U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
BNSF Alma Ethanol Release - Removal Polrep

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region V

Subject: **POLREP #2**
Progress
BNSF Alma Ethanol Release
E16501
Alma, WI
Latitude: 44.3199654 Longitude: -91.9148839

To:
From: Andrew Maguire
Date: 11/9/2015
Reporting Period: 11/8/2015 & 11/9/2015

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	E16501	**Contract Number:**	
D.O. Number:		**Action Memo Date:**	
Response Authority:	OPA	**Response Type:**	Emergency
Response Lead:	EPA	**Incident Category:**	
NPL Status:	Non NPL	**Operable Unit:**	
Mobilization Date:	11/7/2015	**Start Date:**	11/7/2015
Demob Date:		**Completion Date:**	
CERCLIS ID:		**RCRIS ID:**	
ERNS No.:		**State Notification:**	WI Spill #9770 ID 20151107WC06-1-UNK
FPN#:	E16501	**Reimbursable Account #:**	

1.1.1 Incident Category
Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description

The incident is a freight train derailment of 25 cars on a rail line that runs north-south along a man-made embankment constructed within the Mississippi River. Five of the tanker cars were reported to have released denatured alcohol (ethanol) to the ballast and river.

1.1.2.1 Location

BNSF Railroad Milepost 353, St. Croix Subdivision, Buffalo County, near the City of Alma, Wisconsin.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Release of denatured alcohol (ethanol) from railroad tanker cars to the Mississippi River. Releases were reported from at least 5 tanker cars. BNSF estimated that approximately 12.000 - 18,000 gallons was released from one tanker car and between 5-500 gallons were released from the other four tanker cars. Denatured alcohol is flammable and toxic to aquatic organisms. The spill poses a threat to both human health and the environment.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

The LaCrosse Fire Department made preliminary entry to the derailment site by watercraft within hours of the reported derailment. There was no fire, smoke or injury reported. Firefighters confirmed that denatured alcohol (ethanol) product was releasing from the top vents of five of the derailed tanker cars onto the ballast and to the Mississippi River. BNSF provided an estimate that approximately 18,000 gallons were released from one tanker and between 5-500 gallons were released from the other four tanker cars.

A secondary release occurred the afternoon of 11/8 due to high pressure in one of the tanker cars.

The site of the derailment is very remote, situated along a narrow, man-made embankment, with no land access other than along the tracks from the north and south. The Buffalo County Sheriff's Office initially closed sections of State Highways 35 & 37 and conducted a voluntary evacuation of approximately 150 residents until it was confirmed safe for the public to be in the area. The evacuation was lifted at 1300 on 11/7/2015.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

In the hours following the derailment, firefighters focused on accessing the derailment site to assess the damage to tanker cars, other freight cars, and rail infrastructure. Crews also confirmed the release to the environment. Un-impacted railcars and tankers were removed from the railway to the north and south of the derailment area to establish an access route.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

A train list and Safety Data Sheet for the released material was provided by BNSF Railway to the OSC and is posted in the 'documents' section of the website. An incident command post was established by local authorities at the Alma Elementary School located at S1618 State Route 35, Alma, Wisconsin. The incident command post was moved at 1000 on 11/8 to the Alma Marina located at 125 Beach Harbor Rd, Alma, Wisconsin. U.S. EPA, BNSF Railway, BNSF contractors, WDNR, and U.S. F&WS are continuing work on implementing ICS.

Land and water (work barge) access was established into the derailment site. BNSF and their contractors began transferring ethanol from damaged/leaking tankers to intact tankers on site. All observed leaks have been stopped. BNSF's environmental contractor, Pinnacle Engineering, is continuing to sample and monitor Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Conductivity, and Temperature in the river around the site. START is documenting and overseeing all sampling and monitoring activities.

BNSF laid boom around the spill area on both the east and west sides of the tracks. Air sparging equipment is also in place in the River.

One railcar is upright in the River on the west side of the track. The contents of this railcar are currently being transferred. The end of a second rail car is at the water level on the east side of the track. All other ethanol rail cars are on the track, not in contact with the River. All but one of the derailed auto rack cars have been removed from the Site. Crews are also concurrently removing debris and rebuilding the damaged tracks. Operations have been 24 hours/day since the start of the incident.

Downstream drinking water intake managers and US EPA Region 7 have been notified of the derailment and ethanol release.

