# REGIONAL RESPONSE TEAM 10/NORTHWEST AREA COMMITTEE (RRT 10/NWAC)

# PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

**0930 – 1515 Tuesday 2 June 2020**

**Virtual Meeting**

**Meeting participants can be viewed** [**here**](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/NWAC_AttendeeReport.pdf)**.**

## Introductions/Welcome/Initial Remarks from NW Area Committee Chairs

Ms. Lori Muller (United States Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]) gave an introduction and welcomed all the attendees to the first completely virtual Northwest Area Committee (NWAC) meeting. Ms. Muller also thanked Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) for hosting the platform for the meeting. Mr. David Prater (Ecology) reviewed technical tips for navigating the GoToWebinar.

Ms. Beth Sheldrake (EPA) thanked the State of Idaho for their efforts in planning the meeting and working through the technical challenges, she expressed her appreciation for the agenda topics since this is the meeting that focuses on inland response. Mr. Mark Dietrich [Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) also thanked Ecology for hosting the meeting and thanked the attendees/participants.

## Large Responses during the Pandemic

Mr. Tim Lupher (United States Coast Guard [USCG] Sector Puget Sound [SPS]) invited the Oil Spill Response Organizations (OSROs), industry partners, tribes, and state and federal agencies to report on their status in planning for a large-scale response. Mr. Tim Archer (Marine Spill Response Corporation [MSRC]) outlined their response posture and noted they would supply personal protective equipment (PPE) for their responders. MSRC would focus on how to maintain healthy and safe workers. Ms. Tiffany Gallo (NRC) reported temperatures are taken daily by all workers and employees are directed to stay at home if they are not feeling well. Mr. Dan Smiley (Washington State Maritime Cooperative [WSMC]) would rely on MSRC for a field supervisor, they are not planning to deploy personnel to a response and would conduct operations remotely if possible. Mr. Kevin Mallik (BP Cherry Point) reported they are currently using Microsoft Teams and have conducted two remote drills to test their response structure. Mr. Malik noted the closed Canadian border would present a unique challenge if there was a spill at the facility that could impact Canadian resources. Mr. Bill Rinesmith (Phillips 66) reported they have been working with their contractors with regards to PPE availability. Ms. Alex Crooks (BP) reported they have been acquiring PPE to stage at various locations and have been conducting digital drills which have been successful. Mr. Lance Lindgren (The Response Group [TRG]) reported TRG is conducting some responses and the use of Microsoft Teams or other platforms has proven that a remote Incident Command Post (ICP) is possible. Ms. Allison Schmidt (CTEH) reported they have conducted responses across the nation including oversight of response activities and assisting with developing protocols for monitoring responder health.

Ms. Janet Niessner (Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians [CTCLUSI]) reported the pandemic has significantly changed daily operations within the reservation. In mid-March, the Tribal council sent all staff home; in April, non-essential staff could perform work from home, and all staff will return to full-time working from home in mid-June. CTCLUSI staff are still able to respond if needed; however, all drills and exercises are currently postponed. Finally, the CLCLUSI has developed a draft COVID-19 addendum to the estuary program.

Ms. Haley Kennard (Makah Tribe) reported the Makah Tribal Council is taking a fundamentally different approach to addressing COVID-19 than many other areas. The Council’s goal is to protect every single life on the Reservation and in the Makah community from COVID-19. This approach, along with the remoteness of the Tribe, limited access to healthcare on the Peninsula, and the prevalence of underlying health conditions and multi-generational housing, means that the Tribe is relying heavily on social distancing policies. Makah was one of the first Tribes to issue a shelter-in-place (“stay home”) order. The Tribe is in a unique position because it is feasible to easily close the Reservation to non-member non-residents. The Reservation has been closed and a checkpoint established since mid-March. The closure will remain in effect at least until the end of the month. The Tribe has also worked with the USCG to close the Port of Neah Bay and issue guidance to mariners – which has largely been followed. Communication with the USCG on related concerns (recreational fishing, etc.) has been prompt and thorough. Communication with the Marine Exchange and Ecology about the movements of the Emergency Response Tug Vessel (ERTV) has also remained strong, which the Tribe appreciates. The Tribal health order encourages social distancing and use of facial coverings. Hobuck Cabins have been used as quarantine facilities for staff or visitors who come for essential services to keep them removed from the community In the event of an incident, the immediate notification of the Tribal Council, Port of Neah Bay, and Makah Chief of Police would be crucial. While contacting Tribes is a key part of a successful response here in the Northwest, early notification will be particularly vital during this time. The Tribe encourages this best practice across tribal jurisdictions within the region and nationally. The Tribe had planned to participate in several drills and conduct in-person Geographic Response Plan (GRP) site visits with Ecology and MSRC this summer; however, those activities have been cancelled. The Tribe has not made progress on their spill response-specific planning and preparedness work (as staff have been redirected to COVID-19 response activities), but this has been an important exercise in a long-term activation of their Emergency Operations Center (EOC), particularly important with new Council members. The EOC has been stood up since mid-March. The Tribe looks forward to an after-action review and anticipate many lessons learned that will help their spill preparedness as well. Finally, COVID has changed the Tribe’s approach, but they remain committed to effective response and to the protection of treaty resources.

