

**Minutes of the
Upper Mississippi River
Hazardous Spills Coordination Group Meeting**

April 6-7, 1999

**Blackhawk Hotel
Davenport, Iowa**

Barb Naramore of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. on April 6, 1999. The following Spills Group members and observers were in attendance:

Jim O'Brien	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Dave Perry	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Mike Rose	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Jared Meese	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
John Grump	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Theresa Kauzlarich	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
Anthony Beatrez	U.S. Coast Guard
Mike Coffey	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Rock Island Field Office
Steve Faryan	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Ann Whelan	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
Scott Hayes	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Marc Callaghan	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Jason Maddox	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Larry Reed	Wisconsin Emergency Management
Gary Haden	Ecology and Environment, Inc.
Barb Naramore	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Selection of New UMR Spills Group Chair

Naramore expressed the Spills Group's profound appreciation for Ron Kozel's leadership and contributions over many years and welcomed Dave Perry as Iowa's new representative to the group. With Kozel having served as chair since the group's inception, Naramore noted that there was no particular precedent for selecting and rotating the Spills Group's leadership. In informal discussions with the state members of the group, Naramore said options ranging from rotating the chair every meeting to two-year terms had been identified. Jim O'Brien said he would favor a two-year term for the chair, noting that this would provide valuable continuity for the group. Group members concurred with O'Brien's suggestion and asked that he serve the first two-year term. O'Brien agreed and chaired the remainder of the meeting.

Minutes of the October Meeting

The minutes of the October 20-21, 1998 meeting were approved as written.

UMR Protection Strategies

Steve Faryan distributed a discussion paper he prepared regarding potential criteria for Upper Mississippi River (UMR) protection strategies. He reported that the Minneapolis/St. Paul Sub-Area Committee has initiated an effort to develop site-specific protection strategies. He said this sort of in-depth assessment would be beyond the means of the Spills Group to accomplish for the entire Upper Mississippi. However, Faryan emphasized that the Spills Group could identify some generic criteria and strategies, leaving more site-specific work to sub-area committees and other local groups.

Faryan noted that containment on a large river such as the UMR is a big challenge and that response options are often limited. Faryan said his draft criteria identify clear priorities, such as protecting water intakes, and also address the potential use of locks and dams to facilitate containment and collection. He cautioned that any such use of the locks and dams would require careful coordination between the Regional Response Team (RRT) and the Army Corps of Engineers. Ann Whelan reported that Bay West's contingency plans include using barges as a substitute for boom. She noted that the boom supply along the UMR is very limited and said response strategies that rely on booming will need to allow for this constraint and/or identify alternatives.

Given the spatial extent of the UMR, O'Brien suggested that a protection strategies effort should begin by assessing the sources of risk. Jason Maddox observed that riverine dynamics will limit response options in some places. Maddox said the Twin Cities effort is evaluating specific sites to identify such limitations. He recommended awaiting the results of the Twin Cities effort before attempting to employ the approach elsewhere.

Barb Naramore distributed maps developed by UMRBA staff that depict fixed facilities, pipelines, water intakes, and managed natural resource areas along the length of the UMR. As an example of an area of special concern, Whelan directed group members' attention to a pipeline that crosses the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. Naramore also distributed a larger scale series of maps that allows people to see more detail about the river in a particular area.

John Grump expressed interest in the possibility of establishing permanent anchor points near particularly sensitive areas. Grump said such an approach would enhance booming opportunities, but he cautioned that seasonal variability in sensitivity would make it difficult to determine where to establish anchor points. Faryan said he would be interested in discussing the possibility of permanent anchor points with resource managers. Maddox noted that the amount of boom required increases with the current. On a large river like the Upper Mississippi, Maddox said the challenge would not just be establishing anchor points but ensuring that there is sufficient boom available to mount an effective response. Anthony Beatrez concurred with Maddox, reporting that he had encountered significant difficulty deploying boom in currents as low as 2-3 knots. O'Brien observed that it is difficult to justify stockpiling boom if it is rarely used. He asked about the status of the Coast Guard equipment that was prepositioned in several areas along the river a few years ago. Beatrez said he would look into the location and condition of that equipment.

