

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, May 30, 2008

From: David Andrews

Subject: Initial Pollution Report

Ecusta Mill Davidson River Release

1 Ecusta Road, Pisgah Forest, NC

Latitude: 35.2767000

Longitude: -82.7058000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	A4/AK
Reporting Period:	5/28/2008	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	5/28/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	5/28/2008	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	NCF003166675	Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

Ecusta Mill is a Superfund redevelopment site, formerly, paper mill, located near Pisgah Forest, Transylvania County, North Carolina. The Site borders the Davidson River, a locally important recreational stream and a tributary to the French Broad River.

On May 27, 2008 personnel at the Ecusta Superfund Site began routing black liquor from a storage tank through a process sewer to an onsite stabilization basin for treatment.

At approximately 11:30 hrs on May 28, 2008, Personnel On-site were notified by a third party of a sulfur odor and fish kill on the Davidson River. Investigation revealed that a portion of the waste released to the process sewer had entered a storm drain, flowed to an on-site drainage ditch, and discharged to the River. At approximately 13:30 hrs a temporary containment dam was constructed in the drainage ditch. This temporary structure was reinforced with an earthen dam at approximately 17:30 hrs. Afterward, contractors began pumping contaminated storm water from the ditch. Remedial Project Manager (RPM) Jennifer Wendel was notified.

Following consultation with the the RPM and the EPA R4 Duty Officer, Shaw Environmental (the technical consultant for the project) notified the National Response Center of a release of 2,200 gallons of black liquor. RPM Wendel traveled to Ecusta to evaluate the situation. On 5/29/2008, OSC David Andrews was deployed to provide assistance.

Operations are being directed under a Unified Command consisting of the EPA, NCDHEC Superfund and Water Quality, Fish and Wildlife Service, State Division of Health, the County of Transylvania, and Shaw Environmental.

Current Activities

During the reporting period the following additional findings and activities were reported by RPM Wendel: 1) Investigation revealed that the black liquor did not enter the Davidson River. Instead, it had flowed to the stabilization basin as intended; 2) In addition to the black liquor, a second waste stream, assumed at the time to be anthraquinone, was fed from a second tank to the process sewer and on to the stabilization basin. The reported intention was that the anthroquinone would work to enhance biological activity in the stabilization basin and thus facilitate more efficient treatment. Further, this material assumed to be anthraquinone did not appear to match the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the substance. It therefore has been designated as an unknown material and has been sampled to identify its composition; 3) This unknown material appears to have entered the storm drain through a compromised portion of the process sewer. An estimated 3,100 gallons were released to the drainage ditch. A portion of this volume entered the Davidson River; 4) The release has been stopped at the source and within the drainage ditch. Recovery of the material that entered the River is not feasible as it is water soluble; 5) No

water intakes are located on the Davidson or French Broad downstream of the release in area. The location of the nearest downstream intake is being investigated; 6) A significant fish and aquatic faunal kill has occurred over the one-half mile reach of the Davidson between the release point and the confluence with the French Broad; 7) Water quality sampling is being performed by the State Division of Water Quality.

Planned Removal Actions

Continue removal of product from the South Ditch and reinforce the dam(s) in the ditch. Redirect ALL site storm ditches to the WWT (clarifier).

Next Steps

Plan to dye-test the process drain to identify a suspected breach that, apparently, crossed into the storm drain/ditch.

Key Issues

Analytical is pending - Identify the "unknown" chemical that was released and how/why the process drain effluent entered into the storm-drainage system.

response.epa.gov/EcustaMill