

# Stillwater Train Derailment Press Release

**Reed Point, Montana** (June 30, 2023) – 12:00pm

Crews safely removed two additional asphalt cars from the river. In total, seven of the 10 cars that entered the river have been removed, including all six of the impacted asphalt cars. Efforts continue this morning to remove the two remaining molten sulfur cars and the car filled with scrap metal. Construction crews continue preparing the eastern side of the bridge to transfer asphalt product from three upright asphalt cars that did not enter the river to stable railcars. There is a fourth asphalt car that is resting on the edge of the bridge that has not entered the water. Crews continue to assess the safest approach for removal of this car.

Unified Command representatives and the environmental assessment team will be on the river this afternoon investigating and developing a plan to physically remove asphalt material. Members of the public are encouraged to continue reporting sightings of any asphalt material they observe and avoiding contact, when possible, to bare skin. Preliminary reports from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) show that asphalt material will continue to be seen further downstream in increasingly smaller sizes.

Reopening agricultural headgates and irrigation sources continue to be a focal point for Unified Command. Planning continues to evolve surrounding what work is needed to safely reopen headgates and irrigation access points. Unified Command aims to minimize impact to local agricultural producers as much as possible. Local agricultural stakeholders will continue to be informed as these efforts evolve.

Boating and fishing access sites remain closed approximately 1 mile upstream and 2.5 miles downstream from the site of the derailment.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has the following river and park access updates:

- FWP implemented an emergency closure at Holmgren Fishing Access Site (FAS) on the Yellowstone River near Columbus beginning June 30, 2023, at 12 p.m. All public access at the site is prohibited. The closure will remain in effect until further notice. Clean-up crews for the recent train derailment will be using Holmgren FAS as a worksite and

staging area for their efforts, creating unsafe conditions for public use.

- For non-motorized river users, Indian Fort FAS is the last take-out opportunity before the closed area.
- Itch-Kep-Pe Park in Columbus, operated by the City of Columbus, is fully open for public use.
- Riverside Park in Laurel, operated by the City of Laurel, is also staging response crews. Public access will still be allowed at this site.

River and access site closures are subject to change based on condition assessments and needs of emergency response agencies. Signs informing the public of the closure are posted at access points.

To report observed asphalt material, submit information to: [rpderailment@mtrail.com](mailto:rpderailment@mtrail.com).

To report an oiled animal, call the Oiled Wildlife Care Network (OWCN) Response Hotline at 888-ASK-OWCN (888-275-6926) and provide the animal's location, time last seen, and your contact information.

For more information, please visit the response websites at:

<https://response.epa.gov/stillwatertrainderailment>

<https://www.stillwatercountymt.gov/train-derailment/>



*Causeway and construction equipment.*

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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.

