

# Officials to inspect ruptured Mich. oil pipeline

August 6 2010, By JOHN FLESHER , AP Environmental Writer

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This July 28, 2010 photo provided by the State of Michigan shows what Michigan officials say is a sheen of oil on Morrow Lake in Kalamazoo County. The lake is a key point where officials had hoped to stop oil from a spill into the Kalamazoo River that has coated wildlife with oil. (AP Photo/State of Michigan)

(AP) -- A ruptured section of pipeline that spewed hundreds of thousands of gallons of oil into a southern Michigan river will be ready for inspection and removal shortly, officials said Thursday.

The damaged segment has been hard to reach since the spill was reported July 26 because it's in a marshy, oil-covered area of Calhoun County. It will be examined in the ground at first and eventually cut out and shipped to a National Transportation Safety Board lab for tests, regulators said.

Officials with Enbridge Inc. and government agencies said the cleanup of the [Kalamazoo River](#) and other polluted waterways was going well, as crews continue removing tainted water and placing boom material as needed to contain and absorb the oil.

[Contaminated soil](#) and leaked crude have been removed from 2 acres of the 5-acre zone closest to the spill site, said Mark Durno, the Environmental Protection Agency's deputy incident commander. Over 2.5 million gallons of oily water have been sucked out, he said.

"We're moving from crisis to cleanup slowly, day by day," Durno said.

Residents of the Battle Creek area have reported seeing increased amounts of oily sheen recently, but that's because rainfall has washed oil from the riverbanks and wetlands, said Susan Hedman, the EPA's regional chief.

"That is a way of capturing the oil and cleaning the shoreline in a very efficient manner," Hedman said.

She said the EPA had approved the portion of Enbridge's cleanup plan dealing with health and safety.

The 30-inch pipeline, laid in 1969, carries about 8 million gallons of oil daily from Griffith, Ind., to Sarnia, Ontario. Up to 100 feet of pipeline could be removed for the leak investigation, said Steve Wuori, an Enbridge executive vice president.

Enbridge reported the leak to federal officials July 26, although U.S. Rep. Mark Schauer, a Battle Creek Democrat, contends it began the previous night when the Canadian company shut down the pipeline for maintenance.

Schauer has accused Enbridge, based in Calgary, Alberta, of violating federal regulations by taking too long to report the spill, which the company denies.

The EPA has said more than 1 million gallons of oil leaked, while the company estimates the total at 820,000 gallons.

A state official said Thursday that hundreds of fish and some mussels were killed when water levels were lowered in a downstream reservoir called Lake Allegan to help contain the oil spill.

Carp, largemouth bass and bluegills were among fish stranded by the 2-foot drop in levels, said Jim Dexter of the [Michigan](#) Department of Natural Resources and Environment.

Seven types of freshwater mussels, two of which are on the state list of endangered and threatened species, were found on the newly exposed shoreline. But many will live long enough for the levels to return to normal, Dexter said.

A Battle Creek couple filed a federal lawsuit against Enbridge last week and requested status as a class-action case that other area residents could join. The Great Lakes Environmental Law Center has threatened a suit alleging Clean Water Act violations.

"Lawsuits are launched in order to recover damages," said Patrick Daniel, Enbridge's chief executive. "We're indicating there is no need for lawsuits because we will pay for all damages related to the spill."

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