



CITY OF BAINBRIDGE ISLAND

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City Addresses Sewage Spill in Eagle Harbor

Bainbridge Island, WA, 06/01/09 – At approximately 3 pm Saturday, the City’s on-call utility staff received a report of spilled sewage on the northeast beach of Eagle Harbor, near Irene Place. The spill occurred between the ferry terminal and Hawley Cove Park (also known as the Hall Property). City staff investigated and confirmed the leak, and senior city operations and maintenance staff initiated repairs.

The Kitsap County Health District, which is the designated lead agency for shoreline pollution incidents, was notified of the spill immediately. The Health District has posted the beach to alert walkers to steer clear of the area, and issued a ten-day “No Contact” advisory for marine waters in Eagle Harbor. The Departments of Ecology and Fish and Wildlife have also been informed, and testing is scheduled for early this week to evaluate any possibility of e. coli contamination in Eagle Harbor waters. City staff will continue to coordinate with the Health District to provide appropriate advice to the public regarding use of the area and of Eagle Harbor in general.

The leak appears to have been caused by corrosion in the 32 year old submerged beachfront sewage lines. “Like communities across the country, Bainbridge Island is facing the challenge of managing aging sewer and water infrastructures,” says Lance Newkirk, the city’s Deputy Director of Operations and Maintenance. “Two years ago, the city identified the shoreline sewer network around Eagle Harbor as a potential problem area, and we initiated a corrosion assessment; however, the results were inconclusive and did not direct immediate action. This is one of the projects on the list for the city’s Capital Improvements Plan -- we need to work with the City Council to determine how to rank this need for repairs with other capital improvement needs.”

The sewer main in question offers particular challenges, since it lies in the tidal range, so repair activities must be coordinated with favorable tides. According to Newkirk, the first opportunity to repair the break was during an early-morning low tide Sunday. A

crew of city staff and contract pumper trucks was assembled to address the leak. Crews began work at 5:00 am Sunday and implemented temporary repairs. The repair team confirmed that the source of leakage was four holes approximately one-half inch in diameter, probably caused by corrosion.

Approximately 70,000 gallons of untreated sewage is estimated to have spilled between 3 pm Saturday and 9 am Sunday. It is expected that up to 70,000 gallons of additional untreated sewage may enter the environment before final repairs can be completed at the next severe low tide Tuesday morning.

City crews will continue to monitor the spill area and take appropriate actions as necessary. The neighbors most impacted by the spill have been informed and are cooperating with city staff by providing property access to facilitate repairs.

For additional information on repair efforts, contact the City of Bainbridge Island Department of Public Works at (206)842-1212. For information on health advisories, contact the Kitsap County Health District at 1-800-2BE-WELL, or visit www.kitsapcountyhealth.com.

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