

Oily Sheen Appears on the Sackville River

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Nova Scotia Environment staff investigated Friday an oily sheen seen on the Sackville River in Bedford.

Photos emailed to The Chronicle Herald showed what looked like oil in the water. A provincial inspector was dispatched to look into the situation.

Lori Errington, a spokeswoman with the provincial Environment Department, said the inspector “visited the site after reports were made of an oil sheen entering the Sackville River from a storm water outfall.”

She said Halifax Water personnel were at the river Friday afternoon “and they deployed oil-absorbent booms to control the release into the river.”

In an email, Errington said “the hydrocarbon (petroleum) odour and sheen were traced back through storm water infrastructure, and one source appears to be the catch basin in the parking lot of Sunny Side Mall” in Bedford.

“Representatives from the mall have a vacuum truck en route to clean out the catch basin,” she said. “Halifax Water will reassess the outfall on the weekend to determine if cleaning the catch basin addresses the issue.”

Errington said Environment Department staff will continue to monitor the situation “to ensure the cleanup effort continues.”

The Sackville River flows in a mainly southerly direction into Bedford Basin, according to the Sackville Rivers Association. It says the river is about 40 kilometres long and drains an area of some 155 square kilometres.

Walter Regan, the association’s president, said he was unaware of the presence of oil in the water until contacted by this newspaper.

“This is very disappointing as we now have wild Atlantic salmon on their spawning run up the river and they have to travel through this,” he said in an email.

Regan said “the person responsible should be charged and made to pay a large fine that would go toward doing fish habitat restoration in the Sackville River.”

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