

## Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response EAST PALESTINE, Ohio (April 5, 2024)

- At 10:30 on April 5, 2024, deceased fish were observed by response staff in Sulphur Run during routine stream monitoring. An investigation was immediately initiated, and the facts gathered are presented below. Approximately 4.2 inches of rain fell onto the site from March 26 through April 3, leading to areal flooding north of the site. This flooding led to a direct surface connection of State Line Lake with the site's Freshwater Bypass Pond. This connection led to a migration of fish from State Line Lake into the pond, where they were pulled into the bypass pump intakes. The deceased fish then traveled through the bypass pipe and into Sulphur Run immediately downstream from the site. The exact number of fish is still being determined. ODNR, Division of Wildlife was contacted upon discovery of the deceased fish. An officer from the Division of Wildlife was on scene to investigate, and continues to work alongside the other agencies assessing the situation.
  - As the flood conditions recede across the site, it is anticipated that no more fish will be pulled into the intakes. Nonetheless, controls to prevent this from happening in the future are being considered. Further updates will be provided as additional information becomes available.
- 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 sheen from sediments. Once EPA approves an improved operational approach by Norfolk Southern, stream cleaning can resume. In the meantime, crews walk the streams to check if any sheen was agitated by high water levels and heavy rain. So far, sheen has not been observed following these recent rain events. It's expected that stream cleaning may resume during the week of April 8 as long as water levels are not too high.
- On March 28, 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 sediment 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.
- 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 was restored from the first of the nine areas on April 3 following sampling and Ohio EPA approval.
  - 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.
- 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.

- Confirmatory sampling and investigation, known as Appendix E work, is ongoing and almost 60% complete.
- 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 March 29)*

- 177,087 tons of solid waste shipped.
- 57,706,202 gallons of wastewater shipped.
- Confirmatory sampling work is almost 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).
- Cleanup activities in the remaining culvert will continue (weather dependent).