



Regional Response Team II Spring 2025 Meeting Notes

Meadowlands Environmental Center
Two DeKorte Park Plaza
Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071
June 11-12, 2025, 0830-1615

Participating Entities:

- US EPA Region 2
 - USCG 1st District – Sector Long Island Sound, Sector Delaware Bay, Sector New York
 - US ACE
 - FEMA Region 2
 - CDC
 - ATSDR
 - GSA
 - NOAA
 - US DOI
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
 - OSHA
 - NYS DEC
 - NJ DEP
 - NJ SP
 - PEOSH
 - Weston Solutions START VI
 - Clean Harbors Cooperative
 - CTEH
 - Con Edison
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Note: During the executive session only federal/state agencies were present.

RRT2 Subcommittee Updates:

RRT2 Website Redesign Subcommittee:

- The RRT2 website redesign based on Region 10's website is still not active.
- Website redesign will centralize all content onto one website, instead of aggregating links to other websites.
- The new RRT2 website will replace the old website except for the RRT2 calendar.



RRT2 Subcommittee Updates:

RRT2 Website Redesign Subcommittee:

Action Items:

- Review RCP Appendices and add to new website.
- Post ACPs and GRPs on the new RRT2 website.
- Post the meeting notes on the RRT2 website.
- A decision needs to be made on whether to maintain the old website as a repository.
- Add Appendix 8 to the RRT2 website for ESA Consultation.
- The new website should be active by August 2025.

RRT2 Calendar Subcommittee:

- The RRT2 calendar will remain on the old website.
- The calendar will be used to list interagency training and exercise opportunities.
- EPA will maintain the calendar and post the training opportunities provided by each agency.

Action Items:

- Each agency will email EPA their interagency training opportunities monthly to be posted on the calendar.
- The calendar will be active this summer.

Oil Spill BMP Subcommittee:

- The first draft of the RRT2 Oil Spill BMP was submitted to the team on 6/10.
- The RRT2 Oil Spill BMP was based on RRT3's BMP.
- The BMP was revised to be based on activity rather than resource for ease of use by responders.
- Input from all agencies present was requested by the Oil Spill BMP subcommittee.
- Josie Martin is the EPA point of contact for the Oil Spill BMP subcommittee.
- It was suggested that the subcommittee meet every 6 weeks until the Fall 2025 RRT2 meeting to finalize the Oil Spill BMP.

Action Items:

- Verify all contacts in the Oil Spill BMP and add in any missing contacts
- Expand the subcommittee to include a representative from each member agency.
- Add BMPs for air monitoring.
- Add BMPs for data management.
- Set the date and time for the next subcommittee meeting.
- Finalize the Oil Spill BMP by the Fall 2025 RRT2 meeting.

Agreements and MOU Review:

- Many of the MOU pre-authorizations have not been revised since the 1990s and may not be enforceable.

Agreements and MOU Review:

- The use of dispersants may require political approval; the Dispersant MOU should be revised to anticipate this need.
- It was suggested that RRT2 could adapt the RRT1 Process Guide to streamline the approval process during emergency responses.
- Revising the in-situ oil burning MOU based on the CRT documentation was discussed.

Action Items:

- Add a presentation and discussion of the RRT1 Process Guide at the Fall 2025 RRT2 meeting agenda.
- Review and revise where appropriate all RRT2 MOUs.

Federal Agency Impact Reports and Response Capabilities:**DOI Fish & Wildlife:**

- Fish and Wildlife has been affected by the new administration's shift in funding for the agency
- Fish and Wildlife has been affected by a loss of experienced personnel due to retirements and layoffs.
- Funding issues for response planning and coordination have occurred since the new administration was sworn in. Change in requested language from response coordination to response product.

USCG 1st District:

- 1/3 of all personnel rotate yearly
- Pollution response personnel are still status quo.
- Increased focus in the southern and northern border from the new administration.
- A new USCG Commandant was sworn in.
- The number of USCG admirals was reduced by 25%.

NOAA:

- No RRT2 team personnel changes.
- Reduction in emergency response personnel by 30.
- Mission Impact: longer timeline for support and decrease in quality from loss of experience.
- SSCs are expected to have to wait 2-3 days for approval to mobilize on-scene.
- Approvals are now coming from the Department of Commerce rather than from within NOAA.

Federal Agency Impact Reports and Response Capabilities:

US ACE:

- Agency has been affected by a reduction in personnel.
- US ACE now has to share resources between districts which could cause strains on response capabilities during hurricane season.
- The ACE deputy is leaving the agency on 7/1/
- ACE general is leaving on 7/25, a new general will be appointed.

ATSDR:

- Reduction in personnel and funding at the CDC has affected ATSDR.
- Significant reductions in personnel have occurred.
- All public communications from ATSDR have been paused.
- No travel approvals have been issued.
- ATSDR is potentially moving to the Agency for a Healthy America.
- EOC still exists
- Tox still exists.

