

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

85488

**POLREP NUMBER 11
KENTUCKY/WEST VIRGINIA COAL SLURRY SPILL
MARTIN COUNTY COAL CORPORATION
INEZ, KENTUCKY**

DATE: NOVEMBER 13, 2000
TO: DOUG LAIR, EPA REGION IV
CHARLIE KLEEMAN, EPA REGION III
FROM: GREG POWELL, EPA ERT *Greg Powell*

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.
- 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 or the EPA OSC at (606) 395-5395.

**II. CURRENT ACTIVITIES
(FROM 1700 HOURS, WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 8, 2000 THRU 1700 HOURS,
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2000)**

Weather: Weather conditions have generally been favorable for removal activities. A rain event occurred on Thursday, 11/9/00, when 1/2-inch of rain fell during a 30-minute period. Snow flurries are expected Tuesday evening. 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 and Kermit, WV continues to receive water from alternate sources. The town of Kenova, WV continues to receive water from the Big Sandy River and is supplying water to all of its customers as well as to the Big Sandy Water District, Don Acres, Kenova, Ceredo, Ridgelawn, Buffalo, Centerville, and Prichard.

2. On 03 November 2000, a meeting was held at the Fort Gay Incident Command Post to discuss issues to be raised at the Unified Command concerning West Virginia interests. Representatives from Region III EPA, START Region III, WVDNR, WVDEP and WVDOH attended the meeting.
3. WVDNR continues to investigate the damage to the fish population in the Tug Fork River. They requested a Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) be conducted. Since they are a Trustee, OSC Kelly advised them to contact Region III DOI and formally request the assessment.
4. The Environmental Unit of the Unified Command received the results from the Pool Sampling and are currently reviewing them to determine if dredging these areas would be feasible.

B. Kentucky:

1. The water treatment plant in Louisa, KY 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 is back to the normal 1.4 mgd and they are slowly replenishing their reservoir.

C. MCCC continues to respond to the spill 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with their company and subcontractor resources. The company reports 360 personnel and contractors are responding. 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 ERT (Greg Powell), USCG Strike Team, U.S. DOL-MSHA, U.S. DOI-OSM, U.S. Army COE, EPA START Contractor, EPA REAC Contractor

State: KYDNREPC (Tom Gabbard), Roger Martin, KY Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Resources, Kentucky Dept. for Surface Mining and Reclamation (KY DSMRE), KY Emergency Management

Local: Martin County EMA

D. An estimated 18 millions gallons of slurry has been pumped into the impoundments. Ongoing operations in Coldwater and Wolf Creek watersheds are as follows:

Coldwater Creek:

- Cleanup operations continue using lime for solidification and mechanical recovery to

remove slurry from several areas along the creek. Mechanical recovery continues in the yards of private residences. MCCC continues to obtain access from private homeowners in order to remove sludge. A few homeowners are denying access. The EPA attorney will contact the homeowners attorneys to discuss the issues.

- The 6 “cornfield” sedimentation cells that were constructed along the creek to collect slurry are now being used to solidify sludge. The sludge will then transported to mountain top cells.
- Crews continue to pump slurry and water from the original creek channel to an impoundment cell at the Cain Property using an 18” pump. The slurry is treated with a flocculate to speed the sedimentation process. Water appears to be clear from the outfall of the cells into the creek.
- Crews continue to divert portions the Lynn Bark Creek, a tributary to Coldwater Creek, into a different watershed. Pumping operations began on 11/3.
- Crews continue mechanical recovery operations in areas above the Gate 4 Bridge. Roads have been constructed into this area to aid in slurry solidification.
- USCG Strike Team has set up two DataRams along Coldwater Creek to monitor particulate matter in the air from the solidification process.

Wolf Creek/Big Andy Creek Tributary:

- Cleanup operations continue to use pumps and vac trucks to pump slurry from the original creek channel and to sedimentation impoundment cells.
- Water diversion of Panther Creek and Cal Fork, tributaries of the Wolf Creek, continue.
- Crews have reenforced the County Road along the creek in preparation for an increase in the mechanical recovery. Roads have been constructed along the creek to for the mechanical recovery.
- Crews continue to use a Hydroseeder pump and water to remove sludge for the creek banks.
- Crews are continue to move downstream and remove sludge from the yards of private homes.
- USCG Strike Team have collected sludge depth reading behind the Gabion weirs.
- USCG conducted a stream profile survey of the Big Andy drainage. ERT recommends no physical removal at this time.

E. Rain Event, Thursday, November 9, 2000

- Rain gauges at the site indicated up to ½-inch of an inch fell over a 30-minute period.

- Blackwater was observed running over the top of the Gabion weirs on Wolf Creek. Blackwater was observed extending into the middle of the Tug Fork at the confluence of the Wolf Creek. Further downstream the Tug Fork appeared black bank to bank.
 - The County Road along Wolf Creek washed out in two locations. Crews have rebuilt and reenforced the road.
 - Water diversion on both creeks was temporarily interrupted during the rain event. The following day, all water diversion activities were back to normal.
 - The Walnut Creek freshwater impoundment failed during the rain event, causing water to back up behind the roads built above Gate #4 bridge to aid in the solidification process. The water is to be pumped out.
- F. The Stream Assessment Cleanup Survey (SACS) Team is currently evaluating restoration requirement for Coldwater and Wolf Creek. Initial tasks have been directed for the determination of cleanup needs, if any of the Tug Fork and Big Sandy Rivers.
- G. ERT has recommended not installing pre-treatments at the water treatment plants along the Tug Fork. However, it was recommended that the temporary piping installed from the alternative water sources be winterized.

III. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

- A. Continue remediation efforts include pumping and solidifying slurry from both watersheds. Solidification to continue using lime and mechanical methods will be used to excavate the sludge.
- B. Crews will continue working downstream excavating sludge from private yards and seed for erosion control.
- C. 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.