Mr. Allen Gross (Marathon Oil) stated there are three terminals in Idaho and a pipeline across Idaho and they are prepared to respond with additional safety measures to avoid personal contact and use of virtual platforms to conduct response activities and have conducted exercises and have an exercise in Pasco, Washington on June 1. Mr. Dean Ehlert (IDEQ) reported IDEQ is prepared to respond if requested, with non-essential on-site activities being performed remotely, IDEQ held weekly calls with EPA and Idaho Office of Emergency Management (IOEM) at the beginning of the pandemic to discuss response options. Mr. Michael Greenburg (Oregon Department of Environmental Quality [ODEQ]) reported ODEQ has purchased a large durable portable structure that could be used in a response. Ms. Linda Pilkey-Jarvis (Ecology) reported Ecology is prepared to respond if necessary and have responded recently and have done so successfully.

Ms. Sheldrake noted the consistency she is hearing as people are reporting on their response postures amongst all the response partners. EPA has not been conducting in-person drills or exercises but have conducted virtual sessions and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been activated since March 13. Ms. Muller also noted EPAs response posture has not changed due to the pandemic. Ms. Sheldrake noted EPA is working to determine the number of people that need to be on-site versus people that could effectively work remotely and perform their duties. Ms. Anne Chastain (Clallam County Emergency Management) inquired if EPA would bring their own PPE for the duration of a response or would they request supplies from local sources. Ms. Muller responded EPA has their own supplies for EPA personnel and contractors. CWO Shannon McGregor (USCG Sector Columbia River [SCR]) reported their response posture is similar to other agencies. SCR is fortunate because there is an office in both Astoria and Portland which provides backup personnel in the event there is an outbreak in one of the offices. MSSR2 Dean Johnston (USCG Sector Puget Sound [SPS]) reported they are using cloth facial coverings within the building and creating an Incident Management Plan (IMT) inside the building. LT Brett Ettinger (USCG SPS) reported on their operations on the Marine Fire on Harbor Island in Seattle, Washington and the social distancing during an oil spill response was especially problematic. Mr. Greg Buie (Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund [OSLTF]) reported they have been coordinating during the various responses across the nation, there are fewer responses lately. Mr. Bob McFarland (USCG District 13 [D13]) reported they are providing guidance to the sectors and created a command safety plan with specific USCG guidance to provide operational tactics during various operations. Mr. Lupher noted USCG will have a minimal footprint in tabletop drills, participation would be remote and not in-person until Washington State is in Stage 4 of reopening. Mr. Matt Solum (National Weather Service [NWS]) noted they are able to assist remotely with any requests.

## Area Contingency Plan Updates

Ms. Sheldrake reported the Area Contingency Plans (ACPs) for the inland and coastal zones of Idaho, Oregon and Washington are in a state of transition. Historically the Northwest Area Contingency Plan (NWACP) has met the National Contingency Plan (NCP) requirements for both inland and coastal ACPs and the Region 10 Regional Contingency Plan (RCP) requirements. The USCG has determined that they need to have separate stand-alone coastal ACPs throughout the country and thus in the Northwest, the affected agencies are working to help address these requirements. During this transition, however, the NWACP continues to serve as the RCP for the Region 10 Regional Response Team (RRT) and the EPA Inland Area Contingency Plan. The NWACP also serves as the state-wide plan for Oregon and Washington, and Idaho has signed the plan although they also maintain a separate state-wide plan. Mr. McFarland stated there are currently two Coastal ACPs that have been promulgated. Both sectors have been conducting local Area Committee meetings with the response community to obtain feedback on the new plans. The ACPs may not be reviewed every year, they could be reviewed monthly, but will be updated on a five-year basis. The plans will also be reviewed by D13 as well as nationally by Marine Emergency Response (MER). The District has been working with the NWAC and the RRT to discuss strategic planning and how to ensure consistency within the plans. Ms. Sheldrake noted the NWACP will remain the inland plan and there will not be a separate plan.

