

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Mile Post 318.5 Sunken Vessel - Removal Polrep  
Final Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region V

**Subject:** POLREP #3  
Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Mile Post 318.5 Sunken Vessel  
Z5OG  
Chicago, IL  
Latitude: 41.8260941 Longitude: -87.7234600

**To:**  
**From:** Jacob Hassan, OSC  
**Date:** 5/17/2016  
**Reporting Period:**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

<b>Site Number:</b>	Z5OG	<b>Contract Number:</b>	
<b>D.O. Number:</b>		<b>Action Memo Date:</b>	
<b>Response Authority:</b>	OPA	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b>	EPA	<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>	
<b>Mobilization Date:</b>	9/4/2014	<b>Start Date:</b>	9/4/2014
<b>Demob Date:</b>	9/5/2014	<b>Completion Date:</b>	5/12/2016
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>		<b>RCRIS ID:</b>	
<b>ERNS No.:</b>		<b>State Notification:</b>	
<b>FPN#:</b>	E14544	<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>	

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

A Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Patrol Vessel observed a sunken vessel at Mile 318.5 in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal east of the Pulaski bridge, on the North Bank. A sheen roughly 10' wide by 2000' long was observed coming from the back of the vessel. The crew aboard the patrol vessel report the release to the NRC (NRC 1094345). It was noted that a strong gasoline smell coming from the water way which was attributed to the vessel.

The vessel was moored just off the Crawford Power Plant with only the top portion of the cab exposed. No vessel identifiers were visible from the water surface.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

The sunken vessel was located at MP 318.5 on the right descending bank of the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal. The vessel was moored along the Crawford Power Plant, 200 feet upstream of the Pulaski St Bridge.

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Gasoline and oil released from the vessel created a sheen 10' wide by 2000' long. The sheen was migrating upstream of the vessel due to strong winds from the west. A pungent gasoline smell was detected within a 20' foot radius of the boat.

#### 1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

On September 4, 2014, at 1245 hrs, EPA arrived on scene at the Pulaski St Bridge near the Crawford Power Plant. A large sheen could be seen coming of the back of the sunken vessel that was moored to a single piling about 50ft from land. The boat was tied off and had sunk horizontally to rest flat on the bottom of the Canal. Only the top cab was visible.

EPA requested access to the Crawford Power Plant property to conduct a shoreline assessment. EPA, IEPA and NRG Energy, conducted a shoreline assessment and determined that the sheen was visible the entire length of the Crawford power plant property.

## 2. Current Activities

### 2.1 Operations Section

#### 2.1.1 Narrative

On September 4, 2014, while conducting sampling in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, a Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Patrol Vessel observed a sunken vessel at Mile 318.5 in the canal east of the Pulaski bridge, on the North Bank. The reporting party from the Water Reclamation District observed sheen coming from the vessel. MWRD notified Marine Safety Unit Chicago (MSU Chicago) and the NRC of the release (NRC 1094345). The boat was determined to be in

EPA jurisdiction and assumed the role as the lead response agency.

At 1245 hrs, EPA arrived on-scene and conducted a preliminary assessment of the situation. The boat was 95% submerged along the right descending bank of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near the Crawford Power Plant property. The vessel was moored to a single piling located 50' from the shoreline. A large sheen was visible coming from the rear of the boat. EPA and IEPA estimated the sheen to be 10' wide by 2000' long.

EPA mobilized ERRS to the site to conduct booming operations and to assist in finding the ILDNR tags on the boat. After conducting an on-water investigation with ERRS, it was determined that there were no readily identifiable markers on the vessel and that the boat would need to be salvaged. Booming operations were completed at 2000 hrs and Chicago Marine Towing was contracted to conduct the salvage operations.

On September 5, Chicago Marine Towing arrived on site around 0845 hrs to conduct a preliminary assessment of the boat. ERRS removed the hard boom from around the boat but left the sorbent boom in-place during the initial phases of the salvage operation. The sorbent boom was removed by ERRS once the salvage crew began raising the boat. The vessel was fully raised at 1400 hours and EPA was able to identify the boat as a 30' Chris Craft Commander pleasure-boat named "Wette Vette" from Harwood Heights. All the ILDNR boat registration numbers had been removed or covered up. Upon inspection of the raised vessels hull, the salvage crew identified that a hose had been pulled from the seacock which caused the boat to sink. Furthermore, the boat had been stripped of all its batteries and radio communication devices.

