

Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

(October 10, 2023) – 12:00pm

Reed Point, Montana— Unified Command for the Stillwater Train Derailment announced today that expanded task force operations to recover actionable asphalt will begin this week focusing on river miles 21 to 35. Unified Command has determined that additional shoreline assessment and asphalt recovery is warranted this fall based on current environmental conditions, including low water levels, that have exposed actionable asphalt not previously identified and recent maintenance operations that recovered an additional 3,600 pounds of asphalt from the Yellowstone River.

Crews will perform cleanup activities by accessing material from shoreline and will continue based on river conditions, available landowner access, the success of operations and the ability to provide for responder safety. Current water conditions do not allow crews to safely use boats for cleanup activities. Unified Command cleanup guidelines are based on the goal of maximizing asphalt removal while limiting long term impacts caused by removal operations such as damage from heavy foot or vehicle traffic and removal of native material. If identified asphalt material is not actionable, crews will attempt to break it into smaller pieces and cover it with sediment to aid in the natural breakdown process. To date, crews have recovered an estimated 235,813 pounds of asphalt.

This incident is being managed under a Transition Plan announced on September 7. Changing river conditions over the winter and early spring, including shifting sandbars, may reveal additional recoverable asphalt material. Next spring the cleanup will move into Phase 2, where teams will reassess impacted areas and remove additional recoverable asphalt.

Members of the public are encouraged to avoid contact with the material and report observed deposits to rpderailment@mtrail.com

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

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This response is operated 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.



