



For immediate release – August 28, 2025  
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## **Emergency response completed at Padden Creek spill site**

Bellingham – Emergency spill response operations at Padden Creek have concluded. Shoreline assessments and cleanup were completed, with contaminated soil removed to the extent possible, the creek flushed, and protective measures installed. Work has now transitioned to restoration and long-term monitoring.

Crews removed contaminated soil wherever feasible. Soil immediately adjacent to the bridge could not be fully excavated without risking the bridge's structural integrity. In the stream channel, additional excavation would have caused more harm to habitat than leaving residual material in place.

The Lummi Nation, Nooksack Indian Tribe, Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, City of Bellingham, and Faber Construction have managed the response together as a Unified Command since Aug. 8. Additional support came from Graymar Environmental Services, the contractor responsible for cleanup operations.

### **Background**

The spill originated from a malfunctioning pump on a generator at the 12<sup>th</sup> Street bridge construction site. The faulty pump released diesel into roughly one-third of a mile of Padden Creek in two separate incidents on Aug. 3 and Aug. 7, before the generator was removed and replaced. Crews deployed boom, removed contaminated soil, reinforced coffer dams, and installed additional pumps to control creek flow during heavy rain. Wildlife monitoring has been ongoing with no additional impacts observed after Aug. 10.

Over the weekend of Aug. 23-24, the Unified Command approved Faber Construction to resume stream bed backfill and restoration at the bridge site, as part of the original project underway before the spill. Shoreline Cleanup and Assessment Technique (SCAT) teams conducted a final walkthrough on Aug. 25 confirming that no recoverable fuel remained. Flushing operations were discontinued and equipment removed from the site.

### **Transition to Restoration**

Unified Command confirmed that all emergency response objectives were achieved to the extent possible. Recovery actions were completed to a standard that establishes the foundation for long-term recovery.

Restoration and monitoring are now being coordinated by Ecology's Toxics Cleanup Program (TCP) and Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) trustees. TCP will evaluate whether further remediation is needed and manage any long-term cleanup. Tribal, state, and federal trustees will assess harm to fish, wildlife, habitat, and recreation, and determine restoration projects funded by the responsible party.

## **Incident Response Summary**

- Fuel released: Approximately 676 gallons of diesel in two releases
- Response actions: Deployed containment boom and sorbents; ensured and reinforced secondary containment at the pump to prevent future spills; 23 truckloads of contaminated soil removed for disposal, totaling 324.1 tons; flushing operations and sediment sampling conducted; streambank reinforced; and one impacted tree removed for safety
- Wildlife impacts: Five fish and one crayfish confirmed killed
- Public health: No fuel reached Bellingham Bay, and there were no drinking water impacts
- Community impacts: The 10<sup>th</sup> Street trail closure has reopened, with some equipment still onsite

## **More information**

- For the latest information, please visit: <http://cob.org/padden-12th>
- For information about Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA), please visit: <http://ecology.wa.gov/NRDA>
- For information about Toxics Cleanup Program (TCP), please visit: <http://ecology.wa.gov/contamination-cleanups>
- Report injured wildlife: 1-800-22-BIRDS (1-800-222-4737), or online at [https://arcg.is/4T\\$0X](https://arcg.is/4T$0X)
- Questions or concerns: [Liaison@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Liaison@ecy.wa.gov)

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