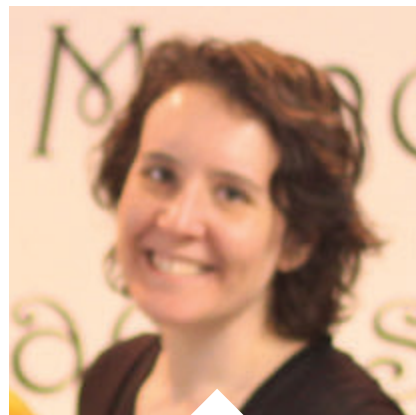


This public safety focused article is being reprinted in order to remind waterfront residents and the leadership of their respective property owners associations of the potential danger that may lurk just below the surface of your favorite lake, pond, stream, or marsh. We believe it is important for everyone to be aware of the location and status of the energy distribution related pipelines in their area, to have a well thought out plan on how to deal with possible leaks, spills, or other potentially dangerous situations that might arise, and to make sure you communicate with the pipeline owner/operator as well as fire departments and other public safety entities in your area to make sure that they have a plan--just in case! Awareness, cooperation, and coordination before an emergency occurs can pay big dividends for you and your community! This article was written by a local reporter following her attendance at the December 2016 Community Techniques for Protecting Water Quality seminar that was held in southeast lower Michigan, a collaborative event that was organized by Freedom Township, the Pleasant Lake Property Owners Association, Citizens Respecting Our Waters (CROW), Huron River Watershed Council, Michigan State University Extension, Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Washtenaw County Water Resource Commission, and Washtenaw County Emergency Management team. Michigan Lake and Stream Associations frequently hosts, and/or collaborates with various organizations in holding regional or community-based events of this type that are planned and organized to enhance water resources protection efforts, and/or public awareness of the important water resources related issues of the day.

Scott Brown  
ML&SA  
Executive Director

## High concentration of gas and oil pipelines running through Freedom Township an increased risk for residents



By Sara Swanson

*Sara Swanson is an editor, writer and founder of the Manchester Mirror. She is on the Manchester Community Garden committee and CRC banquet auction committee, and is a founder and board member of the Manchester Ladies Society, and a Girl Scout leader.*

Washtenaw County Emergency manager, Marc Breckenridge, says Freedom Township is a home to hidden danger. Neither the rolling green agricultural fields nor sparkling Pleasant Lake give any indication to the potential disaster just below the surface. While Sharon and Bridgewater Townships have three pipelines each running through them, Manchester Township has two, and others in Washtenaw County like Saline, York, Augusta and Webster only have one each, Freedom Township has six pipelines: Enbridge, Amoco, Marathon, Wolverine, Panhandle, Consumers Energy, and a soon-to-be seventh, the ET Rover pipeline. In addition, it houses a Consumers Energy natural gas compression station, next to Pleasant Lake. Does this



*EPA's Response to the Enbridge oil spill*

**Photo Credit: USEPA Environmental-Protection-Agency**

high concentration of oil and gas lines create increased danger for Freedom Township residents? Breckenridge says yes, it does.

If one of the pipelines cracked or burst, whether due to natural causes like aging or man-made causes like terrorism, a natural gas line could potentially cause an explosion or an oil line could create an oil spill that would endanger the lives, property and livelihoods of homeowners, farmers and businesses in the area as well as impacting wells, wetlands, streams and the lake. Breckenridge says he finds the number of pipelines running through Freedom Township “concerning” and that while everyone needs to be aware of danger pipelines could potentially cause Freedom Township residents need a “heightened level of awareness” and need to know what to do and be prepared to act if they notice any warning signs.

Breckenridge recommends that residents familiarize themselves with the locations of the pipelines so they know where to keep an eye out for warning signs. First, find the location on the map, then locate it in the landscape. Every

*(Continued on page 30)*



*Talmadge Creek bank oil removal*

**Photo Credit: USEPA Environmental-Protection-Agency**



*Extracting the Damaged Pipeline*

**Photo Credit: USEPA Environmental-Protection-Agency**



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Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

date rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_ amt: \_\_\_\_\_

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## High concentration of gas and oil pipelines

(Continued from page 29)

pipeline has line-of-sight markers on the surface, situated so that you can see the next markers in either direction from the one you have located, allowing you to determine the path of the pipeline.

Manchester Township's Fire Department serves as first responders for all emergency calls in Freedom Township. Fire Chief Bill Scully stated that when dealing with gas and pipeline leaks, the most important issue is early detection, and starting the 911 system operating. He enumerated some of the warning signs to watch out for: "Besides the obvious signs of leakage – hissing, bubbles in the water, they should look for dead grass, odors of gas or a sulfur like smell, pooling of oil, or oil floating on water. If anyone sees or smells a potential leak, they should evacuate the area and immediately call 911."

