

Regional Response Team III Meeting

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge – Bateman Education Center
8231 Beach Road, Chincoteague, VA 23336
0900-1615

Sabina announced to disconnect from WiFi after check-in to assist with WiFi speed. Introduction of co-chairs.

- **Convene, Introductions, and Co-Chairs Opening Remarks**
 - Mike Towle (USEPA R3)
 - Lots of good discussions yesterday, good problem solving
 - Announces new EPA co-chair – Dominic Ventura
 - Kelly Thorkilson asks Beth Lohman to the stage
 - Presentation of recognition to Frank Csulak from VADEQ
 - Presentation of recognition to Commander of Sector Virginia from VADEQ
 - Kelly presents RRT3 letter of appreciation and Meritorious Public Service Award from USCG to Frank
 - Frank gives remarks of thanks and appreciation.
- **Welcome to VA**
 - Ann Hayward Walker (SEA Consulting Group)
 - Eastern shore quote
- **Coastal Birds Presentation (Kevin Holcomb, USFWS)**
 - Eastern shore protections
 - Assateague island has its own unique jurisdiction.
 - Rachel Carson – Pamphlet
 - “Assigned Area” for Recreational Beach
 - 1.4 million annual visitation average
 - Cultural resources
 - USCG Life Saving Station, Assateague Lighthouse
 - Chincoteague ponies
 - Horses owned by Chincoteague volunteer fire department on Virginia side
 - Habitats of Chincoteague
 - 4 types
 - May is important time for migratory birds
 - Kevin thanks Frank for his service
- **RRT3 Executive Committee Report**
 - Kelly describes the standing work groups and accomplishments
 - General RRT Management – website improvements, workgroup spaces, RCP and ACP links, document organization and sharing
 - CHER – plan to develop more cultural and resource guidance, update RCP notification procedures, streamline consultation process

- Spill Response – develop/refine response countermeasure strategies through Chemical and Biological Countermeasures Use Protocol
- Training and Exercise- coordinate training and exercise opportunities
- Information and Outreach – shift into GIS response plan products, developing new schema
- RCP – reviewed RCP, target Appendix updates
- **RRT3 Coordinator Report** (Sabina Bastias USEPA)
 - Highlight upcoming RRT meetings in 2026
 - RRT3 December meeting: December 8-10 in Pennsylvania
 - 2025 Annual Report Highlights
 - # of pollution reports – 10,796
 - Federalized cases - 25
 - Criminal cases -1
 - Highlights Notable Cases
 - Highlight outcoming/incoming personnel
 - WV state representative is out of office April-November
 - Highlight upcoming events
 - IOSC 2027, 2027 NJEPA Conference, Clean Americas, NRT Worker Safety and Health Technical Conference
 - Exercises and Trainings
 - Update on website (opportunities or topic for upcoming RRT meetings)
- **BREAK** (1017-1030)
- **Agency Open Forum**
 - Frank presents William Whitmore SSC to provide coverage for USCG Sector New York and Delaware Bay (RRTII and RRTIII)
- **Outbrief/Panel**
 - Helene Response Presentation (Beth Lohman/Lauren Pillow VADEQ, Scott Sproles VDEM, Myles Bartos USEPA, Ben Porter USACE)
 - Tropical Storm Helene (FEMA 4831)
 - New River Valley was impacted the most
 - Claytor Lake and South Holston Lake
 - Timeline
 - September 2024-January 2025
 - Had to wait for water to recede for damage assessment. Quickly realized they needed assistance.
 - Emergency Support Function (ESF) 10 Oil and HazMat (Scott)
 - Both lakes had masses of heavy debris and oil/hazmat tanks. Containers, propane tanks, white goods, etc.
 - Resources: Regional Hazmat teams, Contracting, Funding Mechanism
 - Challenges
 - Heavy debris made it hard to access certain areas. Utilized drones.

