What happened?

• 0845 Saturday, November 7, 2015
  • 25 rail cars derailed along the rail line on the east side of the Mississippi River in the Upper Mississippi Fish & Wildlife Refuge. *Caused by improper use of dynamic brakes.*
  • 9 derailed cars were carrying denatured ethanol w/ 1-5% gasoline denaturant. *Other cars were empty auto carriers.*
  • 5 of the 9 leaked an amount of ethanol up to approximately 20,000 gallons
Quad Copter Photo
What happened?

• 0845 Saturday, November 7, 2015
  • One ethanol car had a breach, the other 4 leaked out of various valves and manways. *All were older DOT 111 cars.*
  • The majority of the product leaked into the ballast, an unknown amount actually released into the Mississippi.
  • Local FD issued a voluntary evacuation as a precaution, was lifted by 1 PM. *They left after BNSF arrived.*
  • OSC Maguire dispatched early afternoon, arrived mid evening – It was dark…
Breached tank car – Day 2
Wreckage
Wreckage
Observations

• No sheen ever reported by responders
  • Likely very low % denaturant, closer to 1%
  • Measurable BTEX in ballast (significant) and water column (very low)

• No fish kill or DO drop.
  • Could be due to water conditions or size of system vs. size of spill

• High levels of ethanol in ballast and lower amounts in water column.
  • Could cause long term issues
Tactics
Water Monitoring/Sampling
Incident Command Implementation

• BNSF created initial objectives on own and began producing an IAP on own before regulators got there.
• No initial meeting schedule or plans of meetings
• EPA brought in WDNR, USFWS together with BNSF for Unified Command.
• Restructured and began planning P officially on day 2
Media
Media

- Senator Tammy Baldwin (D)
- FRA Administrator
- FRA Regional Administrator
- BNSF from Houston
- Local Officials
- Media from Twin Cities, Madison and local areas.
Moving Forward

- WDNR and USFWS involved in oversight of long term monitoring plan
BNSF Ethanol Spill

• Questions?