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

**OPEN SESSION MINUTES**

**November 18, 2010**

**Attendance sheets can be viewed** [**here**](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Open%20Session%20Sign-in%20Sheets.pdf)**.**

**Welcome**

Captain Danny LeBlanc, Commanding Officer of Portland’s Marine Safety Unit (MSU) began the meeting by thanking the attendees. He stressed that these meetings are important because we can’t let our guard down. At any time there could be a major incident where our area plans are needed, and we need our resources to protect us. He urged attendees to establish contact so they can get to know their counterparts from different agencies.

Mr. Jeff Christensen of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) stated that it was nice to be in Astoria after having previous Oregon meetings in Portland. He emphasized the importance of the area since it is at the mouth of the Columbia River, and has a great deal of natural resources and economic value.

Mr. Calvin Terada of the USEPA also welcomed the attendees to the meeting. He noted that one major change from previous meetings was the format and seating arrangement. The old format was not conducive to dialogue. He asked attendees for their feedback on this change

Captain Scott Ferguson, the new commander of the Coast Guard’s Sector Puget Sound reminded everyone of the purpose of the area contingency plan; to be able to give it straight to contractors and have them be able to execute it with minimal additional instruction.

**Intro to the RRT/NWAC and NWACP for OHMR**

Ms. Heather Parker gave the attendees an overview and history of the RRT/NWAC. You can view her presentation [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/2009NWACP_hap.pptx).

**Operational Commanders Briefings and Q&A Session**

Mr. Jeff Christensen of the Oregon DEQ started this agenda item with a presentation that highlighted the emergency capabilities of Oregon DEQ. He noted that his agency doesn’t have any response equipment, and has limited communication devices. They do, however, have an emergency operations trailer, and a contract with Oregon’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for equipment and support. You can view Mr. Christensen’s presentation [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/DEQ_Operational_Report.ppt).

Captain Danny LeBlanc of the Coast Guard’s MSU handed out several organizational charts, the first of which reflected the recent reorganization for sector Columbia River. He explained that after 9/11, the USCG determined that it would be better for authorities to be under one person. On the first chart, the Sector Columbia River organizational chart the Sector Commander takes on the role of four titles. One unique thing that he pointed out was that some departments had to split personnel between Portland and Astoria. Another change that was made was that the Command Center was moved from Portland to Astoria. The second chart was for the Sector Columbia River Response Department Incident Management Division, and the last was the MSU Portland/Sector Prevention Organizational Chart. These charts can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Sector%20CR%20Org%20Charts.pdf).

After discussion of the charts, Captain LeBlanc spoke about the local USCG involvement with Deep Water Horizon (DWH). Sector Columbia River sent active duty personnel, reservists, auxiliary and civilians, some of whom are still down in the Gulf. He noted that the typical tour is 60 days. He described two recent USCG exercises, one of which was called “Smoke on the Water”, and the other being “That was Then, This is Now”. “Smoke on the Water” took place in September and simulated a fire on a deep draft vessel. The second exercise took place in Kalama at a Grain Terminal. The USCG also hosts several forums; the Harbor Safety Committee (focusing on the save navigation of vessels) and the Area Maritime Committee. This committee hosts a monthly commercial industry breakfast. .

Captain LeBlanc also touched on several pieces of news, including the significant lock closure on Columbia River in March, which will last for 2.5 months, collaboration between the USCG and the USEPA to remediate pollution efforts, and the USCG District 13 acknowledgement of cases of lost power in deep draft vessels. He revisited the topic of DWH and emphasized the lack of expertise and miscommunication during the incident. He noted that the USCG puts on an On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Crisis Management course in Yorktown, and offered information on this course to those that were interested. The administrators of this course are eager for more industry involvement.

Mr. Dale Jensen of Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) wanted to talk about the dam closure that Captain LeBlanc had mentioned. He emphasized that it was a big concern for his agency, as well as many others. He also emphasized the importance of Geographic Response Plan (GRP) work, and the importance of involvement. He stated that looking at the Columbia River GRP’s and how they can be enhanced is a big priority. There will be comprehensive outreach efforts to try and get communities involved.

Speaking specifically about his program, Mr. Jensen reported that they respond to about eight spills per day. About 3000 spills were reported last year, including pesticides, chemicals and oil. He noted that there has been a reduction in large vessel spills, and that we have the lowest spill volumes here in the northwest. In the state of Washington, there is an active legislature. There has been interest in policy changes in response to DWH, at a state level. Mr. Jensen predicted that as more reports from DWH are released, this interest will increase.

Calvin Terada of the USEPA began his update by reminding everybody that the USEPA deals with oil spills and hazmat, and that they are on-call 24/7.

One important thing that he wanted to point out is that the USEPA has been doing a lot of work cooperatively with other agencies. The USEPA is the primary OSC for inland areas, but they don’t do a lot of on-water response. They are good at dealing with incidents on roads, river and rail, but don’t have as much capability or experience with water. Recently, they participated in a successful CG and USACE equipment deployment demonstration on Lake Washington. Mr. Terada noted that he’d be interested in seeing a similar demonstration above the Bonneville Dam.

