

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Caribbean	Calendar Year:	2020
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A. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.	1/28-30/20	San Juan, PR	51	https://www.nrt.org/CRRTMay2020
2.	The CRRT did not hold any additional meetings in 2020 due to COVID-19.			
3.				

B. Activations / Notifications

	Dates: 12/2019 – 3/2020	Event: Puerto Rico Earthquakes	ACT	NOT
	Issue / Concern:	<p>Since the end of December 2019, several earthquakes struck off the southwest coast of Puerto Rico. The largest earthquake, recorded at 0424 AST, occurred approximately 8.4 miles west-southwest of Ponce on January 7, 2020 with a magnitude of M 6.4. Several additional seismic events continued to occur over the following weeks and months.</p> <p>EPA received an ESF#10 MA to conduct hazardous substance and oil assessments in coordination with PR DNER to ensure responder safety and to protect the impacted communities from potential environmental threats. EPA also received an MA for assessment of non-PRASA drinking water systems, and of septic systems that could impact non-PRASA drinking water supplies, in 14 municipalities.</p>		
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, USCG, DNER, FEMA, National Rural Water Association (NGO)		
1.	Decisions Made:	<p>Assessments of RMP, FRP and SPCC facilities were made via email, mail, and text. The PREPA Costa Sur Steam Plant had a spill from one of their large transformers into secondary containment, which was reported to the NRC. At the time of the assessment, the facility was not in operation, and the secondary containment structure that received the spill was observed to be cracked. EPA maintained contact with the facility to ensure appropriate measures were implemented. When assessment work was completed, 161 facilities had been contacted. While a few facilities reported loss of power and/or minor structural damage, the majority of the facilities reported no damage to facility infrastructure or secondary containment structures, and no releases of Oil or Hazardous Materials were observed during the assessments. EPA implemented a reassessment process following subsequent aftershocks of 4.0 magnitude or greater, for regulated facilities that fell within a 25-mile radius from the earthquake epicenter. Facilities were contacted on January 20 and 26, with no additional/new issues reported. On February 4 at 10:45am AST a 5.0 earthquake struck Guanica. A 4.0 earthquake followed in Guanica at 3:53pm AST. These events initiated a call down to a total of 31 regulated facilities within a 25-mile radius. Contact was made with 22 facilities via email, mail, and text. No additional damages were reported by those facilities.</p> <p>EPA coordinated with FEMA and Puerto Rico agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) represented in the Puerto Rico Water Coalition, in assessing the status of non-PRASA drinking water systems. EPA developed detailed cost estimates for non-PRASA systems that sustained earthquake related damage, and provided those reports to FEMA and commonwealth</p>		

		<p>representatives. EPA referred multiple communities to the National Rural Water Association (NRWA), an NGO that assists communities in developing the necessary documents to become eligible for FEMA Public Assistance. All EPA assessment personnel demobed on March 19.</p> <p>In March, all EPA personnel discontinued working from the FEMA JFO in response to COVID19 social distancing recommendations. EPA personnel worked remotely and remained in contact with FEMA JFO staff who were also predominantly working remotely.</p>			
	Dates: 7/30-8/14	Event: Tropical Storm Isaias	ACT	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	On July 30, 2020, Tropical Storm Isaias made landfall on the island of Puerto Rico with winds as high as 65 mph, dropping heavy rains on the island and causing moderate flooding, landslides and widespread power outages. On July 31, FEMA asked for EPA's assistance in the assessment of the island's approximately 240 non-PRASA facilities to determine their current operational status and immediate needs to provide safe drinking water to their communities.			
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, USDA/NRWA			
2.	Decisions Made:	EPA coordinated with the USDA/National Rural Water Association (USDA/NRWA) to conduct assessments of the non-PRASA facilities. Assessments were initially comprised of telephonic interviews of the non-PRASA system operators to determine operational status, and also included field visits where telephone contact was unsuccessful. In coordination with FEMA, EPA informed those communities on what was needed to request a backup generator or back-up water supply. EPA continued follow-up phone calls to systems that reported lack of power. A total of 27 non-PRASA systems had reported they were not providing drinking water due to power issues at the time of the initial contact. By August 14, EPA confirmed that there were no longer any systems which required assistance.			
	Dates: 10/19, on-going	Event: Krum Bay (Subbase) Oil Spill; St. Thomas, USVI	ACT	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	On-going oil discharge into Krum Bay			
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, DPNR, VIFS, VIPD, VITEMA, DPNR, WAPA, DPP			
3.	Decisions Made:	<p>As identified in the 2018 and 2019 annual reports, EPA opened the OSLTF in March 2018 due to concerns of an on-going discharge into Krum Bay on St. Thomas from an inland source within EPA's response jurisdiction. After numerous discussions with VI DPNR, EPA closed the FPN in December 2018 to allow DPNR to address the discharged oil and coordinate all spill response activities, with the understanding that if federal assistance was needed at a future date, a request could be submitted to open the FPN. On October 3, 2019, DPNR requested EPA's assistance in addressing the oil discharge into Krum Bay.</p> <p>EPA met with representatives from the Department of Property & Procurement (DPP) on March 3, 2020 to provide background information on the site and to discuss proposed site investigation activities. EPA plans to install 8 borings/test wells on properties owned by the Territory in the Sub Base area. If free product is observed in any of the boring locations, EPA will install a flush mounted temporary well point. VI DPP confirmed that all properties located in the proposed sampling area are owned by the USVI government and leased to the current tenants. EPA has received a signed access agreement to allow its investigation activities at the proposed locations. VI DPP will provide EPA with a secure location to store any investigation derived waste until disposal can be arranged.</p> <p>Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, work at the Krum Bay Oil Spill site has been put on hold. Once conditions allow, site investigation activities will be conducted to locate the source of oil contributing to the sheening conditions observed within Krum Bay, to determine extent of contamination, and to determine the type of mitigation required to address the subsurface oil. For</p>			