Maddox noted that fueling depots and similar riverside facilities can serve as good collection points. They provide good access for equipment such as vacuum trucks and are typically in relatively low velocity areas. O'Brien reported that several ferries operate on the Illinois portion of the river. He said the ferries could serve as excellent vessels to use in recovery operations, noting that a vacuum truck could be loaded on a ferry and moved to the collection area.

O'Brien suggested reviewing the response plans of regulated facilities and assessing the adequacy of those plans to protect downstream human and natural resources. If weaknesses are found, the facilities can be directed to address those problems. O'Brien said he would favor such an approach over a public agency-led effort to identify response strategies for specific sensitive areas. Whelan expressed skepticism that such an approach would work well with pipeline companies, given the nature of the plans that those companies have developed. She said O'Brien's suggestion could be pursued in combination with other efforts, such as assessing the potential use of locks and dams to facilitate containment and collection and the use of barges as an alternative to boom. Grump noted that using barges as boom is probably only a viable strategy near barge fleeting areas.

Whelan and O'Brien observed that the five-year update schedule for Oil Pollution Act (OPA) facility response plans (FRPs) provides an opportunity to address identified shortcomings in those plans. In response to a question from Grump, Faryan said EPA Region 5 would probably use a combination of on-scene coordinators (OSCs) and contractor support to review FRPs if the group elects to pursue this as part of a protection strategies effort. Whelan suggested also involving the sub-area committees where appropriate. Scott Hayes noted that the authority to review FRPs rests with EPA and that any review must be in accordance with regulations. According to Whelan, the regulations also direct EPA to share the plans with Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) and others. In response to a question from Whelan, Beatrez said that an effort to review OPA vessel response plans (VRPs) and encourage vessel operators to modify those plans as necessary would need to be coordinated through the Coast Guard headquarters, which reviews and approves VRPs.

After additional discussion, Spills Group members agreed to form a Protection Strategies Work Group, to be chaired by Steve Faryan and also to include Jason Maddox, Theresa Kauzlarich, Dave Perry, and Jim O'Brien. The work group was asked to review Faryan's draft criteria and develop a list of tasks for further work. Several potential tasks were identified, including:

- outreach to intake operators regarding preparedness and contingency plans;
- FRP and VRP review to assess the adequacy of those plans;
- exploring the possibility of using locks and dams to assist with spill containment and collection;
- consulting with resource managers regarding the potential to protect specific areas that are identified as having especially high environmental sensitivity; and
- various training options, including reviving the Spills Group's UMR training class or NOAA's riverine training course as well as developing training modeled on Minnesota's effort to provide local responders with both training and equipment.

Work group members agreed to provide the Spills Group with a summary of their activities and recommendations no later than October 1, 1999. This will facilitate action on those recommendations at the group's fall meeting. Spills Group members requested two presentations at their fall meeting — one from the Corps of Engineers on operation of the locks and dams and their potential use during a response and a second from Bay West on using barges as a substitute for boom.

In response to a question from Hayes, Naramore explained that the UMRBA is an organization formed by the five states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin to help coordinate the states' water resource-related policies and programs. Gubernatorial appointees represent the states and several federal agencies serve as advisory members of the Association. The UMRBA works with the states and with federal agencies on a wide range of river issues, including spill response planning, water quality, commercial navigation, floodplain management, and natural resource management. The Association has provided staff support to the UMR Hazardous Spills Coordination Group since the Spills Group's inception in 1989. The Spills Group includes representatives of the five UMR states as well as four federal agencies (i.e., EPA, CG, FWS, and COE). O'Brien explained that the UMR Spills Group developed and continues to maintain the *Upper Mississippi River Spill Response Plan and Resource Manual*. In addition, the group has offered training classes, participated in exercises, and developed UMR-specific policies on issues such as incident command and countermeasures.

