



TO: Local Media
DATE: July 1, 2021
REGARDING: Kestner Houghton Waterfront Beach, Portage Canal Reopens
Portage Canal, Houghton County
FOR: Immediate Release
For More Information: Western Upper Peninsula Health Department
(906) 482-7382

Houghton Waterfront Beach Reopens, Portage Canal, Houghton County.

Houghton County MI -The Western Upper Peninsula Health Department (WUPHD), working in conjunction with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and the Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has lifted the public health advisory for the Portage Canal following the recent fuel spill in Houghton County.

The City of Houghton waterfront including the Kestner Waterfront Park Beach area has been reopened for swimming and other water recreation. Fuel sheen in this area has dissipated, surface water samples collected at the beach determined that the water is safe for swimming, and the sand at the beach has been removed and replaced.

Recent aerial drone footage has observed no widespread fuel sheen on the Portage Canal; therefore, the public advisory has been lifted. There may be isolated pockets of sheen along the shoreline of the canal. The public should avoid all contact with the sheen. Direct exposure of the eyes, skin, and respiratory tract to fuel sheen can cause tissue injury and irritation; therefore, the public should wash skin with soap and water after contact. All areas on the Portage Canal are now open to body contact swimming as long as no visible fuel sheen is present.

According to BeachGuard, all beaches in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are open going into the 4th of July weekend. Beach closures and swimming advisories for the entire state can be viewed on BeachGuard at www.egle.state.mi.us/beach.

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