NOAA Hazardous Waste Site Report

Liquid Gold Oil Corporation (IX-2)
Richmond, California
April 13, 1984

Location and Nature of Site:

The Liquid Gold Corporation site covers 17 acres of filled marshland within the city of Richmond, California (Figure 1). Liquid Gold, a subsidiary of Southern Pacific, was registered with the State of California as a "waste oil pickup" business. It purchased used oil and resold it for uses such as fuel, lubricating oil, and dust control. Several deteriorating buildings and 27 storage tanks of various sizes are located on a site of about two acres. Oily waste found on the ground as well as liquid wastes stored in tanks contain lead, chromium, nickel, and phenols. This site is within 1,000 feet of San Francisco Bay and overlies shallow groundwater (1).

Proximity of Chemical Hazard to Marine Resources:

Liquid Gold lies on the fringe of a coastal plain estuary. This portion of the estuary has a history of pollution problems and has been the subject of numerous state enforcement actions. In July 1983 Liquid Gold ceased operations. The State of California and Southern Pacific have since completed removing the storage tanks. Southern Pacific is currently preparing detailed cleanup plans for the remainder of the facility.

Floating oil and heavy metals are present on site from Southern Pacific operations. Soil and groundwater samples were analyzed for heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB's), phenols, oil, and grease/hydrocarbons. These parameters were chosen for comparative purposes with the available background information. Groundwater samples collected by Ecology and Environment, Inc. (E&E), under contract to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA), indicate that dissolved metals, with the exception of lead, are below the toxic threshold limit concentrations. The site is underlain by fill and bay muds which restrict the mobility of contaminants both on- and off-site. Containment would be difficult on this site if a 50-100 year storm occurred. Shallow groundwater beneath the site flows westerly towards the bay.

Marine Resources at Risk:

This site is located in a heavily developed area near Oakland, California. San Francisco Bay and the Richmond Harbor are bordered by salt marshes with large and smaller lagoons and mud flats that communicate with San Francisco Bay via Point Isabelle. In a small bay

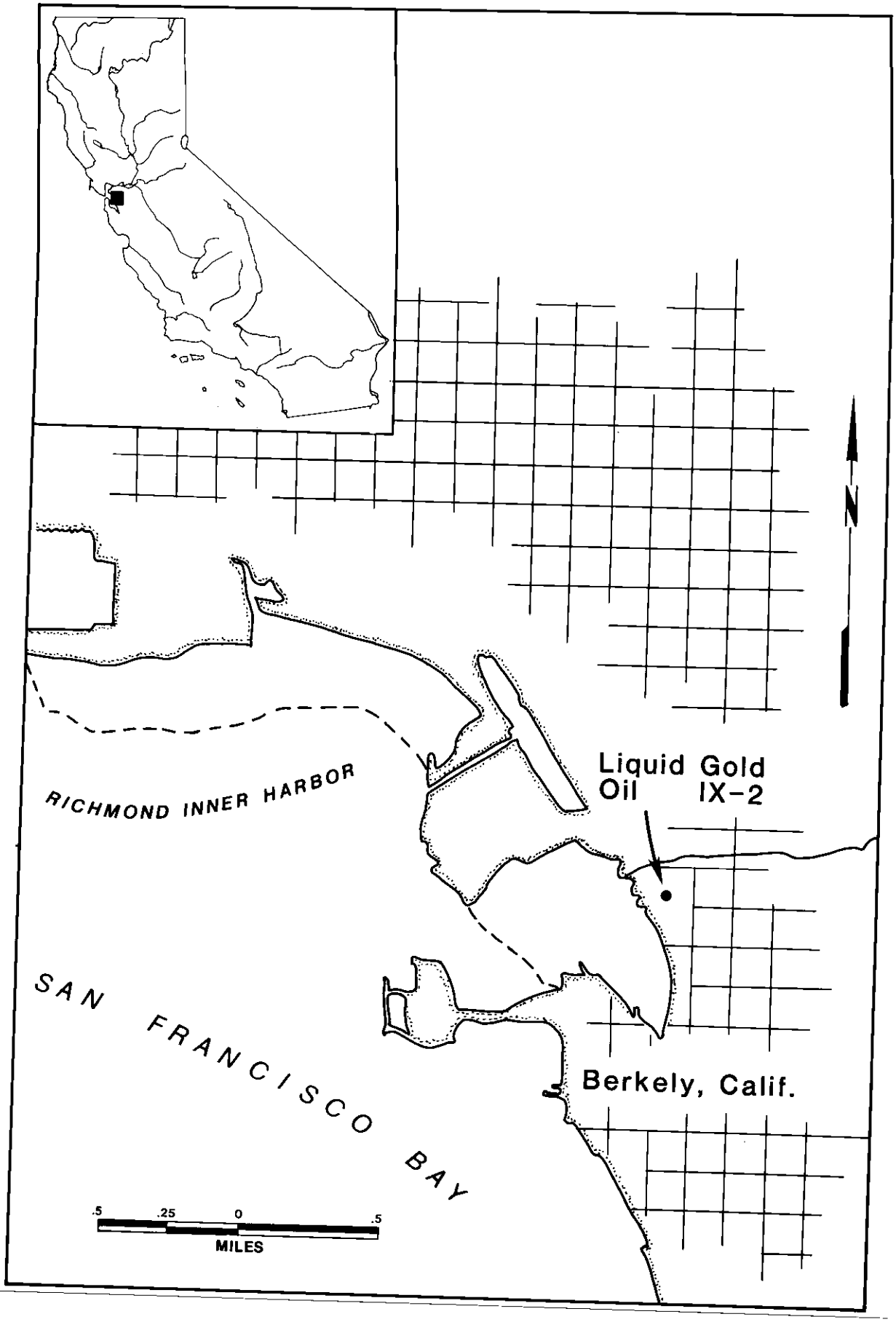

FIGURE 1. Site location.

north and adjacent to the Golden Gate Fields area are nesting sites for the endangered California clapper rail and littleneck clam beds (7). Harbor seals are found in the western and southern areas of San Francisco Bay. There are nesting colonies of seabirds on the outer shores of San Francisco Bay and migratory birds use the sheltered ponds and tidal flats as feeding and rest areas. The endangered salt marsh harvest mouse also uses the habitat around Liquid Gold. The marine resources of San Francisco Bay are not commercially harvested, but there are recreational fisheries for striped bass and other species (Table 1).

Table 1. Fishery resources of San Francisco Bay (4,5,6).

Finfish Species	Adult Habitat	Spawning Area	Nursery Area	Comm. Fish.	Rec. Fish.	Migr. Route
Anadromous						
Salmonids	X				X	
Steelhead trout	X				X	
Striped bass	X				X	X
Sturgeon	X				X	X
Non-anadromous						
Surf perch	X				X	
Flatfish	X				X	
Shellfish						
Softshelled clam	X	X	X			
Littleneck clam	X	X	X			

Summary of Site-Related Actions:

The EPA and the State of California have completed preliminary and secondary evaluations of the site (3). Groundwater samples from 57 soil borings and ten monitoring wells indicate insignificant levels of contaminants in the soil and groundwater supply. The hydrogeologic condition of the site, along with the analytical results obtained, suggest that the mobility of the contaminant both on- and off-site is very restricted.

Proposed EPA remedial actions focus on continued sampling of the groundwater to determine the extent of contamination at the site. A site monitoring program is planned.

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