

Glen Eden fuel leak remains under investigation

Fuel tank ruptures, causing diesel to leak onto the ground

By Stephanie Hounsell
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

damage was caused last month at Glen Eden Ski and Snowboard Centre when a fuel tank was ruptured, causing diesel to leak onto the ground.

An estimated 15 to 30 litres of diesel used to fuel facility vehicles escaped from a break in the tank December 26, said Hassaan Basit, communications director at

Conservation Halton (CH), the environmental agency that owns and operates Glen Eden.

The oil spill occurred after a groomer struck a fence while manoeuvring through a narrow entrance in the facility maintenance area. Part of the fence then punctured the tank, Basit said.

Being an organization that advocates for the environment, CH has taken every precaution with the spill, Basit said. Contaminant clean-up protocols were immediately enacted and reports were filed with both the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) and the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA), he said.

CH then hired a consultant to determine if there are any "lingering effects" of the spill, which Basit said occurred in an area not accessed by the public and away from water sources.

"This is very serious for us, even though it's a small incident," Basit said, adding both the MOE and TSSA were satisfied with CH's containment procedures.

This was one of two unfortunate incidents in what staff say is an otherwise successful season so far — exceptionally so, with the generous snowfalls and an economy that has people sticking closer to home.

The consultants' findings are expected within the next few weeks and if any corrective measures are recommended, they'll be implemented, Basit said.

The fuel storage tanks have since been moved to a different location away from vehicles.

There was no negligence on the part of the driver of the groomer, Basit said: "It was just an unfortunate accident."

The second incident, a power outage, occurred January 6 and resulted in Glen Eden being closed for the day.

A groomer-like vehicle used to transport garbage drove into a low hanging wire early in the morning, which caused the power to be lost to the ski centre.

Staff quickly called all the skiers they knew were planning on visiting that day and notified them of the closure, Basit said.

A spokesperson with Milton

Hydro said the power was back within the day.

The centre was open the next day, but a lift remained out of commission for nine days in connection with the incident, said Glen Eden area manager Gene Matthews.

The wires have since been raised to prevent them from being clipped again, Basit said, and surrounded by a protective barrier.

Slopes busy

Despite these two incidents, it's business as usual — or even better than usual — on the slopes.

"We're seeing a bumper year at Glen Eden," Basit said. "The conditions are excellent, not just for natural snow, but for making snow."

Glen Eden's opening day was December 13; last year opened around the same time, but it wasn't with full runs as it was this year. The tube park has been open since the end of December; last year it didn't open until mid-February.

There was about 20 per cent more precipitation than usual in Halton this past December, Basit said, and that gets people in the mood to ski and helps create a good snow base.

Last season, 185,000 people visited Glen Eden, and Basit said he's expecting that number to be surpassed soon, with scores of people taking advantage of the facility's 13 runs and five lifts, plus the tube and terrain parks.

With the economy the way it is, many people are opting to ski locally rather than embark on expensive ski vacations, Matthews said.

"People aren't spending money on the bigger ticket trips. They're staying closer to home."

A feature Matthews said Glen Eden created with the current economy in mind is the new value season pass, which is good for five weekday skis and seven evening skis; it's been a good seller, he said.

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