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85503

**POLREP NUMBER 17  
KENTUCKY/WEST VIRGINIA COAL SLURRY SPILL  
MARTIN COUNTY COAL CORPORATION  
INEZ, KENTUCKY**

**DATE:** DECEMBER 01, 2000  
**TO:** DOUG LAIR, EPA REGION IV  
CHARLIE KLEEMAN, EPA REGION III  
**FROM:** FRED STROUD

**I. BACKGROUND**

See prior POLREPs.

**II. CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

**(FROM 1700 HOURS, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2000, TO 1700 HOURS, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2000)**

**Weather:** Weather condition during this reporting period have not hindered clean up efforts. On site condition have been overcast with temperatures ranging from the mid 30s to mid 40s.

**Personnel:** MCCC continues to respond to the spill 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with their company and subcontractor resources. The company reports more than 520 personnel and contractors responding. Federal and State agencies continue to support and provide guidance to the company's response team (ICS). Federal, state, and local agencies represented on-scene include:

**Federal:** EPA OSC (Fred Stroud), EPA ERT (Greg Powell and Harry Compton), USCG Strike Team, U.S. DOL-MSHA, U.S. DOI-OSM, EPA START Contractor

**State:** KYDNREPC (Damon White and Ferris Sexton), KY Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KYDFWR), Kentucky Dept. for Surface Mining and Reclamation (KY DSMRE), Secretary James E. Bickford (KY) is on site today (12/1) reviewing the cleanup progress

Totals of recovered sludge/slurry material that has been pumped and or hauled into impoundments located on or around the site are located in the attached tables. Ongoing operations in the Coldwater and Wolf Creek watersheds, and the Tug Fork and Big Sandy Rivers are as follows:

## **Coldwater Creek**

Two crews continue to use an excavator to dip slurry from the creek at several locations to keep the channel open during ongoing removal efforts.

MCCC has been backfilling the excavated areas from gate 4 to Mullet Branch. Top soil has been put in at the Cornet property and the Walnut areas.

Backfill top soil material has been obtained from the Lynn Bark Fork area as haul roads have been constructed to access the area.

Three crews continue to remove trees and other vegetation destroyed during the spill and subsequent operations. The material is being chipped and staged on mine property. MCCC has placed saw dust in corn field cell 1 to assist in solidifying the cell contents. This practice was discontinued due to ineffectiveness.

Tandem and articulated trucks continue hauling operations (see Table 1). Road maintenance continues and conditions have improved. Road construction is complete to the Lynn Bark confluence, solidification activities continue.

MCCC is constructing cells on Lynn Bark Fork and Road Fork as well as constructing additional cells at the south MTR location. These cells will be used for excavated creek bed sludge.

Excavation has begun from the #2 North Main portal towards Coldwater Creek. Crews have encountered sludge up to 10 feet thick. The sludge is being solidified with calcium oxide (lime) and transported to the holding cells located on mine property.

## **Wolf Creek**

The blockages in Wolf Creek have been removed, resulting in lowering the water level in the creek which has exposed additional sludge deposits on the banks. Excavation of the sludge on the banks and flood plains continues. Crews are currently working in Maynard Fork and the log yard.

MCCC has started to use lime to solidify the sludge from the log yard area excavation operations. This has resulted in less spillage on the access and haul roads. Excavation in the Meathouse Creek area also started during this reporting period.

The permanent pond at the South Mains portal was completed, this will catch seepage from the portal and contain it before entering the Big Andy Creek.

Big Andy, Old Slurry Station, security gate 3, and slurry impoundment pumps are operational. Pumps and sediment traps are being serviced as needed.

Creek bank washing/flushing activities are ongoing in divisions WC, WD, and WE, between Pigeon Roost and Pilgrim Mine (see Table 2). Seven Hydroseeders are currently being used to wash the banks.

Black water was seen exiting Wolf Creek for a brief period on Wednesday, it was caused while a crew was cleaning out the dam at the #4 mine location, it dissipated quickly. Blackburn contracting Inc. reduced their sampling effort at the Wolf Creek (No.4 Discharge) to sample collection twice a month.

The environmental group met to generate a riverbank and flood plain restoration plan to address the nonresidential areas of Wolf Creek that were impacted but will not be excavated due to access problems. Representatives from EPA, KYDEP, WVDEP, and MCCC were in attendance. Several options such as mixing the sludge with the underlying soil and re-vegetation, relocating the sludge back away from the creek and stabilizing it, and burial were discussed. A plan will be developed by a MCCC contractor and submitted to the environmental unit for comments by mid next week (12-6-00).

#### **Tug Fork and Big Sandy River**

Ft. Gay and Kermit WTP are currently operational and pumping water from the Tug Fork into their plants for water treatment. The in-line turbidity meter for Kermit was delivered and is being installed by MCCC. Ft. Gay is in the process of raising their intake in the Tug Fork a few feet from the bottom for precautionary purposes.

The slurry assessment of the Tug Fork and Big Sandy River performed by Potesta was concluded on November 28, 2000. Preliminary results indicated that little variation in depth of sediment was present. A final report is due next week. KYDFWR and West Virginia DEP have conducted separate assessments, but these reports have not been made available to the Unified Command or the Environmental Unit.

#### **General Issues**

An Administrative Order of Consent (under CERCLA) was sent to MCCC on November 29, 2000.

MSHA is performing their investigation of the release from the impoundment. The investigation includes collecting 20 cores from locations within the impoundment. Their efforts on ongoing with a mid December completion date.

The environmental unit's Toxicity Report has been finalized.

MCCC has developed a plan for underground injection into the Peter Cave mine. The proposal is being overnighted to EPA Region 4 for review.

MCCC conducted a public meeting Thursday morning and Thursday night for individuals along Wolf Creek.

### **III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

- A. Continuing remediation efforts including pumping and solidifying slurry from both watersheds. Solidification efforts will continue using lime and mechanical methods to excavate the sludge.

- B. Crews will continue working downstream excavating sludge from private yards and seed for erosion control.
- C. EPA and MCCC will continue gaining access to properties along Wolf Creek and Coldwater Creek in order to maintain clean up operations.
- D. Construction on new sedimentation impoundment cells will continue.
- E. Evaluate creek bank and flood plain remediation options.
- F. Aerial photos of the site will be taken by EPA's EPIC group.

**REMOVAL TOTALS**  
Table 1

<b>WOLF CREEK</b>		<b>COLDWATER CREEK</b>
<b>DATE**</b>	<b>VOLUME REMOVED*</b>	<b>VOLUME REMOVED*</b>
11-26-00	8344	8253
11-27-00	8450	8102
11-28-00	8622	7916
11-29-00	8377	8024
11-30-00	8362	8037

- \* Cubic yards includes pumping
- \*\* 24 hour period ending 0600 hours

**BANK WASHING TOTALS**  
Table 2

<b>WOLF CREEK</b>	
<b>DATA</b>	<b>LINEAR FOOTAGE</b>
11-26-00	3800
11-27-00	3500
11-28-00	3700
11-29-00	2400
11-30-00	2580