

Cary sewage spill closes lakes

Workers try to stop the untreated flow into Swift Creek after a pipe burst Friday

BY DAVID BRACKEN, STAFF WRITER, Staff Writer

Cary officials said today that heavy rains and ongoing construction at a pumping station were to blame for a spill that has dumped millions of gallons of untreated sewage into Swift Creek.

The spill has prompted Raleigh officials on Saturday to close Lake Wheeler and Lake Benson to boating, swimming and fishing while bacteria tests were conducted on the water. Donna Jackson, Raleigh's assistant public utilities director, said Sunday she expects to receive those test results Monday.

Rob Bonne, Cary's Utility

Director, said a pipe dislodged Friday evening about 7:30 p.m. after an excavation site at its Swift Creek pumping station caved in. The broken pipe forced officials to shut down the station, which handles about 5 million gallons of waste on an average day.

Cary officials estimate as much as 3 million gallons of untreated waste may have entered Swift Creek over the next 36 hours as

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engineers struggled to fix the problem.

By 11 a.m. today, engineers had a temporary system in place to prevent sewage from reaching Swift Creek. They began rerouting the sewage from man holes located upstream from the pumping station.

The sewage was being diverted to 6,500 gallon tanker trucks, which are hauling it downstream to where it can re-enter the sewer system and flow to the South Cary sewage treatment plant.

The hauling operation caused the closure of Holly Springs Road between Lilly Atkins Road and High Ridge Drive until further notice. Holly Springs Road also is closed to thru traffic from Cary Parkway to Penny Road.

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