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**POLREP NUMBER 6
KENTUCKY/WEST VIRGINIA COAL SLURRY SPILL
MARTIN COUNTY COAL CORPORATION
INEZ, KENTUCKY**

EVENT: MULTI-REGIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE

DATE: OCTOBER 27, 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, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 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:

The town of Fort Gay, WV is receiving water from Louisa WTP. The town of Gay, has opened car washes and Laundromats.

- 1. A meeting was held at the Fort Gay Incident Command Center on 26 October 2000 to discuss strategies concerning the dredging of slurry deposited at the Fort Gay Lock & Dam. Representatives from Region III EPA, START Region III,

EPA ERT, Wayne County OES, WVDNR, WVDEP, KDFWR, Army COE, and WVDOH attended the meeting.

2. On 26 October 2000, ERT requested START Region III to collect water samples from Fort Gay WTPs clarifiers and its intake located in the river. These samples were collected, and shipped to Bio-Chem Testing, Inc. in Teyas, WV. The samples will be analyzed for sulfates, magnesium, sodium, and chloride. Unqualified data from the laboratory was received on October 27, 2000.
3. On 27 October 2000, EPA Region III OSC Jack Downie escorted West Virginia Governor Underwood to the Fort Gay WTP. OSC Downie updated the Governor on the current water status of the towns affected in West Virginia. The current problems and ongoing cleanup efforts were also highlighted.
4. A joint effort is being undertaken by WVDNR and the KDFWR to conduct bioassay testing on fish while conducting time-critical biological monitoring along the waters of the Tug Fork River. On 28 October 2000, representatives from the KDFWR and WVDNR utilized seines to collect invertebrates and fish in the Tug Fork River. Following collection, the species were enumerated and a portion was collected for bioassay testing. The seines were placed at eight different locations along the river. Data collected from the event will be studied to investigate the current condition of aquatic life in the waterways and to determine the effects of the spill on aquatic life. An important condition that is being evaluated is the presence and thickness of the slurry coating on the fish gills.
5. Kenova, WV is supplying water to all of its customers. Kenova is treating water from its normal intake with liquid Alum and polymers. Kenova WTP continues to supply water to the Big Sandy Water District, Don Acres, Kenova, Ceredo, Ridgelawn, Bufallo, Centerville, and Prichard. Turbidity levels in the influent remains approximately three times the normal level, but the water is treatable.
6. Kermit, WV continues to supply 100% of its customers with water through the temporary line, which draws water from a location along the Tug Fork. Kermit continues to supply water to Crum, WV. Kermit WTP will also supply to Warfield, KY as soon as possible.

B. Kentucky:

1. Louisa, KY has completed the construction of a 7500 foot 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.

2. Inez, KY continues to pump from the Middle Fork Creek. Production has been reduced due to pump problems causing them to draw from their reservoir to supplement their intake. The reservoir is reduced by two inches per day resulting in an estimated two week supply remaining. The pump was repaired late day. The plant will continue to draw from the alternate source which will be sufficient to meet their demand of 1.3 mgd plus replenish the reservoir at a rate of 0.5 mgd. Schools are currently open, although laundry mats and carwashes have been shut down in an attempt to conserve water.

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, Greg Powell), 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 includes slurry removal from the original creek channel using 3 dredges, construction of 2 pipe lines to pump slurry from the dredges to the impoundments for future treatment. Treatment includes flocculation and sedimentation. Approximately 8.5 million gallons of slurry has been pumped into the impoundments in the last 2 days. 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. Additional cells are being constructed at the corn field and Cain property locations. Limited excavation of the sludge along the banks and adjoining tributaries has been initiated. Samples of the clear water in the corn field cells were collected and will be analyzed for acrylamide. Samples will also be collected from the effluent every 6 hours during the first 24 hours of discharge.

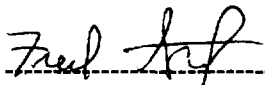
Wolf Creek: Operations in the Wolf Creek include construction of a Gabion weir to control flow prior to entering the Tug Fork of the Big Sandy, constructing numerous rock siltation dams, and mechanical removal of sludge from the creek banks. Construction of piping to pump water from the creek to impoundments 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.

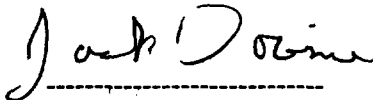
- E. Kemron Environmental Services, Inc., a subcontractor of Region 4 START, continues to perform treatability tests to identify pretreatment alternatives to remove the fines from the water prior to entering the affected municipal drinking water plants.

III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- A. The commonwealth of Kentucky (Governor) has decided to bring in an expert to assess the spill response. This is contrary to the National Contingency Plan.
- B. 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.
- C. Continue water treatability studies and perform a field test later this week.
- D. The ERT filming crew will be on scene Monday to document the "coal slurry release."



FRED STROUD, OSC
REGION IV EPA



JACK DOWNIE, OSC
EPA REGION III