

Site:	Martin Co.
Break:	2.10
Other:	

85478

**POLREP NUMBER 5
KENTUCKY/WEST VIRGINIA COAL SLURRY SPILL
MARTIN COUNTY COAL CORPORATION
INEZ, KENTUCKY**

EVENT: MULTI-REGIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE
DATE: OCTOBER 25, 2000
ATTN: DOUG LAIR, EPA REGION IV
CHARLIE KLEEMAN, EPA REGION III

I. BACKGROUND

- A. At approximately 0200 hours on Wednesday, 11 October 2000, an estimated 250 million gallons of coal mine fine refuse slurry were released from a 72-acre impoundment operated by Martin County Coal Corporation (MCCC). The release occurred as a result of a sudden and unexpected breach into an underground mine adjacent to MCCC's refuse impoundment. The slurry entered both the Wolf Creek and Rockcastle Creek watersheds of Martin County, Kentucky. The spilled material has impacted more than 75 miles of surface water downstream of the site, including both the Tug Fork and Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River, a tributary of the Ohio River. The Tug Fork and Big Sandy Rivers border both West Virginia and Kentucky.
- B. Several potable water and industrial intakes have been affected as a result of the spill. The following provides the status and current activities being conducted regarding the affected systems:
- C. A Joint Information Center (JIC) has been established on site. The JIC serves to issue joint press releases from EPA, the state of Kentucky and MCCC. The OSC requests that all media inquiries be directed to the JIC at (606) 395-0353.

II. CURRENT ACTIVITIES (1700 HOURS, WEDNESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2000)

Weather: weather conditions continue to be favorable for conducting response operations. There continues to be concerns over possible flooding and migration of the slurry should a significant rain event occur. A Precipitation Action Plan has been developed for a major storm event and has been approved by the Unified Command.

- A. **West Virginia:**
 - 1. The town of Fort Gay, West Virginia, has opened car washes and Laundromats. The school in Fort Gay is still open. The town of Fort Gay is receiving water from Louisa WTP.
 - 2. Kenova, WV is supplying water to all of its customers. The Mayor has requested the citizens to conserve water. Kenova is now treating water from its normal intake with liquid Alum and polymers. Kenova is at 3/4 capacity. All of Big

Sandy's customers are receiving 550,000Gal of water from Kenova's tank at Big Sandy. The water at Kenova continues to appear muddy and is at a turbidity of around 70 NTU. Iron and Manganese readings from the water are within normal levels. Kenova is bringing in 3000 Gal/minute. As of 25 October 2000, all tanks were full and have approximately 2.5 million gallons stored.

3. Kermit, WV has completed their temporary line (approximately 6000') along the Tug Fork River. The intake of this line is 100 yards upstream of the point of confluence with Wolf Creek. This line is providing 200,000 gallons per day to the WTP, which is adequate water supply for their entire normal customer base. Kermit continues to supply water to Crum, WV, and if necessary to Warfield, KY. Kermit is supplying at a rate of 4500 Gal/minute

B. Kentucky:

1. Inez, KY has begun pumping operations at full capacity to replenish the reservoir. They intend to continue pumping until the crisis is over and WTP reaches its full capacity. A pipeline has been extended to provide an alternate water supply to Inez from the Middle Fork. Schools are currently operating on a day to day basis. Laundry mats and carwashes have been shut down in an attempt to conserve water consumption.
2. Louisa, KY has completed the construction of a 7500' water supply line upstream in the Levisa River. As a precautionary measure, the pipeline is prepared to extend the line further upstream in the Levisa River. As of 20 October 2000, the Army National Guard stopped treating water at the end of the temporary line. The WTP is operational and supplying 100% of their customers, Big Sandy, and Ft. Gay. Louisa has more than 1 million gallons of water in storage. All advisories have been lifted. Louisa is supplying 1.3 million gallons per day.

C. MCCC continues to respond to the spill with their company and subcontractor resources. Federal and State agencies continue to support and provide guidance to the companies response team (ICS). Federal, state and local agencies represented on-scene include:

Federal: EPA Region IV (OSC Fred Stroud), EPA Region III (OSC Jack Downie), EPA ERT (Alan Humphries), USCG Strike Team, U.S. DOL-MSHA, U.S. DOI-OSM, U.S. Army COE

State: KYDNREPC (Ralph Collins), KY Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Dept. for Surface Mining and Reclamation (KY DSMRE), KY Emergency Management

Local: Martin County EMA

D. Ongoing operations in Coldwater and Wolf Creek watersheds are as follows:

Coldwater: Cleanup efforts slowed yesterday due to a pump failure. Cleanup includes slurry removal from the original creek channel using 3 dredges, construction of a pipe line to pump slurry from the dredges to the impoundments for future treatment. Treatment includes flocculation and sedimentation. Approximately 6.5 million gallons of slurry has been pumped into the impoundments in the last 2 days. Seventeen temporary impoundments have been filled to date. Construction of three up stream and one large down stream sedimentation ponds in the Coldwater to control flow in the event of heavy rains is scheduled for completion later this week. Excavation of the sludge along the banks and adjoining tributaries has been initiated. Discharge of the treated water from the corn field cells began today. Samples will be collected from the effluent every 6 hours during the first 24 hours of discharge. Limited sludge removal has begun along the banks of the creek.

Wolf Creek: Operations in the Wolf Creek include construction of a Gabion weir to control flow prior to entering the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy. Construction of piping to pump water from the creek to impoundments for treatment continues. The weir is scheduled for completion on October 26, 2000. Excavation of the sludge along the banks, where accessible, has also begun.

A team surveyed the creek in an attempt to generate remediation options. They will note accessibility to the creek banks and sediment thickness along the banks.

- E. A public meeting was held on Tuesday evening by MCCC to address the concerns and questions of residents affected by the release.
- F. Kemron Environmental Services, Inc., a subcontractor of Region 4 START, continues to perform treatability tests to identify pretreatment alternatives to remove the fines from the water prior to entering the affected municipal drinking water plants.
- G. A site specific health and safety plan was finalized and approved yesterday.

III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- A. Continue remediation efforts including construction of weirs in the Coldwater and Wolf Creeks, continue to pump slurry from the creeks and excavate sludge from the creek banks where assessable.
- B. Continue water treatability studies and perform a field test later this week.

JACK DOWNIE, OSC
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