

EOC Spot Report: Region 8
BNSF Somers Seep Report of Sheen on Flathead Lake
Somers, Montana
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Report as of 05/05/2017 11:43 am MST

Overview: On Wednesday, May 3, 2017, at 3:25 pm MST, BNSF Railway reported a sheen on the Flat Head Lake, in Somers, Montana through the National Response Center (#1177348). BNSF was notified of the sheen by a local resident. Once notified, BNSF deployed an environmental team to assess the situation. The seepage is just outside the BNSF Somers Former Rail Tie Superfund Site that has known ground water and sediment contamination from operations where creosote was once used to coat rail ties. The ground water tables may be high from above average snowfall/melt in the area, therefore posing a threat of an interaction of ground and surface water. BNSF believes the sheen could be biological, however EPA has deployed to assess the situation due to the close proximity to the Superfund Site and known contamination in the area.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: BNSF and their environmental contractor are on-site. EPA On Scene Coordinator and a START contractor are on site. Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality is monitoring updates through BNSF and EPA.

EPA Actions: EPA has performed a visual inspection of the site and confirmed the visual rainbow sheen appears to be present in multiple discrete pockets along a 500-1,000 ft. stretch of shoreline outside the former rail tie facility. Until sample results are received it is unknown if the sheen is biological or chemical. BNSF is expecting sample results back tomorrow, May 6th. EPA is collecting samples today and expects the results to come in by Tues., May 9th or Weds. May 10th. BNSF has deployed boom to contain the sheen, and they are using sorbent pads to collect the sheen. The EPA OSC has directed BNSF to continue to monitor the boom and sorbent pads to ensure they are providing adequate containment and prevention of migration.

The Regional EOC will continue to monitor and provide updates as needed.

Additional information will be provided at the following website:

<http://www.response.epa.gov/bnsfsomersseep>