

# East Palestine

## TRAIN DERAILMENT RESPONSE

Serving East Palestine, Negley, Darlington  
and surrounding communities

# NEWSLETTER

May 23, 2023



Crews sampling the controlled burn area at the derailment site

## PROGRESS MADE

### Excavation of Controlled Burn Area

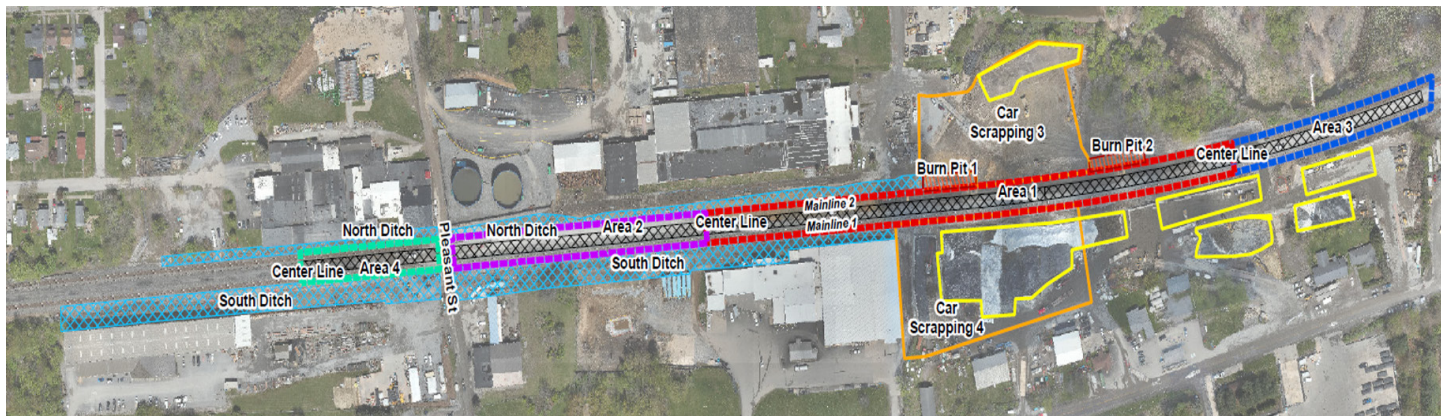
Workers excavated the controlled burn area. Portions of this area were excavated down to roughly 8 feet. The area will be backfilled once soil sample results are reviewed, and the area is approved for backfill.

### Nighttime Air Monitoring

Unified Command has 24/7 air monitoring in place. Recently, community members brought to EPA's attention odors at night in two residential areas. The odors have been thoroughly investigated and are unrelated to the derailment site.

### Asbestos Found in April Not Related to the Train Derailment

EPA has received questions from residents about information that we shared back in April regarding discovered asbestos containing material (ACM). During site cleanup activities, ACM was discovered near one of the work areas. The ACM was unrelated to the incident. The material was not included within either the train or the materials being transported. To protect the workers in the area and facilitate the remediation of the incident, Norfolk Southern utilized Ohio licensed asbestos abatement contractors to remove the material for offsite management and disposal in accordance with associated regulations.



Overview of the derailment site work areas

# THE WEEK AHEAD

## AT THE SITE

- Excavation of the north track is almost complete. Sampling of excavated areas will continue. The areas bordering the tracks will be addressed next.
- Expect increased truck traffic near the derailment site. Typically, up to 100 truckloads of soil or water leave the site every day. Weekends have less truck traffic.
- Work will continue during the week of the fair. Trucks will be rerouted during this time.
- Taggart Street remains closed to the public.

## IN THE GREATER COMMUNITY

- EPA's Community Welcome Center will be closed from May 24 to 29 for the East Palestine Street Fair and holiday weekend. EPA will have a table at the fair and EPA on-site staff can be reached by calling (330) 775-6517.
- Assessment work will continue down Leslie Run to determine next steps.

# COMMUNITY CORNER

EPA community involvement coordinators visited an East Palestine High School science class last Tuesday and presented on the response, including progress made at the train derailment site. Students discussed their air-quality findings from the PurpleAir and Air Beam sensors EPA loaned them earlier this year. One student noticed slightly elevated levels of particulate matter during some evenings, which could have been from pollen or bonfires. During the Q&A period, students asked thought-provoking questions about track excavation and interpreting air sensor results.



East Palestine High School "Go Bulldogs!"

## DID YOU KNOW?

Dust mats are used over the inlets on the roadways around the derailment site to keep particles, such as dust and dirt, out of the stormwater sewer system. The system, which collects water from sources, such as rainfall, water trucks, and snowmelt, discharges directly to the local creeks and tributaries. Excessive particles, such as dust, in the storm sewer catch basin can clog the catch basin and block water flow, so it is important to keep them from entering the system. If you see these mats around town, please do not remove them as they are helping to protect water bodies and aquatic habitats. The storm sewers do not connect to the pipes in your house.



