

# UMR Hazardous Spills Coordination Group

Fall Meeting: December 12, 2024 (Virtual)

Tony Falconio welcomed participants and began introductions.

## Agency and Partner Updates

### Illinois

Tony Falconio said that Illinois EPA held its first annual in-service training at Carlisle Lake, a three-day event to practice responding to a marina fire. USEPA and IEPA hosted and had 56 participants for a tabletop exercise. The exercise was followed by a boom deployment exercise on the water. Illinois EPA hopes to hold an annual training of this sort.

### Missouri

Rick Gann reported that Missouri DNR have staff stability with a full team stationed in Saint Louis as of next week. There have not been many incidents on the Mississippi River, but there were several on the east side of the state. Flash flooding in the Saint Louis area went through industrial zones and floated many containers. Missouri DNR had to identify owners and get them to recover the lost containers. The state's largest lithium battery recycling facility, near Fredericktown in Madison County, caught fire. A foaming system in the building failed because of the initial explosion. The resulting firefight used 800,000 gallons of water, creating contaminated runoff concerns. In late July, the DNR received reports of illegal containers being dumped in Jefferson County that impacted an unsecured drinking water well. A criminal investigation resulted in search warrants and the identification of those who dumped the chemicals. Legal cases are underway.

### Iowa

Kurt Levetzow said Iowa DNR took part in a response exercise in UMR Pool 14 on October 2. Participants used boats from Clinton County Sheriff and City of Clinton Fire Department to visit response sites along the river. The agency has seen no major manure spills impacting the river or its tributaries this fall. Levetzow added that there have been no major spills anywhere in the counties along the river. Staffing is good. DNR staff attended the Wapello County Hazmat Symposium. One Fire Department presented on fighting electric vehicle fires and Levetzow said it was remarkable how much water is used to cool the fire source. There is a significant runoff problem to manage in these situations. Staff will soon have a follow-up demonstration to learn how to disengage batteries in an electric car.

### Wisconsin

Jayson Schrank said Wisconsin DNR has few updates to report. The agency has seen no significant releases to the river in recent months. Due to flash freeze weather, there have been some fish kills. Investigations confirmed they were not pollution-related. In November, staff helped USEPA with site assessments.

## Minnesota

Dorene Fier-Tucker reported that Minnesota PCA had two spill incidents on the Mississippi River with small volumes, but the resulting response work was extensive. In August, a mystery oil spill in Anoka County was reported at the State Highway 610 bridge. An extensive oil sheen was seen spreading from bank to bank. It took time to investigate the source and test the product. As a precaution, the Minneapolis and Saint Paul water intakes shut down. The spill turned out to be a food-grade oil that came from the Coon Rapids Dam. There was no recovery of oil. MPCA learned some lessons about how the agency dealt with the scenario. There was also a Lake Pepin houseboat sinking. Normally MPCA doesn't deal with these, but this houseboat had 300 gallons of gasoline on board. The boat was lightered and the fuel tanks pumped off. It gave the agency a good lesson on roles and responsibilities.

MPCA has added new responders, including Carly McGinty, who will replace Mike Rose upon his retirement at the end of January 2025. The agency is also hiring a responder for the Detroit Lakes office. Staff are busy with the expansion of the new Preparedness Unit. Many of the Unit's duties were within the Emergency Response Group but were secondary to response duties. MPCA will begin strategic planning for the two programs soon. The agency is also working with USEPA to bring an air monitoring and sampling class for Hazmat Teams and emergency responders.

Colin Heintzeman added that MPCA is expanding capabilities and focusing on preparedness and is backfilling the all-hazard planning position now. Hiring compliance inspectors will be next. The agency will then add a training and exercise coordinator for internal work. Heintzeman expects staff to be working at full capacity early in 2025.

## USEPA Region 5

Andy Maguire said that the last half year has seen many retirements of OSCs and management at USEPA Region 5, including Response Chief Jason El-Zein, who retires this month. Kevin Turner has retired after many years working in southern Illinois, Saint Louis, and the Quad Cities. Steve Renninger retired from his post in Cincinnati. The agency has hired four new OSCs in Chicago and is interviewing for open positions in the Region's eastern states. Maguire noted that USEPA made a slight change to which staff will follow up on NRC calls. Agency posture and process will be the same but new people may reach out to states for notifications. There have been no noteworthy responses along the river. Maguire said there are many ongoing asbestos site remediations around the Region. Many mercury sites are also active.

