

DEP, Norfolk Southern Agree on Cleanup

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DEP, Norfolk Southern Reach Restoration Agreement at Spill Site

PITTSBURGH (AP) -- Norfolk Southern will complete restoration of a train derailment site where 42,000 gallons of lye spilled and damaged a trout stream, the Department of Environmental Protection said.

The derailment last June 30 near the village of Gardeau, in rural north-central Pennsylvania, killed fish in Big Fill Run and Sinnemahoning-Portage Creek, designated a creek of exceptional value by state wildlife officials. Effects of the spill were felt 30 miles downstream, officials said.

Norfolk Southern will restore vegetation along the creek banks and wetland areas and redirect a section of Big Fill into a natural channel. The stream was diverted so remediation work could take place. Norfolk Southern must monitor the disturbed portions for at least five years.

"This agreement demonstrates a spirit of cooperation between DEP and Norfolk Southern that allows both parties to set aside our legal dispute and expedite environmental restoration," Kelly Burch, the DEP's northwest regional director, said Wednesday.

The railroad has appealed \$8.89 million in fines the DEP is seeking. The railroad said it has spent more than \$2 million in restoration work so far.

The train's engineer, Michael Seifert, of Buffalo, N.Y., has been ordered to stand trial on charges of causing or risking a catastrophe and reckless endangerment. Seifert was fired last year after investigators determined the train was traveling 77 mph in a 15 mph zone when it jumped the tracks.