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Environmental Quality

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NEWS RELEASE

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Final Water Tests Show No Oil in Mill Creek

Salt Lake City, Utah – The Holly Refinery explosion did not impact Mill Creek, according to the final results of water samples taken the following day when a storage tank ruptured and about 8,000 gallons of oil was sprayed a mile away.

Utah Division of Water Quality collected water samples from Mill Creek the day of the Aug. 30 incident to determine the presence of petrochemicals in the stream.

After visiting the impacted area, Walt Baker, DWQ Director, noted that, “The oil was very heavy and sticky. I had a difficult time removing the residue from my shoes. This stickiness makes the oil hard to clean up but also makes the oil less of a threat with regard to potential contamination of water.”

DWQ scientists collected additional water samples from storm water collection areas on September 1 after a rain storm. Trace concentrations of petrochemicals were detected in these samples but the concentrations were below those that would affect people or aquatic life.

“We collected samples of spilled oil so that we would be able to identify if the petrochemicals in the water were from Holly oil as opposed to other sources such as oil from roads and parking lots. However, because the level of contamination we measured after the first rain was so low, and the number of contaminants so few, we didn’t feel the need to analyze the Holly oil samples because it is unlikely that additional results would tell us anything new.” said Baker.

No additional water sampling is anticipated to be conducted by DWQ on this incident.

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