		the health and safety of EPA and contract personnel working on the investigation and removal activities in the Krum Bay area, EPA will conduct air monitoring at all three utility vaults at the Site. Once field activities can resume, the site investigation is anticipated to take 1-2 weeks to complete.			
		Additional information can be found at: https://response.epa.gov/KrumBayOilSpill			
4.	Dates:	11/27	Event:	Tugboat Cape Lookout	ACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NOT <input type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Sunken Vessel in St. Croix			
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA, NOAA, DOI, NFWS, NPS, and USVI DNR			
	Decisions Made:	Due to limited storage capacity on the island for oily water and lack of filtration systems (oily water separators) the FOSC sought trustee concurrence to decant contact water into containment. Allowing decanting prevented a delay in operations while the vessel was actively discharging into the environment. Two additional federal projects were opened for sister ships CAPT MAY and CAPE Flattery also co-located in Krause Lagoon.			

5	Dates:	12/24	Event:	Sinking of Tug Pro Assist III	ACT <input type="checkbox"/> NOT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Issue / Concern:	Sunken Vessel off SE Puerto Rico			
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA, NOAA, FWS, NMFS, PREMA, FURA			
	Decisions Made:	Tug boat PROASSIST III that sank night in the SE part of Puerto Rico with approximately 1200 gallons of diesel. Tug is still submerged and awaiting equipment availability and weather window. CRRT call to determine possible course of action for the disposal of the vessel and determine suitability for ocean dumping, article reef, or fish attracting device. Decision was made to salvage vessel and conduct shore side destruction of the wreck at first opportunity.			

C. RRT Exercises - No RRT exercises were conducted in 2020.

1.	Dates:		Event:	
	Agencies Involved:			
	Summary of exercise:			
2.	Dates:		Event:	
	Agencies Involved:			
	Summary of exercise:			

D. Changes in RRT Leadership

Agency	Outgoing Personnel	Incoming personnel
1) EPA Region 2	EPA Co-Chair Eric Mosher passed away on August 22, 2020.	Doug Kodama and Shawna Hoppe, serving details as Acting Branch Chief, were EPA RRT Co-Chairs.
2)		
3)		

E. Best Practices and Lessons Learned by the RRT (which may help other RRTs)

None during the period of this report.

F. Federal, State, and Local Planning and Coordination Efforts

Revisions to Appendix 7 of the RCP, "CRRT Best Management Practices for Oil Spill Response Operations," were posted on the CRRT website in April 2020.

Revisions to the RCP were posted on the CRRT website in October 2020.

An updated Appendix 6.2 of the RCP, "FWS and NMFS Endangered Species Act Emergency Consultation Form for PR/VI," was posted on the CRRT website in November 2020.

The Sector San Juan ACP was revised, in the new format developed by the NRT ACP working group, and submitted to the Coast Guard National Review Panel. The plan was approved on October 6th, 2020.

G. Challenges and Issues (and Operational Requirements Which May Require NRT Attention)

None for the period of this report.