EPA was able to obtain an ILDNR from a covered up registration sticker. The registration numbers is IL 9508 HD. This number was provided to Illinois Conservation Police for further investigation.

On September 8, Officer Victoria Smith and Joshua Mooi conducted a field investigation of the vessel and determined that the 2005 ILDNR ID numbers were registered to a Mr. Ray Willas. According to Mr. Willas, the boat had been sold to Helter Real Estate in August 2004. Paper work documenting the transaction were not provided to EPA.

The investigation also revealed that a crane operator at the Canal St Marina (where the Wette Vette was towed for removal and storage) said he recognized the Wette Vette and that it had been stored in dry dock at the Goose Island Boatyard at 934 N North Branch Street. The Manager at the Goose Island Boatyard identified Mr. Rob Royko at the person paying the dry docking fee.

EPA contacted Mr. Royko on September 16 to inquire about the boat. Mr. Royko said that he was the individual responsible for the boat and that the vessel had been taken out of dry dock at the Goose Island Boatyard on August 30th to be moved to the Riverdale Marina for a boat auction. On September 3, Mr Royko commenced towing operations when the boat experienced mechanical difficulties and it had to be tied up to a piling near the Crawford Power Plant until he could get a replacement part.

OSC Hassan issued Mr. Royko a Notice of Federal interest on 09/17/14.

A request for assistance was made by OSC Hassan to have an enforcement specialist conduct a title search on the vessel (using the IDNR sticker information) to properly identify the current owner. A contractor to EPA (Toerek) was enlisted to assist with this process and they were able to confirm that the last owner of record of the vessel is Mr. Ray Willis. Toerek also contacted the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Watercraft/Snowmobile and Registration Unit to validate the title search results. IDNR was able to certify that the Mr. Willas was the last registered owner on record with IDNR. On September 30, 2015, EPA and ERRS conducted a search of the vessel to try and locate the USCG vessel number. After a thorough search, no USCG number was found. EPA submitted the hull identification number associated with the Wette Vette to the USCG's National Vessel Documentation Center. They confirmed that the vessel was not present in their database.

EPA's Office of Regional Council contacted Mr. Willas after conducting the vessel search to inform him that he is the last registered owner of the boat. Mr. Willas disagreed with determination. EPA issued Mr. Willas a formal letter of our findings on December 10, 2015.

Finally, EPA issued Mr. Ray Willas Notice of Federal Interest on April 14, 2016 via certified mail. The letter was signed for by Mr. Willas on April 15, 2016.

On April 28, 2016, EPA received a reply from Mr. Willas regarding the Notice of Federal Interest. He did not sign the notice by provided a letter directing EPA to send all future correspondence to his attorney.

### **2.1.2 Response Actions to Date**

The following is a list of actions that occurred on the following dates:

#### **09/04/2014**

- Conducted a site assessment and evaluation of the boat
- Mobilized ERRS to the site to conduct response actions
- Contacted NRG Energy, MWRD and USCG of the vessel
- ERRS deployed 300' of hard boom around the vessel to contain the release of gasoline and oil
- ERRS deployed 240' of sorbent boom around the vessel to collect the fuel
- Conducted an visual inspection of the submerged vessel to try locate any tags that may be used to identify the boat owner
- Subcontracted with Chicago Marine Towing to conduct salvage operations

#### **09/05/2014**

- Removed hard boom from around the vessel for salvage operations
- Sorbent boom was left in place to assist in collecting fuel during the initial phases of the salvage operation
- ERRS, EPA, and IEPA conducted oversight of salvage operation
- Vessel was raised and secured for transportation
- The vessel was towed to the Canal St Marina for removal and storage
- EPA logged all the identifying tags on the vessel to assist in identifying the owner
- Sorbent boom was removed from the canal and bagged for disposal
- A site generator ID was requested through IEPA
- Contacted the Illinois Conservation Police to assist in finding the owner

#### **09/08/2014**

- A waste profile was generated for the boom disposal
- Illinois Conservation Police were onsite at the Canal St Marina to conduct an investigation
- The 2005 IL DNR ID number was traced to Ray Willas

#### **09/16/2014**

- ILDNR Conservation police provided EPA with contact information for Ray Willas and Rob Royko
- Mr. Royko identified himself as the responsible party

