

UPDATE OF US GULF COAST AREA OILFIELD WASTE DISPOSAL PROJECTS

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Abstract

Initial attempts to permit and construct salt caverns for the management of waste residues began in the early 1980's. For a variety of regulatory and political reasons, these early efforts were not successful. In the late 1980's and early 1990's, salt caverns were proposed for the management of non-hazardous oilfield waste streams (E&P wastes). Several projects have been permitted since that time and are currently operational and other projects are now in the permitting cycle. This paper gives a brief historical overview of several projects and discusses design and operational considerations of several project either in operation or have permits pending before regulatory authorities. An overview and summary of lessons learned is provided and suggested areas of future research are discussed.

Key words: Environmental Protection and Regulatory Affairs; Waste Disposal; Oil and Gas Drilling Wastes; Cavern Design; Cavern Operation; Texas Regulations; Louisiana Regulations; International Regulations; Gulf Coast of the US and Mexico