

MINUTE ITEM  
This Calendar Item No. 82  
was approved as Minute Item  
No. 82 by the State Lands  
Commission by a vote of 3  
to 0 at its 8-22-90

CALENDAR ITEM

A )  
S ) N/A

82

08/22/90  
C 9023  
W 3399  
W 30007  
Hall

DECLARATION OF A HAZARD TO INCLUDE  
IN THE COASTAL HAZARDS INVENTORY  
OIL SEEPAGE FROM OLD ABANDONED OIL WELLS  
LOCATED IN SUMMERLAND, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

PARTY: State Lands Commission  
1807 13th Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

In 1898 there were 22 companies that were drilling for oil within the surf zone and up to 800 feet from the beach in Summerland, Santa Barbara County. Staff has documentation that identifies 165 wells which were drilled prior to 1907 at this location. The then technology for plugging and abandoning these wells to ensure that oil would not escape was very crude by today's standards. In 1968, the Legislature appropriated funds to cap the wells. SLC contracted for the capping of sixty abandoned wells by placing a 5 foot deep concrete plug in the well casing below the ocean floor. An evaluation of the plugs was not performed and there is evidence that the methodology may not be totally effective.

During the summer of 1989, staff obtained the service of Oceaneering International to identify which abandoned wells were seeping oil. Due to restricted visibility this effort did not provide conclusive results. In November of 1989, during an on-site presentation to the prospective contractors for the Beach Hazards Program, the staff was approached by concerned citizens regarding the worsening problem of oil on the Summerland Beach. From that point forward the SLC Santa Barbara staff has monitored the beach and has found that the problem appears to be increasing.

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MINUTE PAGE 2365

JUSTIFICATION TO INCLUDE THE SUMMERLAND HAZARD IN THE COMMISSION'S INVENTORY

The seeping oil from the old abandoned wells continues to coat the beach at Summerland causing a disruption to recreational activities and harm to the local environment. The wells are located from the surf zone out to 800 feet offshore and the seeping oil comes directly to the beach area rather than dissipating or evaporating. The frequency of higher levels of oil on the beach has concerned the local community and SLC has been approached to provide a solution to the problem.

The Commission's Mineral Resources staff has analyzed the problem and has sought an economical and effective means to cap these wells to stop the seeping oil from the abandoned wells. The estimated cost to cap the wells is \$500,000 per year over a three year period.

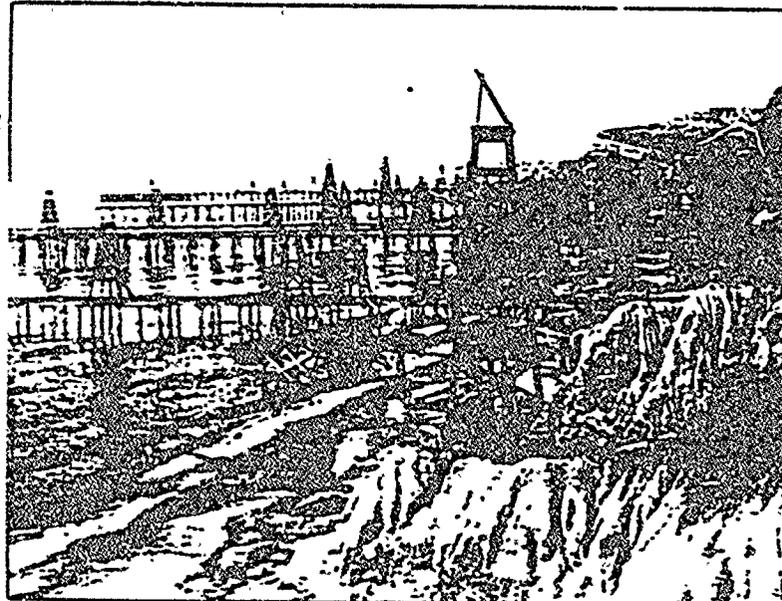
- EXHIBITS:
- A. Santa Barbara newspaper articles.
  - B. Summerland Beach site map.

