest Management Forum Swift Current

March 23 SCCWS Annual General Meeting Swift Current

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