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Oil spill near water supply for Peekskill, Cortlandt, Buchanan

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YORKTOWN — A ruptured tank spilled up to 300 gallons of home-heating oil into storm drains that feed into Mohegan Lake over the weekend, threatening the drinking water of more than 30,000 people.

Mohegan firefighters kept the fuel from reaching the lake a few hundred feet away, but the cleanup will take several more days. Mohegan Lake lies within the Peekskill watershed and drains into a stream that feeds the Hollow Brook, the drinking-water source for Peekskill and parts of Cortlandt and Buchanan.

"Basically, we've got it under control," said Michael Dominelli, whose firm, Northeast Environmental of Mamaroneck, was chosen for the cleanup. "It's not all cleaned up, but it's contained."

To contain the oil, Dominelli's crew installed booms in storm drains on Parmly Court and along a stream that leads into the lake.

Traces of the rust-red fuel were barely visible yesterday on absorbent pads laid down to sop up the oil. Workers will return every other day to replace the pads and inspect the cleanup.

The Fire Department's Hazardous Materials unit responded to 3187 Parmly Court around noon Saturday to find oil pouring from a drainpipe into the marsh. They traced the source to 1790 Parmly Road, where a 250-gallon tank had ruptured following a delivery.

Fire Captain Neil Boddie turned off a sump pump that was pumping the oil out of the house. Firefighters contained the leak within the wetland and deployed a boat to see whether the oil had reached the lake, Boddie said.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation is treating the spill as an accident. No violations have been issued. A DEC spill report lists the spill at 500 gallons, but both Boddie and Peekskill Water Superintendent Scott Kavana said it was likely half that.

Kavana said the city's water supply was unaffected. The lake drains at the opposite shore, 1.5 miles from the spill.



In February, an overturned delivery truck spilled hundreds of gallons of fuel oil into the Hollow Brook. The city, which owns its water supply, tapped into a neighboring system for more than a week during the cleanup.

"This is an ongoing problem for us, even though it's rare," Kavana said.

City reservoirs at Pumphouse Road in Cortlandt were monitored for oil after Saturday's spill.

In an e-mail, Andrew Fischer, president of the group Hollow Brook Water Watch, advised members to watch for traces of oil between the lake and Pumphouse Road. Reports of contamination came in for weeks after the February spill, Fischer said.

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