

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
TIN Pearl River Spill - LA - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VI

Subject: POLREP #1
JOINT EPA REGIONS 4 and 6 (Initial)
TIN Pearl River Spill - LA
R4:B4L4 R6:
Bogalusa, LA
Latitude: 30.7763940 Longitude: -89.8552780

To: Ragan Broyles, Superfund Division
Shane Hitchcock, US EPA R4
Jeff Meyers, LDEQ
Dana Tulis, U.S. EPA HQ

From: John Martin, OSC

Date: 8/17/2011

Reporting Period: 8/14/2011 to 8/17/2011

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	R4:B4L4 R6:	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:		Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:		Incident Category:	Removal Assessment
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	8/14/2011	Start Date:	8/15/2011
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:	R6:985947 R4:985947	State Notification:	YES
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category: Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description: Pearl River system impacted by discharge from the Temple-Inland Bogalusa Paperboard Mill (TIN, Inc.) facility.

1.1.2.1 Location: Pearl River System from Bogalusa, LA south to I-10 including the border between Louisiana and Mississippi.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat: A very large fish kill was observed including other aquatic animals death or stressed.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results: On 08/09/2011, a paper mill located in Bogalusa, La released black pulp liquor into the Pearl River. After receiving notification from a local media station, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) responded on 08/13/2011 to investigate the incident. They observed numerous dead fish as well as foam and a dark brown/black discoloration of the river.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative: On Saturday, August 13, MDEQ assessed the Pearl River for a fish kill after receiving a NRC report submitted by a private individual. On August 14, MDEQ contacted EPA Region 4 Duty Officer for assistance. Also, on August 14, EPA Region 4 Duty Officer contacted the EPA Region 6 Duty Officer to relay the information since the Pearl River runs along the state line between Louisiana and Mississippi. An estimated 100,000 fish and other species were impacted. The cause of the fish kill appears to be a release of Black Liquor from the Temple-Inland Paper Mill in Bogalusa, LA. Two Region 4 OSCs with START support were deployed to assist MDEQ at their request with response and coordination. One Region 6 OSC with START support was deployed to the Louisiana side to coordinate with LDEQ.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Saturday 08/13/2011: LDEQ, MDEQ, US Fish & Wildlife, multiple State trustees, and local

government mobilized to the river for assessment as soon as notification was received. LDEQ and MDEQ began field screening for water quality (dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, temperature, turbidity). Each agency also independently collected samples for lab analyses. US F&W and other trustees began assessments of biota. Mississippi issued a fish consumption advisory.

Sunday 08/14/2011: LDEQ visited the mill and collected outfall samples and submitted the samples to a laboratory for the following analyses: biological oxygen demand, total suspended solids, oil & grease, total phenols, volatile organic compounds, and semi-volatile organic compounds.

Monday 08/15/2011: EPA R4 arrived on scene to support MDEQ in water quality screening and sampling. EPA and MDEQ formed 2 teams with multiple agency partners and began sampling from either end of the river (immediately upstream of the facility effluent working downstream vs beginning at the I-10 location and working upstream. Eight locations were either screened or sampled. No fish were retrievable as the available carcasses had begun to decay. LDEQ continued with periodic overflights to determine travel of the dark plume. By Monday, the plume had been observed as far south as the mouth of the West Pearl River approximately 45 straight miles. The West Pearl is a fork off of the Pearl River and is wholly within the State of Louisiana. In the East Pearl (the boundary of Louisiana and Mississippi) the observed fish kill and discoloration was only evident to as low as just below Walkiah Bluff, or approximately 14 straight miles.

LDEQ and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) were assessing the Pearl River from the West Pearl River north towards the mill; LDEQ and LDWF are counting dead animals and collecting water quality measurements of the river. LDEQ conducted a facility inspection of the mill. In addition, LDEQ conducted an over-flight of the river and observed the tailing edge of the release approximately 20 miles down-river of Bogalusa.

EPA OSC John Martin mobilized on-scene to begin assessment in-coordination with State and Federal officials.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs): Multiple trustees with law enforcement authorities are evaluating whether they will pursue additional actions related to this discharge.

2.1.4 Multi-Agency/State Coordination Call:

8/17/11 1100 MEETING SUMMARY

Participants: EPA Regions 4 and 6
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
Louisiana Department of Equality (LDEQ)
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH)
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, District 8 (NOAA)
US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

Meeting notes:

- Town meeting was held on 08/16/2011, at the Pine Grove Volunteer Fire Department. The meeting was conducted by the fire chief. About 100 community members were present. EPA R4 and R6, MDEQ, FWS, and Pearl County EMA were in attendance to answer questions. Community concerns focused on the chemicals in the river, impact of groundwater if any, impact to recreational activities in river, and if there may be consequences directed towards the facility. A second town meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, 08/25/2011, to discuss sample data and path forward. EPA R4 and R6, MDEQ, FWS, and Pearl County EMA will attend.

- St. Tammany Parish, LA declared a state of emergency to avoid citizens near fish. LDEQ established an EOC at St. Tammany, mostly for the dissemination of information.

- A round of sampling by MDEQ and EPA has been completed which includes sediment, surface water, biota samples (muscles), fish tissue. Parameters consist of VOCs, SVOCs, and metals. Results will be available by end of week. Daily river monitoring is ongoing and includes pH, DO, temperature, turbidity, conductivity, and TDS.

- The discharge appeared to have started Tuesday and ended Sunday. During the event the release volume was estimated at 75% of the normal 18 million to 19 million gallons per day.

- Facility has hired two contractors to collect dead fish. Facility has been awarded verbal permission by the respective wildlife agencies and departments to start collecting the dead fish following certain procedures. Facility is to notify FWS of any dead turtles. FWS is to be notified of dead sturgeon.

- East Pearl appears to be minimally impacted. Plume remains at the Rigolets and parts of the West Pearl. The tide is pushing back and forth at the mouth of Lake Pontchartrain and into smaller tributaries of the west branch. LDEQ deployed a team of hydrologists to assess water conditions and plume behavior in that area to determine (among other things) if increasing flow by opening the Ross Barnett Reservoir in Jackson, MS would improve water quality conditions.

- All assessing agencies are reporting no new dead wildlife. Unconfirmed reports of dead "no gill" species such as alligators, snakes, and turtles have reported by citizens. However responding agencies have not noted any.

- Since 1100 operations call, Region 4 OSCs Huyser and Ball, have been surveying Mississippi portions of the Pearl River via air boat (areas that were not accessible previously). Reportedly to have surveyed 60 river miles were surveyed from Hwy 26 to I-90.

For additional background material, please see:

EPA R4: www.epaosc.org/PearlRiverFishKill EPA R6: www.epaosc.org/R6-TINPearlRiverSpill

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities: Assessment and investigation activities will continue as EPA R4 and R6 support the impacted states and foster communications among all agencies.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities: LDEQ will continue the assessment of the river quality monitoring and sampling; MDEQ will continue screening along the Eats Pearl River. Natural Resource Trustees will coordinate the collection and inventory of dead animals in the impacted area.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps: A KMZ file is still being built. The KMZ File shows photographic images of sampling locations as of this morning. Analytical results from both the MDEQ/R4 and the LDEQ sampling efforts should be arriving soon. Interpretation and evaluation of the data will determine what and if any, other clean-up and enforcement activities are necessary.

2.2.2 Issues: Incident occurred on the Pearl River, which is on the border of two states of two EPA regions involving numerous state and federal agencies.

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.