

**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105**

**WASTE MANAGEMENT DIVISION
RCRA ENFORCEMENT OFFICE**

Purpose: RCRA Compliance Evaluation Inspection

Facility: **Consolidated Tire Recyclers, Inc.**

Facility Address: 90-333 63rd Avenue
Mecca, CA 92254

Mailing Address: Same as above

EPA ID Number: CAL000293551

Date of Investigation: August 17, 2011

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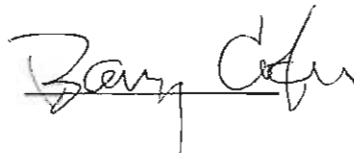
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Consolidated Tire Recyclers, Inc.

Report Prepared By:

Barry Cofer



Google Earth view dated June 23, 2011.

Purpose of Investigation:

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the facility's compliance with Subpart C and D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended, the regulations provided in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 40, Parts 258-279, and the Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) signed May 31, 2011.

Background:

Consolidated Tire Recyclers, Inc. ("CTR" or the "facility") operates the facility pursuant to a contract with First Nation Recovery, Inc. ("FNRI"), a tribal corporation owned and managed by the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians ("CBMI"). The facility is located on trust lands of the CBMI, within the boundary of the CBMI reservation, within the Cabazon Resource Recovery Park. FNRI leases the tribal trust land on which the facility is situated from the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA") on behalf of the Tribe.

CTR grinds used tires to create a usable fuel. Their primary customer is Green Leaf Power's nearby 47-megawatt Colmac biomass power plant.

During site visits on September 28, 2010 and May 11, 2011, concerns were expressed about the number of tires that had accumulated at the site and fire prevention and suppression issues. See Attachment 2. On May 17, 2011, Cal Fire and Riverside County responded to a fire at the facility. According to the incident report, the fire was contained inside "a large diameter pipe" and there were no injuries (Attachment 3). A subsequent site visit by Becky Ross of the CBMI indicated a fire in the ground tire hopper ignited the rubber, which was put out by the automatic fire suppression system. The large diameter pipe was the equipment exhaust flue, which ignited when facility operators were checking for hot spots.

On May 26, CBMI issued Respondent a Notice of Violation and Order to Comply, requiring CRT to take steps to address the manner in which the tires are being managed. Many of the same actions and additional requirements were imposed by EPA's Unilateral Administrative Order signed May 31, 2011 (Attachment 4 and <http://www.epa.gov/region9/waste/enforcement/pdf/UAO-Consolidated-Tire.pdf>).

The facility's "Waste Tire Work Plan, FNRI History and Narrative for the GNATT Time Line Chart" in response to the EPA order forms Attachment 5.

Inspection:

CTR does not appear to regularly generate any significant quantities of RCRA hazardous waste. See below for non-RCRA hazardous wastes.

The CTR facility grounds are monitored by closed-circuit cameras, which can be viewed live in the CBMI environmental offices. CBMI personnel also visit and photograph the facility about once each week.



Since large truck and heavy equipment tires are larger and contain more rubber, tires are counted as “passenger tire equivalents.” Facility representatives estimated there were 90,000 passenger tire equivalents on site at the time of the May 2011 fire, and they were down to 70,000 equivalents at the time of this inspection.

The fire hydrant outside the facility has reportedly been repaired, and develops about 50 psi of water pressure. A fire suppression pond is reportedly located approximately 238 feet from the facility, with open ground in between.

When operational, the facility reports they can process 6,000 tires a day if they run a double shift. The facility was not shredding tires at the time of this inspection. The facility representatives stated they had begun operating the facility in the later part of 2008, and have found the equipment needs regular and expensive repairs. The shredder had reportedly went down on July 22, 2011, and parts to repair it were on order. According to the weekly photo surveys submitted by the CBMI compliance officer, they were informed CTR had a hydraulic line failure on August 26, 2011, and have not processed tires since then. (October 12, 2011 photo survey, Attachment 6).



Some tire areas had been neatly stacked, and the overall height of the piles reduced. The latest photo survey shows they are still neatly stacked.



Stacked tires along south-east fence.



