

# Rail cars could be submerged in Clark Fork

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Four coal cars are unaccounted for and could be submerged in the Clark Fork River following a 27-car train derailment outside Trout Creek, officials said Tuesday.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency personnel are on the scene.

Lynda Frost, spokesperson for Montana Rail Link, said crews hope to have the tracks cleared by noon Friday. Until then, MRL traffic between Spokane and Billings is being re-routed.

Monday's derailment occurred in a remote area of Sanders County with no cell phone service. That's made it difficult, Frost said, to keep up with the latest news from the accident site.

"We do know that of the 27 cars, all but four have been accounted for," Frost said. "The four could be in the river, but we haven't been able to confirm they're in the river yet."

Frost said the Clark Fork is reportedly as deep as 80 feet where the derailment occurred, and "if they are in the water, they can't see them."

The train had 115 cars and four locomotives and was en route from Buckskin, Wyo., to Boardman, Ore. Twenty-seven of the cars derailed 2 1/2 miles west of the town of Trout Creek.

There were no injuries.

Frost said destinations determine where MRL traffic will be re-routed, but most would probably use Burlington Northern Santa Fe tracks that cross the Montana Hi-Line.