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE COMMISSION:

1. FIND THAT THE ACTIVITY IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CEQA PURSUANT TO 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15061 BECAUSE THE ACTIVITY IS NOT A PROJECT AS DEFINED BY P.R.C. 21065 AND 14 CAL. CODE REGS. 15378.
2. FIND THAT THE HAZARD "ABANDONED OIL WELLS" LOCATED AT THE CITY OF SUMMERLAND, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY IS A HAZARD AS DEFINED BY THE COMMISSION'S CRITERIA CONTAINED IN THE 1986 HAZARDS INVENTORY REPORT.
3. AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO TRANSMIT A REQUEST TO THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMITTEE TO ADD THE HAZARD TO THE COMMISSION'S HAZARD INVENTORY.
4. AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER TO SOLICIT BIDS, AWARD AND EXECUTE THE CONTRACT TO THE LOWEST QUALIFIED BIDDER IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE CAPPING OF THE "ABANDONED WELLS AT SUMMERLAND".

EXHIBIT "A"

San Diego County (Cal.) Star & Free Press AUG. 3, 1990



Officials say oil is seeping from some of the 165 abandoned wells, seen here in their production heyday, along the Summerland coast.

# Oil, tar blobs darken Summerland beach

By Barry Berwick  
Special Staff Writer

Summerland's oil legacy of the early 1900s is returning with a vengeance as blobs of tar and oil appear on the beach. The sticky, gooey stuff is discouraging some local beach goers.

Later this month, the state Lands Commission will consider a recommendation declaring old oil wells along Summerland's shores an "extreme hazard." The commission, which regulates oil drilling within three miles of the coastline, also will debate spending

\$200,000 to cap several of these abandoned and leaking wells.

There was a time when the Summerland coastline had a view reminiscent of an Oklahoma oil field, as wells spread from the beach like a dark web.

In the early 1900s, there were no agencies looking out for shore and sea life. When a well went dry, it was not always capped with posterity in mind. Sometimes a telephone pole was shoved down the abandoned well to stem its flow. In other instances, a well was covered with stones.

Since those boom days, the waters off Summerland frequently have had an oily sheen.

Although state experts say some of the current oil mess is created from natural seepage — similar to the leakage at Coal Oil Point near the UCSB campus — part of the blame comes from 165 wells left abandoned in 1937, said Charlie Powell, an oil official with the Lands Commission.

No matter what the source of the oil, its presence has tainted life in Summerland.

"We can't even go to the beach

anymore," said Saché Kitoa, 14, of Summerland. "It is only everywhere. It has been that way for years. It (the oil) gets all over my bathing suit. That is why I don't go there anymore."

The oil does more than cling to clothing, said Carpinteria resident Ron Ward, who often fishes from the beach at Lookout Park.

"Sometimes the oil is so thick on your (fishing) line that you have to replace it," Ward said, while examining an inflatable chair he used to fish in. The chair had a ring of oily tar along its bottom.

"It's thick," Ward said of the oil. "It also stinks," said Lookout Park lifeguard Roland Smith as he viewed the floating oil slicks from his watchtower.

"When a wave goes out, the sand will be totally dry because it is saturated with oil," Smith said. "I do ocean swims and I have to stop when getting near Lookout Park because you can taste it. It is rancid."

One of the abandoned leaky wells is just a few steps from

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*SANTA BARBARA NEWS PRESS  
7/26/90  
8/1/90*

## Oil

Continued from Page A 1

Smith's tower, and is clearly visible.

"Sometimes there is so much oil it is like hair," Smith said. "You can smell it and taste it."

Lookout Park Ranger Jack Finnegan, a 16-year resident of the beach town, said the oil "has put a real damper on the normal beach activity we have here. It is bad, it is unusually bad."

Ridding the area of small, floating oil slicks and tar balls will not be easy — or cheap.

Jack Finnegan's office, said Tuesday an oil barge could be brought from Alaska to help cap the wells, but the price would be high.

The barge, which costs \$100,000 a month to operate, may be the cheapest way of correcting the leaking wells, Finnegan said.

"Those who use the beach want to see it fixed," Finnegan said. "The more people who make noise about it, the better it will be done."

