

Regional Response Team (RRT) Annual Report

Region:	Caribbean	Calendar Year:	2021
EPA RRT Co-Chair:	Doug Kodama	Email:	kodama.doug@epa.gov
USCG RRT Co-Chair:	Forest Willis	Email:	Forest.A.Willis@uscg.mil
EPA RRT Coordinator:	Steve Touw	Email:	touw.steve@epa.gov
USCG RRT Coordinator:	LT Andrew Garcia	Email:	andrew.m.garcia@uscg.mil

A. Annual Meetings – No CRRT meetings were conducted in Calendar Year 2021

	Dates	Location	# of Attendees	Website for presentations
1.				

B. Activations / Notifications

1.	Dates:	April to Nov 2021	Event:	Limetree Bay Refinery Air Monitoring	ACT		NOT	X
	Issue / Concern:	Multiple air releases during refinery restart operations impacting the surrounding community.						
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, VI DPNR, VI CST						
	Decisions Made:	<p>The 1960s-era Limetree Bay Refinery experienced numerous releases in early 2021 following its restart, after being shuttered since 2012 by former owner HOVENSA which subsequently declared bankruptcy in 2015. The facility is in south central St. Croix, adjacent to an EJ community predominately made up of people of color and low-income populations that are already disproportionately burdened by environmental conditions, especially air quality.</p> <p>On 2/4/21 an oily mist was discharged from the facility, reportedly as the result of a valve being fully instead of partially open during an operation. Oil droplets settled on nearby resident's homes, gardens, vehicles, and water cisterns. Limetree undertook clean-up actions on approximately 300 properties. EPA did not learn of the incident until about three weeks after it occurred. On 4/22-23, Limetree had an upset which resulted in significant emissions of either hydrogen sulfide gas, sulfur dioxide gas, or both. The fumes sickened people in many parts of St. Croix as far as 10 to 12 miles downwind, causing nausea, respiratory symptoms, dizziness, etc. Several schools were evacuated, and the local Health Department urged people feeling sick to leave the area until the problem was resolved.</p> <p>On 4/30, an EPA OSC and Air Program Inspector visited Limetree Bay for a meeting regarding the past releases as well as to conduct an SPCC inspection. It was determined that five SO2 ambient air monitoring stations required to be installed by HOVENSA, the previous facility operator, had not been in operation since February 2013. A VI DPNR representative informed EPA that he was going to recommend that the DPNR Commissioner request EPA air monitoring support.</p> <p>On 5/5, the EPA Acting Regional Administrator requested EPA/ERT air monitoring personnel and assets to be deployed to St. Croix. ERT personnel and equipment arrived at St. Croix on 5/8. From mid-May until mid-November 2021, EPA OSCs and ERT conducted air monitoring for SO2 and H2S at the five monitoring stations. On 10/25/2021, Limetree purchased air monitoring equipment and co-located the equipment with EPA equipment at the five stations. EPA/ERT personnel trained and assisted in troubleshooting the equipment with Limetree personnel until EPA demobed in mid-November 2021.</p>						

2.	Dates:	March 2018 - Aug 2021	Event:	Krum Bay (Subbase) Oil Spill; St. Thomas, USVI	ACT	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	Oil discharge into Krum Bay (See previous annual reports)					
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, DPNR, VIFS, VIPD, VITEMA, DPNR, WAPA, DPP					
	Decisions Made:	<p>As identified in the 2018 and subsequent 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. Subsequent site investigation activities were expected to 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. The site investigation was anticipated to take 1-2 weeks to complete. However, due to COVID-19, work at the Krum Bay Oil Spill site was put on hold in 2020. Due to the ongoing pandemic, continuing travel restrictions, and the health and safety considerations of EPA and contractor personnel, EPA decided to close this FPN in August 2021. A new FPN will be opened when the situation in the territory has improved and travel restrictions have eased. EPA will reach out to all parties once dates for the site investigation are confirmed.</p>					
3.	Dates:	9/5-20/21	Event:	Vieques Landfill Fire, Sector Puerto Diablo, Vieques, Puerto Rico	ACT	NOT	
	Issue / Concern:	Landfill fire, with nearby residents impacted by smoke and fumes					
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, PR DNER, Vieques Fire Department, Vieques Emergency Management					
	Decisions Made:	<p>The Vieques Fire Department responded to a fire on September 5, 2021 at the Vieques Landfill. The fire was located in an area composed mostly of vegetative debris. It was unknown at the time how long it would take to extinguish the fire; however, the fire department speculated that it could take several days or weeks. On 9/17, the Puerto Rico Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DNER) and the Vieques Municipality requested EPA assistance with air monitoring in the local community. On 9/18, two EPA START contractors mobilized to Vieques and the EPA OSC arrived on 9/19.</p> <p>On 9/19, fire suppression continued. EPA monitored 6 locations: Isabel II (ferry dock), La Esperanza (commercial property-hotel), Monte Carmelo (PRASA water storage tank), Villa Borinquen (residential property), Santa Maria (community center/animal rescue building) and the landfill administration building. Locations were selected based on information provided by State agencies and citizen complains. Periodic air monitoring was conducted utilizing Multi-RAE Plus monitors to detect Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Carbon Monoxide (CO), and Hydrogen Sulfide (H2). VOCs and CO were only detected periodically at levels below background at the Monte Carmelo and Villa Borinquen locations.</p> <p>Fire suppression activities were completed at the Site on 9/20. EPA continued to monitor the 6 locations through the morning of 9/20. Again, VOCs and CO were only detected periodically at levels below background at Monte Carmelo and Villa Borinquen. As of noon on 9/20, there was no visible smoke coming from the landfill, but a slight burnt material odor still persisted. The OSC met with the Mayor and Vieques Emergency Management in the late morning of 9/20. Since the fire appeared to be out, there was no</p>					

