

Statement by WORC On the Exxon oil pipeline spill July 8, 2011

The 42,000 gallon Exxon oil spill in the Yellowstone River hits close to home, just a short distance from the WORC office in Billings.

WORC members and friends along the Yellowstone are now dealing with this tragedy, confronting damage to the river banks, farmland and hay fields. They're concerned about the health of their families and animals.

WORC is teaming up with our Montana member group, the Northern Plains Resource Council, its local affiliate, the Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council, and allies to ensure that the Yellowstone River and affected lands are cleaned up as far as the swollen waters of the Yellowstone have taken it. We will also make sure landowners are justly compensated for any damages caused by the spill.

The Yellowstone River oil spill is a stark reminder of the potential risks of oil and tar sands pipelines to our precious rivers and underground water. It highlights the need for the best possible precautions for TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline.

That's why WORC is joining with Northern Plains to ask Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer to protect the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers and landowners along the path of the Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline by requiring these conditions if Montana grants a permit for the pipeline:

- Publication of a comprehensive Emergency Response Plan from TransCanada for public review before Montana issues a permit
- Restoration of all disturbed land to its original state in consultation with soil scientists familiar with the region
- A comprehensive engineering study of pipeline pressures and worst-case spill risks specific to the Keystone XL pipeline
- Compensation for all costs, including medical expenses, to landowners for permanent replacement of contaminated water due to the construction or operation of the pipeline.
- Assumption of liability for surface and water damage by TransCanada
- Identification of all hydrologic sensitive areas and implementation of a plan to protect those areas
- A certificate stating which state agency will oversee all pipeline construction activities in Montana

We will keep you informed about the Yellowstone clean up and the Keystone XL tar sands oil pipeline.