

Major Oil Spill in Arkansas: Has ExxonMobil Lost Control of More than Just its Tar Sands Oil?

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It took less than an hour for something like 5,000 barrels (at 42 gallons per barrel) of ExxonMobil's tar sands oil flow into a residential neighborhood and surrounding wetlands in [1][Mayflower, Arkansas](#),[1] on March 29, once the company's Pegasus pipeline had opened a two-inch hole along its top surface. The hole was also over 22 feet long and made the pipe look like a split sausage.

The first pictures of the pipeline gash came from the law firm suing ExxonMobil on behalf of those hurt by the spill. The Duncan Firm of Little Rock posted four pictures on its [4][Facebook page](#)[4] April 11, following an onsite inspection the previous day.

That was the same day that ExxonMobil complied with a subpoena and delivered 12,587 pages of documents, including hundreds of plans and blueprints to Arkansas Attorney General Dustin McDaniel. Commenting on the 22 foot long, 2 inch wide, smooth split in the pipeline, McDaniel said, "The pipeline rupture is substantially larger than many of us initially thought."

Also that day, April 10, the Huffington Post ran a detailed story about widespread health complaints among people living near the pipeline and as much as a mile or more away. The next day, the Arkansas Times had a much [5][longer story](#)[5] about the town with the headline: "Will Mayflower ever be the same after the Exxon spill?" Not surprisingly, there was no one who thought so.



Arkansas Paper Hears Ticking Time Bomb

The Arkansas Times story notes in passing "the still-ticking time bomb on the shores of Central Arkansas's primary water source, Lake Maumelle, where the Pegasus pipeline comes within 600 feet of the shoreline."

And the Duncan firm is reaching out to people along for full 300-mile length of the pipeline in Arkansas, suggesting on Facebook: "If this pipeline runs through your property you may have a claim for damages."

None of this information came from ExxonMobil. Late on April 11, the ExxonMobil website's freshest news was a Unified Command press release from April 10, featuring the usual good news about the air, water, fish, and residents.

April 10 looks like the day ExxonMobil lost [2][control of the story](#)[2], at least for the

moment.

Despite sketchy mainstream media coverage outside Arkansas, enforced by a county sheriff's department obedient to ExxonMobil directives, the increased [3]flow of news[3] from the Duncan Firm, and Attorney General, and a local population losing patience with – and more importantly trust in ExxonMobil's promises will be much harder for America's most profitable corporation to control.

And Why Would Anyone Distrust ExxonMobil?

Some days ago, ExxonMobil gave four families well-publicized permission to return to their homes. The families chose not to return, because the Arkansas Dept. of Health suggested they wait till air quality tests confirmed it was safe.

ExxonMobil reported April 10 that "Fish in the main body of Lake Conway have not been affected." The press release acknowledges obliquely that a cove that is part of the lake already has tar sands oil in it, but tries to reassure the reader that that's as far as the diluted bitumen and its unknown, multiple chemical components will go .

One Mayflower resident who lives near that cove went to an ExxonMobil community meeting April 7 and heard an ExxonMobil panel of four guarantee that there was no tar sands oil in the cove. After the meeting, he went home and saw tar sands oil in the cove.

The Duncan Firm is pursuing the class action suit against ExxonMobil in federal court. On local TV April 9, Duncan Firm founder, attorney Philip Duncan said he expected the class of Arkansans harmed by ExxonMobil to grow into the hundreds.

Notes

[1] <http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/271-38/16841-tar-sands-oil-arkansas>

[2] <http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/271-38/16855-the-press-and-public-are-contained>

[3]

<http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/276-74/16890-cleanup-workers-collect-oil-faster-than-media-collect-information>

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Duncan-Firm/118456371523836>

[5]

<http://www.arktimes.com/arkansas/will-mayflower-ever-be-the-same-after-the-exxon-spill/Content?oid=2797633>

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