

Creek cleanup and notification continue

By Public Affairs, UC Berkeley | December 22, 2011

BERKELEY — UC Berkeley officials, working in coordination with federal, state and local agencies, have begun distributing informational flyers to city of Berkeley property owners who live along the Strawberry Creek area affected by the Dec. 10 diesel fuel spill that originated on the campus.

Distribution of the flyers, which began today (Dec. 22), is the latest of several efforts to alert the public to the incident, provide safety information and offer updates on the cleanup effort. The handout explains what occurred and what has taken place to address the spill.

Initial notification efforts involved city workers going door-to-door informing residents of the incident, and emergency crews posting signs in public areas near the creek. The agencies and university also issued press releases and news updates regarding the incident and cleanup.

Among the key pieces information in the flyer being distributed to residents who live along open portions of the creek:

- A slight sheen of diesel oil remains on some portions of the creek, and traces of fuel are continuing to be trapped by absorbent pads and booms. Property owners along the creek are asked to avoid disturbing the absorbent materials. These materials will remain in place as long as necessary to protect the creek and San Francisco Bay.
- Because diesel fuel can irritate the skin, residents should avoid contact with water in Strawberry Creek.
- The odor of diesel fuel is easily detected by the human nose, even at concentrations well below levels that would present a public health threat. Air quality sampling has been conducted and has verified safe conditions.
- Residents who have any concerns regarding this issue are encouraged to call (510) 642-6760.

Cleanup efforts have been underway since the evening of Dec. 10, when campus officials learned that malfunctioning equipment inside UC Berkeley's Stanley Hall caused diesel fuel to spill from an emergency generator tank, down to storm-water pumps in the building's basement and into Strawberry Creek.

University officials immediately contacted federal, state and local authorities regarding the spill and have been working closely with officials from the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and other agencies to address the spill.

While much of the fuel remained within the building, a significant amount entered Strawberry Creek, and a smaller amount reached San Francisco Bay.