Dust mats are placed over storm drains to keep particulate matter out of the sewer system

## COMMUNITY RESOURCE LIST

In honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, we wanted to take a moment to acknowledge the mental and emotional toll a mass environmental disaster can take on individuals and the community. Mental health is a vital part of human health. Environmental contamination in East Palestine has disrupted daily life. Psychological symptoms can often show up after the initial crisis period has subsided. Many mental health providers and spiritual advisors have specific training and expertise in this area. If stress, anxiety, or depression is negatively affecting your life, help is available. The East Palestine Clinic has same-day appointments. Stop by 139 N. Walnut or call 330-383-6020. Resources are also available from the Columbiana County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board. They can be reached at 330-424-0195



# TOP 3 QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

## 01 What are the health agencies doing?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) are analyzing their Assessment of Chemical Exposure (ACE) survey results to assess the health impacts of the train derailment. CDC and ATSDR continue to support the Ohio and Pennsylvania health departments and will be back in the community in June to discuss public health. EPA is collecting questions from residents ahead of time; if you would like to submit a question for ATSDR you can email [r5\\_eastpalestine@epa.gov](mailto:r5_eastpalestine@epa.gov) or drop a question off at the Welcome Center.

Additionally, the National Institute for Health (NIH) will be coordinating a series of workshops to evaluate public health research needs in East Palestine and surrounding areas. An info session about these workshops will be held on June 1.

If you have immediate health concerns related to the train derailment it is recommended that you go to the East Palestine Clinic located at 108 Walnut Street.

## 02 Is there a temporary water treatment system being installed on the site?

Norfolk Southern has brought in water treatment equipment and made a request to EPA and Ohio EPA to approve a plan for on-site treatment of water that came into contact with contaminated areas. Currently, this water is treated as hazardous waste because it has come into contact with site contamination. The on-site treatment of this water would make it non-hazardous so that it could be potentially disposed of at more facilities and removed from the site more safely and efficiently. Also, on-site treatment would reduce the number of water trucks and storage tanks, consolidating water management into one primary area and reducing truck traffic. EPA and Ohio EPA are currently reviewing the company's proposal.

## 03 What happens after the track work is completed?

The track work has been the highest priority to remove most contamination as early as possible. This, plus preventing the spread of contamination by capturing water from the site and constructing a bypass of Sulphur Run around the site will continue into June. While track work and water management continue, EPA has been reviewing Norfolk Southern's plan to do a full assessment of the areas surrounding the derailment site, including waterways. Further cleanup work will be conducted in areas identified during this assessment.

### SITE STATUS CHECK

As of May 19



#### NORTH TRACK:

Estimated 75% complete

**SOUTH TRACK:** In operation



#### LESLIE RUN:

Stream assessments are ongoing to determine next steps

#### SULPHUR RUN:

Bypass carries upstream water past derailment site



APPROXIMATELY

# 100

trucks a day carry waste off-site

# 17.8 million

est. gallons of wastewater shipped offsite

# 44,717

est. tons of solid waste shipped offsite

## IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

On May 18, the Way Station and First United Presbyterian Church hosted "Track Talk" an information session on site progress. An EPA on-scene coordinator updated community members on progress at the north track excavation, the timeline for cleanup, and answered questions. A recording of the session can be found on our website.



(330) 775-6517



[R5\\_eastpalestine@epa.gov](mailto:R5_eastpalestine@epa.gov)



[epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment](https://epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment)

## KEY COMMUNITY EVENTS THIS WEEK

The East Palestine Area Chamber of Commerce will host its annual street fair beginning at 5 p.m. May 24 to May 26, and beginning at 1 p.m. Saturday, May 27. During this time, the Welcome Center will be closed. During fair hours, EPA will host a booth for visitors with activities for children and educational material. Community members can still reach on-site EPA staff at 330-775-6517 for train derailment concerns.

## EPA WELCOME CENTER

EPA's Community Welcome Center is a one-stop shop where residents can speak with EPA team members and make appointments with our experts. Give the Welcome Center a call at 330-775-6517 or stop by at 25 N. Market St.

### New Hours of Operation:

Monday – Friday: 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Saturday: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday: Closed

(The Center will be closed May 24 to May 29.)

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This weekly newsletter is being developed through a joint effort of local, state, federal agencies, and community organizations. If you would like more information about topics discussed, please visit [www.epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment](http://www.epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment) or call EPA's Information Line at **330-775-6517**



**SCAN ME** for a list of additional resources

EPA Welcome Center - EPTD  
25 N. Market St.  
East Palestine, OH 44413