

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Caribbean	Calendar Year:	2019
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A. Annual Meetings

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.	5/14-16/19	Caguas, PR	65	https://www.nrt.org/CRRTMay2019
2.	The Fall/Winter CRRT meeting was moved to January 2020 due to travel budget considerations and scheduling conflicts.			
3.				

B. Activations / Notifications

1.	Dates:	5/10-19/19	Event:	Landfill Fire, Island of Vieques, PR	ACT	NOT
	Issue / Concern:	Smoke from landfill fire containing potentially hazardous materials impacting local community.				
	Agencies Involved:	PR EQB, EPA, US FWS, PREMA, PR FD, PRASA				
	Decisions Made:	<p>On May 10, 2019, a fire started at the Vieques Landfill. The fire, believed to be arson, started in a staging area created for debris from Hurricane Maria that contained cars, white goods, propane tanks, possibly low-grade military munitions, and other scrap metal. There is very limited firefighting equipment on Vieques and the ferry from San Juan is no longer operating, so inter-island logistics hindered the deployment of additional assets. The EPA Region 2 REOC received numerous phone complaints from residents impacted by the smoke and fumes, with complaints of headaches, difficulty breathing, and runny eyes.</p> <p>On May 14, 2019, PREQB requested EPA assistance with air monitoring within the vicinity of the plume and the impacted neighborhood. An EPA OSC, ERT and SERAS contractor support staff arrived in Vieques on 5/16 to provide air monitoring and sampling support to evaluate potential impacts to the community. The air monitoring data was provided to the landfill operator responsible for breaking apart the piles and extinguishing the fire. EPA personnel and contractors demobilized on May 19, 2019, after the fire was controlled and the air sampling was concluded. Sampling data generated by ERT and a summary of the results were provided to EQB.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://response.epa.gov/viequeslandfill</p>				
2.	Dates:	6/19, on-going	Event:	Anguilla Landfill Hazardous Waste Clean Up	ACT	NOT
	Issue / Concern:	Unsecured waste oil and hazardous materials storage at St. Croix landfill.				
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, DPNR, VI WMA				
	Decisions Made:	<p>The Anguilla landfill on St. Croix, operated by the Virgin Islands Waste Management Authority (VIWMA), has experienced multiple fires over the past several years, including a series of fires in June and July of 2019. On 6/30, VI DPNR requested EPA assistance for air and water monitoring/sampling support, amid concerns that the smoke could impact down-wind communities as well as nearby airport operations. EPA CEPD deployed an OSC from PR to coordinate EPA's response activities. EPA provided air monitoring support until 7/6/2019, when the most recent fire appeared to be extinguished.</p>				

		<p>During this response, EPA discovered an unsecured waste oil and hazardous materials storage area, consisting of an approximately 2-acre area where unknown parties had dumped various materials on to the landfill. On 7/12-/13, the OSC and START conducted a visual preliminary assessment of the waste storage area, noting the presence of waste oil, waste cooking oil, household hazardous waste, waste oxidizers, and flammable liquids. Numerous pools of waste materials were noted on the ground, along with hundreds of containers of hazardous materials, many of which had leaked their contents onto the ground. From 7/16-19, EPA and START conducted sampling of accumulated waste on the ground surface. On 7/23, USCG transferred FOSC responsibility for the site to EPA. On 7/30, VIWMA submitted a draft Work Plan and Scope of Work to EPA, describing the activities to be conducted by their contractors with proposed time frames. EPA continues to provide technical support to the VIWMA as requested, and will continue to provide oversight of cleanup activities.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://response.epa.gov/AnguillaLandfillHazardousWasteCleanUp</p>				
3.	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				
	Decisions Made:	<p>As identified in the 2018 annual report, 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 Region 2 and ERT conducted a site visit on 12/5/19 to determine current site conditions. Puma continues to maintain hard curtain boom near the boat ramp around the storm water outlet. Silver sheen was detected within the boomed area of Krum Bay near the storm water outlet after a brief rain shower. Air monitoring readings at all three utility vaults indicated that low level VOCs are still present within the WAPA vault. EPA met with DPNR and Puma representatives to discuss next steps to address the ongoing discharge.</p> <p>Site investigation activities are anticipated to begin in January 2020 to determine the type of mitigation required to address the subsurface oil body present in the Krum Bay area. The subsurface investigation will determine what actions are needed to halt the discharge of oil from the subsurface to the Bay and will assist in identifying a source.</p> <p>Additional information can be found at: https://response.epa.gov/KrumBayOilSpill</p>				
4.	Dates:	4/19	Event:	S/V Morena grounding on Mona Island, PR	ACT	NOT
	Issue / Concern:	The fiberglass vessel contained diesel fuel and lube oil, and was damaging endangered corals.				
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, NMFS, EPA, PR EQB, US FWS, PREMA, FURA				
	Decisions Made:	<p>On April 23, the 44' Sailing Catamaran MORENA grounded on the South Shore of Mona Island and was breaking apart in the surf. The fiberglass vessel contained diesel fuel, lube oil, and was damaging endangered corals. The remote location of Mona Island and its designation as critical habitat required mitigation. The RRT was activated to determine the best method of removal and to prevent further damage to the critical habitat. Neither the Coast Guard nor the RRT partners have sources of funding for the marine debris removal once the "significant threat" has been mitigated under the OSLTF. There is no authority authorizing the destruction of a fiberglass vessel. The USCG opened the OSLTF for the removal of the diesel and lube oil. NMFS relocated the coral likely to be</p>				

	damaged by the removal of the vessel, and FURA provided funds for the removal of the fiberglass hull and associated marine debris. Engines were removed on site and the hull was transported on a barge for destruction.
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C. RRT Exercises - No RRT exercises were conducted in 2019.

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) USCG District 7	LT James Davis, RRT Coordinator	LTJG Andrew Garcia, RRT Coordinator
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

In the summer of 2019, Puerto Rico’s Law 171 went into effect. Known as the Reorganization Plan of the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources of 2018, the law amended Law 416, (known as the “Environmental Public Policy Act”), which had created the Environmental Quality Board. Under Law 171, the facilities, functions, services and structures of the EQB were transferred and consolidated into DNER; the powers and functions previously delegated to the EQB, its President and/or its Governing Board were transferred to the DNER Secretary; DNER was designated as the lead agency for coordinating the response to environmental emergencies; places SERC responsibilities within DNER; created an Environmental Emergency Fund and the ability for DNER to recover 3x response costs from the responsible party;

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

None for the period of this report.