- Struggled with types of boats would work to navigate heavy debris
- HazMat recovery
- USCG auxiliary and exclusion zones
 - Recreational users entered water to retrieve belongings, but some got stuck. Had to suspend some operations for rescue missions.
- Staging and Security
 - Staging at public access boat ramps. Materials segregated and packaged for transport and off-site management.
 - Materials were not secured but there was no evidence of tampering.
- FEMA Mission Assignment
 - Learning curve with filling out paperwork.
 - CWA/OPA Authority, Mission Assignment, Expanded Mission
- Claytor Lake Imagery and Damascus
 - Used VT Unscrewed Systems Lab to collect HD imagery for data analysis. Phoenix U-15 Motorglider, able to fly low
- Debris Classification and Area Estimation
 - Class 1 vs 2
- Claytor Lake Debris Removal
 - Coordination with EPA (white goods and HHM disposal) continued with USACE
 - Mission strengths: strong partnerships, 0 injuries, contractor capability
 - Mission issues: recreational boating activities (safety risks), stranded debris on private property
- South Holston Lake Debris Removal
 - Strengths: strong support
 - Issues with ROW with property lines
- Strategic Evolution of USACE Debris Response
- Question about imagery and MA: Resource request to contract VT for imagery request
- Question about sources of debris: Highly recreational area, lots of debris from that. A lot of debris coming from NC (new river flows south to north)
 - Submerged debris – fisherman wanted it to stay because of fish habitat
- Lessons learned? Prioritization of debris areas, opinion on who has authorization to remove debris from the lake
- ESF 3 Public Works and Engineering
 - DEQ role is to provide situational awareness
 - S123 damage assessment tool

- Unable to send out ahead of time for Helene
 - Gaps: capture detailed damage assessments or cost of temporary vs. permanent repairs. Filled by extensive one-on-one outreach,
 - Emerging: more detailed data assessment
- Lessons: Ownership of debris in hydropower lake, authorization of HazMat cleanup on private public property, payment when a landfill loses airspace to storm debris
- Interstate debris
 - Straddles between two FEMA regions (VA and TN, R3 and R4)
 - Two state government coordination
- Debris Task Force
 - Co-chaired by VDEM and DEQ
- What went well: federal partner coordination, MA template worked, VT imagery
- Gaps we're closing:
 - No dedicated aircraft → looking to create capability
 - No analytical pipeline → machine learning debris classification
 - No standing partnership → formalizing commonwealth, VT partnership
- ARA Grant Awarded: 13.5 million to address unmet needs from Helene. Funds not yet deployed. Debris removal, debris management planning, tabletop exercises, aerial imagery/LiDAR, response equipment cache
- Invasive species concerns? Had to involve VA department of agriculture. Gypsy moth and others. Had to get waivers to move things over county lines.
- USCG has authority/federal jurisdiction over some lakes. Established some safety zones
 - Auxiliary branch of USCG – excited to get out there and help establish safety zones
- Data Schema for Emergency Response (IM&O Workgroup)
- **LUNCH (1140-1300)**
- **Tabletop Exercise**
 - RRT3 Activation
 - Incident Specific Team on stage/introductions
 - Ground rules
 - Objectives
 - Delaware Bay Refinery/ERMA Overview
 - Resources at Risk
 - STARTEX
 - Scenario Problem Set #1 - Decanting
 - Decanting Checklist – Appendix 1, different states have different procedures

- Delaware is “case by case” is there anything that needs to be added here? Ben says it works for Delaware. USCG states they have a good standing partnership with DNREC.
- Appendix 2 – Decanting of Contact Water Decision Tree
 - Ask group to review on their own. Following review, address any comments/concerns.
 - Activation of incident specific RRT missing, needs added. Add to end of first page.
 - Need the addition of SOCS to flow chart decision making along with FOOSC. SOCS is only mentioned in laws on the first page but not in the flowchart.
 - Carl from R2 – How would NJ have a hand in this if there were impacts? Process for incident specific RRT – reps from both included. Potentially add a reference to potential joint RRT scenario
 - What would be the RRT involvement, specifically decanting? RRT must approve plan. Plan needs to be submitted by RP.
- Appendix 5 – Decanting of Contact Water Operational Checklist
 - Ask group to review. Comment after.
 - Who completes the checklist? FOOSC submits to unified command (incident specific RRT).
 - Maybe reference RRT tools for consultation? Have xyz been submitted... etc.
 - Do we have different considerations for HazMat?
 - More places to elaborate about Y/N questions
 - TAT for this document? Not really defined.
- ISRRT Activation Questions
 - Which agencies? On stage.
 - Does the guide/tool provide necessary info? Feedback given already.
 - What info/resources do each agency have to assist UC through the IRRT consultation?
 - Options if you don’t decant?
 - DOI – sensitive environments/species/concerns, mitigation suggestions, offer a monitor for approved plan, POCs for cultural resources
 - USACE adds they can provide infrastructure to inspect facility
 - How would the ISRRT recommendations be documented?
 - Decision memo with checklist and notes from ISRRT decision making meeting, housed on website to reference in future decisions if needed.

