

Company: Equipment didn't detect North Dakota oil leak



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Electronic monitoring equipment failed to detect a pipeline rupture that spewed more than 176,000 gallons of crude oil into a North Dakota creek, the pipeline's operator said Monday.

It's not yet clear why the monitoring equipment didn't detect the leak, Wendy Owen, a spokeswoman for Casper, Wyoming-based True Cos., which operates the Belle Fourche Pipeline, said.

A landowner discovered the spill near Belfield on Dec. 5, according to Bill Suess, an environmental scientist with the North Dakota Health Department.

Suess said the spill migrated about almost 6 miles from the spill site along Ash Coulee Creek, and it fouled an unknown amount of private and U.S. Forest Service land along the waterway. The creek feeds into the Little Missouri River, but Suess said it appears no oil got that far and that no drinking water sources were threatened.

This 6-inch diameter pipeline spilled more than 176,000 gallons of crude oil down 6 miles of Ash Coulee Creek **undetected by electronic monitoring. This pipeline was only 36 years old.**

The possible cause of this rupture was an undetected hill side slip.

Are there any pipelines running up and down steep hills in Placitas?

In comparison, Our Western Refining Crude oil pipeline running through 8 miles of Placitas is a 60-year-old, 16-inch diameter pipeline flowing at 4.2 million gallons per day, operating at 800psi, and traveling directly over most of our drinking water aquifer.