FEMA:

- FEMA is experiencing staffing shortages from reductions in personnel, coordination with the Department of Defense especially affected.
- Significant funding cuts have occurred, funding for hurricane response has not been affected yet.
- FEMA can still supply force packages.
- Surge accounts (FOS) still exists.
- Disaster funding has been taking longer to approve.
- FEMA's mission remains unchanged.
- Regional leadership is unchanged.
- FEMA is hosting an interagency training exercise at joint-base Earl in July.

GSA:

- Significant (63%) reduction in personnel.
- Change from regional administrations to a national focus with one administrator.
- Emergency Management personnel remains the same in R2.
- Approval has to come through the central office leadership.
- Restructuring of the agency is still on-going.

DOI:

- Dianne Lisinki retired, Matthias Benko has assumed her role in the agency.
- Loss in senior leadership as part of significant reductions in the agency's personnel: down 10,000 people.

DOI (continued):

- Response capabilities still intact.
- Only mission critical travel has been approved.
- Potential for further restructuring within the agency.

EPA:

- Still chance for future reorganization and reductions in personnel.
- R2 has 10 unfilled OSC positions and 2 supervisory positions.
- EPA has had issues with contracting which could lead to issues mobilizing contractors who have had to float more money than expected.
- Reduction in 1,000 personnel across the agency.
- Travel still approved.
- EPA R2 has not received the full fiscal year 2025 budget.
- No change to the mission, but operations have slowed down.
- RRT2 new co-chair is Kelli Lucarino. Eric Daly and Carl Pellegrino have also stepped into leadership roles on the RRT2 team.

NY DEC:

- Impacts from inconsistent federal funding.
- NY governor looking to support laid off federal civil servants by hiring them for state positions.
- BY OEM coordinator has returned.

Note: Private entities were present for the open session portion of the Spring 2025 meeting.

New Marine Environmental Response & Preparedness (MERP) Instruction/Manual Discussion:

- An internal USCH document that includes policies, guidelines, and procedures for marine environmental responses.
- MERP Manual revised every 5 years.
- RRT support requested to revise ESA, EFH, HPA portions of the manual and any other sections that team members could support with.

Action Items:

- Coordinate interagency support for the MERP manual revisions.

ACP Reformatting/Updating:

- ACP has been reorganized for ease of use by USCG FOSCs.
- New information included in annexes and compendiums. (NRDAR, S&T, Seafood liaison)
- USCG requests RRT2 subject matter experts input for updating the ACP.

ACP Reformatting/Updating:

Action Items:

- Brian Attardo will email the RRT2 team which sections of the ACP need to be reviewed by subject matter experts. It also requested that team members volunteer to review sections they have subject expertise in.
- Add section of the ACP on surface washing agents.
- Develop responder friendly resources like an ACP phone application.
- Store the ACPs on the new RRT2 website.

Endangered Species Act (ESA) Overview & USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Tool:

- Fish & Wildlife trustees for ESA, have signed MOUs with other agencies.
- Fish & Wildlife support response efforts with subject matter experts, training, committee membership, tools, and guides.
- ESI maps of species live on IRMA, but R2 map has not been updated since 2016.
- Can use IPaC website to develop species list. (use beta website for training).
- Official species list process can be completed using IPaC website
- Lake Champlagne ESI in development will be live by 12/2025.

NRDAR:

- Objective to return area to baseline from spill and response activities.
- Need to collect ephemeral data during spill response to meet NRDAR requirements.
- Ordra_Docs website for DOI NRDAR cases.
- Plans must be released from public comment.

Overview of Meadowland Research and Restoration Institute (MRRI) & Meadowlands Environmental Center:

- Bergen county was the organic chemical waste recycling capital of NJ. This and other industrial activity led to significant environmental degradation and pollution.
- MRRI collects environmental data for local agencies, planners, developers, and lawyers.
- Maintains continuous monitoring data database from the last 27 years including water quality, air quality, land use changes, sea level rise, and sedimentation rates.
- All data is available on EPA's WQX website.
- Land use change monitored using drones: multispectral DGI and True Camera DGI. Issues getting DGI drone now.

EPA ESF-10 Response Activities: SoCal Wildfire ESF-10 Response:

- Wildfires were exacerbated by the Santa Anna winds (sustained gusts of 3-40 mph).
- Two separate fire Eaton (9,400 structures affected) and Pacific Palisades (6,800 structures affected).