Mr. Terada had a few USEPA changes to note. One was that he and Chris Field were working in Alaska with Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) and with the USCG in Alaska on response readiness. Mr. Field is the Alaska RRT chair and Calvin is the alternate. One of the advantages is that they are able to look at what’s happening in Alaska, and can bring some of their good ideas back home to this area. One good example that Mr. Terada mentioned was Alaska’s statewide towing system and their kit for how to deploy towing systems. At this point, the USCG confirmed that District 13 already has one of these. Mr. Terada went on to say that the primary input of the Alaska RRT is oil spills, but pointed out that it is an all-emergencies organization that could be responding to any type of hazardous or dangerous substance. They want to provide their USCG counterparts in Alaska with more training on Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) law, and are looking to put together short course on CERCLA.

On inland work, Mr. Terada confirmed that the USEPA has been contributing to and participating in statewide hazmat conferences. They have been connecting with public health departments and emergency management groups. In addition, they’re starting an initiative with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other environmental counterparts to reach out and bring local and state health departments together with emergency management departments, to work together. The kickoff meeting for this initiative will be on Dec 10, 2010.

Mr. Terada then brought up the locks closure as a discussion point. He asked the group if there was any other preplanning that was needed on the road/rail/transportation side, and if there was any preplanning that could be done for response in case of an incident.

Dale Jensen of the DOE responded that there are already good measures that have been put in place. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has been conducting regular conference calls regarding preplanning and response capabilities in case of an incident.

Mr. Jeff Christensen commented that the Oregon DEQ doesn’t have adequate equipment for responses of this magnitude, and that they needed to think about ways that commodity transport would shift. He also noted that the closure will be shorter than it was originally planned, and credited the USACE for this change.

Ms. Kelly Thorkilson added that the USCG has done a lot of pre-planning with USACE.

Mr. Terada ended the discussion by proposing that the USEPA would contact primary responders and would touch base with Oregon State Patrol and Washington State Patrol to let them know that USEPA is available for support. He urged everybody involved to tighten up response during the locks closure.

Mr. Mark Truax, the Hazmat Team Leader for Region 11 reported that this state-manned organization’s response area is Clatsop County. The team works with 10 different departments within the county, with their main priority areas being chemical and hazardous substances at Astoria canneries. They have mutual aid with local fire departments so that they are able to respond first and ask the state for permission later. He thought that their biggest struggle was getting the decision-makers to change their way of thinking and adapt to new ways of training and collaborating.

**Columbia River Vessel Response Capabilities**

Mr. Jeff Christensen of Oregon DEQ stated that there has been a movement towards trying to find additional vessel response capabilities. He introduced Captain Scott Heesacker and Tim VonSeeggern of the City of Portland, and noted that they would share current capabilities and future capabilities.

Captain Heesacker and Tim VonSeeggern introduced themselves and stated that the fire department was not just about responding to fire anymore. They also provide security, emergency medical services (EMS), spill response, and hazmat response. Their department has been looking at a grant opportunity for a large platform boat; a Regional Response Vessel to replace the David Campbell built in 1927. This boat is an all-hazards type response boat that can also operate as a command center. It is not just needed by Portland, but by the whole Columbia River system. Their presentation can be viewed here.

Dan Monaghan of Patriot Technical Consultants discussed a support plan to address the response capabilities contingent with a vessel proposal and small vessels. He stated that Vancouver has limited assets and relies on Portland. His company was tasked with submitting a proposal for a study to close gaps in response capability on the lower Columbia River, but the scope of this study has changed from just the lower Columbia River, to the entire river. When approved by the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) grant funding, Patriot Technical anticipates that it will take 10-12 months for the study. In the process of analysis, it will require many meetings and interviews with stakeholders. The Work Plan, Geographic Study Area, Schedule and other applicable topics were outlined on a handout, which you can view [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Scoping%20Project%20Overview.pdf).

Mr. Monaghan highlighted two priorities. The first priority was to respect and comply with DHS’s grant guidance. There was a study completed last year that was funded by DHS, to do a risk management and resiliency study of Sector Columbia River. They will be using lessons learned from this study. Priority number two is to look at the risk assessment that was conducted in 2009 to see if the 8 gaps identified line up closely with what’s being proposed by Portland. Mr. Monaghan reported that they will be using a four-step process. First they will look at the list of chief priorities and compare it with what currently exists, second they’ll do a gap analysis and make recommendations, and the third step will be that they create a concept of operation. Their last task will be to look at funding sources.

**On-Scene Coordinator Reports: Recent Responses**

Calvin Terada of the USEPA gave a presentation on recent responses, which you can view [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/2010%20Fall%20RRT_Presentation_FOSC_Report.ppt).

