

Texas company opts to settle case over fuel spill in Cimarron River

Associated Press

By [Associated Press](#)

Published: Thursday, December 24th, 2020 at 8:10am

Updated: Thursday, December 24th, 2020 at 10:14pm

CIMARRON – The state Office of Natural Resources Trustee has reached a settlement with a Texas-based company over a fuel spill along a northern New Mexico river.

A tanker truck carrying more than 1,000 gallons of fuel overturned in icy conditions in 2016 and spilled its liquid cargo into the Cimarron River near a wildlife management area. State officials said fish and invertebrates were killed and surrounding soil and sediment was contaminated. A portion of the river had to be closed to public access for several months.

Under the proposed settlement, Fronk Oil Co. will pay \$150,000 toward restoration projects.

State officials said the agreement was filed in federal court this week. It will be up to a judge to sign off.

Fronk Oil cleaned up the spill under the oversight of the New Mexico Environment Department. The work involved capturing the fuel and removing contaminated soil.

Jerry Worsham II, a lawyer for Fronk Oil, said the company immediately began working with the state following the weather-related crash. He said the initial cleanup and a five-month remediation effort cost more than \$300,000.

“Fronk Oil regrets the accident and has taken seriously our corporate responsibility to make things right,” he said, adding that it doesn’t appear there are any long-term effects on the fish or the river.

Settlement funds will be used exclusively for restoration projects in the area of the spill. The Office of Natural Resources Trustee is drafting a restoration plan that will govern how the money will be spent. The public will have a chance to comment on the proposal before any work begins.