

State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries

1069 State Office Building
Portland 1, Oregon

MOHLER SAND & GRAVEL PIT OIL SEEP

Tillamook County

Location: The gravel pit is located about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of the town of Mohler along the bank of the Nehalem River, approximately in the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ sec. 5, T. 3 N., R. 9 W., Tillamook County.

Summary: A sample of oil-saturated gravel was obtained below the 3-foot level in a pit dug on a gravel bar on the north bank of the Nehalem River. The oil had a kerosene odor. There was a coarse brown-stained sand overlying the gravel which had a more residual oil odor.

Discussion: On August 12, 1958, Herbert Schlicker and I visited the Mohler Sand & Gravel pit about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles east of the town of Mohler. We met Mr. Ken Crowell, owner of the gravel operation at the crushing plant near the north bank of the Nehalem River. Mr. Crowell took us to the gravel bar alongside of the river and showed us a hole filled with water where he said he had hit an oil saturated gravel. He moved a small (1/2 yard) power shovel to the hole and proceeded to scoop out sand and gravel. The depth of the hole was about 3 feet when he began. The top layer scooped out was a coarse brown-colored sand which was oil saturated and had a residual odor. Below the sand was a pebble gravel which had a bluish cast and smelled strongly of kerosene. The odor could be noted several feet from the hole.

Mr. Crowell showed us another area nearby where the surface gravel had been stripped to a depth of 2 or 3 feet and showed the same bluish color. He said oil was encountered there also. The area where oil shows were noted covered a 100' x 100' square.

Three half-gallon samples were taken of the oil saturated gravel. One of these samples was given to Parke Snavely of the U. S. Geological Survey, Fuels Branch, Menlo Park, California, for a check on the type of oil. Mr. Snavely said it was extremely difficult to distinguish refined oil from natural petroleum.

Report by: V. C. Newton
August 19, 1958