- Scenario update
- Scenario Problem Set #2 – Surface Washing Agents
- SWA Preauthorization Test and Evaluation Protocol
 - Not accurate – “FOSC preauthorized to test SWAs”
 - Bring back to workgroup to discuss changing verbiage.
 - Bucket Test – not authorized to do that. Need approval from RRT.
 - “When to consider for use” – still accurate? Need updates?
 - Oiled vegetation? Addressed later.
 - “Marsh Madness” study. Referenced due to doing less was more helpful in these environments. Can die and grow back. “Less is best”
 - What is the concern with the FOSC to have preauthorization to test? MD does not have a problem. Not permitted per Subpart J. So, document is not consistent with Subpart J.
 - “Target areas” – still accurate? Need updates?
 - General applications requirements – add something about not normally using on vegetated areas? Bring in language about using compatible products with vegetation.
 - Criteria for Considering the Use of SWA
 - Change to bullet/flow chart format. Easier to digest.
 - Special Consideration Areas
 - #1 – “near” – need a better description
 - #2/6 – change “should” to “shall”
 - #3 – remove preauthorization reference
 - Appendix A
 - “To be Provided” – updates
 - SWA Protocol and Guidance Documents Highlights
- Scenario PS #3 – Surface Removal Options
- Oil Spill Response Application Checklist and Guidance Highlights
 - Annex 1. Zone descriptions – no changes
 - Appendix 2 – Letters of Agreement. R3 does not have any. Last updated in 2003, but nothing had been identified since then.
 - Agree to remove this Appendix.
 - Appendix 3 Decision Tree:
 - Explanation for decision tree. What is the Y/N question being asked? Do you have to meet all criteria in the box? Further discussion/review warranted regarding formatting. Are these and/or statements?
 - Ben DNREC mentions its difficult to get air monitoring people involved.
 - Oil Spill Response Application Checklist
 - Update title, description and opening paragraph

- Resources at risk? Page 22.
 - Reference RRT3 guides
 - #1/#1-D – update
 - No mention of offshore wind
- Wetland In-Situ Burn Evaluation Checklist
 - General cleanup/clarification/overhaul.
- Scenario #4 – Agricultural Response Discussion/Recommendations
- Whose responsibility is to know these documents and procedures?
 - RRT and FOSC
- Whose responsibility is it to make call about in-situ burning?
 - Unified command asking RRT
- Would we need farmer/landowner approval?
- Need considerations for permitting for runoff into wetlands
- TOC for Appendix 6D doesn't match other places
 - Condense checklists.
- SWA, and CI can be moved to Chemical Countermeasures use protocol?
- “What’s the best solution for this spill? Is burning in place better than tearing up the area and affecting what’s nearby?”
- Has this ever been done as a preferred course of action?
- If these documents were not printed for you would you know where to find them? Group should be familiarized.
- Is there anywhere in the RCP that lists response options for incident specific RRT activation? Not specifically addressed currently. Need to update somewhere. Table format?
- Was there a historic properties specialist activated? DOI says they can provide someone for guidance.
 - Consult with SHPO, then decision can be made regarding HPS activation. Addition of best practice document.
- **BREAK (1510-1525)**
- **FOSC/SOSC Highlights**
 - EPA Region 3 (Myles Bartos)
 - Retirement acknowledgements
 - Pre-deployments for large events.
 - NFL Draft – OSCs, ERT, USCG strike team. Air monitoring for safety
 - Pocono Raceway
 - FIFA Games in Philly and American 250 Events
 - USCG Sector Delaware Bay
 - March 10-11, scrap metal barge fire. Fire reported by Douglas J
 - Conducted internal hotwash, looking to do external partner hotwash
 - Government shutdown causes challenges, restricted training/exercises
 - Hosted Area Committee Meetings, Oil Wildlife Response Workshop

