



Oil Spill Assessment and Recovery

Poplar Pipeline Spill

January 25, 2015



Ongoing Efforts

The Unified Command consisting of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), and Bridger Pipeline continues working on assessment and cleanup activities related to the pipeline break; oil recovery from the river and assessment of habitat and wildlife resources.

Status of Pipeline

The cause of the leak remains unknown. A tool, known in the industry as a "pig" has been used to help purge oil from the pipeline. Response teams have finished removing oil from the pipeline and have cut and capped the ends of the damaged line.

Responders recovered a significant amount of oil over Jan. 23 and 24. A final tally of the total oil recovered from the pipeline is being made and a more precise estimate of the volume lost is being calculated. These numbers will be released in the next few days.

Bridger has used a submersible robot with camera and sonar capability to collect pictures and measurements of the pipeline. As this information is compiled it may help complete the understanding of what caused the break. It will be released to the public.

River Operations

Oil recovery remains difficult due to the ice on the river. However, crews did recover oil that has begun to bubble to the surface in the vicinity of the pipeline break. The volume recovered has not yet been determined.

The collection slot remains open at mile 3.3 from the pipeline break and crews are monitoring it but oil recovery remains low.

EPA is working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to model how the oil may have moved in the river in an effort to determine whether it is trapped under the ice or has moved downstream.

Monitoring

Monitoring plans for water, environmental impacts, wildlife and air have been developed and are being implemented. All plans include sampling stations up and down the river corridor to assess the area of impact and help determine where future action may be necessary. The plans will be posted on the website and outline the Unified Command's approach for determining the next steps in the recovery phase of the operation.

Future Recovery

The Unified command has begun to develop its long-term implementation strategy. These approaches will depend on river conditions and the amount of residual oil remaining in the river. When the strategy is finalized, they will be made available to the public for review.

Visit these web sites for more information:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
<http://www2.epa.gov/region8/bridger-pipeline-release>

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
<http://www.deq.mt.gov/yellowstonespill2015.mcpx>

Dawson County
<http://www.dawsoncountymontana.org/>

Bridger Pipeline LLC Poplar Response
<http://www.poplarresponse.com>

CDC/ATSDR
http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/yellowstone_river.html

Or contact Wendy Thomi, EPA Public Information Officer at 406-457-5037 or thomi.wendy@epa.gov