

K9 SCAT ON A RIVER SPILL IN CANADA – AN ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED BY DR. ED OWENS



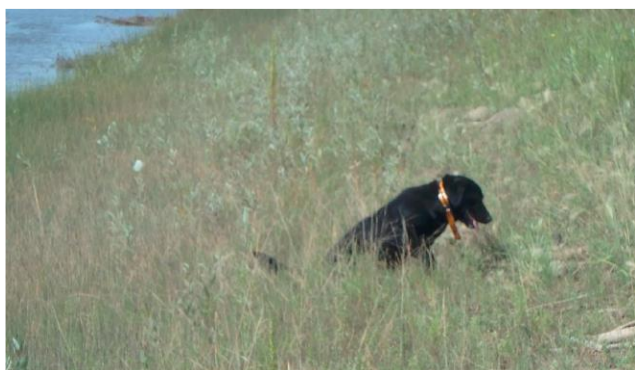
Dr. Owens is the President of Owens Coastal Consultants and is an internationally recognized expert on oil spill shoreline response. He has conducted oil spill related missions as a United Nations Expert Consultant for the International Maritime Organization on (IMO) projects in the Caribbean, South America, and Africa and was a technical consultant for the UN Claims Commission on the 1991 Gulf War claims.

Two K9 SCAT teams were deployed by Husky Energy on a river spill to the North Saskatchewan oil spill continuously between 11th August and 15th October.

The two canines were trained on oil detection prior to the incident and imprinted with the spilled oil on site prior to deployment.

The dogs completed over 60 boat-based field team days of effort and surveyed more than 250 km of river bank, out of the nearly 1,750 km surveyed.

Typically, the dogs searched 2 km of river bank for every linear kilometer of river.



The work was conducted off leash in a range of sediment and vegetated environments, along cut banks, and in some instances being directed from the bow of a boat.

The team included a professional handler and an experienced SCAT Team Lead.

All “alerts” were documented on a variation of the standard SCAT form, fixed by way-points, and photographed.

Search track lines were recorded to ensure full coverage.

The primary use of K9 SCAT was to clear areas in downstream reaches with little or no oil.

On many missions, the SCAT team was accompanied by a “clean as you go” (CAYG) operations boat and the oiled materials immediately removed.

As well as proving to be a valuable and efficient component of the SCAT program, the canines performed an important secondary role as “good ambassadors” to clear First Nation lands along the river.



The canines are trained and handled by K2 Solutions, Inc. and are part of the OCC-led SCAT program.

More information: Click on Dr Owens’ website at <http://owenscoastal.com/>

Note from Editor: ISCO Members can also find a great deal of information in the Members’ Area of the ISCO Website. You need to log in and then open the Technical & Reference section.

Click on Oil Spill Response and Scroll down to the bottom of the page to find SHORELINE CLEANUP ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE (SCAT) where you can find manuals, forms, publications, shoreline SCAT plans and cultural resources.