

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
McCarthy Road Discharge - Polrep/Sitrep
Initial and Final Polrep/Sitrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region X

Subject: SITREP #1
Initial/Final
McCarthy Road Discharge

McCarthy, AK
Latitude: 61.3720000 Longitude: -142.7970000

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Thru:
From: Robert Whittier, OSC
Date: 5/22/2015
Reporting Period: 04/29/2015-05/22/2015

Executive Summary

On April 29th both the "National Park Service" and "Alaska Department of Conservation" personnel requested EPA assistance in dealing with unreported discharges associated with a placer mine operator located approximately 17 miles east of McCarthy, AK near the Nizina River. One incident that occurred over the winter involved the overturning of a 1500 gallon skid tank discharging approximately 1000 gallons of diesel fuel on an unimproved trail upslope from the river. The other involved discharges of hydraulic fluid from staged excavation equipment along the shoreline of the Nizina River. Given the threat of impact to the river from the former incident, and evidence of impact from the staging of equipment, a field assessment was warranted.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: OPA	Response Type: Time-Critical
Response Lead:	Incident Category: Removal Assessment
NPL Status:	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date:	Start Date: 5/20/2015
Demob Date:	Completion Date: 5/21/2015
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:

1.1.1 Incident Category

The National Park Service and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation requested EPA assistance in assessing a 1000 gallon discharge of diesel fuel from an overturned skid tank possibly threatening the Nizina River. It was also requested that a second site be investigated involving leaking excavation equipment staged along the same river in a different location.

1.1.2 Site Description

The first incident involving the skid tank occurred on an Alaska DOT right of way, and also impacted land owned by the University of Alaska. The second situation involving leaking equipment took place below the high water mark on Alaska Department of Natural Resources land.

1.1.2.1 Location

Both Sites are located approximately 17 miles east of McCarthy, AK in a rugged remote area surrounded by Wrangell St. Elias Park and Preserve.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The primary threat involves the discharge of the estimated 1000 gallons of diesel fuel located upslope from the Nizina River.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

An on-site investigation with the NPS and ADEC determined that the 1000 gallon discharge posed no threat to the Nizina River given the relatively long distance to the river, soil conditions, and the presence of thick herbaceous vegetation. The second site involving the hydraulic fluid leakage from the staged excavation equipment shown little evidence of remaining fluids. It's speculated that the shoreline was scoured during flooding associated with spring breakup.

1.2 Incident Objectives

Assessment only

1.3 Critical Resource Needs

None

1.4 Strategic Considerations

None

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

On May 20th personnel from the National Park Service and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation staff, along with EPA met in McCarthy to investigate the two discharge sites in question, since road conditions improved enough to gain access. Investigation of the first site where the skid tank overturned during the winter season shown that its location did not threatened any waters of the US; (Nizina River). It was initially speculated during the review of satellite imagery, that channeled terrain would have aided the fuel reaching the river. Upon inspecting the site however, no channeled terrain was evident. The fuel spread out during the melting of ice and snow and was absorbed by soil and thick herbaceous vegetation leaving an extremely low probability of reaching "Navigable waters"; especially given a relatively long distance to the river.

Upon inspection of the second site on the bank of the river, where leaking construction equipment was first observed by NPS officials, shown little evidence of discharge. Given the time waiting for trail conditions to improve in order to gain access, it is believed that flooding during spring "break up" scoured the area removing any trace of contaminated shoreline. No further action, with the exception of monitoring the activities of the placer miner, is expected.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Assessment only

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

The case will be referred to the Office of Compliance and Enforcement for "failure to report", and possibly CWA violation. This refers to only the incident involving the leaking equipment staged at the river's edge.

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

None

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

None

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

None

2.2.2 Issues

A primary issue concerned the time waiting for adequate conditions in order to gain access to the Sites. The road was impassible from McCarthy due to frost coming out of the ground.

2.3 Logistics Section

N/A

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

2.5.1 Safety Officer

2.5.2 Liaison Officer

2.5.3 Information Officer

Not Applicable at this time

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

EPA/ADEC

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

US National Park Service, University of Alaska, Alaska Department of Natural Resources

4. Personnel On Site

1- EPA

3- NPS

1-ADEC

5. Definition of Terms

N/A

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

6.2 Reporting Schedule

N/A- Assessment only

7. Situational Reference Materials

Satellite Imagery