

Fuel leak contaminates soil at Zephyr Cove Resort

By Kathryn Reed

The exact amount of unleaded gasoline leached into the soil at Zephyr Cove Resort may never be known, but officials say there is no threat to drinking water, Lake Tahoe or human health.

“The leak is in an underground storage tank,” explained Vinson Guthreau with the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection. His agency is responsible for overseeing the clean up. “We don’t focus on the amount (leaked), we focus on environmental clean up.”



But he could not say what was being done in terms up clean up, only that the report expected next week will dictate what his agency will do. This, despite that the fact the leak was reported nearly a month ago.

Aramark let NDEP know about the leak June 27. According the Forest Service, soil samples were obtained July 18, with the results expected next week. The public had not been notified of the situation until today.

No on with NDEP, the U.S. Forest Service (which owns the land) or Aramark (which is the concessionaire running the resort) would quantify how small or large of an area was impacted by the leak because they say the tests will determine that. Guthreau said it was “not extensive” but would not elaborate further.

Drinking water at the resort has been tested and is not contaminated, officials said.

“We visibly observed an intermittent drip while replacing the fuel pumps,” David Freireich with Aramark told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The fuel pump transfers fuel from the underground tank to the dispenser. We suspect the source of the release was where two pipes connect to one another. This connection has been repaired.”

When asked if he could estimate how much fuel leaked out and for long it had been leaking, Freireich said, “We hope to learn more when we receive the results from the sample analysis.”

But the reality is soil samples will not be able tell how much fuel leaked out of the pipes or for how long. Aramark would at least be able to get a good idea of the amount leaked by knowing how much the tanks hold and what has been used – the difference being the amount of leaked fuel.

The fuel in question is what rental boats and the M.S. Dixie II use.