

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



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region II

Subject: POLREP #6
SPECIAL #1: Issuance of Field Expedient Notice to McAllister Towing and Transportation Co., Inc.
Tugboat Wm. McAllister

Port Douglass, NY
Latitude: 44.5038516 Longitude: -73.3543396

To: Dennis Farrar, NYSDEC
Tim Grier, USEPA Headquarters 5202G
John Kushwara, USEPA Region 2 DECA-WCB
Beckett Grealish, USEPA Region 2, ERRD, RAB
Alex Sherrin, USEPA
Steve Lehmann, NOAA
Arthur Cohn, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum
Rudy Brown, Public Affairs
Matt Moran, Vermont DEC
Tim Cropley, Vermont DEC
Richard Spiese, Vermont DEC
Mario Paula, USEPA
Adam Kane, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum
Andrew English, NYSDEC
Wilson Ring, Associated Press International
Erik Beck, USEPA
David Sherry, Sector Northern New England
James Warren, NYS Historic Preservation Office
David Sherry, USCG
John Senn, USEPA

From: Paul L. Kahn, OSC; Neil Norrell, OSC

Date: 5/12/2010

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: 1/13/2010
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#: E10203	Reimbursable Account #: 2010HR02H0XAK302D91C

1.1.1 Incident Category

The tugboat *William H. 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. 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 *McAllister* is a steel-hulled Diesel tug built by the now defunct Livingston Shipbuilding Company, Orange Texas, during World War II. The keel was laid on February 12, 1942 and launched September 18, 1943. Her papers describe it as an "oil screw vessel having one deck, two masts, a raked stem and elliptical stern". It's registered dimensions are 85 ft. length, 23 ft. beam, and 3 m (9.6 ft.) depth. The registered tonnage was

140 gross and 95 net.

The tug was in U.S. Army service as ST-243 and was subsequently acquired by McAllister Brothers, Inc., of New York in 1949 when it was renamed the *William H. McAllister*. The tug sank on November 17, 1963, after striking Schuyler Reef on the NY side of the lake while pushing an empty gasoline barge. All hands escaped to the barge when the tug sank. The owners of the vessel originally planned to recover the hull which was valued at \$250,000 (Burlington Free Press November 20, 1963).

Because of its interesting history the tug was the subject of ROV documentation by the LCMM in 1997. The vessel was in very good condition and red and white paint is still clearly visible on the hull. The tug has settled heavily but on an even keel 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 Levintson Shipbuilding of Orange Texas. Cruising speed was 10 knots and full speed was 12 knots. Cruising range was 2415 km (1500 nautical miles). Fuel capacity was 14,000 gallons with a daily fuel consumption of 840 gallons at cruising speed. It is not known how much Diesel was on the vessel when it sank, nor is there any information as to how much may remain 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 tug sank involved various 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 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 has a role similar to that of 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. 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, if any remains on board, 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

An ROV assessment of the condition and orientation of the wreck is being scheduled for June, 2010.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

The purpose of this POLREP is to document the following enforcement activity.

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

EPA has issued a Field Expedient Notice to McAllister Towing and Transportation Co., as a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP). However, the decision whether to initiate a cost recovery action is solely within the purview of the NPFC

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

2.2 Planning Section

No information available at this time.

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

No information available at this time.

4. Personnel On Site

No information available at this time.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.