- New 65ft response vessel. To be commissioned June 9.
 - Cruise ships begin operating out of Philadelphia
 - TTX prep scheduled
 - 6 FIFA games, 250 Celebration and MLB All-Star game
- USCG Sector Maryland-NCR
 - 56 investigative cases have been received since beginning of calendar year. 1 federalized case.
 - Heating oil discharge in DC (January). Plant overfilled heating oil tanks by 15k gallons. Most ended up on the ground, ended up in storm drain.
 - Issues getting access to marina to perform cleanup
 - Good example of district engagement with another federal agency (DOEE)
 - Training: Hosted Environmental Response Investigator College (30 students), Annual prep exercise scheduled for late August (Tabletop) that will lead to a full scale later on.
 - Successful GOOEY
 - Key Bridge Reconstruction is in progress. Hydraulic oil discharges. Found that this is common during bridge constructions. Started internal protocol for this.
 - Adopted new ACP architecture.
 - Significant turnover this summer.
 - Introducing shortrange UAS causing constraints. Pilots are being directed internally to other missions. Having to rely more on local partners.
 - Thanks to Frank.
- USCG Sector Virginia
 - Challenges with funding. USCG was unfunded for 76 days. Some USCG civilians were not paid during this time. Funded as of last Thursday.
 - 333 NRC reports since last RRT Meeting.
 - 6 federalized cases
 - Christmas Eve, Lumen Tech, 3000-gal discharge into storm drain
 - Valentines Day weekend reported 50-gal JP-5. Several follow-up NRC reports. NOT 50-gal was 4000 gal?
 - Leveraged support from other agencies
 - Lessons – lean in more as responders, don’t always trust the report. Use all OGAs. Earlier notification. Implement ICS. Leverage admin order earlier. Communication management with state partners was a great best practice to garner public trust.
 - Major leadership changes this summer
 - Major June events
- USCG Sector Eastern Great Lakes
 - Dec 2025 – 2800 diesel on board. Working on salvage operations this week. Sink cause unknown.

- Exercises: Held Area Committee meeting, ACP Full Scale Exercise (June)
- USCG Sector North Carolina
 - 124 NRC reports, 24 letters of warning
 - May 2025 – contractors conducted dive operations. 6600 gal of diesel
 - Several UAS certifications recently
 - Change of command notifications
- MSU Huntington
 - Sister field Ferry – 1000 gal, did not have response plan. put out soft boom to minimize risk. Has been salvaged but put on a barge.
 - Lessons learned: was sunk for several days before anyone was aware due to occurrence in small town.
 - 600-gal potential release. Ended up being EPA jurisdiction in R5.
 - Marathon exercise. KY/WV boarder. 250 participants
 - MSO is leaving this summer.
- MSU Pittsburgh
 - Sunk/capsize dredge barge. 20k gal capacity, 12k on board. Water went in tank, didn't lose any diesel. Lube oil 20-25 gal discharged into Ohio River.
 - RP was quick to hire OSRO. Boom management
 - Barge was cut in place and placed on another barge for disposal.
 - Case lasted 2 months
 - Lost all small boat stations inland. Drone was very useful here in mitigating where to place boom to collect almost everything.
 - Training- Sector Ohio Valley put on a response in rivers training. AMSC exercise, SCAT training in 2 weeks in Nashville, NFL Draft (strike team deployed)
 - Light transfer season. Losing commanding officer (transfer occurring June 18)
- Delaware
 - Acknowledge military appreciation month
 - Banana boat docked at Willington and had an engine room fire.
 - 70 firefighters and EMTs
 - Barge fire
 - Challenge foe DE firefighters, because it kept moving between fire districts. Should have set up UC early in prep for movement of barge.
- Maryland
 - Truck/tank incidents (~10 events)
 - Refrigerated liquid tanker overturn
 - 2 leaking HCl train cars
- Pennsylvania
 - York Salvage Fire (Feb 26)

- Fire at a salvage facility, storing petroleum hydrocarbon products
 - Released into soil, tributary and Susquehanna River
 - Potential future RRT meeting topic
 - Tractor trailer accident
 - Carrying 400-gal diesel. Spill into reservoir. Water intake considerations.
 - Public use restriction considerations
 - Delaware River Basin spill training
 - Individual modeling from agencies. Sometimes models don't work together. Lesson learned – cooperate quickly so they don't conflict.
- Virginia
 - Potomac Interceptor Event
 - Potomac belongs to MD, but southern shore belongs to VA. VA was keeping tabs on event. Concerns for public health due to residents in this area.
 - DC, MD, VA testing and there was a want for a unified dashboard, but everyone was collecting data differently. It took time due to harmonizing data.
 - \$13.5 million grant received
 - Holly Ground call-out for support to get this grant.
 - CSX train derailment
 - Lesson learned: tribal consultation when it's not federalized. Some consultation should still occur. Having internal conversations for state-leading incident guidelines for consultation.
 - Series of regional readiness summits. Open forum to capture capability gaps. Lot of turnovers in agency leadership, preparedness knowledge has gaps. See it has an opportunity to expand this knowledge from the summits.
 - Inland Oil Spill class shoutout.
 - Lots of work on abandoned derelict vessels. Initiated an informal group. First meeting this past week.
 - Lots of retirement opportunities are coming up in the next year. Planning succession. Want to spend time trying to capture knowledge, many things are not written down only kept in minds.
- West Virginia (Brad Wright)
 - AEP Transformer ~5k gal tank vandalized and leaked into creek. Impacted drinking water intake. Intense public reception
 - Another transformer 14k tank failure at the same time
 - Industrial Accident – Institute, WV
 - Nitric acid and strong base mixing H₂S gas release

