Oil Spill Leaves Sheen on Grand River

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Cleanup crews were working Tuesday to contain about 300 to 500 gallons of hydraulic fluid that spilled from a Lansing power plant and left a sheen on the Grand River.

The Board of Water and Light installed booms — inflated buoys with pads to absorb the fluid — across the river, said Brad Wurfel, a spokesman for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

It was too soon to assess the spill's effects on the environment, Wurfel told The Associated Press early Tuesday afternoon.

The spill started Sunday night and was blamed on a gasket failure at the utility's Eckert Power Plant near downtown.

Oil-absorbing materials were expected to be in place for several days to collect the oil.

The Board of Water and Light notified state officials and the Environmental Protection Agency about the spill. An EPA crisis manager was on the scene, according to the state.

The utility said it's following standard cleanup procedures following the spill.

"The Board of Water and Light is very responsive in this situation," Wurfel said. "You can't foresee what happens. It's about the response at this point."

Word of the spill prompted a call from environmentalists for an investigation and thorough cleanup.

"We're encouraging accountability from the Lansing Board of Water and Light, particularly on behalf of the Lansing residents who could be impacted by this spill," Nic Clark, Michigan Director of Clean Water Action, said in a statement.

Oil spills into Michigan waterways have received increased attention since July 2010, when more than 800,000 gallons spewed into the Kalamazoo River and a tributary creek after the rupture of an underground pipeline near Marshall in southwestern Michigan.

Cleanup continues following that spill from Enbridge Inc.'s pipeline. In that case, oil flowed about 35 miles before it was contained.

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