Response Capabilities in the Region

Ann Whelan said she is increasingly concerned about regional response capabilities. As an example, Whelan cited a recent incident in Illinois involving a Shell facility near St. Louis. Product leaked from the bottom of a tank and reached the river, where a sheen was observed and reported to the state. Shell initially denied responsibility for the reported sheen. When the company did begin responding, its two initial contractors reportedly handled the response poorly and were replaced with another contractor. According to Whelan, it was 18 hours before any boom was deployed. She said this was particularly disappointing given the facility's proximity to a major metropolitan area. Jared Meese said approximately 50 barrels of product were spilled. He said the original contractors attempted to recover the product with vacuum trucks from the shore and observed that this effort was completely ineffective.

Whelan emphasized that the Shell incident is simply one of several factors contributing to her concern regarding the ability of contractors to respond quickly and effectively in this part of the country. She noted that equipment was slow to arrive and be deployed in recent incidents in western Minnesota and the St. Lawrence Seaway. Whelan said she understands there is only approximately 3,000 feet of boom in the Twin Cities metro area. Gary Haden said he has heard of firms being listed in plans as a facility's response contractor without the contractor's knowledge. He noted that designating response contractors is particularly difficult for vessel operators because of their mobility. Mike Rose observed that it is common in Minnesota for facility operators to list a response contractor that does not provide a full range of services. In the event of an incident, the facility operator then often elects not to use its identified contractor but instead seeks to hire one of the state's two full-service contractors. Faryan said these sorts of difficulties are precisely why the better prepared facility operators also develop their own in-house response capabilities.

Larry Reed asked whether facilities are required to have a response firm under contract. Whelan said facility operators are required to have a plan adequate to respond to the loss of their largest tank. If they do not have sufficient equipment and personnel on-site, then they must have a contract for response services. Hayes noted that these requirements only apply to OPA-regulated facilities. Smaller facilities are subject to less stringent requirements. Whelan said that there has been considerable consolidation among clean-up contractors. As a result, facility operators have fewer and fewer contractors from which to choose. O'Brien noted that the Shell facility in Illinois has 3,000 employees on site and was relying entirely on its contractors to respond to a 50-barrel spill. He said a facility of this size should have better in-house response capabilities.

Whelan said EPA Region 5 will be focusing on the response capabilities of facilities and contractors as it conducts its unannounced exercise program. She said Region 5 will likely develop a report addressing the issue based on its experience with the unannounced exercises. However, she asked Spills Group members to consider other ways in which the issue of regional response capabilities can be addressed. Beatriz suggested highlighting the issue at forums such as the Coast Guard's Marine Community Day and EPA's Inland Spills Conference. O'Brien asked about the possibility of an advisory letter to OPA-regulated facilities advising them of their preparedness obligations and the potential ramifications should their arrangements prove to be inadequate.

Hayes cautioned that FRPs must be considered as a group as well as individually. He said it is not uncommon for several facilities in an area to rely on the same contractor equipment and personnel. In the event of multiple incidents, such a system would clearly break down. Whelan agreed that this occurs, but said it is not clear what EPA can do to address the situation. Rose suggested that having several facilities in an area all relying on the same outside contractor may not demonstrate preparedness under OPA. Meese said that, if a contractor is listed repeatedly in various companies' plans, then it would seem reasonable to verify with the contractor whether it is realistic for them to serve all of the facilities effectively. If there appears to be a problem, then Meese suggested that would be the time to go back to the companies.

O'Brien recommended getting on the record with companies regarding any concerns or deficiencies that the agencies identify in facility plans. He said any such notices should be sent to a company's registered agent rather than to its plant manager. O'Brien and Hayes both said that the review of facility plans should not be limited to FRPs but should also include hazmat and Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) plans.