Barbi Lee shared information about a free webinar on December 16 about the Goo Smoke Shop fire in Michigan. Anyone interested must register to attend the webinar. Lee added that a Worst-Case Discharge Analysis has been done for Region 5 counties that are not within a planning sub-area. The vulnerability and hazard evaluation for those counties includes pipelines, railroads, and highways. It considers water intakes, boat ramps, and more as sensitive receptors. Lee said the next RRT5 meeting will be held on April 15-16, 2025, in Columbus, OH.

Barbi Lee said USEPA Region 5 held a mercury and lithium battery response symposium. Presentations are now available on the RRT5 website.

David Morrison explained that in UMR Pool 3, containment and collection from the banks is not possible. This group has talked about developing a barge-based response, but we would still need to exercise the strategy. Morrison has asked for funding to support a barge set on-water recovery demo but to no avail thus far. He asked participants to consider this type of response and let him know if their organizations would be interested in supporting a training.

#### USEPA Region 7

Joe Krauska said USEPA Region 7 supported response to the lithium battery recycling fire mentioned by Rick Gann. The event proved to be good experience for newer OSCs to set up ICS and connect with other responders. USEPA Region 7 is planning a joint exercise with DOI to include a tabletop discussion and an on-site workshop for a pipeline release around sensitive UMR habitats. There is a tentative early April target date for the exercise. OSCs recently attended a Waste Treatment Transportation and Disposal training to learn how to manage waste on-site and how to characterize and transport waste as hazmat.

Joe Davis added that he recently sent an NRC report through listserv and asked if others received the message. Some participants said they had not, so Mark Ellis will update the membership list. Davis noted the change in Quad Cities Sub-area planning with Kevin Turner's retirement. The agency has hired many new OSCs in recent years and has been getting staff involved in activities along the UMR. An ICS Incident Management Team exercise was held last month and brought together leadership and folks from the USEPA Division of Waters. Division of Waters staff often deploy to the same incidents that we do because they have a drinking water component under ESF 3 that falls outside of CERCLA. Teams clarified roles within ICS and talked through an earthquake scenario. The agency plans to hold a functional exercise later in 2025 to simulate data collection and making IAPs and a Situation Manual.

USEPA Region 7 has been busy with hazmat responses, including a site where large quantities of pesticide waste were abandoned at a facility in the Missouri River floodplain near Saint Joseph, MO. The agency has disposed of 300 tons of granular pesticides and over 5,000 drums that were drained, cleaned, and recycled. The cleanup resulted in 330,000 gallons of contaminated water, totes, and listed hazardous waste. Davis expects the cleanup to be done within several weeks. He added that the agency has also had to clean up several mercury and explosives sites.

Joe Krauska added that the Greater Saint Louis Sub-area is updating its plan. The published version will be ready by the end of this month.

Joe Davis said the Quad Cities Sub-area Plan was updated in June 2024.

#### USFWS

Aleshia Kenney reported that USFWS attended the October RRT5 meeting. USFWS has been assessing damage from the Missouri lithium battery fire mentioned earlier. Staff are working with the state to assess damages from the resulting fish and aquatic life kill in the adjacent creek.

#### USCG

Shannon Young said USCG MSD Saint Paul has only seen one spill since July, a 10-15 gallon diesel spill from the overflow of a heater. The Detachment held a joint GIUE with USEPA. MSD Saint Paul

had two pollution responders transfer out this summer; the office has two remaining. Young would like to be more involved in upcoming exercises with DOI and USEPA.

#### Industry Partners – CAER Groups

Matt Stokes said the Mississippi River CAER groups held a November 12<sup>th</sup> meeting online with Levi Brown, Minnesota Department of Transportation's Tribal Coordinator. The groups are organizing a 2025 Quarter 1 joint meeting with Wakota CAER and Red Wing CAER; Bill Kurtz of BIA will talk about building relationships with Tribes and how to find culturally sensitive information. Dubuque CAER and Quad Cities CAER are looking for more ideas about how to keep the work fresh. Members must do equipment deployments to meet requirements, so tying topics to requirements will help. Stokes welcomes any ideas for speakers.

