

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
R2 Hurricane Irene/TS Lee (NY) Response - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region II

Subject: POLREP #36
ADDENDUM to Final SitRep of 12-01-2011
R2 Hurricane Irene/TS Lee (NY) Response
Edison, NJ
Latitude: 40.5159553 Longitude: -74.3550459

To: Lisa Plevin, US EPA
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From: Eric Mosher, Regional Incident Coordinator

Date: 12/8/2011

Reporting Period:

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: Stafford Act	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead: EPA	Incident Category: Removal Action
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date:	Start Date: 8/26/2011
Demob Date:	Completion Date: 11/29/2011
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report serves as an addendum to the final Situation Report of 12-01-2011. It was reported in the 12-01-2011 Final Situation Report that work had been completed in the NYSDEC Region 5 Areas of Essex and Clinton Counties. EPA has completed actions related to the recovery of "known" and/or "accessible" orphan containers in this area. EPA had observed many debris areas that were not accessible for any number of reasons at that time. Two of those reasons included limited specialized equipment and/or funding, with the funding issue related to the cost-effectiveness of recovery versus the actual threats to the public.

During past EPA collection activities in the NYSDEC Region 5 area, debris piles were observed to have solid waste and hazardous type waste, such as propane cylinders, oil tanks, and other general household hazardous wastes, all co-mingled within the debris piles. At times, EPA was required to sift through debris piles to access and/or investigate the potential presence of hazardous waste. EPA's initial plan was to work with county officials using county developed debris management plans in order to collect and segregate solid waste from hazardous wastes. It was disclosed to EPA by county officials that they could not obtain necessary funding to implement their debris management plans

During the past week, EPA and FEMA discussed the options for revisiting the NYSDEC Region 5 area in the spring of 2012. County officials have expressed concerns that spring thaws with possible spring floods could impact remote debris piles which may cause debris and any currently trapped and/or inaccessible hazardous wastes containers to migrate downstream towards more populated areas. If this were to occur, additional work could be required in the spring months of 2012. EPA will continue to work with FEMA, State, County, and Local officials to address any future issues that might arise.

In the event that additional hazardous waste collection is required following spring thaws/floods, EPA has drafted an anticipated response strategy to address potential future collection. The following is some background and recommendations for moving forward on any future action(s);

Background Information on Impacts and Operations related to Tropical Storm Irene in the NYSDEC Region 5 Area

West Branch Au Sable, East Branch Au Sable, Au Sable and Boquet Rivers, in addition to other brooks and rivers, breached their banks and caused damage to several towns in Essex and Clinton Counties.

- The torrent of flood waters uprooted large trees as well as forcing heating oil and propane tanks from residences in those areas.
- The bulk of the trees and orphaned containers were snagged by other upright trees along the banks of the rivers, primarily on islands and river bends.
- EPA conducted orphan container collection along flood impact areas with the initial plan of being supported by the counties using the counties approved Debris Management Plan(s).
- Due to lack of funding, county government was unable to fully support the EPA mission with any debris (solid waste) management.
- In an effort to collect known hazardous wastes containers, EPA began conducting operations that involved some sifting and segregation of debris in order to access or uncover hazardous containers. Known hazardous wastes containers were identified by visual observations of containers and/or signs of leaking hazardous materials such as oil from oil tanks.
- EPA's intent was to carry on sifting the debris piles with observed Orphaned Containers till Essex County was able to secure funding and implement the Debris Management Plan. At which point, EPA would revert to the initial approach conceived, a more rational and cost savings approach. However, during the life of EPA's Mission Assignment, Essex County was unable to secure funding needed to implement the proposed Debris Management Plan.
- EPA worked to collect orphan containers from debris piles in the more populated areas first, then moving to areas of less population and even into some more remote locations. During this process, EPA did find some orphan containers with hazardous substances at the centers or bottoms of debris piles, areas not visible during initial inspection(s). EPA feels there may be some additional areas and/or debris piles that still contain non-visible containers. While these areas are in the more remote locations, there is still the potential for re-suspension and migration downstream to more populated areas.

Recommendations and Potential Future Actions in NY to Address Impacts from Tropical Storm Irene in NYSDEC Region 5:

- Given the observations during the screening/sifting process, it is believed that there is in all likelihood, additional orphaned containers beneath debris piles, obscured from view and not addressed during the EPA sifting process.
- There is a severe potential of the vegetative debris piles becoming dislodged and migrating downstream (to more populated areas) during the spring floods, and carrying with it, currently trapped containers of hazardous substances.
- A fresh survey of the impacted rivers will need to be conducted if the debris dislodges from their current locations during the spring thaw/floods.
- The ideal approach to addressing the orphaned container collection operation would be to implement the County Debris Management Plan and to work in consort with the county during the debris removal operation thereby minimize material handling and costs. In addition, the identification and retrieval will need to be thorough or otherwise there is a potential that with each successive spring thaw/floods, debris piles will continue to dislodge and expose orphaned containers from Tropical Storm Irene.

The above documented information and recommendations is provided to provide a potential course of action related to any future need to address any known threats of hazardous substance caused by impacts from Tropical Storm Lee in the Northern NY State areas (NYS DEC Region 5). At this point in time, EPA's mission has been completed and all EPA resources are currently demobilized from all former Hurricane Irene operational areas in NY. If an additional Mission Assignment is provided to EPA, additional Situation Reports will be generated to document and discuss those additional operations.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

NA

2.2 Planning Section

NA

2.3 Logistics Section

NA

2.4 Finance Section

NA

2.5 Other Command Staff

NA

3. Participating Entities

NA

4. Personnel On Site

NA

5. Definition of Terms

NA

6. Additional sources of information

NA

7. Situational Reference Materials

NA

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