Updated as of June 26, 2019

ADEM INVESTIGATION OF MULBERRY FORK FISH KILL

NPDES Permit No. AL0040843 / Master ID 892

ONGOING RESPONSE EFFORTS

- The water quality in Mulberry Fork/Sipsey returned to pre-release conditions suitable for recreational activities as of June 13, 2019. Click here for recent Mulberry Fork/Sipsey Sampling Locations and Results.
- ADEM contacted drinking water systems with downstream water intakes after the spill regarding possible impacts. As needed, the systems in the area have adjusted treatment to ensure that drinking water meets all health-based standards.
    - Jasper Water Works and Sewer Board has released a statement. All available information is in the Department's eFile System by selecting "Water" for the media type and entering the Master ID 6632.
- ADEM and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) are compiling all data / information collected throughout this event. Each agency will generate a comprehensive report of its investigative activities.
- 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.
- ADEM will take the appropriate enforcement actions after a full review of the comprehensive reports and all other available information.
- In furtherance of ADEM's commitment to providing a safe, productive and healthful environment, permanent signage is posted at the boat ramps to allow boaters, anglers, and users to access water quality information, which includes the latest information concerning the Mulberry Fork fish kill.

CAUSE / RESPONSE EFFORTS

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. River Valley Ingredients hired an emergency response contractor who removed recoverable wastewater and dead fish.

ADEM confirmed that the discharge was stopped and alerted Tyson to initiate the public notification process. ADEM also confirmed that emergency response contractors had been deployed to the affected area. ADEM and the ADCNR began monitoring water quality and assessing impacts on Thursday (6/6). ADEM collected water quality data at numerous locations and 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 (June 6th – 10th). ADEM also documented elevated levels of pathogens (June 6th and 7th) 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 rains and river flow. ADEM worked with the Alabama Department of Public Health to confirm that a fish consumption advisory is not warranted due to the fish kill being related to depressed levels of dissolved oxygen.

ADEM called a meeting in Montgomery with senior Tyson management from Alabama and Tyson headquarters on June 13, 2019, to review public outreach, response efforts, enforcement and remediation efforts relating to the events of the spill.