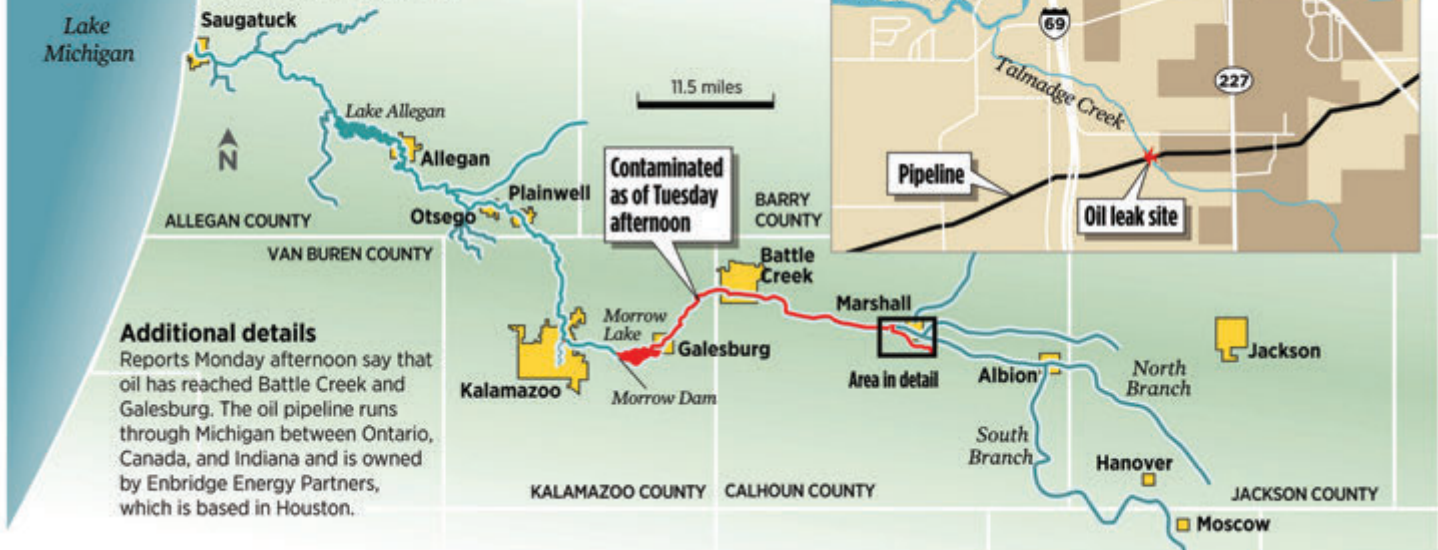
The Manchester Township Fire Department has received training from the pipeline companies, as well as Consumers Energy, on pipeline safety and what to do if a leak occurs. Scully said that training is held yearly with the gas companies, fire departments, and excavators. "We receive updated information on new lines in the area, as well as contacts if there is a problem with a pipeline. All of the pipeline companies have crews and their own teams that would work with us to prevent further damage and mitigate the situation as quickly as possible."

He explained what would happen in the case of a pipeline leak. "If we were dispatched to a reported oil or gas leak, we would respond to the area from an uphill upwind direction. We would evaluate the situation for hazards, and if a leak was confirmed we would attempt to locate a pipeline marker to obtain the correct contact number for the owner of the line. If it is a gas leak, we would perform evacuations as needed to keep the public safe. If there was a fire involved we would still evacuate the public, and then attempt to protect structures and property that are being threatened. If it were a gas leak, we would attempt to dike the leak to prevent further damage to the environment."

Scully reports that since he's been with the Manchester Fire Department, they've only had to respond to one pipeline leak but that large pipelines aren't the only risk or possibly even the biggest personal risk, where gas is concerned. "In my time with the fire department, there has only been one pipeline rupture in our area," he stated, "It was located in Freedom Township near the Consumers Energy facility. It was an old line that was not marked on a map and was struck during excavation. We assisted the gas company in securing

## Oil flows into Kalamazoo River

More than 800,000 gallons of oil have spilled into Talmadge Creek, near Marshall, and oil has flowed into the Kalamazoo River and is heading toward Kalamazoo.



Source: Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment

GAZETTE GRAPHIC/KRIS KINKADE

the area until the line could be shut down. In the same time period, there have been multiple natural gas line leaks in town due to the homeowner digging and hitting the line.”

While gas line ruptures can cause fires and explosions, oil pipelines are likely to cause more environmental damage. One of the largest inland oil spills in US history happened less than an hour west of us in Marshall, Michigan in the summer of 2010. A six-foot rupture in the 30-inch 6B pipeline operated by “Enbridge” dumped more than one million gallons of heavy crude oil into the Talmadge Creek, a tributary of the Kalamazoo River. Close to fifty households were evacuated and almost 100 households couldn’t drink their water. Thirty-five miles of river were contaminated and the river was closed for clean up for almost two years. The “Enbridge Clean Water Act Settlement” states that oil spills are known to “cause both immediate and long-term harm to human health and ecosystems” including limiting oxygen in water, suffocating wildlife, destroying algae and other plankton, killing birds, contaminating food sources, reducing animal and plant reproduction and contaminating nesting habitats. The report reads, “Oil spills can cause long-term effects years later even if the oil remains in the environment for a relatively short period of time.” A settlement was reached last summer and Enbridge has agreed to pay \$177 million.

