

## Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response

### EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (April 12, 2024)

- After prolonged and steady rains last week, State Line Lake, located north of the train derailment site, began to flood into the freshwater bypass pond established at the site. With the two water bodies connected, fish from the lake were drawn into the bypass pump intakes. The fish were killed by the pumps in the bypass system, not by exposure to any contaminants. Deceased fish were initially discovered on April 5 during routine stream monitoring. An investigation was immediately initiated, and the creek was closely monitored over the weekend.
  - On April 8, after consulting with Ohio Department of Natural Resources, crews began to pick up deceased fish along Sulphur Run. Crews walked all portions of Sulphur Run that were accessible, starting downstream at the Park Drive Bridge to the outlet of the bypass system feeding Sulphur Run. Approximately 1,000 fish were collected, and collection is now complete.
  - As the flood conditions recede across the site, no additional fish are anticipated to be pulled into the intakes. EPA will evaluate whether there are any measures to prevent a reoccurrence if the lake overflows again.
- It's expected that sediment cleanup will resume in Sulphur Run during the week of April 15, as long as water levels are not too high.
  - On March 25, Norfolk Southern began sediment cleanup in Sulphur Run. EPA later directed Norfolk Southern to suspend cleanup operations to evaluate how to more effectively contain and recover oil sheen from sediments. In the meantime, crews walk the streams to check if any oil sheen was agitated by high water levels and heavy rain. So far, oil sheen has not been observed following recent rain events.
- On April 10, cleanup activities were completed in the culvert that starts underneath Liberty Street. The cleaning targeted specific areas where oil sheen was observed during the assessment completed in December 2023. A high-powered vacuum hose was used to remove sediment inside the metal pipe section of the culvert. A control point was installed at the downstream end of the work area to contain and capture any released oil sheen that was not captured by the vacuum operation. This was the final culvert to be addressed as four were previously cleaned last year.
- Planning for the return of natural water flow back into Sulphur Run is underway. This work will occur over the course of several months. To prepare for rainwater and water from the upstream wetlands and derailment zone areas to flow naturally again to Sulphur Run, the north and south ditches alongside the tracks and adjacent areas will be sampled starting at the western-most end of the derailment site. Robust testing under EPA and Ohio EPA guidance, oversight, and approval will ensure the soil around and within the ditches have no remaining contamination. EPA released a [short video](#) describing this process.
  - Once sampling in the ditch shows naturally flowing water can return, flow will be restored for that area. The testing process will repeat area-by-area (nine areas in total) until the full natural flow of water is restored. Surface water sampling in Sulphur and Leslie Runs will continue during this process. None of this water flow will come from currently contained site wastewater.
  - Natural flow has been restored from the first three of the nine areas. Rainwater and snowmelt will continue to be collected on-site until water is fully restored to the ditches. If any areas need additional work, they will not be part of the process to restore water flow.
- Confirmatory sampling and investigation, known as Appendix E work, is ongoing and is nearing 60% completion.
- EPA's Welcome Center is open by appointment only. To make an appointment, please call EPA's information line at 330-775-6517. Questions can also be sent to [r5\\_eastpalestine@epa.gov](mailto:r5_eastpalestine@epa.gov).

### Response by the Numbers (as of April 12)

- 177,092 tons of solid waste shipped.
- 60,189,667 gallons of wastewater shipped.
- Confirmatory sampling work is nearly 60% complete.

**What to Expect Next Week**

- Continue site-wide confirmation sampling.
- Continue shipment of untreated non-hazardous water.
- Anticipate resuming cleanup activities in Sulphur Run (weather dependent).
- Anticipate resuming tactics planning for cleanup activities in Leslie Run (weather dependent).