

Mosier Derailment Site Status

Background

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) continues to oversee monitoring and cleanup of petroleum contamination from a June 3, 2016 spill of Bakken crude oil that occurred when a Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) train derailed in Mosier, Oregon.

During the derail, 16 cars of a 96-car train derailed, with three of the cars catching fire. The fire was extinguished early June 4, 2016.

Approximately 47,000 gallons of oil escaped from four rail cars. During the derail, one of the cars tore off the lid of a sanitary sewer manhole and as a result, approximately 13,000 gallons of the oil flowed into the nearby wastewater treatment plant, where it was contained. The oil was later pumped out and taken to an offsite disposal facility. The wastewater treatment plant and associated piping was later restored to operating condition.

Initial cleanup involved excavation and offsite disposal of 2,960 tons of petroleum-contaminated soil. UPRR estimates that this contaminated soil contained 18,000 gallons of oil. UPRR estimates that the remaining 16,000 gallons of oil burned during the fire.

Oil remaining in the derailed cars was successfully and safely transferred by truck to The Dalles, and then hauled by rail to Tacoma, Washington, its original destination. The emptied rail cars were taken by truck to Portland for salvage.

A small amount of oil initially entered the Columbia River through the wastewater treatment plant. Oil-absorbing booms were placed around the affected portion of the river to contain and prevent migration downstream. The amount is unknown but low in volume, based on site observations; the oil resulted in light sheen and quickly dissipated.

Cleanup Investigation

Following initial spill response, DEQ began overseeing additional investigation activities.

Two groundwater extraction wells were installed at the crash site, just south of the railroad tracks and were designed to pump contaminated groundwater, if encountered, to prevent migration to the river. Initial testing of these wells indicates that there are low levels of

petroleum in the water at this location and no active pumping was required.

An additional four groundwater monitoring wells were installed on the north side of the tracks to be used to monitor conditions between the source area and the river. Petroleum in the groundwater was found at one of these wells at levels that DEQ determine will require additional investigation and remediation to reduce levels to prevent any future exposure issues at the site.

Is the Beach area safe to use?

Yes. Surface water sampling in the river shows no significant contamination from the spill and booms have been removed. The booms will be replaced prior to the start of the autumn rains as a preventative measure in case precipitation flushes additional oil into the river.

Is the City Water safe to use?

Yes. The city obtains its current drinking water from a well approximately 450 feet in depth and over 1 mile from the spill area.

What Happens Next?

DEQ is working with UPRR's consultant in designing a treatment system for the area of high petroleum contamination. The system consists of vertical pipes through which air will be injected into the groundwater. The oxygen in the injected air stimulates the growth of naturally occurring microbes that consume the oil.

DEQ will continue to provide active regulatory oversight of the work.

How can I get more information?

The site investigation reports may be viewed in DEQ's Environmental Cleanup Site Information (ECSI) database located on the web at www.deq.state.or.us/lq/ecsi/ecsi.htm under Site ID 6115.

You may also contact the Project Manager:
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