LCDR Ettinger reported the sector is continuing dissemination of the sector plans. LCDR Wes Geyer (SCR) reported they had disseminated their plan in January, compiled comments and addressed them, the plan should be finalized in the near future. The SPS ACP was signed on 1 April, and the SCR ACP was signed on 15 May. Ms. Heather Parker [United States Navy (Navy)] noted there has been no new information on the promulgation of new plans and how have the plans been rolled out and inquired why the plan has not been signed by Ecology. LCDR Ettinger responded that both plans are on the public Homeport page and will also be posted on the NWAC web page imminently. Ms. Pilkey-Jarvis reported that the pandemic has derailed the plans that were started for incorporating comments on the draft ACPs; Ecology intends to sign the plan, but they want to have additional review time.

Mr. Pete Gardner (O’Brien) also requested additional guidance on how the plans are to be implemented. Ms. Niessner reported that the tribe submitted comments and did not hear back how those comments were incorporated and requested consultation with the tribal government and requested updates on how the comments were addressed. Mr. McGregor responded the roll out of the plan was not as smooth as all wanted it to be, he also acknowledged the plan was not perfect and the ACPs are “living documents”, by December it will be clear which ACPs need to be cited by industry and other plan holders. The Captain of the Port (COTP) will only be signing the ACPs in the future and Mr. McFarland will be signing the NWACP. Mr. Mike Zollitsch (ODEQ) noted the sectors did a good job, but they did it on their own and some comments still need to be addressed. He stated that the ACPs need more coordination with the states and the tribes, and further inquired how ODEQ and the tribes can help improve the plans. CAPT Jeremy Smith (USCG SCR) noted that the USCG is committed to working with the states and stakeholders to develop response strategies for the area, and acknowledged there were comments received and incorporated if they were within the bounds of the MER guidance; however, the incorporation of the comments was not effectively communicated back to the stakeholders. Promulgation letters are being revised based on comments received.

## BNSF Kootenai Derailment

Mr. Justin Pipe (BNSF), Mr. Marc Kalbaugh (IDEQ), Mr. Robert Steed (IDEQ), and Mr. Eric Vanderboom (EPA) gave a presentation on the Kootenai River BNSF train derailment including the roll BNSF personnel played in the response, initial response actions, the structure of the response, the environmental unit activities, cleanup activities, and statistics of the response. The presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/01_Kootenai%20River%20BNSF%20Derailment.pptx).

## US Navy Barge – Lake Pend Oreille Response

Ms. Parker gave a presentation on the US Navy Barge Lake Pend Oreille sinking including Navy surface warfare center, an overview of the incident, phase 1 of the response, phase 2 of the response, and consultations that were conducted. The presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/02_Navy%20Bayview%20ID_Barge%20Salvage%20Operation.pdf).

## Updates

LCDR Jamie Rosenberg, (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]) reported both the Science of Oil Spills and the Science of Chemical Spills have been cancelled for the 2020 courses. The Science of Oil Spills will be offered in Seattle, WA in June 2021 and the Science of Chemical Spills may be offered on-line soon. LTJG Betker introduced the NOAA weekly lecture series titled “You don’t know what you don’t know” which is offered each Thursday afternoon at 12 PDT. These sessions are being recorded and NOAA is working to get them posted on a public site. Ms. Muller will send the link to the NWAC ListServ.

Ms. Muller reported the National Response Team (NRT) recently released a video on responding to oiled wildlife trainings which are posted on the NWAC/RRT web page under related links. <https://www.rrt10nwac.com/Links.aspx>

## Lake Pend Oreille Geographic Response Plan Strategy and Bridge Status Update

Mr. Nic Winslow (BNSF) gave a presentation on the 2020 Lake Pend Oreille GRP Update and Bridge Construction Summary including the timeline for updating the GRP, 2018 equipment vulnerability updates, Lake Pend Oreille boom strategy testing, and the new railroad bridge construction schedule. The presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/03_Lake%20Pend%20Oreille%20GRP%20Update.pdf).

## Meeting Wrap-up

Ms. Muller reported the next meeting would normally be scheduled in September or October in Oregon. The dates and locations have not been scheduled. Mr. Ehlert thanked the attendees for coming to the meeting. Ms. Sheldrake also thanked all the attendees and the Ecology IT team and the active response partners for their participation.