O'Brien suggested that the Protection Strategies Work Group take up the issue of regional response capabilities in its work. Potential tasks include notifying operators of deficiencies and preparing guidance for OSCs in their review of FRPs. Rose said all facilities should have at least some in-house response ability. Hayes and Whelan said Rose's suggestion has merit, but noted that the regulations do not require any in-house response capability. They said the regulations would have to be rewritten before such a requirement could be imposed. Whelan said the UMR Spills Group may want to consider writing a letter to the three OPA regulatory agencies (EPA, CG, and OPS) expressing concern regarding regional response capabilities. However, she suggested that the group document the basis of these concerns before sending

such a letter. Whelan recommended that the documentation include information culled from plans as well as information about incidents and exercises in which there were delays and/or failure to perform by facilities and contractors. Rose said the states could probably help provide such information. Members of the group agreed that it would be useful to review the FRPs filed with EPA as a first cut analysis. Hayes said Region 7 would probably need letters from Iowa and Missouri specifically asking for such an assessment. Whelan said she would provide the Spills Group with an analysis of what the FRPs on-file with Region 5 suggest about response capabilities by October 1, 1999. Hayes said he would attempt to meet this same target, contingent on approval of the effort by his management.

Emergency Response MOA between Wisconsin, EPA, and Coast Guard

John Grump explained that, pursuant to the "Home Rule" provisions in Wisconsin's constitution, local responders retain authority in emergency responses. Wisconsin, U.S. EPA, and U.S. Coast Guard executed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) in October 1998 that sets forth how local, state, and federal agencies will work together within the concept of Home Rule, while also maintaining consistency with applicable state and federal statutes. Grump said the MOA calls for establishing unified command when necessary. When unified command is not needed, the parties agree to rely on the incident command system (ICS).

In response to a question from Barb Naramore, Ann Whelan said the Wisconsin MOA is consistent with the UMR Spills Plan's provisions regarding ICS and the pre-designated federal on-scene coordinator (FOSC).

OPA-Related Issues

Barb Naramore reported that the Minneapolis/St. Paul Sub-Area Committee is currently working on several issues, including protection strategies and Natural Resources Damage Assessment (NRDA). A Twin Cities Protection Strategies Work Group completed a pilot field assessment of three sites in late March. The Work Group plans to evaluate sites on the Upper Mississippi between St. Paul and Hastings, Minnesota in June. Naramore explained that the group will review strategies that Bay West has developed for the area as a starting point for the assessment work. Jason Maddox said the Work Group plans to ground truth Bay West's identified containment and diversion sites and will use teams of people working from boats and from the shore. Naramore indicated that the Sub-Area Committee has not yet determined how to incorporate information about protection strategies into the Twin Cities plan and atlas.

Naramore reported that personnel from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been working to clarify how the agencies would coordinate NRDA in the event of a major incident in the Twin Cities. Ann Whelan noted that the Minneapolis/St. Paul Sub-Area Committee has also discussed the possibility of offering awareness training for responders regarding archeological resources. Naramore said the committee concluded that such training would not be well suited to local responders but felt that it might be quite useful for state and federal response personnel. She also noted that the Twin Cities Sub-Area's NRDA and archeological awareness work might well have statewide benefits in Minnesota.

Scott Hayes reported that the Quad Cities Sub-Area Committee met immediately prior to the Spills Group meeting. With the exception of some pending minor changes, the Quad Cities plan is final. Gary Haden explained that members of the Quad Cities Sub-Area Committee will receive the plan in copy-ready format and will be asked to duplicate and distribute the plan as they wish. Members of the Region 5 and 7 RRTs will receive digital copies of the plan. Haden said he anticipates that the Quad Cities Plan will be attached as an appendix to Region 7's Integrated Contingency Plan. In response to a question from Whelan, Hayes said that the Quad Cities Sub-Area Committee elected not to sign a MOA or other document formally executing the plan. Hayes also reported that the Quad Cities Sub-Area Committee is planning a tabletop exercise for the plan. A small design team will be developing the exercise, which is scheduled for August. Hayes suggested the possibility of holding a review session for the pending Quad Cities atlas in conjunction with the exercise design team's next meeting. Naramore said UMRBA staff would look into this, but noted the team's April 27 meeting might be a bit too soon, given the number of schedules that have to be coordinated.

