



Buena Vista Lagoon Wastewater Spill O V E R V I E W

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- Sometime on Saturday evening, March 31, a 24-inch ductile iron force main owned by the cities of Vista and Carlsbad failed along the shoreline of Buena Vista Lagoon off of Jefferson Avenue in Carlsbad.
- At approximately 6 p.m. on Sunday, April 1, a passerby called Carlsbad dispatch to report a spill.
- Once notified of the failure, the City of Carlsbad mobilized staff to address the spill. An incident command was established because of the magnitude of the spill and the ecological sensitivity of the spill area.
- The cities of Carlsbad and Vista retained a specialty contractor to implement pipeline repairs.
- A regional response effort was initiated using staff and equipment resources from the City of Carlsbad, City of Vista, City of Oceanside, Encina Wastewater Authority, Leucadia Wastewater District, California Department of Fish & Game, and San Diego County Department of Environmental Health.
- Ecological assessments and clean-up planning and response were initiated concurrent with pipeline repairs. This work has been on-going since the earliest stages of the spill and is expected to continue for some time to minimize harm to the sensitive lagoon area.
- The discharge of sewage from the sanitary sewer system was terminated through pipeline repairs completed at about 1 p.m. on Tuesday, April 3.
- Preliminary investigations of the pipe section that failed suggest that exterior corrosion of the pipe caused the ultimate rupture. Interior surfaces of the pipe were observed to be in good condition, and the failure would not have been evident through standard inspection methods.
- It is estimated that 7.3 million gallons of raw sewage was discharged into the lagoon prior to the completion of repairs. During repairs, approximately three million gallons were diverted from the system upstream or pumped out of the Jefferson Pump Station containment area where it was diverted from the pipeline rupture and trucked away to be fed into different lines.

- A pump-back system was implemented to withdraw contaminated lagoon water from the eastern end of the lagoon and send this water to the Jefferson Pump Station and ultimately down to the Encina Wastewater Plant. This system serves to extract sewage as well as to limit the extent of the sewage plume in the lagoon and draw it back towards the origin of the spill.
- The pump-back has removed millions of gallons of water from the lagoon and recalled much of the sewage.
- Six aerators were placed in the lagoon and continue to run.
- Sewage did not reach the ocean shoreline at any time during or subsequent to the spill. Beaches were posted as a precautionary measure as water quality data has been collected and processed.
- Dissolved oxygen levels fell below lethal limits for fish and some invertebrates within the portions of the eastern basin of the lagoon. Around 1,700 fish were collected from the lagoon. As of April 11, those oxygen levels have substantively recovered.
- There have been losses of four birds identified. These include two American coots, a California gull, and a gadwall duck.
- The cost of the response remains largely unknown at this time, but is expected to be substantial. The cities of Carlsbad and Vista have each allocated \$500,000 for repair and remediation.
- The line was constructed in 1982 and is a pressurized sewer line between the Jefferson Pump Station and the Encina Wastewater Authority's treatment plant.
- The line was expected to last 50 years.
- The cities are continuing their environmental impact monitoring efforts in coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

For more information, please contact Vista Communications Officer Jenny Peterson at (661) 492-1006 or Carlsbad Communications Manager Denise Vedder at (760) 703-2840.