#### 09/17/2014

- Mr. Royko was issued a Federal Notice of Interest

#### 9/01/2015

- EPA receives final title search report

#### 9/11/2015

- EPA receives IDNR letter confirming Mr. Willas is the last registered owner of the boat

#### 10/02/2015

- EPA receives official USCG letter documenting that the vessel is not registered in their system

#### 12/10/2015

- EPA issued a letter to Mr. Willas of the title search results. A copy of the IDNR and USCG letters were provide as attachments

#### 04/14/2016

- A notice of Federal Interest was issued to Mr. Ray Willas via certified mail

#### 04/15/2016

- The certified letter was signed for by Mr. Ray Willas

#### 04/28/2016

- EPA received a response from the Notice of Federal Interest which directed all futher correspondence to his attorney

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

Rob Royko and Ray Willas have been identified as potentially responsible parties

### 2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>
Oiled boom	soil/liquid	7 drums	013427669JJK	none	Tradebe Treatment and Recycling

## 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

## 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

### 3.1 Unified Command

### 3.2 Cooperating Agencies

MWRD  
IEPA  
Illinois Conservation Police  
USCG

## 4. Personnel On Site

None

## 5. Definition of Terms

MWRD - Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago  
EPA - Environmental Protection Agency (U.S.)

IEPA - Illinois Environmental Protection Agency  
 OSC - On-Scene Coordinator  
 USCG - United States Coast Guard  
 MSU - Marine Safety Unit  
 ERRS - Emergency and Rapid Response Services  
 ILDNR - Illinois Department of Natural Resources

## 6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

## 7. Situational Reference Materials

### Regional Metrics

This is an Integrated River Assessment. The numbers should overlap.	Miles of river systems cleaned and/or restored	1
	Cubic yards of contaminated sediments removed and/or capped	na
	Gallons of oil/water recovered	na
	Acres of soil/sediment cleaned up in floodplains and riverbanks	na
Stand Alone Assessment	Number of contaminated residential yards cleaned up	na
Contaminant(s) of Concern	Number of workers on site	10

### Oil Response Tracking

Estimated volume	Initial amount released	200
	Final amount collected	3
	FPN Ceiling Amount	40,000
CANAPS Info	FPN Number	E14544
	Body of Water affected	Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal

### Administrative and Logistical Factors (Place X where applicable)

Precedent-Setting HQ Consultations (e.g., fracking, asbestos)	Community challenges or high involvement	Radiological
x More than one PRP	Endangered Species Act / Essential Fish Habitat issues	Explosives
AOC	Historic preservation issues	Residential impacts
UAO	NPL site	Relocation
DOJ involved	Remote location	Drinking water impacted
Criminal Investigation Division involved	Extreme weather or abnormal field season	Environmental justice
Tribal consultation or coordination or other issues	Congressional involvement	High media interest
Statutory Exemption for \$2 Million	Statutory Exemption for 1 Year	Active fire present
Hazmat Entry Conducted – Level A, B or C	Incident or Unified Command established	Actual air release (not threatened)

### Green Metrics

Metric	Amount	Units	Directions (Delete in report)
Diesel Fuel Used	Not Tracked	gallons	ERRS fuel use. If possible, can also include estimate of fuel used in trucking subcontracts - estimate via # loads over # miles.
Unleaded Fuel Used	Not Tracked	gallons	ERRS fuel use. Don't include GOV fuel - tracked elsewhere.
Alternative/E-85 Fuel Used	Not Tracked	gallons	ERRS fuel use. Don't include GOV fuel - tracked elsewhere.
Electricity from electric company	Not Tracked	kWh	Total used on site
Electric Company Name and Account #	Not Tracked		Helps us calculate sources of power and emissions
Electricity from sources other than the electric company	Not Tracked	kWh	Onsite energy generation (solar, wind, other)
Solid waste reused	Not Tracked	enter	Material reused onsite. Examples include reusing excavated material for fill, using flyash to treat for metals, using corn cob to dry waste. Feel free to add as many lines as necessary to capture your materials. Use units most applicable.

Material sent off site such as typical recyclables, as well as scrap metal, pallets for cogen, etc. Feel free to add as many lines as necessary to capture your materials. Use units most applicable.

Solid waste recycled

Not Tracked

enter

Water Used

Not Tracked

gallons