

Rainier Oil Spill Prompts Review

During the winter of 1984-85, approximately 7,000 gallons of diesel fuel were lost from a storage tank at Paradise day-use building, Mount Rainier National Park. A leak in the tank or overflow due to water infiltration of the tank resulted in a spill into soils around the tank, according to Bob Dunnagan, Assistant Superintendent.

The displaced fuel either flowed under the snow-pack or through the soil to Barn Flat, about one-third of a mile downslope from the day-use building. In late June 1985, the smell of diesel fuel became evident at Narada Falls, on Paradise River about 3 miles downstream from the Barn Flat tributary. This prompted investigation, which revealed oil pooled on $\frac{9}{10}$ of an acre at Barn Flat.

Immediate cleanup of the contaminated area was begun, and continues, using temporary retaining dams and special absorbent pads made of a synthetic material that absorbs oil but not water.

In-house review of the entire situation is scheduled for mid-August, after which a *Park Science* article will be written describing the event from a number of perspectives. These will include the ecological effects, the regulatory maze, and the sociopolitical ramifications of handling such a situation.

"I think," said Dunnagan, "that a good deal of wisdom that will be useful throughout the Park System can be distilled from all this."