Jared Meese reported that the Greater St. Louis Sub-Area Committee last met on March 29. At that meeting, the group discussed responsibility for responding to releases to the Mississippi. Under an existing harbor plan, the Coast Guard and the City of St. Louis Fire Department have agreed that the fire department will respond to a wide range of emergencies on the river, including releases of oil. EPA Region 7 and some of the other agencies were unaware of this agreement. Haden said he believes that EPA Region 7 is now comfortable with the harbor plan, particularly since the St. Louis Fire Department is currently the only entity able to respond immediately on the river in this area. Meese said the St. Louis Sub-Area Committee also discussed the possibility of mapping sewer outfalls and the related question of how to convey information about the service area of different sewer districts. According to Meese, the group concluded that mapping the outfalls would be a potentially enormous undertaking if both stormwater and treatment plant outfalls were included, with no clear benefit. Meese said the group's next meeting is scheduled for May 11.

Naramore reported that the draft maps for the Quad Cities and Chicago Sub-Areas are nearly complete. Once they have been duplicated, the UMRBA will initiate the map review process in these two sub-areas. Final maps for Pools 3-9 and the Open River are awaiting receipt of threatened and endangered species data from Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Missouri Department of Conservation, respectively. Whelan said issues with Wisconsin DNR have been resolved and said EPA Region 7 may already have the data from Missouri DOC. Naramore said the remaining portions of the Upper Mississippi River are almost done in draft form. Initiation of map review for these remaining sections of the river will depend largely on the availability of species data and the queue of work at the USGS's Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center, which generates the draft maps using spatial data provided by the UMRBA. Naramore said the Illinois River is the UMRBA's next mapping priority after the UMR.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned for the day at 5:30 p.m. The meeting reconvened at 8:45 a.m. on April 7, 1999.

Whelan announced that EPA Region 5 is continuing with its unannounced exercise program. Region 5 plans to conduct two exercises per state in each of its six states. Exercises have already been held in Illinois and Indiana. Once Region 5 selects an area, it provides all

candidate companies in the area with a 30-day notice that they may be subject to an unannounced exercise during a specified week. Whelan explained that this general notice both avoids schedule conflicts with key personnel at the selected facilities and enhances readiness at all the candidate facilities. The exercises are limited to four hours and involve an average most probable, not a worst case, discharge.

Whelan reported that an asphalt plant and a Marathon storage facility were selected for the unannounced exercises in Indiana. She said both companies did a good job, but noted that Marathon relies entirely on a response contractor and the contractor did not deploy boom within the required one hour. Region 5 has directed Marathon to address this issue. One of the exercises in Illinois involved a Mobile facility and Whelan described the response there as very comprehensive. The second unannounced exercise was to take place in Peoria, but Region 5 staff found that three candidate facilities in the area were either closed or had no product on site. Whelan said this points to a significant issue for EPA — i.e., how to track and regulate facilities that are closed but not permanently shutdown. She noted that mothballed facilities can be reactivated quite quickly and said there are increased risks associated with such reactivation because equipment can deteriorate quite rapidly in a closed facility.

In response to a question from Maddox, Whelan said that EPA does not plan to issue hazardous materials regulations under OPA. Nor will EPA include hazmat facilities in its OPA exercise program. Whelan said EPA's position is that hazmat regulation is adequately addressed under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act and the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act. Maddox said he has seen significant lack of preparedness among hazmat facilities, including plant officials who do not know what materials they have on site. Whelan said there are other regulations and programs to address such problems.

In response to a question from Dave Perry, Scott Hayes said EPA Region 7 is not conducting unannounced exercises, noting that the unannounced exercise program is unique to Region 5. Whelan said Michigan and Ohio are next on Region 5's unannounced exercise schedule. Minnesota and Wisconsin are scheduled for June and September, respectively. Whelan said Coast Guard and state representatives are invited to attend the unannounced exercises.