The derailment site has been mostly cleared of damaged railcars, tank cars and damaged infrastructure. One auto transport car remains on the toe of the ballast and will be removed at a later date still yet to be determined.

Sampling was conducted in the spill area to understand the extent of contaminated ballast and soils. The ballast was replaced and train tracks were repaired early morning on 11/10, trains were running by 0300 on 11/10 . BNSF contractors will delineated the spill radius using a PID and laboratory samples analyzed for BTEX, VOC's, and ethanol. A center point was established in the spill zone and points were collected horizontally and vertically from the central point. The spill area was delineated vertically to a maximum of 5.5 feet bgs and horizontally to a maximum of 20 feet from the center point. The maximum field screen reading for VOC was 351 ppm at the surface and 319 ppm at 5 feet bgs, this reading was taken on the eastern side near the center of the spill area. START collected spilt samples for the EPA and are awaiting the results.

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

BNSF Railway was issued a Notice of Federal Interest by OSC Maguire on 11/7/2015. BNSF Railway has accepted responsibility for the release and is responding in coordination with federal, state and local response agencies.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

Cumulative totals (to date) are found in the table below.

Waste Stream	*Medium*	*Quantity*	*Manifest #*	*Treatment*	*Disposal*
Denatured alcohol (ethanol) product	liquid	TBD	various	recovery	
Contaminated soil	solid	TBD	various	landfill	
Contaminated water	liquid	TBD		treatment	

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Environmental controls (absorbent and containment boom) placed in and around the derailment site to contain spilled product will be monitored and maintained. Air sparging equipment in the river will be utilized as needed based on DO readings. A long term operation, maintenance and contingency plan will be developed with EPA, USFWS, WIDNR and BNSF input.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

BNSF will continue to monitor and sample impacted soil and water around the spill site using. . The spill site during the next rain event will be closely observed to ensure that unsafe levels of ethanol do not leach from the impacted soil into the waterway.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

A streamlined IMT was established to manage the incident utilizing ICS and a Unified Command. IAPs are established to define response activities during specified operational periods.

A regular schedule for both air and water monitoring was established around the derailment site to protect human health and monitor impacts to the environment. Downstream jurisdictions will be notified of potential impacts to wildlife management areas and drinking water intakes located along the Mississippi River.

2.2.2 Issues

The derailment site is on a remote right of way located within the Mississippi River. Access to the area is primarily by water and work is proceeding slowly as a result.

2.3 Logistics Section

The incident command post is located at 125 Beach Harbor Road, Alma, Wisconsin, 54610. BNSF Railway, Hulcher, Pinnacle Engineering, WCEC, WDNR, US F&WS and START are providing ground support.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

2.5.1 Safety Officer

OSC Andrew Maguire is serving in this role at this time. An incident HASP is under development by BNSF Railway. Individual contractors and response agencies are currently working under HASPs established for emergency response activities.

2.5.2 Liaison Officer

OSC Andrew Maguire is serving in this role at this time.

2.5.3 Information Officer

OSC Andrew Maguire is serving in this role at this time.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

A Unified Command was established consisting of U.S. EPA, WDNR, U.S. F&WS, and BNSF Railway. IAPs are being developed utilizing the ICS planning process to govern response activities during defined operational periods.

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

Wisconsin DNR

Wisconsin Emergency Management

Buffalo County Sheriff's Office

USDOT Federal Railroad Administration

USDOT Pipeline & Hazardous Material Administration

US F&WS

LaCrosse Fire Department HAZMAT

BNSF Railway

4. Personnel On Site

FEDERAL: 4

STATE: 2

LOCAL: 10

BNSF: 10

CONTRACTORS: 50

TOTAL: 76 (estimated)

5. Definition of Terms

BNSF	Burlington Northern Santa Fe
CTEH	Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health LLC
FPN	Federal Project Number
HASP	Health & Safety Plan
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
IMT	Incident Management Team
ICP	Incident Command Post
NRC	National Response Center
OSC	On-Scene Coordinator
POLREP	Pollution Report
SDS	Safety Data Sheet
START	Superfund Technology Assessment and Response Team
VOC	Volatile Organic Compound

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

Photographs, data, work plans and other supporting technical information can be found at:
http://www.epaosc.org/bnsfalmaethanol.

6.2 Reporting Schedule

POLREPs will be issued as milestones are met.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.