- Norfolk Southern Derailment. Confusion on jurisdiction, because 0.5 mile from VA. Norfolk Southern cleaning lines. Heavy metals release
 - Interest in instantaneous information. Focus on fast information to the public.
 - Nate Meadows is on deployment for Air Guard for the next month.
 - He took on additional duties outside of response.
 - District of Columbia
 - Not present.
- **Closing Remarks & Meeting Adjournment** (Mike and Kelly)
 - Mike – Potomac Interceptor discussion
 - Conversations about CERCLA designations. FEMA stepped in.
 - EPA OSCs are very busy. Information needs are intense in the current climate.
 - Emphasize workgroup accomplishments.
 - Exercise focuses on freshening up documents and knowledge of locations.
 - Appreciation to R2 for showing up.
 - Thanks to Frank.
 - Thanks to Kevin Holcomb for use of facility.
 - Kelly – reminder of Happy Hour at Ropewalk tonight 1730.
- Sabina reminds group of Inland Area Committee Meeting.
- Adjourned 16:43.

Meeting Attendance Roster	
Attendee Name	Attendee Organization
Alfonso, Arian	USCG D5
Anderson, Ben	DNREC
Avila, Juan Carlos	USCG D5
Banda, JoAnn	DOI - USFWS
Bartos, Myles	US EPA
Bastias, Sabina	US EPA
Belcer, Joshua	USCG D8
Bodner, Christopher	USCG D5
Brown, Holly	VDEQ
Byrns, Michael	CDC ATSDR
Chase, Justin	USCG D5

Ciani, Lydia	START – Tetra Tech
Clark, Kevin	US EPA
Collison, Candice	MD-DNR
Cook, Elisha	USCG D5
Csulak, Frank	DOC - NOAA
Davis, Steve	US EPA
Delean, Blair	NOAA
Dinkins, Sam	ORSANCO
Donahue, Geoffrey	MDE
Eagler, Christopher	NRC
Feist, Brian	PEMA
Fernandez, Roger	USEPA
Fontenot, Steven	VDEQ
Gawarzewski, Joey	US EPA
Gaynor, Kevin	US EPA
Goodrich, James	US EPA
Guzzetti, Christopher	US EPA
Hein, Emily	Other
Heym, Kevin	US EPA
Hoppe, Michael	US EPA
Hughlett, Emily	USCG D9
Humes, Eric	DC DOEE
Jolley, Justin	USCG D8
Jones, Doug	DOI
Jordan, Tom	VDEM
Keese, Jesse	NRC

Lohman, Elizabeth	VDEQ
Martin, Josie	US EPA
McElhaney, Josh	USCG D5
McKelvey, Ray	Gallagher Marine Systems, LLC
Mingledolph, Juvart	DC DOEE
Moore, Brian	PA DEP
Muse, Katlyn	Tri-State Bird Rescue
Nelson, John	DOI
Nilsen, Ashley	US EPA
Nunez, Candice	DOD USACE
Nyman, Jennifer	USCG D5
Pellegrino, Carl	US EPA
Pillow, Lauren	VDEQ
Porter, Benjamin	DOD USACE
Scheaffer, Sarah	DOI – FWS
Smith, Jess	START – Tetra Tech
Sproles, Scott	VDEM
Strickland, Brooke	VDEQ
Takaki, Daniel	DOC – NOAA
Tarpley, John	NOAA
Thorkilson, Kelly	USCG D5
Tinkham, Seth	DOI
Towle, Micheal	US EPA
Townsend, Tracy	OSHA
Ventura, Dominic	US EPA
Walker, Ann Hayward	SEA Consulting

Walter, Hannah	USCG D5
Weiser, Christopher	DHS
Welsh, Monet	USCG D5
Wickersham, Jon	Inland Response
Wilkinson, James	MSRC
Wilson, Daniel	Tri-State Bird Rescue
Wright, Brad	WVDEP
Ziolkowski, Lila	ORSANCO