Kelly Thorkilson of the USCG also gave a presentation, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/RRTBriefing%20Nov%202010.pptx). She was followed by Joe Delauter of USCG Sector Puget Sound. His power-point presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/2010%20RRT%20summary%20Nov10.pptx). During Mr. Delauter’s presentation, there was a discussion about the munitions found in Puget Sound Pier 90/91, as well as a discussion about the Bremerton WA Coal Tar Waste Release. It had been decided during that particular response not to excavate, but to just cap the spill since it could only be accessed during low-tide.

Oregon DEQ gave a presentation (accessed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Hartley%20Farms%2015.ppt)) about a fuel tank that was being refilled at its location on an onion farm, and was overfilled; causing fuel to spill onto the ground and into a canal that feeds a large amount of farmland. Approximately 6,000 gallons were spilled, and the diesel fuel spill extended for approximately 1.2 miles down the canal. Underflow dams, culverts, boom and pads were used to help clean the canal, and then the source was addressed. Contaminated soil was put on a double-lined staging area. A soft water wash was conducted for the entire length of the canal. There was also contamination through the cracks in the floor of the structure where the tank was housed, so it needed to be removed. A sample of the groundwater was taken and showed low levels of naphthalene, but it was concluded that this was probably from pesticide use.

**Lunch/Equipment Tours: Clean Rivers Wildlife Trailer and MSRC’s Responder vessel. Clean Rivers’ brochure from the meeting can be viewed** [**here**](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Clean%20Rivers%20Brochure.pdf)**.**

**OR Incident Response Info System (OR-IRIS) briefing**

Mr. Don Pettit gave a short presentation on the Oregon Incident Response Information System (OR-IRIS), which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/OR-IRIS_RRT_NWAC_2010.pptx). Following the presentation, Mr. Steven Jett (Geographic Information System Coordinator for Oregon DEQ’s emergency response and cleanup sections) gave a demo of the software. He showed the various layers that use symbols for all types of data. The layers included categories for incident notification groups, emergency response resources, wildlife/habitat, natural resources and hazards, public health, aerial imagery/maps, transportation/infrastructure, people at risk, water resources protection, potential toxic sources, and a mapping base.

 Mr. Pettit and Mr. Jett discussed how they are trying to create a system to find where the best Places of Refuge (POR) are, using the software. They were interested to see how a tool like this might be able to help make those kinds of decisions. They suggested looking at natural resources and wildlife data, because an effective POR should not have too many sensitive wildlife colonies, but should have a good landing strip area.

**Comparison of OR-IRIS and NOAA’s ERMA System**

Ms. Ruth Yender of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) gave a presentation on her agency’s ERMA system. Her presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/ERMA%20Astoria.pptx).

**Impacts of DWH on WA, OR and ID**

Mr. Jeff Christensen gave a presentation on a State Perspective of Impacts of the DWH Incident on OR, which can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/State_Perspective__Deepwater-Horizon.ppt). Ms. Linda Pilkey-Jarvis was a co-presenter during this session and discussed some of the impacts of DWH on WA state. She stated that as far as equipment was concerned, from a State perspective, DWH requests for equipment started small and then grew rather quickly. She noted that one of the principles to stick to was that as a neighbor, you want to help out other communities as much as possible, without falling below an acceptable level of readiness. Another principal was that they needed to keep the public’s confidence high, which led to the equipment-tracking website idea.

Ms. Pilkey-Jarvis emphasized that the DOE wanted decisions made to be very public. Regulations can determine how much equipment to keep, but it was not possible in this instance to follow these regulations, as dispersants and boom were needed and were sent out quickly to aid in the Gulf spill. The website provided a spreadsheet used to track what resources were leaving (for the public’s knowledge) and what impact it was having. The impact of decreased equipment inventory was not immediately apparent.

Dale Jensen of the DOE felt that there needs to be a discussion about what to do when a catastrophic situation occurs and a lot of equipment is needed. In other words, what happens when people need to send out their equipment and they dip below their local standards? The bare minimum standards need to be put into a plan.

Ms. Pilkey-Jarvis agreed, and noted that they had put equipment into three categories: Equipment that could leave with minimal impact, equipment that there is backfill for and equipment that can’t leave.

**Global Diving Salvage**

Mr. Aaron Harrington from Global Diving Salvage presented and narrated a video about a project that his company conducted for the USCG which involved removing oil from a sunken ferry boat in Alaska, then gave a presentation on the same project. His video can be viewed [here](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zbdgfz82MqU), and his presentation can be viewed [here](http://www.rrt10nwac.com/files/files/Princess%20Kathleen%20fuel%20removal%20project%20%285%2002%2010%29%20KW%20edit2%20.pptx).

**Closing Comments**

Mr. Jeff Christensen thanked everybody for attending. Captain Danny LeBlanc emphasized in his closing, readiness and preparation, and ended with a sports analogy: “The team that is the most prepared is the team that is going to win”.