

Protecting waterfront development

A hydraulic hose from an industrial crane on a waterfront development site ruptured last summer, sending litres of hydraulic fluid dangerously close to the lake's shoreline. Following standard procedure, a clean-up crew rushed to contain the spill. And they did...on the surface. However, despite their best efforts oil still seeped into a nearby storm drain.

Covering 36 hectares and with a price tag close to \$200 million (Cdn), this ambitious project includes residential and commercial development. Boasting new condominiums, shops, a hotel and a marina, all of this expansion is tied together with a long boardwalk that borders a re-created, pristine shoreline.

The list of potential environmental and economic impacts from such a spill is longer than the crane's arm. In addition to the high cost of cleaning water-borne spills, there is the prolonged impact to waterfront businesses – losing customers because of the unsightly film covering the water that may harbour dead fish and coated waterfowl.

And it doesn't take much. According to environmental experts, one litre of oil can contaminate one million litres of water. Thankfully, the lake never tasted as much as a drop of fluid because of the Stormceptor® system installed the previous year.

Because of the project's expansive pavement area, developers installed nine Stormceptor STC 1500 systems along the shoreline to capture pollutants found in stormwater runoff that are carried across the area's parking lots during rainfall.

The crane's faulty hose also demonstrated the Stormceptor systems' ability to contain spills in both dry and wet weather. A certified maintenance operator performed an inspection of the Stormceptor units shortly after the spill and confirmed the hydraulic fluid was safely contained in one of the units. "This spill could have been a real black-eye on this development," noted the operator who arranged for licensed technicians to remove 50 litres of fluid. Without the Stormceptor unit in place, the cost of the clean up could have easily exceeded \$80,000. No one was as relieved as the development's business owners, many of whom noted the area's wealthy clients would have quickly turned their boats around at the sight of such a spill.

"Thankfully, Stormceptor did its job," said the area's business manager. "The Stormceptor systems were installed to contain stormwater pollutants, but their ability to contain spills also gives me and all the business owners peace of mind – this accident proves we're protected."



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