Bill Lazarz said that Wakota CAER will hold ice response training at Lake Rebecca in Hastings on February 11, 2025. He added that CAER groups provide training opportunities for anyone; reach out for more information if you are interested. Wakota CAER will hold its January luncheon meeting at Tanucci's in Newport, MN on January 15, 2025.

#### Environmental Restoration, LLC

Robert Hite said Environmental Restoration has had no river incidents lately. The company services Mike's Marine in Alton, IL for overwater transfers and is the only permit holder in the area. Staff are keeping up with OSRO certifications. Paul Doherty led the OSRO program but has stepped back. Dan Wheeler, formerly with USCG, will now oversee this program nationwide. Hite said he would like to meet the new Missouri DNR OSCs. ER has also supported mercury spill response at several sites this year.

#### American Water

Erica Pauken of American Water asked for more information about the CAER groups. She is the new Director of Source Water Protection for the company. American Water has developed a standard department to function nationally and is hiring staff to cover Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri. Pauken noted a cyanotoxin harmful algal bloom (HAB) event in August upon detection of microcystins in the Mississippi River in Illinois and Iowa. Both state teams responded to the HAB detection from August to October. The company wants to reduce risks to water supplies, so it is heavily involved with Incident Management Teams.

#### BNSF Railway

Paul Hester of BNSF commends the notification connections of this group. He has had people call about response resources and it is nice to have a good sense of what is going on up and down the river. BNSF has exposure along the river, as does CPKC Railway; the two share a GRP for the area for a unified approach to response. BNSF has a Facility Response Plan for the Fridley, MN yard; the railroad works with Minneapolis Water Works and tests boom deployments nearby.

#### Xcel Energy

Hollie Hennagir told about the Xcel Rapidan hydroelectric dam failure in southern Minnesota that was due to heavy rains. Xcel was able to recover equipment lost from the power station. However,

they were unable to find one Xcel transformer and one county-owned transformer. Staff are using sonar to find the lost equipment.

## **Planning Updates**

### RRT5

Barbi Lee noted that USEPA Region 5 is due to update the regional contingency plan. She will send out plan material to review.

Mark Ellis said the Inland Sensitivity Atlas (ISA) data provided by USEPA Region 5 now includes jurisdictional boundaries. UMRBA has attempted to depict the conditional USCG jurisdiction with a navigation channel polygon. Ellis noted that this is an imperfect representation and welcomes any ideas for how this could better be done with geographic data. Increased staffing over the last year has led to more frequent ISA updates. Now all data for Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are less than two years old.

### Great Rivers Sub-area

Nick Goeke gave an overview of the Great Rivers Sub-area geography. Tetra Tech is working on river reconnaissance data to fold into the response plan. Staff are making two-page summaries for each GRP. Data will also be put into the UMR Map Viewer. Next year, Tetra Tech will work with USEPA Region 7 OSC Shannon Kennedy to hold a coordinated oil spill response training with the Greater Saint Louis Sub-area.

### Minneapolis/St. Paul Sub-area

David Morrison said the Twin Cities Sub-area committee is working to keep the IAP current. Morrison is hosting the next sub-area planning meeting on Tuesday, December 17 in Saint Paul. Topics include sub-area expansion, using Survey123, and data management.

### Quad Cities Sub-area

Joe Davis said the Quad Cities Sub-area Plan was updated in August; this was mostly hyperlinks and contacts. Tables listing river features have been replaced with a link to the USEPA Region 7 Mississippi River Viewer. Mark Ellis added that crews were able to get out on the river twice this year to update or verify response strategies in the sub-area. CPKC Railway supported the work on Pool 15. Work on Pool 14 was led by Clinton County, IA, as mentioned earlier by Kurt Levetzow.

