



DAKOTA RESOURCE COUNCIL
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News Release

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Local leader investigates million-gallon Bear Den Bay Spill

DRC and SOAR member takes water samples, photographs; says contamination likely

Dakota Resource Council and SOAR member Vance Gillette, of New Town, recently investigated a salt water spill located on Fort Berthold Indian Reservation. The salt water leak was discovered on July 8 from an underground pipeline owned by Aero Pipeline, LLC, a Crestwood Midstream Partners LP subsidiary. The spill ran approximately 1 million gallons of salt water down a ravine that residents believe ended up in Bear Den Bay, a tributary of Lake Sakakawea.

Gillette met with other Dakota Resource Council members and staff at their annual Oil and Gas Task Force meeting in New Town on Sunday to discuss his findings. Gillette presented photographs to the group as well as a firsthand account of what he saw at the spill site.

“When I reached the site where the spill occurred, the water near the bay was a rusted color and the shoreline vegetation was dying” said Gillette

“The tribal government tested the water after the spill, but they haven’t released any results. From what I saw at the spill site it is highly unlikely the results of the water tests will show no contamination.” Gillette continued. Gillette, an enrolled member of the Three Affiliated Tribes, is an attorney and a former chief judge at Fort Berthold.

On Monday, SOAR held an environmental forum in White Shield to allow local citizens to voice their concerns about the spill. Addressing the group was Edmund Baker, Tribal Environmental Director.

“The spill is located ¼ mile away from the Mandaree water intake system which supplies the reservation its drinking water. The tribe withholding the water testing results would lead anyone to infer that the spill did hit the lake” said Baker.

Baker also stated that he requested the test results in early August and has not received any proof that there has been no contamination.

Gillette said, “The toxic solution could contain petroleum, fracking residue, sand, water and other undisclosed chemicals that are pumped into drilling site to help fracture rock formations. It is hard to say what exactly killed the vegetation surrounding the shoreline since production fluid elements are considered a trade secret. “

The continued investigation is a joint effort between Fort Berthold group SOAR and Dakota Resource Council.

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Founded in 1978, Dakota Resource Council is a statewide organization bringing together farmers, ranchers, small business owners, workers and other North Dakotans to address issues that affect their lives and livelihoods.

******The Photographs can be found by [CLICKING HERE](#)******

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