

Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

Reed Point, Montana (July 6, 2023) – 12:15 p.m.

Cleanup crews have continued expanding asphalt material collection efforts and additional cleanup teams are being brought onsite today and tomorrow. As of Wednesday night, over 23,000 pounds of asphalt material had been recovered. Cleanup efforts continue to focus on areas with the highest concentrations of asphalt material. Cleanup teams have been focused on the first four river miles downstream of the site. The assessment area extends 240 river miles downstream with the goal to cleanup as much asphalt material as retrievable, while limiting the impact to the ecosystem.

An initial rapid assessment of observed asphalt material began on June 25th, the day after the derailment. In rapid assessments, teams observed asphalt material 110 miles downstream. The teams continue with detailed assessment and are flagging locations of recoverable asphalt. These assessment teams have completed reviewing and tagging locations needing cleanup 16 miles downstream and are continuing to target the cleanup efforts on the most impacted areas as they move downstream. An information dashboard, highlighting daily cleanup efforts and cumulative product recovered, has been created and can be found via the link to the EPA website referenced below.

Environmental crews continue to look for impacted wildlife daily. Yesterday an additional dead garter snake was found, bringing the total confirmed impacted wildlife to three.

Montana Rail Link continues to make efforts to serve customers and limit impacts to the supply chain as much as possible. MRL train crews are assisting in the movement of trains from Laurel to Great Falls and Great Falls to Shelby in order to aid in traffic re-routing and supply chain continuity. Bridge construction activity and preparation is ongoing as MRL continues to work with all federal, state, and local agencies involved in the process. While there is no timeline currently available regarding completion of bridge construction, work efforts will continue with the goal of returning to normal operations as soon as possible, while keeping the safety of MRL employees, responders, and community members as the top priority.

Unified Command continues to communicate with local stakeholders and agencies as the situation evolves. A second public meeting will be held tonight, July 6, at 6:30 p.m. at the Columbus High School Gym, 433 N 3rd St, Columbus, MT 59019 and via Zoom. For more information and details please visit: <https://response.epa.gov/stillwatertrainderailment>.

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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:

<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.