		visible smoke observed, and air survey readings were at background levels, it was determined that no further EPA assistance was required, and the OSC and START personnel demobed.				
4.	Dates:	April 2020 - June 2021	Event:	Unregistered Disinfectant Products, USVI	ACT	NOT
	Issue / Concern:	Unregistered disinfectant products being sold in various retail stores in the USVI				
	Agencies Involved:	EPA, VI DPNR, VI DLCA, VIFS				
	Decisions Made:	<p>EPA notified USVI DPNR in April 2020 concerning reports of unregistered disinfectant products being sold in various retail stores in St. Croix. The USVI Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs (DLCA) visited these stores and directed retailers to discontinue sale of the items and to remove the product from the sales floor. DLCA recovered 500 boxes and several loose cans of unregistered pesticide products from retailers in St. Croix. The products were transferred to a 40-foot DPNR storage trailer owned and under the control of the DPNR Enforcement Division. On St. Thomas, DPNR seized two pallets of antibacterial disinfectant spray and a pallet of antibacterial cleaner and sanitizer at the port. At the time of seizure, numerous boxes were wet and/or damaged, had a turpentine-like odor, and had an oily substance on the outside of the boxes from leaking materials stored in the boxes. The pallets of materials in St. Thomas were moved to Fort Christian to be overpacked and removed for disposal.</p> <p>DPNR sent a referral letter to EPA in May 2020 requesting EPA assistance for the removal of the seized pesticides stored on St. Thomas and on St. Croix. EPA OSCs held a conference call with representatives from the responsible party (RP) in May to discuss the status of the staged disinfectant materials in St. Thomas and St. Croix. The RP contracted with VI Regulated Waste to retrieve and dispose of the materials. VI Regulated Waste submitted a workplan to EPA in June 2020 to address the removal of the materials from both the St. Thomas and the St. Croix locations.</p> <p>Drums and absorbent granules were shipped to St. Thomas and St. Croix and cleared US Customs in June. The VIFS provided access to Fort Christian in July 2020 to VI Regulated Waste to stage the overpack drums and absorbent materials in preparation for removal work. DPNR was on site to oversee the movement of the overpack drums. VI Regulated Waste completed the lab packing of disinfectant materials on St. Croix in November 2020. A total of 44 overpack drums were loaded and staged inside a 40-foot container awaiting disposal. The container storing the drums was removed from DPNR property in St. Croix in January 2021 and shipped via barge in February 2021 to St. Thomas. Shipped materials arrived in St. Thomas in March 2021.</p> <p>VI Regulated Waste contracted with Clean Harbors to overpack the remaining materials located in St. Thomas and to provide transport and disposal of all materials. Due to COVID travel restrictions, Clean Harbors was significantly delayed in safely traveling to the U.S. Virgin Islands to perform the work. Overpacking of all materials located in St. Thomas was completed in late March 2021. The consolidated disinfectants from both St. Thomas and St. Croix were transported to the mainland for final disposal in Florida. On June 11, 2021, EPA received confirmation of disposal of all materials.</p>				
5.	Dates:	July 2021 to Jan 2022	Event:	Pier 4 Mystery Spill, Old San Juan, PR	ACT	NOT X
	Issue / Concern:	Multiple oil discharges were observed coming from storm drains impacting the surrounding waterway.				
	Agencies Involved:	USCG, EPA, DNER, US FWS				
	Decisions Made:	Sector San Juan received numerous NRC reports from the Puerto Rico Port Authority regarding an oil sheen near Pier 4 from an unknown source. The Port Authority used a contract company for initial clean up but oil continued to collect inside the storm				

	<p>drain. Sector San Juan assumed the response after the Port Authority exhausted its capabilities and resources. The OSLTF was opened for \$50K and a contractor was hired to deploy containment boom and use a vacuum truck to remove any pooled oil collecting inside the storm drain. A total of three storm drains were identified as collecting oil, with about 6,500 gallons recovered throughout the response.</p> <p>The CRRT was convened to discuss further action. By the time of the CRRT call, NRC reports from the site had stopped. A determination was made by the team to continue to monitor the situation but to close out the OSLTF FPN. No further action was taken.</p>
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C. RRT Exercises – No RRT exercises during the period of this report.

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

D. Changes in RRT Leadership

Agency	Outgoing Personnel	Incoming personnel
1) EPA		Doug Kodama, EPA Co-Chair
2) EPA		Shawna Hoppe, Alternate Co-Chair
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

Archive documents from 1997 regarding previous ESA consultations on dispersants preauthorization were posted on the CRRT website in September 2021 for reference.

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

None for the period of this report.