

Daily Log for Chris Haynes
January 13, 2010
All times are approximate

0630 – Met Greg Gearheart and Dylan Seidner left Sacramento and drove to San Leandro.

0830 – We arrived in San Leandro and drove by the Foamex/Kaneka facility on Polvorosa and the Metro Poly Corp. facility on Aurora Drive. There was a crew working in the Metro Poly Parking lot on what appeared to be a stormwater drain. At the side of the building I observed plywood laid on the railroad ballast that I did not remember from my previous site visit. I also noted that there were several plastic bins staged near the rail cars also not seen on my previous visit.

0840 - We briefly inspected the stormwater outfall located just west of Metro Poly (now designated ESTN). This storm outfall drains the area of Foamex and the former Kaneka site as well as possibly a portion of Metro Poly. The tide was coming in fast and we wanted to understand how we would conduct the sampling effort.

0900 - Met with Department of Fish and Game (DFG) Warden Kyle Hiatt and Biologist Janna Rinderneck in the Costco parking lot on Davis St., San Leandro. SF Bay Regional Water Board staff (Boschen, Felix, Rembaum-Fox, and Pham) also met us there. DFG staff decided to inspect Metro Poly Corp. facility on Aurora Dr. while Water Board staff headed to the stormwater outfall mentioned above to begin implementing our rapid field debris assessment and sampling plan. I walked the railroad spur that runs north and east along the wetland area and behind the Foamex/Kaneka facility. I collected one sample of foam like pellets from the edge of the wetland behind the former Kaneka facility.

0915 – I walked south, from the above stormwater outfall to see if I could find the 42 inch storm water outfall that also may drain from the area of Metro Poly. I located the outfall and observed many pellets in this area. I collect a small sample as I was unsure if the tide change might make later sampling even more difficult.

10:00 – Joined the group sampling the stormwater outfall west of Metro Poly and submitted my samples to Dylan. The tide was very high but the group seemed to be finding many of the foam type plastic. I walked into some of the wetland area previously sampled and observed many pellets. The smaller plastic pellets were much harder to see and floated much lower in the water but were numerous. I assisted with cleanup activities.

11:20 - Left the ESTN area and drove by Metro Poly Corp. facility on Aurora Dr. Stopped to briefly talk to Warden Hiatt, who mentioned they had sampled the raw LDPE materials from this facility and were almost done there and planning to go inspect and possibly sample the area we refer to as ESTN.

1130 - Broke for lunch.

1230 - I joined the Water Board team headed to southern 42 inch outfall, referred to as ESTS, to inspect and possibly conduct assessment and sampling. Decided to break outfall ESTS into two areas, Northern bank and Southern Bank, and only sample (no rapid debris assessment) this area for plastic pellet debris. The tide was moving out and it was no longer under water. This area appeared to have much less debris, including plastic pellets, than ESTN area however a close examination of the vegetation and mud surface showed both the foam type and harder plastic type of pellets in abundance. The harder plastic type of pellets were very hard to see as they seem to collect some sediment on their surface and just blend into the background.

1320 – Greg received a call from Warden Hiatt, who, along with Biologist Rinderneck, had discovered another facility owned and operated by the same Metro Poly Corp. (owners and operators of the Aurora facility) at 2020 Williams St. in San Leandro. Warden Hiatt requested that our Water Board team should join them immediately. We drove to the Williams St. facility.

1340 – We arrived at the Williams St. facility and joined Laura Drabant of the State Water Board's Office of Enforcement. Met with Tommy ? and Peter Kung in the parking lot of the Uni Poly Williams St. facility and obtained consent to conduct an inspection and take any samples at the facility. I had met Mr. Kung during my previous visit to Metro Poly.

1345 – I joined the Water Board team (all except Pham, Drabant and Seidner) and entered the facility and began inspecting the facility. SF Bay Regional Water Board led the inspection and is preparing a separate inspection report. My observations are summarized below:

- In the front parking lot I observed plastic pellets on the pavement.
- The rail siding on the Western edge of the facility was paved and covered with many plastic pellets.
- There appeared to be few best management practices (BMPs) in place for many of the rail cars parked in siding area. Some had poor BMPs in place. For example, some had small pans under the hopper valves and makeshift caps designed to prevent spillage during vacuuming process. These caps were different and better than the cut plastic covers I observed during my previous site visit to Metro Poly. However like Metro Poly the transfer hoses were often PVC pipes taped together and stuck in valve opening (observed some with and some without makeshift caps). Hoses and vacuums were undersized and pellets were observed all over the area, including on the upper dock area and beyond the fence.
- At the back fence area of the facility I observed a door accessing the inside of the facility (later discovered to be the recycling area) and lots of debris that appeared to have been washed off the landing near the door towards the Northern fence line (and into the raid spur area directly on the other side of the fence). John Camp from the City of San Leandro briefly joined us at this point in the inspection.

- We entered the facility in this Northern edge door and began inspecting the inside operations. Tommy and Peter indicated that this back area is where internal recycling of both LDPE and HDPE occurs. They indicated that this recycled material accounts for about 5% of all the material they use at the facility to make products.
- I received samples of both the LDPE and HDPE raw material pellets from Tommy and Peter. The LDPE was identified by both Peter and Tommy as the same material used at Metro Poly. The HDPE and a small amount of the LDPE are used at Uni Poly.
- From the recycling area we exited the building near the offload docks on the Eastern edge of the building. I observed lots of debris (plastic pellets, recycled plastic pieces, and general trash/debris) on this loading dock and on the asphalt ground beneath it. There appeared to be little regard for debris and litter entering the storm drains directly beneath the loading docks.
- From the Southern edge of the loading docks we entered the main manufacturing part of the building. I noticed a pungent smell of "hot plastic, burning plastic" and the air inside appeared to be a little bit smoky. Almost all the machinery was operating and I observed some pellets and other debris on the ground. We walked West through the building and exited back onto the docks near the rail siding. I observed a lot more pellets on the raised docks and additional missing or poor BMPs in this critical area to control the release of pellets into the environment.
- Tommy and Peter appeared to be very cooperative with the entire inspection team.
- I submitted the collected raw material samples to Dylan as we completed the Uni Ploy inspection.

1520 – Walked across Williams St from Uni Poly to look at the railroad siding behind a building immediately across the street and behind Interstate Plastic. Small piles of plastic pellets were observed behind the building and I collect a sample and submitted it to Dylan. We will need to return later to inspect Interstate Plastic.

1530 - The Water Board team left the Williams St. facility and headed to the former Kaneka facility on Polvorosa Ave. Entered the parking lot and took samples of the plastic pellet materials present in the loading dock area of the former Kaneka facility. Observed a lot of the materials on the rail tracks bordering the Western and Northern edge of the property, approximately 100-200 yards from the former facility's main entrance. I also observed some plastic pellets stuck on the inside of the storm drain inlet walls in the middle of the parking lot South of the former Kaneka facility's entrance and loading dock areas. I collected a sample of some of the pellets in the parking lot and submitted it to Dylan.

1600 - The Water Board team met with DFG staff to discuss observations and next step.

1640 - Departed San Leandro and drove to Sacramento.

1820 - Arrived back in Sacramento.



42 inch outfall



Behind Interstate Plastic Building



Area Behind Uni Poly Back Fence



Uni Poly Back Fence area



Uni Poly Back Corner



42 Inch Outfall Looking North



42 Inch Outfall Looking West



42 Inch Outfall Looking West