

At Indian Mountain— Oil Spill Occurs Near Hughes

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The U.S. Air Force has reported an oil spill from a pillow bladder storage tank at a radar site on Indian Mountain. The spill is located only about fifteen miles from the Athabaskan village of Hughes and threatens to leak into the nearby Koyukuk River.

The total amount of spill was approximately 25,000 gallons of fuel oil with close to 15,000 running down a slope into a swamp adjacent to the

river.

The State of Alaska Department of Conservation said the tank was intended to be temporary and was installed in 1970. It holds about 50,000 gallons when full.

Jerry Hok, Fairbanks officer for that agency, said, "This tank was about half-full. They were expecting a delivery by Herc the next day."

Hok said Air Force personnel had left the area earlier that day, leaving a valve open to drain water out of the diked

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area surrounding the tank.

"Apparently a seam on the tank broke open and when the men returned around 11 P.M. they found oil leaking out through the valve."

Hok added that it was difficult to estimate the life expectancy of this type of storage tank "but we're beginning to get some idea from the number of accidents."

Ray Morris, from the federal Environmental Protection Agen-

cy, visited the site to direct clean-up operations. The Air Force was trucking fuel that was partially contained to other storage tanks.

There was no official comment on how much oil has gone into the river itself and whether or not there will be damage to wildlife, especially to the fish in the river.

Many of the Indian families of Hughes depend on fish from the river as a major food source.