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# Gas spill cleanup continues

## Crews soak up fuel in Carbonero Creek

By Terri Morgan  
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Cleanup crews are still working to remove thousands of gallons of gasoline from Carbonero Creek, which was contaminated last Wednesday after an accident and spill on Highway 17.

"I honestly don't know how long it will take to return the creek to the condition it was before the spill," said Ted Haavisto, a safety and health manager with Crosby and Overton, the environmental firm hired to do the cleanup.

Haavisto said Tuesday that about 2,000 to 3,000 gallons of gasoline still need to be removed from the creek, which runs through Scotts Valley to Branciforte Creek and the San Lorenzo River.

The contamination occurred when a northbound tanker truck, owned by Petroleum Delivery Inc., overturned near the Mount Hermon Road exit in Scotts Valley, spilling nearly 4,000 gallons of gasoline onto Highway 17. Much of the gas washed into a drainage ditch along the road, then funneled directly into Carbonero Creek.

### Petroleum firm paying for cleanup

The Los Angeles-based company, which has a division in San Jose, is paying for the cleanup.

"About 600 gallons were collected on the road," Haavisto said. "We've pumped 800 to 1,000 gallons from the creek, and a certain amount has evaporated."

Because the creek is at the base of a steep hillside with dense growth, the cleanup workers' only access is behind a private Glen Canyon Road residence about a half-mile downstream from the spill site.

Crosby and Overton workers, assisted by inmates from Ben Lomond's California Youth Authority camp, dammed the shallow, slow-moving creek with gasoline absorbent booms, then pumped out the purple pools of petroleum. Once the imminent danger of explosion was eliminated, they put down absorbent pads to soak up residual gas.

"It's very tedious work," Haavisto said. "There are no quick fixes."

### Work to continue for a week

Officials from the California Department of Fish and Game, which is overseeing the job, estimates work will continue for at least another week to 10 days.

"The cleanup's going pretty well," said Phil Nelms, department patrol captain. "They've gotten a lot of the raw product out of the water. The next task will be removing it from the soil."

Cleaning gasoline from the soil is labor intensive, said Haavisto, because the soil must first be removed from the area.

"We'll be starting at the site of the spill and cleaning section by section," Haavisto said. "We may find that Mother Nature has helped out by evaporating the gas. If not, we'll be here for a while."