The south side of the facility had been generally cleared of tires, although some combustible wooden pallets were stacked alongside the building. The latest photo survey shows the area remains clear, and does not show any wooden pallets.



The tires in the southwest corner of the facility have since been neatly stacked, but the survey shows they are now too close to the south fence.

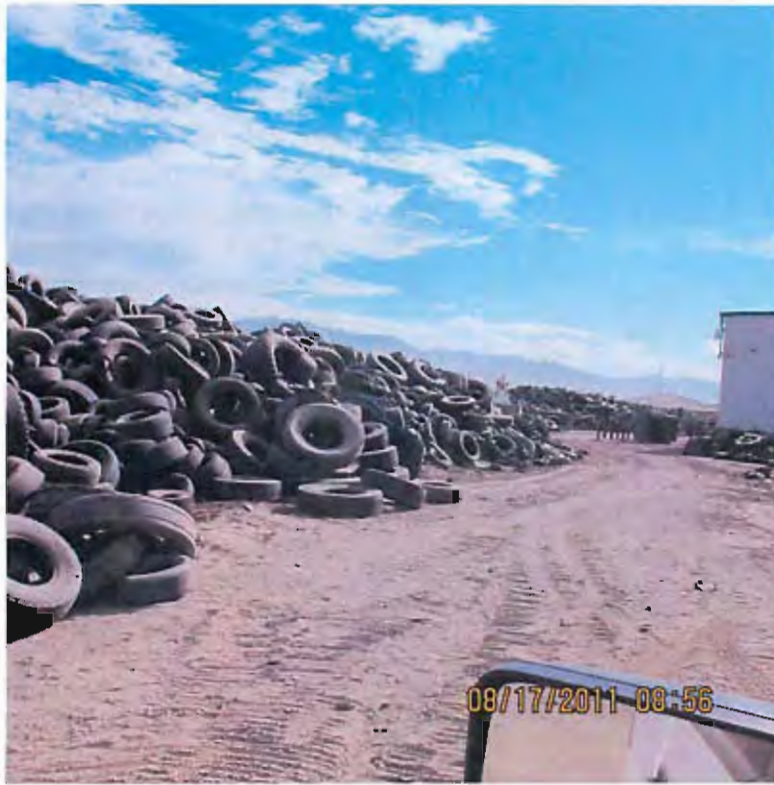


Tires near dumpsters had been placed directly along the middle of the west fence. According to facility representatives, these tires could not be crushed, and were present when they took over the facility. It was suggested during the inspection that if they could not process the tires at the site, they should remove them from the site. The current survey shows fewer tires there, but some material and mounted tires remains.

The tires visible in the background, in the NW corner of the facility, have since been moved farther from the west fence.



A significant number of tires remained in the loading area, leaning on and adjacent to the processing building. The current survey shows many tires remain in the same location.



Tire pile along the north side of the facility.



Looking towards the center area of the tires along the north side. Note equipment for moving tires.



Aisle space between the rows is adequate for the tire equipment, but too narrow for fire trucks. The current survey shows a wider but still narrow lane.



A second lane in the north tire pile area.



View between north tire pile and north facility fence. Although no tires are alongside the fence, there is not sufficient space for a fire truck to pass. The current survey appears the same.



View of north tire pile from outside facility fence. These photos were taken by the CBMI compliance officer in the same spots she takes the weekly survey, to allow comparison over time.



A view of the aisle with the tire handling equipment from outside the facility. The current survey photo is very similar. The tires outside of the fence, visible on the right, were placed to form a barrier for a hole that was excavated to repair piping.



North-west corner of the facility, showing the western fence line. The current survey shows improvement along the west fence line.



Overall view of the north and west sides of the facility, looking towards the east.

The UAO required the "...removal of any and all waste tires from the Alloy Building site near the Facility."



This photo shows the north-east corner of the former Specialty Alloys site.



