Pipeline – Inland

At 0430 on April 16th, the pipeline control center notices a pressure decrease in the 16” line as it is transferring a batch of oil sands product to the receiving refinery. This triggers a SCADA system alarm, which prompts control center personnel to order the pump station to be shut down. Emergency shutdown procedures are initiated and the pipeline is isolated between block valves. The pressure continues to drop in the line section adjacent to Tennant Lake in Ferndale, WA. Local 911 receives a report of oil in the marsh area around Tennant Lake as well as several calls from residents of a nearby subdivision reporting a strong petroleum odor. The pipeline initiates a response. Notifications are made and unified command is formed.
Resource Concerns

Ferndale, Washington is located on a southern crossing of the Nooksack River, minutes away from Bellingham, Washington and south of Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Tennant Lake is located about a mile SE of Ferndale. It covers about 43 surface acres and lies at an elevation of only 15 feet. The lake is shallow and locals describe it as a bird watchers paradise. Tennant Lake Park is a well-known tourism and recreation destination in Ferndale. It has two miles of trails and boardwalks to observe the wetland areas and resident wildlife. It also has Fragrance Garden, in which visitors can see and smell over 200 fragrant plants.

In the vicinity of Tennant Lake: The pipeline runs adjacent to Tennant Creek and its surrounding wetlands and streams. The area is home to a variety of wildlife species including beavers, blue herons, woodpeckers, frogs, wood ducks and other waterfowl, as well as bald eagles [FCo/SS]*.

The Nooksack River is a salmonid spawning area and is widely used for recreational fishing.

Many different Native American groups have a historical and continuing presence in Washington State. It is possible that cultural and historical resources exist in the area of the spill, particularly on the Nooksack River.

*Sensitive species include the following federal and state designations: Federal Endangered (FE), Federal Threatened (FT), Federal Candidate (FC), Federal Species of Concern (FCo), State Endangered (SE), State Threatened (ST), State Candidate (SC), State Sensitive (SS).