

# East Palestine

## TRAIN DERAILMENT RESPONSE

Serving East Palestine, Negley, Darlington and surrounding communities

# NEWSLETTER

April 4, 2024



A high-powered vacuum hose is placed inside the culvert to remove sediments

## PROGRESS MADE

### Final Culvert Cleanout

Cleanup activities, including sediment removal, began in the remaining culvert that starts underneath Liberty Street. The cleaning targets specific areas where oil sheen was observed during the assessment completed in December 2023. A high-powered vacuum hose is used to remove sediments inside the metal pipe section of the culvert. A control point is installed at the downstream end of the work area to contain and capture any released sheen that is not captured by the vacuum operation. This is the only culvert left to be addressed as four were previously cleaned last year. As of April 5, work has not resumed due to heavy rains and high water levels.

### Stream Cleaning Operations

On March 25, Norfolk Southern began sediment cleanup in Sulphur Run. EPA later directed Norfolk Southern to suspend cleanup

operations and evaluate how to more effectively contain and recover sheen from sediments. Once EPA approves an improved operational approach by Norfolk Southern, stream cleaning will resume. It's expected that stream and culvert cleaning will both resume during the week of April 8 as long as water levels in the creeks are not too high.

### Water Treatment Plant

Operations at the on-site wastewater treatment plant are reduced to sediment filtering capabilities only. As of March 14, water has been mostly disposed of as non-hazardous (without treatment) after testing shows it doesn't contain site contaminants. This change reflects the success of the cleanup.

### Update on Final Confirmation Sampling

Final confirmation sampling – the “double-check” to make sure

hazardous substances are cleaned up to meet long-term cleanup standards – is approximately 57% complete. Details about this work can be found online in the Appendix E workplan. Sampling will look for any remaining soil contamination that may present a long-term risk from the spilled materials. The plan applies to a large industrial area and includes properties that were impacted directly and potentially by the derailment and cleanup efforts. If any soil that is sampled shows an exceedance of the screening level, it triggers an evaluation of the area to define the geographic extent of the exceedance. Then, assessment of that area will determine if more action is necessary. Of roughly 1,900 soil samples for volatile organic compounds taken so far, only about 1% have had low-level exceedances of the screening level for any chemical. This continues to confirm initial removal work was effective.

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

### ACE Survey Follow-up



Residents and first responders who took the Assessment of Chemical Exposure (ACE) survey can take a follow up survey to report any changes that may have occurred. The follow-up survey includes questions about participants' ongoing health symptoms, medical care received, and outstanding health concerns and needs. The survey will be available until April 30.

**Ohio** residents will be contacted by the Columbiana County Health District via email, if provided, or phone. If you didn't get a chance to take the survey the first time, you can use the following link to record your initial responses: [odhredcap.odh.ohio.gov/surveys/?s=E4ETRTXT88KXFHLE](https://odhredcap.odh.ohio.gov/surveys/?s=E4ETRTXT88KXFHLE)

**Pennsylvania** residents can access the survey for community members at [sst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dd1WEdLoQBfwECO](https://sst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dd1WEdLoQBfwECO), or for first responders at [sst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_dipyHiynqN9KhJl](https://sst.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dipyHiynqN9KhJl).

To take the survey in-person, you can visit the Darlington Township Municipal Building on April 9, 18 or 25 from 4-8 p.m. or April 10, 19 or 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

## AGRICULTURE UPDATE



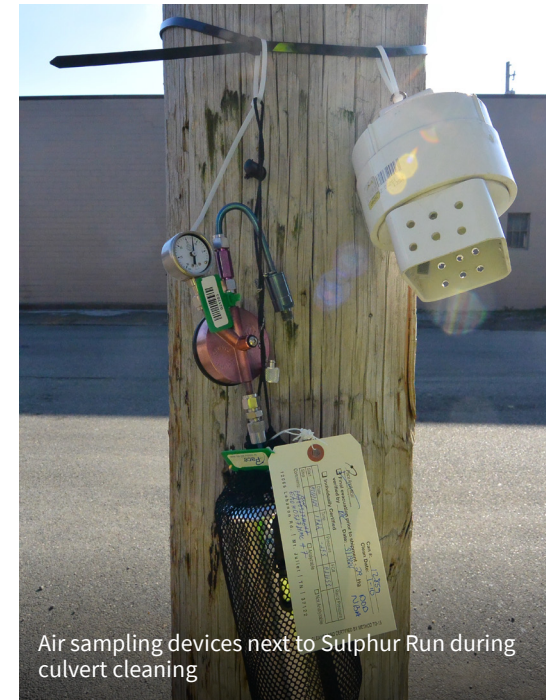
In April 2023, the Ohio Department of Agriculture and The Ohio State University conducted plant tissue sampling of crops in East Palestine and did not find contamination with semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs). Thirty-one samples were collected within a 5-mile radius of the derailment, and included tissue from winter wheat, malting barley, pasture grasses, rye, and forage covers. In 2023, Columbiana County crop producers saw yields above historical averages, consistent with trends in surrounding counties and statewide. For sampling results and maps visit: [ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/east-palestine-derailment-info/testing-results](https://ema.ohio.gov/media-publications/east-palestine-derailment-info/testing-results). For 2023 crop stats visit: [go.osu.edu/23columbianacropstats](https://go.osu.edu/23columbianacropstats)



Subsurface confirmatory sampling



Crews set boom in Sulphur Run



Air sampling devices next to Sulphur Run during culvert cleaning



The culvert underneath Liberty Street, where cleaning operations are ongoing but weather dependent



Vacuum trucks pull sediment out of a culvert



Confirmatory sampling crews collect and process a soil core

## COMMUNITY CORNER

### Research Consortium

On April 10 from 6 to 7:30 p.m., the Ohio/Pennsylvania University Research Consortium will host a science update at The Way Station in East Palestine. The meeting will explore the scope and limits of publicly available data collected after the train derailment, including what's been learned about air, plant, and water exposures, and a summary of the health issues and symptoms reported following the derailment. The Consortium is made up of researchers from different universities, the East Palestine health community, and responding agencies with the goal of providing accurate, data-driven information. RSVP at [tinyurl.com/bdz23u6k](https://tinyurl.com/bdz23u6k).

### Well Sampling Funding for Columbiana County

Funding for the residential well sampling project was secured in the recent federal budget and will help ensure residential well water in Columbiana County is safe to drink where municipal water is not available. The Columbiana County Health District has been sampling residential wells as part of the derailment response since April 2023. The local health department will share more information as it becomes available.



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## NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION UPDATE

The next newsletter will be issued as notable reportable items become available. Stay updated on response activities by checking EPA's response webpage.



Vacuum trucks are placed near booms to collect oil sheen generated during stream and culvert cleanup

## ABOUT THIS PUBLICATION

This newsletter is developed through a joint effort of state and federal agencies and community organizations. If you would like more information about topics discussed, please visit [epa.gov/east-palestine-oh-train-derailment](https://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