

# Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

**Reed Point, Mont.** (June 27, 2023) – 4:00 p.m.

Unified Command shared that crews have safely disassembled the west segment of the bridge (photo below). Riprap has been delivered to the site and is currently being utilized to construct a causeway, or stable path, which is anticipated to be completed later this evening. Once that work has been completed crews will focus on removing the remaining tank cars in the river. Communities on the BNSF Railway routes from Laurel to Shelby and Glendive to Snowden should expect increased rail traffic for the next several weeks because of the service interruption on the Montana Rail Link network. Affected counties include Yellowstone, Golden Valley, Wheatland, Judith Basin, Cascade, Teton, Pondera, Toole, Dawson, Richland and Roosevelt.

Unified command continues to monitor and assess the ongoing release of asphalt material that has entered the river. Whitewater Rescue Institute of Missoula, Montana, specializing in fast water spill response, is currently assisting with river assessment and safety protection. They have eight boats currently deployed, with six of those boats are identifying the downstream extent of the material release.

Daily water quality testing continues to be conducted at 10 downstream locations and one upstream reference location. Results show no detectable levels of petroleum hydrocarbons and downstream sulfur levels that are consistent with the upstream sampling location. "Public Water Supplies are utilizing emergency plans and procedures to monitor the situation and protect public health. At this time there is no known threat to public health," said Montana Department of Water Quality Public Water Supply Bureau Chief Greg Olsen. Public health remains one of Unified Command's top priorities. We will continue to provide updates about water quality as they are available.

Unified Command monitored the area where sheen was observed last night after the rail car was removed from the river. There is currently no visible sheen.

A public meeting regarding the derailment and response efforts will be held on Wednesday, June 28, at 7:00pm at the Columbus High School Gym, 433 N 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Columbus, MT 59019. For those unable to attend in person, the meeting will be made available via the Zoom link below:

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/86328279446>

Or by phone: 1-206-337-9723

For more information, please visit the response websites at:  
<https://response.epa.gov/stillwatertrainderailment>  
<https://www.stillwatercountymt.gov/train-derailment/>



*West segment of the bridge resting on the west river bank.*



*Whitewater Rescue Institute crew providing safety protection.*

This response is operating under a Unified Command which enables different jurisdictions and organizations to jointly manage and direct incident activities. Unified Command for this incident is comprised of representatives from Stillwater County Disaster and Emergency Services, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Montana Rail Link.

