Utility: Lansing Oil Spill Mostly Cleaned Up

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A utility has cleaned up most of the about 300 to 500 gallons of hydraulic fluid that spilled from a Lansing power plant and left a sheen on the Grand River, officials said.

Lansing Board of Water and Light's General Manager Peter Lark expects oil-absorbent booms — inflated buoys with pads to absorb the fluid — to be in place at least through the weekend, the Lansing State Journal reported.

"We are committed to cleaning up all the oil," Lark said. "If anybody can find any oil on that river, we are going to clean it up. If there are any pockets of oil that emanated from our plant, we are responsible for them."

A vacuum truck was used Wednesday to suck up the light, lubricant oil from the water, MLive.com reported.

The spill started Sunday night and was blamed on a gasket failure at the utility's Eckert Power Plant near downtown. Officials say crews began working immediately to clean up the leak but realized early Monday that oil was escaping a containment area.

Booms have been in place since Monday.

George Stojic, who heads the Lansing Board of Water and Light's environmental department, said the utility's environmental response team followed its emergency action plans after the spill. Still, Stojic said the accident was unacceptable.

"You don't want to see these spills," he said. "This stuff doesn't belong in the river."

The utility and the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality are investigating spill, and the MDEQ will assess the potential environmental impact.

"BWL appeared to have gotten in front of this thing very quickly," MDEQ spokesman Brad Wurfel. "They're doing everything they're supposed to be doing right now."

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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