Scully explained that whether or not you live in Freedom Township or near a large pipeline, you need to be aware of the potential danger near you. “There is a high concentration of large gas and oil pipelines running through Freedom Township, but all of western Washtenaw County has its fair share of pipelines, not including the natural gas lines in the cities and villages that deliver gas to our homes.” He explained, “The smaller gas lines that come to our homes are

just as dangerous, and they are not marked. We have had considerably more calls to deal with homeowners who have been digging or working around the meter and have struck and ruptured the gas line. Natural gas is lighter than air, so if it is not trapped in a confined space, such as a home, it dissipates rapidly into the air, reducing the danger of traveling and reaching an ignition point. Liquid propane gas (LPG) that is used by many homeowners who do not have access to natural gas, is far more dangerous if a leak occurs. LPG is heavier than air, so it will seek out a low spot and flow to it.” He would like to remind readers, “Before anyone digs, they need to contact the ‘one call’ system (811). This is a free service that will send someone to their location and mark the location of any underground lines near their planned excavation.”

It is important to remember that under our country’s current energy systems, pipelines are a necessity and that there are practical and economic benefits from pipelines and gas operations. So long as they are needed and run through Washtenaw, oil and gas pipelines are going to continue to be routed through the less populated areas of our county, like Freedom Township, and residents will bear more risk of explosion, fire, and environmental contamination from the pipelines than our neighbors to the east. However, everyone needs to be vigilant, as Scully states: “All residents, not only the Freedom Township residents, need to be aware of pipelines that run under or near their property. Normally they won’t cause a problem, but we all should be aware of something out of the ordinary.”

*(Continued on page 34)*

# High concentration of gas and oil pipelines (Continued from page 31)

## HOW TO RECOGNIZE A LEAK

Pipeline leaks are unusual, but do occur. The most common cause of pipeline incidents is excavation-related activities. We encourage everyone to be familiar with where pipelines are located, understand the signs and conditions of a possible leak, and know what actions to take.

Natural gas is a flammable, colorless, odorless, lighter-than-air, non-toxic substance. Sometimes local utilities add an odorant to help consumers smell gas should a leak occur. However, it's important to remember that you may not always be able to detect a gas leak by smell.

Natural Gas Liquids (NGLs) are naturally occurring elements found in natural gas and are extracted from the gas stream during processing. These liquids include propane, butane, ethane, iso-butane and natural gas condensate.

Crude Oil is a mixture of hydrocarbons that exists in liquid form in underground pools or reservoirs. Crude oil varies in composition and can contain small amounts of organic compounds like nitrogen, oxygen and sulfur.

Refined Products are produced from the processing of crude oil and other liquids, and include multiple grades of gasoline and middle distillates, such as jet fuel, heating oil, and diesel fuel.

## BY SIGHT

- Dust blowing from a hole in the ground.
- Continuous bubbling in wet or flooded areas.
- Dead or discolored vegetation in an otherwise green area.
- Ice around leak.
- A vapor cloud or mist.
- Flames, if the leak has ignited.
- A rainbow sheen on water.
- Petroleum product pooling on the ground.


## BY SOUND

- Blowing or hissing sound.

## BY SMELL

- An unusual smell or gaseous odor.
- If you become aware of a leak, notify the pipeline company immediately.
- Emergency phone numbers are listed on all pipeline markers.

## WHAT TO DO IF A LEAK OCCURS

- Leave the area immediately on foot and warn others to stay away
- Abandon any equipment being used in or near the area
- Avoid any open flame or other sources of ignition
- Call 911 or local law enforcement
- Notify the pipeline company immediately
- Do not attempt to extinguish a natural gas fire, and do not attempt to operate pipeline valves 



## PIPELINE COMPANIES IN MICHIGAN/ EMERGENCY CALL NUMBERS

- Amoco Oil Co.-1-800-548-6482
- Buckeye Partners, L.P.-1-800-331-4115
- Enbridge Energy, L.P.-1 800-858-5253
- Kinder Morgan Cochin, LLC  
1-866-762-8442
- Marathon Pipe Line, LLC  
1-800-537-6644
- Plains All American Pipeline, L.P.  
1-800-708-5071
- Sunoco Pipeline, L.P./Energy Transfer  
Partners-1-800-786-7440
- Wolverine Pipeline Co.-1-888-357-5004

## ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES

- DEQ - Report Environmental Emergencies**
- Environmental Emergency  
24-hour Pollution Emergency Alerting  
System (PEAS) 1-800-292-4706