UMR Spills Plan

Barb Naramore said pending updates to the UMR Plan include incorporating the bioremediation language approved at the October 1998 Spills Group meeting. In addition, Naramore said Theresa Kauzlarich has informed her that one of the water intakes associated with Lock and Dam 15 is not reflected in the UMR Plan. Naramore said no other Spills Group members have provided updates. Jim O'Brien asked whether the UMR Plan should be amended to include reference to the recently completed Quad Cities Sub-Area Plan. Naramore explained that the UMR Plan does not currently address the issue of sub-area planning and asked group members whether they would like to change that. O'Brien suggested that the on-line version of the UMR Plan could include links to related plans. After some discussion, it was agreed to add a new appendix to the UMR Plan that will identify and briefly describe the sub-area plans. Naramore agreed to draft such an appendix and distribute it to Spills Group members for their review. Assuming that there is general agreement on the draft, Naramore

said she would make any necessary revisions and include it with the next set of plan updates, rather than awaiting approval at the Spills Group's next meeting.

Naramore recounted Ann Whelan's suggestion from the previous Spills Group meeting that systemic maps be developed for the UMR Plan using data collected as part of the OPA mapping effort. Naramore said UMRBA staff has explored options for such maps and has determined that there are significant tradeoffs involving scale, level of detail, labeling of individual features, use of color, and ease of interpretation. She expressed her assumption that any maps developed for the UMR Plan would need to be reproducible in black and white and would need to be of such a scale that the entire river corridor could be covered in a reasonable number of maps. She distributed some draft maps from UMRBA staff that reflect these assumptions and invited questions and comments.

Naramore said the basic issue from her perspective was whether a systemic map series would be sufficiently useful, given the constraints and given that the full color OPA maps will be available in both digital and hardcopy form. Several Spills Group members said black and white maps would be much more reproducible, and thus more accessible for first responders. Steve Faryan said black and white maps, in combination with the resource manual portion of the UMR Plan, would be very useful to first responders. He advocated an effort to get these materials to first responders on the river.

After further discussion, Spills Group members expressed a desire to have a series of river corridor maps in the UMR Plan. They agreed that the maps should be black and white and should be of such a scale that the UMR can be covered in approximately 30-40 maps. Naramore suggested a variable map scale, explaining that the scale could be adjusted to preserve map clarity in areas with many features, while treating river stretches with fewer features as efficiently as possible. River mile indicators and a scale bar would clearly indicate the scale to users. Group members agreed that a variable scale seems to offer the best balance between efficiency and map clarity. Recognizing that it will not be possible to label all mapped features, the Spills Group placed priority on labeling the following features:

- water intakes
- pipelines
- locks and dams
- river miles
- major roadways

The group said they would also like the following features on the maps, but said these features would not need to be individually labeled:

- marinas and access points
- fixed facilities
- managed areas

Naramore said UMRBA staff would refine the prototype maps based on the group's discussion and distribute revised maps for review and comment. It was agreed to hold the other UMR Plan updates until a decision is made regarding the river corridor maps.

Exercise/Training Issues

John Grump and Barb Naramore noted that the Spills Group decided at its October meeting to pursue a joint exercise with the Tri-State Hazmat Group. Naramore recalled that the Spills Group had expressed particular interest in exercising the UMR Plan's incident command and countermeasures provisions. Grump said a joint exercise could build nicely on the Tri-State Group's previous exercises.

Larry Reed explained that Tri-State's goals include working effectively across the river and other political boundaries and building working relationships between local responders and state and federal agencies. The group has also focused on involving local elected officials so that they understand what is involved in a response. Reed said Tri-State has done training and exercises using existing all-hazards plans, but has not developed a plan for river spills. He noted that the UMR Plan addresses issues such as remediation and clean-up and said Tri-State has focused exclusively on the emergency response phase to-date. Reed said he would like to develop an exercise that familiarizes local responders with the later phases of response. He suggested that it might be helpful to precede any joint exercise with some training to acquaint first responders with the UMR Plan.

Reed urged the Spills Group to distribute the UMR Plan more broadly, noting that it includes information that would be quite useful to local responders. O'Brien expressed hope that the Internet will ultimately be an effective means to broaden distribution of the UMR Plan. Reed noted that the states' emergency management agencies are not signatory to the UMR Plan. He observed that any response to a river spill in Wisconsin would be coordinated among multiple state agencies. Reed reported that Wisconsin is currently negotiating with the La Crosse Fire Department to have them serve as a state Level A Hazmat Team. La Crosse would be Wisconsin's first Level A Team located on the river.

