

Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

Reed Point, Montana (July 3, 2023) – 1:00pm

Unified Command has confirmed that the last rail car in the river, containing sulfur, along with the bridge steel from the middle span was removed last evening. This morning, teams finished transferring the product from the three remaining asphalt cars on the eastern span of the bridge into stable rail cars. The rail cars with the transferred product will be relocated and staged at a location away from the site. Work to remove the now empty cars remaining on the eastern span of the bridge will continue throughout the day.

“Our efforts have been focused on removing the rail cars from the river and assessing downstream impacts. We are turning our attention to cleaning affected areas along the Yellowstone River,” said Columbus Fire Department Chief Rich Cowger.

All rail cars are out of the river and the potential release of asphalt materials are no longer a concern. Environmental teams are focusing their efforts on continued downstream assessment and adding additional resources to cleanup efforts. There have been additional boats and personnel deployed to remove asphalt material from the riverbanks. Approximately 1,500 pounds of asphalt material were collected as part of initial efforts yesterday.

Montana Rail Link is running traffic and serving customers across their system not impacted by the derailment.

“As Montanans celebrate the Fourth of July holiday and associated community events, please be aware that trains are present on the railway and to stay off the tracks at all times for your safety,” said Montana Rail Link President Joe Racicot.

Unified Command continues to communicate with local stakeholders and agencies as the situation evolves. A second public meeting is planned later this week. Final details for the meeting are being compiled and additional information will be included in future press releases.

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Members of the public are encouraged to continue reporting sightings of any asphalt material they observe to the email below and continue to avoid touching the material with bare skin. This email can also be used for any impacted landowners to start the process of filing a claim. To report observed asphalt material, submit information to:

rpderailment@mtrail.com.

Anyone with information about oiled wildlife are encouraged to call the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) Response Hotline at 888-ASK-OWCN (888-275-6926).

For more information, please visit the response websites at:

<https://response.epa.gov/stillwatertrainderailment>

<https://www.stillwatercountymt.gov/train-derailment/>

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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.

