

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Tugboat Wm. McAllister - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region II

Subject: POLREP #1
INITIAL POLREP
Tugboat Wm. McAllister

Port Douglass, NY
Latitude: 44.5038516 Longitude: -73.3543396

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Date: 1/12/2010

Reporting Period:

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: OPA	Response Type: Pre-Deployment
Response Lead: EPA	Incident Category: Removal Assessment
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date:	Start Date:
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#: E10203	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

The tugboat *Wm. McAllister* sank in Lake Champlain in November, 1963 after striking Schuyler Reef on the New York State side of the lake near the town of Westport. The vessel had a maximum fuel capacity of 14,000 gallons of Diesel fuel. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM) in Vergennes, VT, has referred this potential source of water pollution to Region II EPA.

1.1.2 Site Description

The *Wm. H. McAllister* is a steel-hulled diesel tugboat built by the Livingston Shipbuilding Company of Orange Texas during World War II. She was laid down on February 12, 1942 and launched September 18, 1942. Her papers describe her as and oil screw vessel having one deck, two masts, and a raked stem and elliptical stern. Her registered dimensions were 24.6 m (80.6 ft) length, 7 m (23.1 ft) beam, and 3 m (9.6 ft.) depth. Draft was 3.2 m (10.5 ft) loaded and 3.02 m (10.0 ft) in ballast. Registered tonnage was 140 gross

and 95 net.

The tug was in U.S. Army service as the ST-243 and was acquired by McAllister Brothers, Inc., of New York, New York in 1949 and renamed the *Wm. H. McAllister*. She was assigned Official No. 258975 on November 10, 1949 and her homeport was listed as New York. The tugboat sank on November 17, 1963, after striking Schuyler Reef with an empty gasoline barge in tow. All hands escaped to the barge as the tugboat sank. The owners of the vessel originally planned to recover the hull, which was valued at \$250,000 (Burlington Free Press November 11, 1963).

Because of its depth, the site was one of the subjects of ROV documentation by the LCMM during the 1997 season. The vessel is in very good condition, and red and white paint is still clearly visible on the hull. The tug has settled heavily into the bottom of the lake, and mud covers a good portion of the rudder. Only the top of the uppermost propeller blade protrudes from the sediment. The vessel's name is clearly painted on the stern, the bow, and the front of the pilot house.

The tug had a 720 BHP four-cylinder diesel engine built by the Alco Sulzer Company of Auburn New York. Cruising speed was 10 knots and full speed was 12 knots. Cruising range was 2415 km (1500 nautical miles). Fuel capacity was 53,200 liters (14,000 gallons) with a daily fuel consumption of 3192 liters (840 gallons) at cruising speed. The LCMM reports that a sheen is noticeable on the surface of the lake above the location of the wreck. It is not known how much Diesel fuel was on the vessel when it sank, nor is there any information as to how much remains on-board.

1.1.2.1 Location

The wreck is located a few hundred yards off the shore near Westport, NY at the base of Schuyler Reef, in approximately 150 feet of water.

Shortly after the tugboat sank, involved parties executed several diver examinations of the deep site. At least two preliminary discussions considered the feasibility of raising the vessel, although these deliberations did not lead to any actual physical attempt to raise the tug. The vessel *Doris C* was chartered to locate the wreck, but it is unclear whether they were unable to find the wreck or believed it to be too deep to recover. The LCMM first located the wreck in 1988, relocated it during the 1997 Lake Survey, and examined it with ROV later that summer.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The LCMM, which plays a role similar to a "Riverkeeper", routinely monitors the lake for various concerns, including water pollution. The LCMM reports that an oil sheen is often seen on the surface of the lake over the location of the wreck, indicating that Diesel fuel may be escaping from the vessel. Given that the tug is 65 years old and has been submerged for 46 years, it is likely that the fuel tanks are corroded to the point where a catastrophic release of the fuel may be imminent. Should that happen, a major spill of oil into a navigable waterway of the United States would occur.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

To Be Undertaken.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

EPA Region II has opened an OPA Spill Account with the Coast Guard's National Pollution Fund Center for an initial amount of \$6,000. The money will fund EPA travel costs to the LCMM to view and copy their video documentation. The remaining money will fund a Pollution Response Funding Request (PRFA) to the US Navy Superintendent of Salvage (NAVSUPSALV) for that organization to review the LCMM documentation and advise EPA as to whether the wreck can be safely accessed and if the fuel oil can be removed from the wreck.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

Based on the assessment by NAVSUPSALV and the possible identification of viable responsible party(ies), EPA will make the determination whether it would be appropriate to initiate an enforcement action.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

A meeting will be scheduled with staff of the Maritime Museum and EPA On-Scene Coordinators. EPA OSCs will discuss the situation with Museum staff and review relevant documentation, such as video footage and side scanning sonar data. This documentation will be copied and forwarded to NAVSUPSALV for evaluation and assessment.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

Any response activities will be dependent on the feasibility of accessing the wreck and removing any fuel on-board.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

See above.

2.2.2 Issues

None, yet.

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

The cooperating agencies will be determined at the appropriate time. Although not inclusive, the agencies that *could* be involved in this project, among others, would be various departments within the government of the States of New York and Vermont, the US Coast Guard, EPA Region 1 (Boston), the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, and the US Department of the Interior.

4. Personnel On Site

To be determined.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

The web site operated by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum.

6.2 Reporting Schedule

As needed.

7. Situational Reference Materials

See Additional Sources of Information.