

Nathan Allan/R2/FWS/DOI To
08/30/2007 11:32 AM cc
bcc
Subject Fw: Newspaper story

-----Original Message-----

From: O'Donnell, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2007 3:24 PM
To: 'Nathan_Allan@fws.gov '
Cc: 'Paige_Najvar@fws.gov'; 'Christina_Williams@fws.gov'; 'cyndee_watson@fws.gov'
Subject: FW: Newspaper story

FYI.

-----Original Message-----

From: Sanders, Mark
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2007 2:51 PM
To: O'Donnell, Lisa; Barrera, Rene
Subject: RE: Newspaper story

I've never found any salamanders at the area in question (confluence of Stillhouse and Barrow), however, I do know that Andy Price did years ago. My best guess as to why I've never found salamanders at this location is the periodic sewer spills from the Barrow branch, in the past it was quite frequent.

Mark

From: O'Donnell, Lisa
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2007 12:23 PM
To: Sanders, Mark; Barrera, Rene
Subject: FW: Newspaper story

Just an FYI, in case you didn't already know about this.

-----Original Message-----

From: Kaufman, Eric [mailto:eric.kaufman@ci.austin.tx.us]
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2007 10:50 AM
To: O'Donnell, Lisa
Cc: Cooper, Sharon; Garza, Oscar; Peacock, Ed; Johns, David; Scoggins, Mateo
Subject: RE: Newspaper story

Lisa:

The spill occurred well below Still House Hollow and below Barrow Preserve. The furthest upstream point that was affected by sewage is just below the place where the Barrow tributary comes in to the bottom of the drainage and about 150 above the place where the Still House tributary enters the bottom drainage. Neither of these tributaries was affected. Mateo and some of his team were on site yesterday and they will be monitoring the affected area. We have had several spills in this vicinity over the years and it is our understanding that the site is lower in elevation than any Jollyville Salamander sites. Please let us know if that is not the case. I have attached a web page map for you to view. The manhole in question is number 116245 and it is the first manhole southeast of the letters H31 on the map. Feel free to call if you have any questions (974-3512).

Eric

See the summary below for more details:

Summary:

On Monday August 27 at 11:25 AM, the Austin Water Utility notified (via the Pollution Hotline) WPDRD'S Spills and Complaints Response Program of an active sewage overflow into a tributary of Bull Creek in the creek bottom below West Rim Cove (SR # 319731). Spills Program staff were on site by 12:06 and worked throughout the spill (From 12:06 PM on Monday until 2:00AM on Tuesday Morning) to assist the AWU in determining the best options for recovery and mitigation, to assess the overall impact of the spill and to provide assistance in interpretation of regulatory issues . The overflow was estimated at a total of 50,000 gallons and lasted from 11:30AM until about 11:30 PM. The AWU crews were able to recover about 50% of the sewage from three different locations along the tributary starting from the old lift station site below West Rim Cove and extending to the bridge over the tributary at the Treetops Apartments at 5217 Old Spicewood Springs Road. An undetermined amount of creek water contaminated with sewage was released downstream into the main tributary of Bull Creek and Bull Creek Park. For that reason, the AWU made a public notification concerning the spill on Tuesday morning. The spill appears to have been caused by a blockage of grease and debris in the line.

AWU worked hard to mitigate the spill but the blockage kept moving downstream, causing overflows from three separate manholes. The last overflow site was so remote that crews had drag hoses for 1000 feet down a steep wooded slope in the dark to supply water for their track mounted flushing machine. Once the blockage started moving downstream, there was no place to pump the sewage so the crews had to prepare for a pump-around while they were also trying to unstop the line. They had already laid out over 800 feet of hose for the pump around when the line was finally cleared. Spills staff assisted AWU in devising a pumping plan that utilized the 800 feet of hose to recover some of the sewage from the middle section of the creek. A pump was also set up at the bridge to prevent any further migration of the sewage contaminated creek water.

Spill Staff returned to the site on Tuesday Morning to assess the clean up. The water in the downstream area at 5217 Old Spicewood looked clean and clear but the water in the area around the initial spill was cloudy and turbid closer examination revealed a very large amount of sewage solids had collected in the rocky section of creek just downstream of the first manhole that overflowed. Spill staff identified the area of concern and requested that crews dam the creek below that area and then use low pressure on the flusher hose to suspend the collected sewage solids and wash them to the dam and then pump the solids and the contaminated creek water back into the sanitary sewer. The cleanup should be finished by the end of the day Tuesday. Spill staff also contacted the biologists of the WPDRD WRE section and led them on a tour of the site so they could perform aquatic assessment work.

From: O'Donnell, Lisa [mailto:Lisa.ODonnell@ci.austin.tx.us]
Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2007 10:18 AM
To: Cooper, Sharon; Kaufman, Eric; Garza, Oscar; Peacock, Ed; Johns, David
Subject: FW: Newspaper story

Hi All,

Do you have any information on the location of this spill? It appears to be in the vicinity of Stillhouse Hollow and Barrow tributary, do you know if the spill occurred below the confluence of these two tribs?

Many thanks,

Lisa

-----Original Message-----

From: Nathan_Allan@fws.gov [mailto:Nathan_Allan@fws.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, August 29, 2007 8:21 AM
To: O'Donnell, Lisa
Cc: Paige_Najvar@fws.gov; Christina_Williams@fws.gov; cyndee_watson@fws.gov
Subject: Fw: Newspaper story

Hey Lisa, Do you know where this spill occurred related to JPS sites? thanks, Nathan

Nathan Allan
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----- Forwarded by Nathan Allan/R2/FWS/DOI on 08/29/2007 08:14 AM -----

Wastewater spilled in Bull Creek tributary

Wednesday, August 29, 2007

Austin American-Statesman

Wastewater spills into tributary

Water Utility crews were expected by late Tuesday to finish cleaning up about 50,000 gallons of wastewater that spilled into a Bull Creek tributary Monday, spokesman Kevin Buchman said.

Officials are advising people who live in the area to avoid contact with standing water over the next few days.

The spill has not affected drinking water, Buchman said.

Debris in a wastewater line between West Rim Cove and Spicewood Springs Road in Northwest Austin caused the spill Monday morning, he said.

Repairs were delayed because workers had trouble accessing the rough terrain in the canyon area, he said.