



Oil Spill

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Crews have secured the affected area of the creek with containment boom and constructed an underflow dam where the storm sewer system discharges to the creek. More than 2,000 gallons of oil, including oil contaminated sorbent and debris, have been recovered to date using a vacuum truck and absorbent material.

The underflow dam at the storm sewer outfall at 1st Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, along with collection areas behind each boom set, are skimmed several times a week to remove emulsified oil. EPA and partnering agencies selected an Oil/Water Separator as a semi-permanent solution to contain and collect oil outside of the creek. Installation of an Oil/Water Separator will begin Sept. 7, barring any unforeseen circumstances, with work expected to take approximately two to three weeks due to the complexity of the installation.

Due to the depth of the existing storm sewer, excavation down to more than 15 feet below grade will need to occur in order to install the new oil/water separator. With an excavation this deep, the excavation area and staging areas for materials will encompass the entirety of the road closure area.

Road closures will begin along 1st Avenue and 6th Street. Signs will be posted in the affected areas to notify community members of any road closures.

Oil/Water Separator

EPA will be installing an Aqua-Swirl Oil/Water Separator. It uses hydrodynamic separation technology, which operates under gravity flow, in order to maximize the removal of oil from the storm sewer. Essentially, storm water will be diverted from the storm sewer into the Oil/Water Separation unit. In the OWS, the oil will be trapped inside behind a baffle and the water will flow through the unit and back into the storm sewer. Oil collected in the unit will be pumped out with a vacuum truck regularly.

Ongoing Source Investigation

Source investigations to date have allowed the Unified Command team to determine where the oil is entering the storm sewer, and have ruled out several facilities in the surrounding area with large heating oil tanks. Unified Command has also sent several samples of oil ruling out a number of sources and identifying the fuel being released as a moderately weathered light fuel oil.

Ongoing Source Investigation for the site will continue in late-August and beyond with the use of geophysical technology. Currently, EPA and partnering agencies are finalizing the details of the work proposal to move forward with using geophysical technology at the site. The information gathered with this technology is expected to help lead to the discovery of the source of the oil spill.

EPA will use a surface geophysical technique that induces surface waves to identify subsurface structures and pathways – meaning, it is a way to detect what is happening underground. This technique is called a Multi-channel Analysis of Surface Waves (or MASW) survey, looking for the buried stream channel that runs through town and its orientation with respect to the identified seeps into the storm water pipes. The MASW survey will also help EPA interpret the folded top of rock that may be a conduit for the oil. This will help EPA investigate/identify possible pathway(s) for the source(s) of the oil that is being recovered. Based on the results of the first survey, a second survey with additional geophysical techniques may be employed to further understand the subsurface, and the oil's pathway to the stormwater drain.

Health-related concerns

In addition to the PA Fish and Boat Commission's work on site, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry has also offered information to EPA regarding health-related concerns from residents. Both agencies offered the following information:

The PA Fish & Boat Commission has not observed or been notified of fish kills or distressed aquatic life in the vicinity of the spill. As a precaution, in-season trout stocking locations were adjusted to avoid the immediate area of the spill. To address questions regarding fish consumption from Martins Creek, the Fish & Boat Commission collected Brown Trout and American Eel to test fish tissue for PAH, (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons). PAHs are components of petroleum products with known carcinogenic effects. The results were negative. No traces of PAH were detected in the fish tissue. No other impacts to the fish community have been detected at this time.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry stated that there a number of factors to be considered regarding any potential harmful health effects if you are exposed to hazardous chemicals such as fuel oils. These factors include the amount you are exposed to, the duration and how you are exposed – via means like breathing, eating, drinking or skin contact – and individual characteristics such as age, sex, nutritional status, family traits, lifestyle, and state of health. Based on the design of the Bangor municipal water system, drinking water has not been affected by this spill. As for any well water in the area, that has also not likely been affected, but ATSDR reminds residents if they notice any change in odor, color or taste to contact EPA or PADEP.

