

Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

Reed Point, Montana (September 7, 2023) – 4:00pm

Unified Command for the Stillwater Train Derailment has released a [transition plan](#) on EPA's website documenting how cleanup has moved from an initial emergency response to maintenance operations. A taskforce remains on-scene to respond to reports of asphalt material. Members of the public are encouraged to avoid contact with the material and report observed deposits to rpderailment@mtrail.com. Phase 1 of cleanup began when the derailment occurred on June 24th and will continue through the spring of next year.

Phase 1 maintenance operations, which began on August 8, will continue until river conditions allow for Phase 2 of the cleanup to begin. Changing river conditions, including shifting sandbars, over the winter and early spring may reveal additional recoverable asphalt material. Accordingly, next summer the cleanup will move into Phase 2 with teams reassessing impacted areas and removing additional recoverable asphalt.

Phase 1 maintenance operations include an on-scene taskforce which is specifically targeting actionable asphalt material, defined as asphalt material that can be safely removed without causing significant damage to natural habitat, such as removal of natural sediment and vegetation. If the reported asphalt material is not actionable, the taskforce will attempt to break it into smaller pieces and cover it with sediment to aid in the natural break down process.

The Unified Command cleanup guidelines are based on the goal of maximizing asphalt removal while limiting long term impacts caused by the removal operations (such as damage from heavy foot/vehicle traffic and removal of native material). As a result, Unified Command has assessed 136 river miles below the spill site and removed an estimated 232,000 pounds of recoverable asphalt material to date. The mass balance, or total volume, for the asphalt material that entered the river has been calculated at approximately 419,442 pounds of material. Therefore, crews collected approximately 55% of spilled material.

Anyone with information about oiled or impacted wildlife are encouraged to continue call the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) Response Hotline at 888-ASK-OWCN (888-275-6926).

The natural resource damage process to evaluate the damage caused to the environment due to this event will continue through the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

For more information, please visit the response websites at:

<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.

