

Site:	<u>Martin Co.</u>
Break:	<u>AIR</u>
Other:	<u> </u>

85474

POLREP NUMBER 3
KENTUCKY/WEST VIRGINIA COAL SLURRY SPILL
MARTIN COUNTY COAL CORPORATION
INEZ, KY

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

I. SITUATION (1700 HOURS, THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2000)

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.

A Joint Information Center (JIC) has been established on site. The JIC serves to issue a joint press releases from EPA, the state of Kentucky and MCCC. The JIC will issue a press release by 1700 hours regarding analytical findings from samples collected by MCCC and Kentucky Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet (KYDNREPC). The OSC requests that all media inquiries be directed to the JIC at (606)395-0353.

B. Several potable water and industrial intakes have been affected as a result of the spill. The following provides status and current activities being conducted regarding the affected systems:

West Virginia:

Fort Gay, WV, continues to conserve water by closing car washes and Laundromats. The town has requested residents to conserve water by minimizing lawn watering, car washing, etc. The WTP is at full capacity and with water conservation has a 36-hour reserve. The school in Fort Gay is still open. The town of Fort Gay is receiving water from Huntington, WV and Prichard, WV. It is anticipated that future water supplies will be from Louisa, KY, pending full operation of their temporary water line. Plans are underway to construct a water line across the Tug Fork River to supply water to the town of Fort Gay.

Kenova, WV WTP is at its 2/3 capacity. All schools are open. The Mayor has requested that the citizens conserve water. Kenova is receiving water from Ashland, Lavalette, and West Virginia American Water.

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 at this time. Kermit will supply water to Crum, WV and if necessary to Warfield, KY.

Kentucky:

Inez, KY has a remaining reserve of 9 to 10 days of potable water. Schools are closed in an effort to conserve water. A pipeline extension is being constructed to provide an alternate water supply to the town from the Middle Fork. This system is expected to be operating by 22 October 2000.

Louisa, KY continues to experience a water emergency. Schools reopened on the 18th. Tanker trucks of water are supplying water directly to the hospital. A pipeline is being constructed to a point 1 mile upstream of their intake to draw fresh water. This system is expected to be operating by 24 October 2000.

The Ashland/Marathon Oil Refinery in Catlettsburg, KY has shut down their water intakes. It is reported that the refinery is getting water from the Ohio River delivered by barge.

- C. MCCC is continuing to respond to the spill with their employees and contractor personnel. Federal and State agencies are supporting local emergency services, and are providing guidance and direction regarding response priorities, which still include ensuring adequate supplies of potable water to affected areas, and containment of source material in Coldwater Fork of Rockcastle Creek and Wolf Creek. Agencies represented on-scene include:

Federal: EPA Region III (OSC Bob Kelly), EPA Region IV (OSC Art Smith),
EPA ERT (Greg Powell), USCG Strike Team, U.S. DOL-MSHA,
U.S. DOI-OSM, U.S. Army COE
State: KYDNREPC, KY Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources,
Kentucky Dept. for Surface Mining and Reclamation (KY
DSMRE), KY Emergency Management, WV DEP, WV Health
Dept.
Local: Martin County EMA

- D. As of early the morning of 19 October 2000 the blackwater front had reached the Ohio River. The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)

has been monitoring the Ohio River and Big Sandy River for turbidity, conductivity, and pH, in order to track the advancement of the front. On 17 October 2000, the USCG has launched a boat at the confluence of the Ohio River and the Big Sandy River to monitor the leading edge of the front.

As of 18 October 2000, data collected by ORSANCO from the Ohio River indicates that the black water plume has sank to the bottom upon entering the Ohio River. Turbidity measurements from the bottom of the river at mile marker 317.4 ranged from 45 to 290 NTUs.

- E. Weather: To date, 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, due to the accumulation of solids in creek and river channels as a result of the impoundment failure.

II. ACTIONS TAKEN:

- A. On 18 October 2000, three water samples were collected from the intake of the WTP's of Fort Gay and Kermit (one water sample from Fort Gay intake, one from the current temporary intake and one from the normal intake). On 19 October 2000 one water sample was collected from the intake of the Kenova WTP. These samples will be analyzed for metals at a laboratory in Beckley, WV. The results are anticipated on 20 October 2000.
- B. The EPA hosted a meeting at the Fort Gay City Hall to identify salient issues and discuss further strategic actions. Representatives from, EPA Region III, WVDEP, WVDNR, MCCC, Wayne County OES, Mingo County OES, Kenova Water, City of Louisa, Fort Gay Water, WV Department of Health, and City of Fort Gay attended the meeting. This workgroup plans to meet as necessary.
- C. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife have been patrolling the Tug Fork River, Wolf Creek, and Coldwater Creek and have documented dead and dying fish. They will continue to monitor the creek systems throughout the week. Replacement actions will be taken following the passage of the black water and slurry.

Region 4 START is conducting treatability studies in an attempt to develop methods to assist local water plants in treating water for consumption. Samples were collected from Inez, Louisa, Fort Gay, Kermit and Kenova water intakes in Kentucky and West Virginia.

Three surface water and three sediment samples were collected by Region 4 START from the Coldwater Creek and Wolf Creek watersheds and a background from Panther Creek. The samples were sent to the US EPA laboratory in Athens,

Georgia, for volatile organic compounds, semivolatile organic compounds, and total metals. Sample results are expected mid-next week.

- D. MCCC and its contractors have installed a check dam across Coldwater Fork and filter dams along both Coldwater Fork and Wolf Creek. Mud Cat barges, vacuum trucks, and water trucks continue to be used to remove water and solids from Coldwater Fork, and dipping operations are continuing to be conducted on Wolf Creek to remove materials there. Settling basins are being constructed adjacent to Coldwater Fork and are being planned for Wolf Creek to be used to store recovered slurry. Cells are also continuing to be constructed nearby to receive slurry via pipeline or truck from Coldwater Fork. A plan has been proposed to pump slurry recovered from Wolf Creek into the Wolf Creek number 4 mine impoundment. In addition, old refuse ponds have been prepared and HOPE pipe has been constructed to receive recovered slurry from Wolf Creek. Filter booms have also been installed across the Tug Fork and across the Levisa Fork to promote the settling of suspended solids.

MCCC is constructing a series of holding/treatment cells along the Coldwater Creek. The sludge will be treated with a potable water quality flocculent, allowed to settle, and discharged back into the creek.

- E. A primary focus continues to be on ability of municipal water companies to provide potable water, as well as on efforts to contain and begin recovery of the released materials in Coldwater Fork and Wolf Creek.



ROBERT KELLY, OSC
REGION III EPA
PHILADELPHIA, PA



ART SMITH, OSC
EPA REGION IV