



**For Immediate Release:**  
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## **ADEM Investigates Release Into Local Waterway**

**MONTGOMERY** - The Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) continues its investigation of an unpermitted release of materials into Pepperell Branch. ADEM staff have been on-scene since Friday conducting a thorough investigation of how the release occurred, evaluating environmental impacts, and overseeing the cleanup. ADEM officials indicate the release originated from the former WestPoint Pepperell facility in Opelika.

Sludge materials have been documented in Pepperell Branch, as well as Saugahatchee Creek, and vacuum trucks have been on-scene over the weekend working to remove the sludge materials from both waterways. In addition, water samples have been collected and are being analyzed to evaluate potential impacts to water quality.

Visual observations have not documented any negative impacts to aquatic organisms, such as fish, in either Pepperell Branch or Saugahatchee Creek. ADEM officials will remain on-scene continuing their investigation, monitoring cleanup efforts, and observing both waterways for potential impacts to water quality and aquatic organisms.

The Department has been in contact with local officials from the City of Auburn and the City of Opelika to ensure they remain up-to-date on all aspects of the investigation and remediation efforts. The Department has also contacted local environmental groups to establish open lines of communication with those parties.

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