

# Settlement reached over tanker crash into Cimarron River

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A 2016 tanker truck crash that spilled 1,100 gallons of petroleum into New Mexico's part of the Cimarron River that eventually flows into Oklahoma, has resulted in a settlement in which Texas-based Fronk Oil Company will pay \$150,000 for restoration of the river.

New Mexico Natural Resources Trustee Maggie Hart Stebbins announced the settlement resolves an Oil Pollution Act claim for natural resource injuries.

A Fronk Oil tanker truck loaded with unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel crashed in icy winter conditions on highway U.S. 64 five miles west of the town of Eagle Nest, New Mexico. The tanker plunged into the river and the driver was unhurt. The resulting spill into a section of the Cimarron River in the Colin Neblett Wildlife Management Area of the Cimarron Canyon State Park killed fish and other animals and contaminated water and soil.

As a result, a 1.5 mile section of the river was closed to the public for months while Fronk Oil spent \$300,000 in cleanup.

Hart Stebbins said the \$150,000 in additional cost to Fronk Oil will compensate New Mexicans for lost natural resources and for the months during which the spill area was closed for fishing and other recreational uses.

"This settlement ensures that the damage to fish and aquatic habitat caused by the fuel spill is restored and holds accountable those who were responsible for the spill," she added. "I thank the leadership at Fronk Oil for honoring the company's obligations following the accident and their willingness to work with us to reach a fair resolution to this case."

"Fronk Oil regrets the accident and has taken seriously our corporate responsibility to make things right," said Attorney Jerry D. Worsham II for the company.

**Settlement funds will be used exclusively to plan and implement restoration projects in the area of the spill. The New Mexico Office of the Natural Resources Trustee is drafting a restoration plan that will govern how the settlement dollars will be spent. Once complete, the restoration plan will be released for public comment before restoration work begins.**

**The proposed settlement, filed this week in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Mexico, is subject to public comment and to approval by the court.**