

Ash Release at TVA's Kingston January 3, 2009 7:45 p.m. EST

TVA, local, state and federal agencies continue to work on recovery and clean up of a release of ash caused by a failure of a coal ash containment retention wall at TVA's Kingston Fossil Plant in East Tennessee.

On Sunday, January 4, TVA will open the access road leading to Swan Pond Methodist Church by 8 a.m. to accommodate church services, but will close the road after church services are over in the afternoon.

Airborne Ash Dust Control

The ash is mostly inert and breathing fly ash for a short period of time is unlikely to be a health concern. Breathing particulates (fly ash or other airborne particulates) over long periods of time can irritate the respiratory system. TVA is taking measures to reduce the amount of airborne dust that may arise in the future. Today, TVA began spreading grass seed and fertilizer as part of the immediate actions it has planned to minimize dust and erosion. Long term recovery efforts will continue. The seeding will target the undisturbed portion of the ash cell, with a liquid dust suppression agent via truck and sprayer. For the internal portion of the spilled material, TVA will spray seed and fertilizer, followed later by straw, using a helicopter as a temporary measure for controlling dust and erosion. For the area around Swan Pond Road where work is continuing, the ash will be sprayed with water. The rest of the perimeter will be sprayed by amphibious vehicle with seed and fertilizer, with straw to follow. This process is similar to the one used by highway departments to provide ground cover.

Community Assistance

TVA continues to assist residents affected by the incident and has scheduled meetings with homeowners to answer their questions and listen to their concerns. TVA has activated a 1-800 number that property owners should call if they need an assessment of property damages. An Outreach Center is opening Tuesday, January 6, at 509 North Kentucky Street in Kingston. The center will be open the first week Tuesday through Saturday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays.

All other members of the public should continue to use 865-717-4006 with their questions or concerns.

Roadway and Railway Cleanup

Public access on Swan Pond Road past the Kingston plant and Swan Pond Circle remain closed except for construction as TVA removes material off the roads. Safety is the priority for anyone entering the area. Currently, there is no estimate for when the road will reopen for public use.

All rails and ties have been removed. TVA is now beginning the process of rebuilding the railroad base. Tracks will be set beginning on Monday.

Air Monitoring

Real-time air monitoring was temporarily suspended this morning due to weather conditions, since the hand-held monitors cannot reliably measure air particulates in the rain or fog. This monitoring will resume as soon as weather permits. 24-hour air monitoring continues at the five fixed stations located in residential areas near the plant and at the on-site mobile laboratory. As of the last samples taken yesterday, air quality remains good. Concentrations of air particulates remain below levels of concern (i.e. below National Ambient Air Quality Standards).

Water Quality

Additional water sample results indicate municipal drinking water continues to be safe. EPA, TDEC and TVA data are consistent and indicate that treated drinking water is safe. Each agency is using certified labs for the analysis. Water samples have been tested from four local water treatment facilities, Rockwood, Harriman, Cumberland and Kingston.

Samples closest to the Kingston water treatment plant continue to meet requirements for primary drinking water standards.

TDEC is sampling the Kingston and Rockwood Water Plant intakes and processed water through mid-January. These samples will be taken daily and analyzed for Safe Drinking Water Act standards. The analysis will be performed by the Tennessee Department of Health Laboratory in Nashville. The laboratory data is released by TDEC.

The most recent results of water sampling near the ash release area indicate that the concentrations of sampled contaminants either met or were below detection levels established by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to protect fish and aquatic life.

To date, TDEC has sampled 40 private wells within a four mile radius of the plant. Those members of the public within this vicinity who desire to have their drinking water ground wells tested should call (865) 717-4006 to schedule.

TVA has set up a river water sampling schedule on a Monday, Wednesday, Friday rotation, with information being released through www.tva.com within four to five days.

Soil Sampling

Preliminary testing of the offsite soil samples show that toxic metals are well below (on the order of 10-100 times) the limits for classification as a hazardous waste. The trace concentrations of toxic metals in the offsite material sampled are consistent with and generally lower than that of the historic sampling results

from the ash dredge cell that collapsed. The data shows that the concentrations of most metals in the deposited ash are not dramatically different from concentrations found in natural, non-agricultural soils in Tennessee, with the exception of arsenic. Total arsenic results were slightly above the average naturally occurring, but well below levels found in soils that are well fertilized and significantly below the limits to be classified as a hazardous waste.

Emory and Clinch Rivers

The Emory River remains closed from mile marker zero through mile marker 4. The Kingston Fossil Plant Boat Ramp and fishing area has also been closed due to large equipment being moved into the area for clean-up. Coast Guard and TVA Police marine units are assisting with security in the area.

Work is complete on a rock weir built on the Emory River, just north of the existing intake skimmer weir. The weir is about 615 feet long. The weir will allow water to continue flowing, but will contain the ash. TVA is coordinating with the Corps of Engineers to address the dredging process on the Emory River in the vicinity of the release.

A second weir has been designed and when complete will confine the ash and keep it from entering the river during the river dredging process. This approximately 2000-foot rock weir will extend from Swan Pond Circle south to the plant river bank.

General Information

Two of the nine units at Kingston are operating today. The other seven units are shutdown due to reduced demand for electricity as the relatively mild weather remains in the Tennessee Valley.

TVA, TDEC and EPA continue to work together to develop a long range sampling plan for air, water and soil.

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