

Herrington Lake gasoline spill 'bad' but 'could have been worse'

By Todd Van Campen

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A contractor is cleaning as much as 1,000 gallons of unleaded gasoline from Herrington Lake after a spill was reported last night.

The spill happened when a gasoline line broke at Chimney Rock Marina near the Garrard-Mercer county line, off Ky. 152.

The line carried gas from a shoreline tank to pumps on the water for boats to access.

Police in Harrodsburg and Garrard County got reports of the spill about 11 last night, said Wayne Davis, Mercer County emergency management director.

The marina's owner hired Evergreen Environmental out of Nicholasville to clean up the mess, and the company arrived between 4 and 5 a.m., Davis said.

The gasoline had started to dissolve Styrofoam flotation devices beneath the marina's docks. The gas and Styrofoam congealed to form mats that floated on top of the water, and Evergreen's workers used rakes and swimming pool screens to collect the mats, Davis said.

A boat with a boom on it was to be put into service this morning, said Mark York, a spokesman for the state Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet.

Electricity to Chimney Rock Marina and Kennedy Marina, across the lake, was shut off as the cleanup proceeded.

Early this afternoon, docks at Chimney Rock were being taken apart so workers could get at the last of the gas.

Davis said he did not know how the gas line ruptured.

York said it was too early to tell whether any citations would be issued. But he said the spill is "not a big environmental threat."

Davis agreed.

"The gasoline will stay on top of the water, and with the sun today, it will evaporate off the water pretty quickly," Davis said.

"We're seeing live fish all around the dock, and that's good news. That also means any explosive danger or anything like that is minimal now. We haven't had to close down the lake or anything else. There's no drinking water supplies affected.

"It's bad, but it could have been worse."

Questions:

1. What are your initial reactions after reading the article above?
2. How serious was the gasoline spill? How did the authorities react to the situation?
3. Is the gasoline spill (which occurred on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006) still a threat to the environment around Lake Herrington? How do you know?