EPA ESF-10 Response Activities: SoCal Wildfire ESF-10 Response:

- Mission: Phase 1 Removal of debris including oil, HHM, ACM, and Lithium-Ion batteries.
- Recon teams were deployed with a MultiRAE and Ludlum to identify structures that required removal of HHM, oil, lithium-ion batteries, or ACM. Also identified dangerous situations to avoid.
- HHM staging area selected was the Altadena municipal golf course.
- Lithium-Ion batteries were transported using fire blankets for safety to the staging areas.
- EPA also supported remediation of fire effected water reservoirs (ESF-3)

SoCal Wildfire Response Challenges:

- Expedited response time (30 day goal)
- Staging area placement (NIMBYs)
- Site-security: response was open to public, homeowners were able to return to their properties. This led to increased interactions with the public and communication was key to success.
- Mudslides limited access at times.

Lithium-Ion Battery Response Case Study:

- Two large scale responses conducted by EPA: Maui wildfire response and SoCal wildfire response.
- Burning lithium-ion batteries release high concentrations of toxic gases: Hydrogen gas, HF, IDLH conditions for heavy metals (Ni, Li)
- ERG is a good resource during response of an active lithium-ion battery fire.
- Battery construction and chemical makeup are trade secrets. Not every battery will have the same chemical makeup.

Response Cleanup:

- Always bring an electrician.
- Conduct air and thermal monitoring during removal, transportation, and staging of batteries
- Cross sensitivity between CO/LEL with Hydrogen gas has been found. If CO and LEL are increasing, it is highly likely that Hydrogen gas is increasing.
- Shredder can be used to process discharged batteries.
- Industry is waiting for regulations to catch up. Limited guidance is available at this time.
- Increasing issue due to increased prevalence of lithium-ion batteries.

Action Items:

- Conduct an interagency lithium-ion battery response TTX.

Case Study: Rt 31 Sludge Site (PFAS):

- EPA recently added PFAS as a hazardous material regulated by CERCLA.
- Drinking water MCLs established (4 ppt PFOA, PFOS; 10 ppt PFON).
- Actual goal 0 ppt, but unachievable at this time.
- Source was fabric manufacturing sludge.
- Nearby WWTP could be secondary source of PFAS.
- Kars, fractured bedrock and limited soil cover has allowed PFAS to travel vertically and horizontally through groundwater.

Environmental Unit Job Aid:

- Document explaining subject matter experts; role within ICS as part of environmental unit.
- Revising RRT3's document for RRT2 and potentially other regions.

Action Items:

- Revise RRT3 Environmental Unit Job Aid for RRT2.

State Agency Reports:

Note: NY state representatives left before the state agency reports were held.

New Jersey:

- NJ has 12 field responders between the northern and southern response regions of the state.
- 700 reports so far in 2025.
- Case study on the vegetable oil release response.

Federal Agency Reports:**FEMA:**

- Prepare for hurricane season.
- RSCC exercise to be held at joint-base Earl 7/25.
- No risk meetings will be held, only monthly interagency call will be held.
- ESF9 coordinator retired and the position has not yet been filled.
- Delays in emergency declarations from the new administration.

ATSDR:

- NCEH is attempting to rehire some laid off staff.
- No upcoming interagency trainings approved yet.

DOI:

- Interagency Upper Delaware release response TTX to be held with the National Park Service 6/24/2025.
- DOI holding a training for USCG 9th District on protecting historic first nation archeological sites on the Great Lakes during spill response activities with the St Regis Mohawk tribe.

EPA:

- Significant Actions: Rt 31 Sludge Disposal Site, SoCal Wildfire Response, Cooper Chemical
- Developing the RRT2 website and calendar
- Upper Delaware release response TTX to be held with the National Park Service 6/24/2025.
- Joint R2/R3 Inland Delaware River Spill Response TTX being planned.
- Reduction in OSCs (10 open vacancies).

USCG Sector Eastern Great Lakes:

- Significant Actions: M/V Still Watch abandoned at port and sunk with HHW, ACM, and 56,000 gallons of oily water on board.
- USCG Eastern Great Lakes continues to collaborate with member agencies.
- Low frequency of pollution related events has led to inexperience in the Eastern Great Lakes district.
- 7/21/2025 virtual SCAT training will be held.
- 7/28/2025-8/1/2025 MTS disruption
- There was a change of command on 5/30/2025.

USCG Sector Long Island Sound:

- 26 pollutions responses in 2025.
- Significant Actions: M/V Miss Freeport V – 120 gallons of oily water was pumped out of the vessel before it sunk.
- Electric Vehicle fire training exercise at Port Jeff planned for 9/2025.

USCG Sector New York:

- Significant Actions: M/V Evelyn Cutler response. 50 gallons of oil spilled, responsible party was fined.
- Alternative fuel workshop scheduled for 9/10/2025.
- Sector increasing use of Field Maps as a response tool.

USCG Sector Delaware Bay:

- Significant Actions: M/V Algoma carrying solar salts ran aground in Delaware River. An unusual high tide allowed the vessel to re-float and be repaired
- PREP TTX scheduled for 8/14/2025.

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