## **Illinois Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS)**

Darin Beckman presented an overview of the Illinois Mutual Aid Box Alarm System (MABAS). In 1968 a Fire Captain in Elk Grove decided there must be a better way to support mutual aid and made box cards for this. Over 30 years this grew to be a statewide practice, so the system formed divisions to organize. In 2000, MABAS signed an intergovernmental agreement with the State of Illinois to become the state fire department. It now has 69 divisions, each with an executive board that meets monthly or quarterly. Of 1,100 fire agencies in the state, only 30 are not members. After 2001, funding became available through FEMA grants. MABAS collects dues but the grants helped buy trucks and equipment and pay for overtime work and training.

MABAS now has 31 hazmat teams, with many in the greater Chicago area. There are also 29 Tactical Response Teams, 16 water rescue teams with dive and sonar capabilities, and two swift water rescue teams in the Chicago area. The MABAS main office is in Wheeling, where Illinois Task Force 1 is based. MABAS also has medical staff, canine handlers, and structural engineers. Any team can be deployed statewide or out of state and have a minimum of 20 staff on roster. A deployment is ten people with an equipment cache. All staff received training through the Illinois Fire Service Institute. Several departments are combination career and volunteer-based departments. Equipment is strategically placed around the state. All have generators, a shelter tent, Polaris UTV, decontamination trucks with inside showers and 200 gallons of water. These need a water source and catchment for runoff and can reach any site within Illinois within a 1.5-hour drive.

To deploy in-state, each division has a primary dispatch center. Most assets can be requested through dispatch. For larger assets or scope beyond one site's capacity, the MABAS dispatch center can mobilize more units. At the Rockford explosion, dispatch pulled in several departments from northern Illinois for on-scene assistance. This was also done for the Morris, IL lithium ion battery fire. Beckman said that for out of state deployments, we are still learning the process. MABAS recently sent two swift water rescue teams to North Carolina from an EMAC request. This was a seven-day deployment with a one-week extension. During demobilization the next hurricane hit. MABAS assembled three strike teams and sent 68 staff to Florida to support the local response. They stayed two days before demobilizing.

Answering a question, Beckman said that any MABAS mobilization can be triggered simply by calling county dispatch. Out-of-state requests may require some additional contacts within MABAS but can be started the same way.

### **Barge-Based Response**

Mark Ellis updated the group on progress toward developing a barge-based response tactic. Tow operators were reluctant to engage in talks about using work barges to move response equipment to on-water recovery sites. David Morrison reminded the group about the full barge sets owned and deployed by National Response Corp., as shared at the May 2024 meeting. Ellis will continue to reach out to operators to see if we can develop a strategy with their assistance.

### **Next Meeting**

For the spring 2025 meeting, a suggestion of the week of April 21 was tentatively well-received. Mark Ellis will send meeting notes and share a schedule poll to choose a date.

*Attendees:*

Tony Falconio	Illinois EPA
Kurt Levetzow	Iowa DNR
Dorene Fier-Tucker	Minnesota PCA
Colin Heintzeman	Minnesota PCA
Rick Gann	Missouri DNR
Maizie Reif	Wisconsin DNR
Jayson Schrank	Wisconsin DNR
Lisa Olson-McDonald	Wisconsin Emergency Management
Patrick Chamberlain	USCG MSD Duluth
Shannon Young	USCG MSD St. Paul
Barbi Lee	USEPA Region 5
Andy Maguire	USEPA Region 5
David Morrison	USEPA Region 5
Carol Ropski	USEPA Region 5
Joe Davis	USEPA Region 7
Joe Krauska	USEPA Region 7
Reena Bowman	USFWS
Ed Karecki	USFWS
Aleshia Kenney	USFWS
Jesse Doty	Rock Island County Sheriff
Erica Pauken	American Water
Paul Hester	BNSF Railway
KC Sullivan	BP Pipelines
Robert Hite	Environmental Restoration, LLC
Dan Wheeler	Environmental Restoration, LLC
Matt Witzel	Pinnacle Engineering
Matt Stokes	Safety Training and Response Strategies
Nick Goeke	Tetra Tech
Bill Lazarz	WCEC
Mark Gerlach	Xcel Energy
Hollie Hennagir	Xcel Energy