

ADEM INVESTIGATION OF MULBERRY FORK FISH KILL

NPDES Permit No. AL0040843 / Master ID 892

- A release of partially treated wastewater from River Valley Ingredients (Tyson Farms Inc.) in Hanceville was reported to ADEM on Thursday (6/6). The release was reportedly due to the failure of an above-ground hose/pipe that was being used to pump the partially treated wastewater from one holding pond to another holding pond.
- ADEM and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) were on-scene and monitoring the impacted streams on Thursday (6/6) through Monday (6/10). ADEM collected water quality data at numerous locations that documented depressed levels of dissolved oxygen, which is believed to be the main reason for fish mortality. ADCNR collected data on the overall number of fish killed along with the different types of fish species.
- ADEM documented depressed levels of dissolved oxygen on the Mulberry Fork beginning at the River Valley Ingredients facility and extending approximately twenty-two (22) miles downstream. ADEM also documented elevated levels of pathogens downstream of the facility.
- Dead fish were observed as far as forty (40) miles downstream of the facility due to them being washed downstream as a result of recent rains and river flow.
- Recent rains have aided in the recovery of water quality and dissolved oxygen levels have now returned to normal conditions.
- River Valley Ingredients has hired an emergency response contractor to recover as much of the released wastewater as possible. In addition, since ADCNR has completed their assessment of the number / species of fish killed, an emergency response contractor has begun to collect dead fish for proper disposal.
- It is important to note that ADEM is in the process of compiling all of the data / information that was collected over the past five (5) days and will generate a comprehensive report of its investigative activities.
- A decision on appropriate enforcement actions will be made upon a full review of the comprehensive report and all other available information.
- Senior management from Tyson met with the Department in Montgomery on June 13, 2019, to discuss response and enforcement relating to the events of the spill.
- The latest sampling results collected on June 13, 2019, indicated the E. Coli meets the water quality standards. [Click here for Mulberry Fork/Sipsev Sampling Locations/Results.](#)
- Finalized reports and other data will be available in the Department's eFile system by selecting water for the media type and entering the Master ID 892.



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June 13, 2019

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) has coordinated with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) regarding the water quality concerns on Mulberry Fork following the release of partially treated wastewater from Tyson Farms Inc., River Valley Ingredients in Hanceville, AL. The release caused depressed levels of dissolved oxygen in the water resulting in the fish kill. Therefore, a fish consumption advisory is not required as a result of this release. While dissolved oxygen levels have returned to an acceptable range in the Mulberry Fork there are still efforts underway to collect dead fish as part of the remediation by Tyson Farms Inc., River Valley Ingredients. The ADEM continues to assess water quality for the level of bacteria in Mulberry Fork and downstream waters. Caution is advised for all recreational activities as recovery actions are still being implemented.

With regard to the Jasper Water Works and Sewer Board's drinking water treatment plant, the system has taken additional measures - including additional chemical treatment - to prevent any impacts to finished water. These measures will continue as deemed appropriate. As of 9:00 AM, June 13, 2019, no impacts have been reported by water treatment plants further downstream.

ADEM Investigation of Mulberry Fork Fish Kill is available on the Department homepage and will be updated as additional information becomes available.

