

Site:	<u>Martin Co.</u>
Break:	<u>2.10</u>
Other:	_____

85476

POLREP NUMBER 4  
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, MONDAY, 23 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.
- B. 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.
- C. 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:

1. The town of Fort Gay, West Virginia, 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 at Fort Gay 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 by truck and is also receiving water from Prichard WTP, since Kenova is operational now. It is anticipated that the city of Fort Gay will receive water supply from the temporary water line from Louisa, KY by 25 October 2000. Construction of the pipeline from the Louisa WTP was completed on 21 October 2000. Ft. Gay has installed a cut off valve that was overlooked during construction. Water supply from Louisa to Fort Gay is delayed due to lack of surplus water storage at the Louisa facility.
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 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.

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.

Kentucky:

1. Inez, KY has began pumping operations at full capacity to replenish the reservoir. They intend to continue this means of operation until the crisis is over and back to full storage capacity. A pipeline extension has been constructed to provide an alternate water supply 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 fully operational and is supplying all of its customers in Louisa. Louisa is supplying 1.3 million gallons per day. The WTP is at half capacity and it is anticipated that it will reach its full capacity in two to three days. Big Sandy will be allowed to withdraw water once the WTP reaches a height of 13' in their tanks. Schools in Lawrence Co. are closed today and all advisories have been lifted.
- D. 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 (Alan Humphries), 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

Local: Martin County EMA

- E. 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. The blackwater plume reached the Ohio River on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. As of 23 October, ORSANCO reports that the turbidity readings have stabilized at low levels, which make it difficult to discern the leading edge of the plume moving down the Ohio River. Both the COE and ORSANCO have discontinued collecting water quality measurements today until the next major rain event.
- F. 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. A Precipitation Action Plan has been developed and approved by the Unified Command.

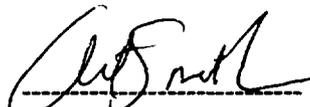
II. ACTIONS TAKEN:

- A. On October 23, seven samples were collected by MCCC from the Wolf Creek, Coldwater Creek, and Tug Fork to test for acrylamide, a water treatment polymer used by MCCC in their operations.
- B. Ongoing operations continue in Coldwater and Wolf Creek watersheds. Coldwater operations consist of 4 dredges removing slurry from the original creek channel, and construction of hard line piping to pump from the dredges to impoundments for treatment with flocculent and allowed to settle out. Approximately 6 million gallons of slurry has been pumped in the last 2 days, 17 temporary cells have been filled to date. Construction of three up stream sedimentation ponds and a down stream weir in the Coldwater to control flow in the event of heavy rains is scheduled for completion later in week. Excavation of the sludge along the banks of Wolf Creek and adjoining tributaries has been initiated.

Operations in the Wolf Creek include construction of a Gabion weir to control flow prior to entering the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy. Additional silt dams have been added and 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 of Coldwater Creek, where accessible, has also begun.

- C. Region 4 EPA has requested the U.S. Army COE to analyze the quantity and quality of sediment present at the Fort Gay Lock & Dam and to develop removal alternatives. Scope of work is anticipated mid week.

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JACK DOWNIE, OSC  
REGION III EPA

  
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ART SMITH, OSC  
EPA REGION IV