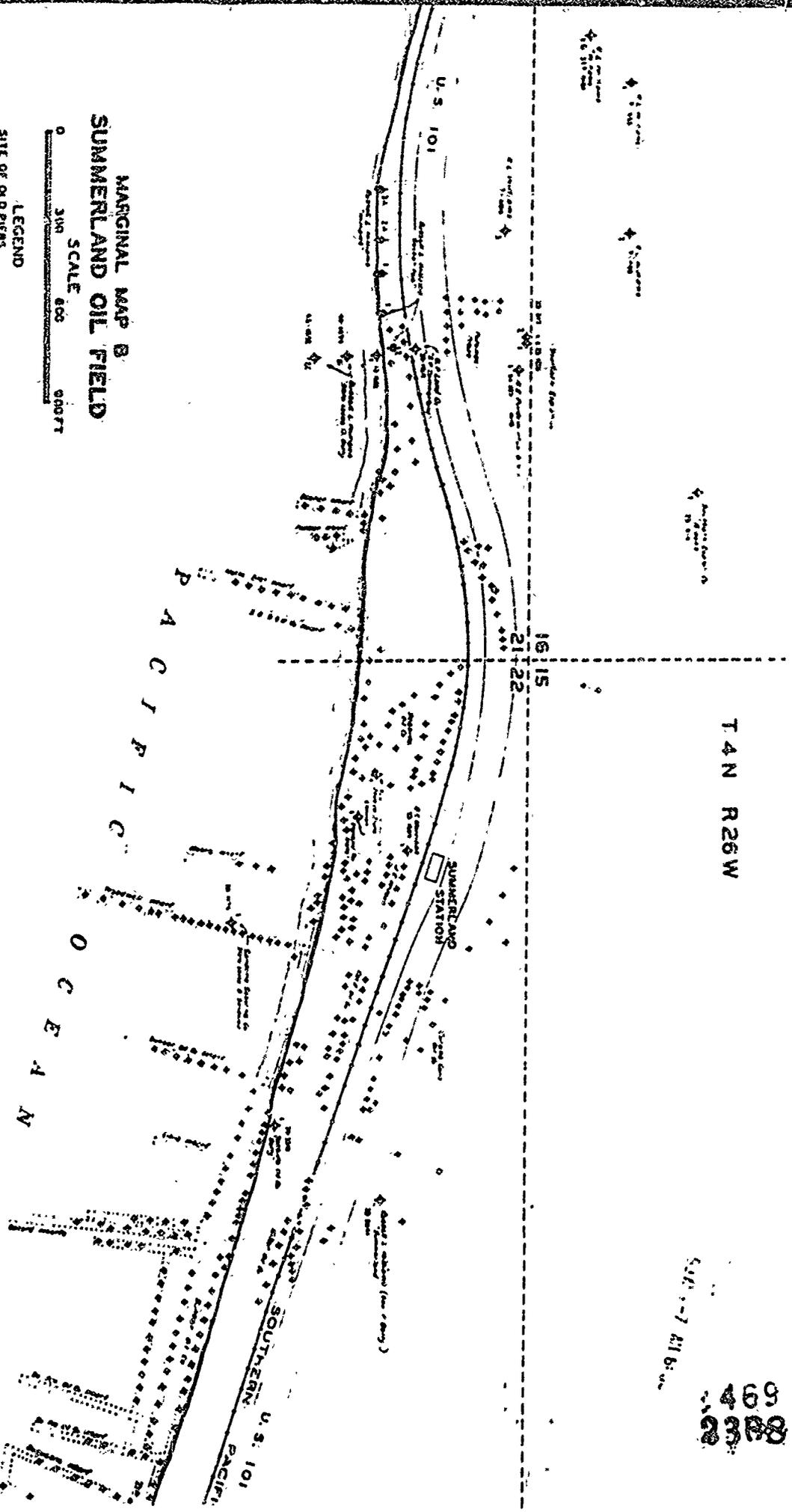
Should the Lands Commission approve its state's recommendations, clean up operations could begin in four months, according to Finnegan.

468  
2367

5000  
4000  
3000

Scale - 1/4" = 100'

T 4 N R 26 W



### MARGINAL MAP B SUMMERLAND OIL FIELD

0 300 600 900 FT  
SCALE

- LEGEND
- SITE OF OLD PIERS
  - OLD ABANDONED WELLS, NO RECORDS
  - LOCATION FROM U.S.G.S. MAP DATED 1907
  - ⊕ ABANDONED - OIL
  - ⊕ ABANDONED - DRY HOLE
  - ⊕ ABANDONED OIL

EXHIBIT "B"