Reed noted that Tri-State has sponsored several training classes, including sessions focusing on barges, tank cars, incident command, and boom deployment. He said the Tri-State Steering Committee will meet at the end of April to plan the group's activities for the next 12 months. Reed explained that the full Tri-State Group typically meets twice per year, usually in conjunction with a training class or exercise. Because many members are volunteer firefighters, these activities are typically held on evenings and weekends.

Mike Rose observed that the Tri-State Group emerged from local officials' concern regarding their preparedness to respond to a multi-jurisdictional incident on the river. Rose said the level of interest among county emergency directors has been mixed, but said the group as a whole has been quite successful. Rose said internal preparedness at the state level is also essential and noted that some state responders are not aware of the UMR Plan.

Reed said Tri-State has focused on key response phase issues, including mutual aid across the river and the transition from incident command to unified command. Reed said he would report back to the Spills Group after the April Tri-State meeting regarding Tri-State's plans for the next year and potential opportunities for joint efforts. Rose said he would represent the Spills Group at Tri-State's April Steering Committee meeting and would also report back

regarding possible activities. Reed announced that Iowa will likely be assuming the role of Tri-State Chair.

In response to a question from O'Brien, Gary Haden said the Quad Cities Sub-Area Committee is planning a tabletop exercise for this August. The committee would also like to do functional and full scale exercises sometime after that. Scott Hayes said the committee has identified 12 different agency players for the tabletop.

Agency Updates

Mike Rose reported that there have been no large incidents in Minnesota recently. He noted that MPCA is responding to more methamphetamine sites, working with the Drug Enforcement Administration and EPA on recovery and disposal. Rose said complaints about feedlots and related odors are also on the rise.

John Grump said there have been several spills resulting from truck accidents, but no major incidents in Wisconsin. Grump described a mercury contamination incident in Green Bay that resulted after a high school student stole mercury from a school chemistry lab. A bowling alley and several homes were contaminated. In response to a question from Rose, Grump said it remains to be determined how responsibility for the clean-up costs will be allocated. Grump said the school will be responsible for a portion of the costs. Wisconsin is currently conducting an outreach campaign to educate people about the dangers of mercury.

Dave Perry reported that Iowa DNR fields an average of 800 spills calls per year. Most of these incidents are vehicle-related, followed by spills at fixed facilities. Many of the spills in Iowa involve farm chemicals. There are three people in Iowa DNR's central office emergency response unit. These staffers receive the notification calls, provide technical assistance, and notify the appropriate field office staff. The field office staff determine whether to respond to a particular report. Perry said he joined the central office emergency response unit a couple of months ago and said he will make certain that the two field offices on the Mississippi River and the state's emergency response managers are familiar with the UMR Spills Plan.

Jim O'Brien said there were 3,200 incidents in Illinois last year, up from 2,500 the previous year. The biggest increase was in incidents involving leaking underground tanks. O'Brien said there have been no significant spills recently involving the Mississippi River in Illinois, other than the previously discussed spill at the Shell facility. There were two pipeline breaks in Will and Kankakee Counties, both of which involved refined products. O'Brien also described two recent railroad incidents, one in which derailed Amtrak passenger cars collided with a hazmat car on a siding. In the other rail incident, two trains collided, rupturing the fuel tanks on three of the four engines involved. The spilled fuel reached a creek that is tributary to the Kankakee River. Boom was deployed in the creek and recovery operations there were fairly successful. O'Brien said there is still saturated soil remaining to be cleaned up.

