

**April 6, 2024**

## **EPA and EGLE Update: Pilot Diesel Spill, Ottawa Lake, MI**

*This document provides daily on-site activities in response to the Pilot diesel spill in Ottawa Lake, Michigan.*

**Daily Site Update (updates to FAQ in red)**

**Saturday, April 6, 2024**

### **EPA**

- All updates can be found on EPA's website: [response.epa.gov/Ottawa\\_Lake\\_Diesel](https://response.epa.gov/Ottawa_Lake_Diesel)
- To date, 18,091 gallons of diesel have been collected. The company has collected 449,193 gallons of liquid that includes a mixture of diesel and water. This water will be treated or disposed of properly.
  - The majority of the pure product collected was recovered from the location where the leak originated on-site. This will be documented moving forward by providing separate volumes for excavation-area product and product that migrated to the creek.
  - Starting tomorrow, additional metrics will be reported including gallons of treated water and gallons of treated water discharge via the EGLE approved permit.
- Line jetting operations continue to remove sediment and diesel from the off-site sewer. Sediment and liquids are being collected and contained for treatment and/or disposal.
- The off-site storm sewer was investigated via camera beginning south of Sunoco running north. All buried manhole structures were located during the investigation.
- Boom is being maintained at six locations along North Tenmile Creek, south of the outfall (Sunoco, Erie Road, Bibb Road, Temperance Road, Jeff's Road, and Yankee Road).
- Contaminated vegetation removal continues along North Tenmile Creek.
- Underground utilities are being located to prepare for drilling and soil sampling on-site.
- The on-site investigation continues, which includes collection of soil samples, groundwater samples, and installation of recovery wells where product is encountered.
- Sampling of drinking water wells continues with oversight from Monroe County Health Department and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.
- EPA continues to provide oversight of all on-site and off-site work in the waterways, ensuring the safety of workers and documenting efforts.

### **Planned Work:**

- Preparation will begin to excavate and remediate Tenmile Creek between US 23 and US 223. Strict best management practices will be followed to prevent erosion and protect endangered species habitat.
- Preparations are underway to accommodate treatment of the collected contaminated water.

### **EGLE**

- EGLE has been participating in local emergency operation center coordination calls with Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division throughout the weekend.

- Language was provided to the Monroe County Health Department regarding the on-site water treatment and discharge plan.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q: Has the spill been contained?**

A: Yes. The line that contained the leak was shut down on March 26. The on-site sewer system has been capped to stop flow off-site. There is no continuing release.

#### **Q: Was the leak coming from an underground storage tank?**

A: No, the leak came from a four-inch supply line. That line was shut off upon discovery of the leak and a vacuum truck was set up to remove the product immediately after leaving the pipe. The volume collected from this location is included in the total number of gallons of pure product reported out daily.

#### **Q: Is there still oil migrating to the south of the site in North Tenmile Creek?**

A: Two underflow dams have been installed in North Tenmile Creek at the outfall behind the Sunoco gas station on US 223 and near Erie Road to prevent any heavy contamination from moving downstream. These locations will stop the flow of additional oily sheen downstream as the contaminated sediments in North Tenmile Creek are removed. Since EPA arrived on scene, booms have been installed in several locations downstream of these dams to contain any oil sheens that were present prior to the dam installations. These booms are maintained on a regular basis and any oil buildup is removed by a contractor with EPA and EGLE oversight.

#### **Q: Who is overseeing the cleanup of the on-site contamination?**

A: EPA and EGLE are on site daily to review plans and ensure that the cleanup is progressing in a safe and orderly fashion.

#### **Q: How long will it take to finish the cleanup?**

A: EPA and EGLE are working with Pilot to clean up all off-site contamination as safely and efficiently as possible. A plan for the on-site work is currently under development.

#### **Q: How will the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit work for the water treated and discharged on-site?**

A: The NPDES permit is overseen by EGLE. The on-site requirements will include a weather analysis to ensure drainage ditches will not reach flood capacity, laboratory analysis of the treated water prior to discharge, coordination with the neighbors, and regular assessments of the discharge line throughout the day.

#### **Q: What is karst geology?**

A: Karst is a type of landscape that occurs in areas where soluble rock types such as limestone and dolomite are found in the bedrock. Over time as water travels underground, these rock types dissolve which leads to the formation of cracks, fractures, and holes. Some characteristic features of karst landscapes include sinkholes, sinking streams, caves, and springs.

Karst formations can be found in Monroe County. EPA and EGLE have been working with the MCHD and MDHHS to evaluate whether this could be a potential pathway for contaminants, but analytical results to date have not indicated any impact to groundwater as a result of the spill. If residents nearby North Tenmile Creek have springs on their property and notice odors, sheens, or other evidence of oil, please contact EPA or EGLE so that the potential for underground migration can be investigated immediately.

**Q: I can see a brown buildup in some areas of the creek, is that oil?**

A: Containment measures such as containment booms and underflow dams have been installed on North Tenmile Creek to prevent downstream migration of any sheens released by cleanup activities. While the purpose of these booms is to capture any oil on the surface of the water, other materials such as pollen, algae, sediments, and debris can also collect in front of them over time. An example of this is shown in today's photo below. One thing that can distinguish the two is that absorbent booms and pads are oleophilic meaning that while they absorb oil and hydrocarbons, they repel water and other materials. If you see buildup in front of a booming location and it is not being absorbed by the pads, it may not be oil. EPA is monitoring the two underflow dams and six containment boom locations on North Tenmile Creek several times per day. If a resident believes they see or smell oil in North Tenmile Creek outside of the work area, please contact EPA or EGLE.

**Q: What kind of cleanup is being done on-site?**

A: EPA is working with Pilot to ensure all on-site contamination from the spill is cleaned up thoroughly and safely. A plan has been developed to determine the extent of the underground contamination for removal. Under EPA and EGLE oversight, Pilot has already started to perform a full subsurface investigation to determine the extent of contamination.

#### **Today's Photo**



Buildup of natural materials in North Tenmile Creek on April 6, 2024