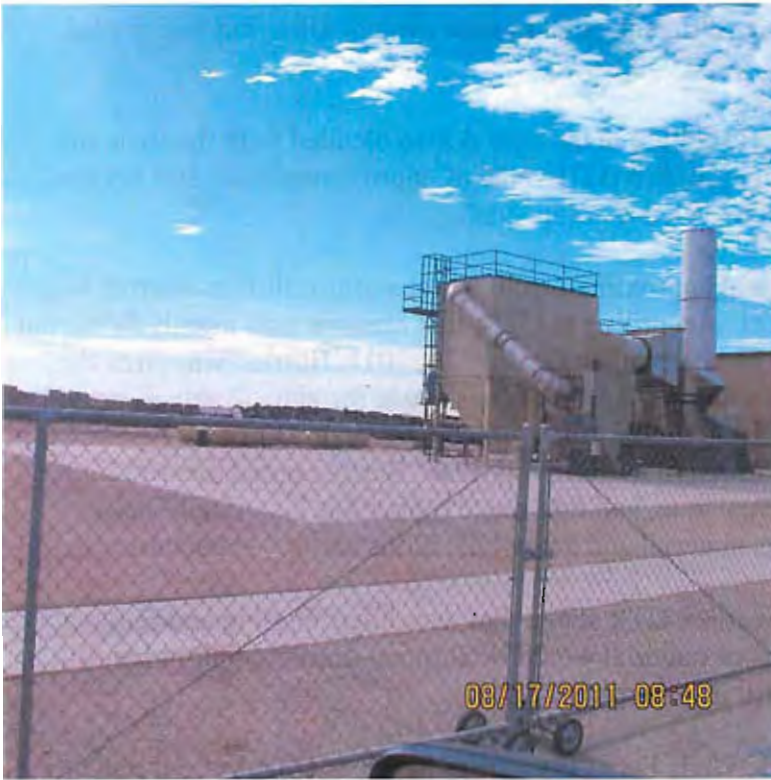
North-west corner of the former Specialty Alloys site.



Truck tires along the west side of the former Specialty Alloys site.



View from a gate on the west side of the former Specialty Alloys site, looking to the east.



View from the same location, looking south-east.



View from the southwest corner of the former Specialty Alloys site. Note the large tires adjacent to the building. All the photos in the current survey of the former Specialty Alloys site are very similar to these. The two large tires have not been moved.

Consolidated Tire Recyclers, Inc.

Facility representatives stated during the inspection that they had been negotiating with CEMEX, a large consumer of tires for fuel in their cement kilns, but had not yet reached an agreement.

The majority of the fabric belting in the tires is also blended with the fuels for burning at Colmac, CTR reported, with a BTU value of approximately 16,300 per ton. Steel removed from the tires is recycled as scrap steel.

In May of 2011, CTR sent approximately 80.83 tons of tire fluff to Burrtec Waste Industries, Inc.'s Salton Landfill. According to CTR, that material was mainly fabric but had too much residual steel to be acceptable. On July 29, 2011, Burrtec was cited for accepting the fluff, which was a non-RCRA hazardous waste for zinc. Analysis provided indicates the fluff contained 13,000 mg/kg zinc (Attachment 7). In Burrtec's Response to Summary of Violations and Corrective Action Work Plan, Burrtec noted that tire rubber contains zinc oxide, not elemental zinc, and that waste rubber has historically been "...handled as a non-hazardous material and a non-hazardous waste." Attachment 8.

At the time of this inspection, CTR stated that with intermingling and removal wastes, approximately 250 tons of material would be shipped from the Salton Landfill to the South Yuma County Landfill in Arizona.

On September 16, 2011, Wells Fargo Insurances Services USA Inc. submitted a letter noting that they had been engaged to obtain a clean bond and General Insurance Liability Policy for CTR. No final bonds or policies have been forwarded to this inspector (Attachment 9).

List of Attachments:

1. Photo log.
2. Trip Report prepared May 23, 2011
3. Riverside County Incident Report.
4. Unilateral Administrative Order signed May 31, 2011.
5. Waste Tire Work Plan, FNRI History and Narrative for the GNATT Time Line Chart.
6. October 12, 2011 photo survey.
7. Analytical Results dated June 22, 2011.
8. Burrtec Summary of Violations Response and Corrective Action Work Plan.
9. September 16, 2011, Wells Fargo Insurances Services USA Inc. letter and related correspondence.