Jared Meese reported on a chlorine release at a packaging plant in Festus. A one-ton cylinder of chlorine was dropped while being loaded on a truck and ruptured. Several hundred people were evacuated from the area. Meese observed that this facility is a major chlorine handler, with as many as four chlorine-containing rail cars on site at any given time, but has very little by way of monitoring or alarm equipment. He said that this incident was handled well, noting

that the evacuation proceeded quickly. Meese also reported that Missouri is suing the Missouri Farmers Association (MFA), a coop that provides petroleum products to farmers and others in rural areas. The adequacy of secondary containment at MFA facilities is at issue in the suit. Meese said releases from above ground storage tanks have escaped secondary containment at more than one MFA site. Spills from one facility have contaminated a local sewer system multiple times. Meese said MFA officials have agreed to discuss a possible settlement with the state.

Steve Faryan reported that EPA Region 5 staff have been involved in many responses recently, including some of the pipeline and rail incidents described by O'Brien. Faryan said there was a large plastics fire on the Ohio River in Indiana. Odors from the fire were detected 300 miles away and the fire took three or four days to put out. Faryan said there were run-off problems from the site, requiring the closure of at least one water intake. The city of Mount Vernon, Indiana was evacuated. According to Faryan, counter-terrorism training and sediment remediation are among Region 5's other major activities at present. Ann Whelan said Region 5 is continuing its efforts with the Fish and Wildlife Service to address problem oil pits (POPs). Whelan said the Service identifies POPs from the air and nets the sites where feasible to exclude waterfowl. EPA focuses its clean-up efforts on POPs that threaten navigable waters. Scott Hayes said EPA Region 7 generally addresses problem oil pits through its water program, using the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and other authorities. O'Brien noted that, with the depletion of old fields and the low world oil prices, significant numbers of oil production sites have been abandoned in Illinois. The Illinois DNR regulates oil and gas production in the state and assesses fees on production. The state has been using revenue from these fees as well as money from OPA to clean up some of the worst open pits in the state.

Hayes reported that EPA Region 7 has been responding to many mercury incidents. In follow-up to Meese's earlier comment, Hayes said Region 7 has responded to five or six incidents involving the Missouri Farmers Association. Region 7 is working with the MFA on its compliance with SPCC regulations. Hayes said secondary containment at some MFA facilities consists of concrete walls and gravel bottoms, a system he characterized as clearly ineffective. Other recent incidents in Region 7 include a train derailment in Nebraska that resulted in 120,000 gallons of diesel fuel reaching the soil. In another incident, product from a pipeline break in Kansas reached the Verdigris River. The river was at flood stage and response was not possible. However, the river flows to a reservoir in Oklahoma, where some recovery was accomplished. In an effort to promote better compliance, Region 7 is now offering facilities the option of paying a fine on-the-spot for certain violations discovered during SPCC inspections. To qualify for this option, the violation must be easily correctable within 30 days. Hayes said that EPA Region 6 has used this approach quite successfully. Hayes also noted that Region 7 has also been involved with two recent removal projects on the Mississippi River, one involving Great Lakes Container in St. Louis and the other involving a wetland area in the Quad Cities that was contaminated with lead shot.

Jason Maddox reported that the Great Lakes shipping season has opened and said that he is currently consulting on two vessel groundings. Maddox said he has also been working on response to a Colonial Pipeline spill that involved release of 80,000 gallons of #2 diesel to the Tennessee River.

Tony Beatrez said the Coast Guard has responded to several minor spills on the Mississippi River, including a tow grounding in the Quad Cities area that had the potential to release 3,000 gallons of fuel. The grounding ruptured the tow's bottom and some fuel was released. The spilled fuel was deflected and recovered in a casino boat's docking area. Beatrez also reported that temporary repairs filed twice while the damaged tow was enroute to St. Louis for permanent repairs.

Gary Haden reported that a state-sponsored mercury collection effort in Kansas yielded one ton of mercury. The mercury was recycled and fully offset the costs of the collection effort. Meese noted that Missouri has an on-going mercury collection program. State OSCs collect mercury from residents and transport it to Jefferson City for recycling. Meese said the state recovers its costs from the recycler. He noted that the state does not accept mercury from industry through this program.

Other Business

The Spills Group scheduled its next meeting for October 19-20, 1999 in the Quad Cities.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:10 a.m.