

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of: \*

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CPKC TRAIN DERAILMENT IN \*

BORDULAC, NORTH DAKOTA \*

Accident No.: RRD24LR012

ON JULY 5, 2024 \*

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Interview of: JAY BONEBRAKE, Manager, Bridge Maintenance  
Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC)

Jamestown, North Dakota

Monday,  
July 8, 2024

APPEARANCES:

DAVID CASACELI, Investigator-in-Charge  
National Transportation Safety Board

TODD ANDERSON, Track Safety Inspector  
Federal Railroad Administration

MATHEW SCHERBING, Investigator  
Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees

CHARLIE DUFFY, Assistant General Manager, Production  
Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC)

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I N T E R V I E W

(8:40 a.m.)

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2  
3 MR. CASACELI: My name is David Casaceli and I am the  
4 investigator-in-charge for the National Transportation Safety  
5 Board for this accident. We are here today on July 8th at about  
6 8:40 a.m. in -- at the Fairfield Inn in Jamestown, North Dakota,  
7 to conduct an interview with Jay Bonebrake, who works for the CPKC  
8 railroad as a manager of bridge maintenance. The interview is in  
9 conjunction with NTSB's investigation of the CPKC derailment near  
10 Bordulac, North Dakota. The NTSB reference number for this  
11 accident is RRD24LR012. The purpose of this investigation is to  
12 increase safety, not to assign fault, blame, or liability.

13 Before we begin our interview and questions, let's go around  
14 the table and introduce ourselves, please spell your last name,  
15 state who you're representing and your formal job title. I would  
16 like to remind everyone to speak clearly so we can get an accurate  
17 recording. I'll start off and pass it to my right. Again, my  
18 name is David Casaceli, C-a-s-a-c-e-l-i, and I am the NTSB  
19 investigator-in-charge for this accident.

20 MR. ANDERSON: Todd Anderson, A-n-d-e-r-s-o-n, FRA track  
21 safety inspector, Bismarck, North Dakota, 15 years.

22 MR. SCHERBING: Mat Scherbing, M-a-t-h-e-w, and then  
23 Scherbing, S-c-h-e-r-b-i-n-g, BMWED portion.

24 MR. DUFFY: Charlie Duffy, D-u-f-f-y, I'm with CPKC,  
25 Assistant General Manager, Production, out of St. Paul.

1 MR. BONEBRAKE: Jay Bonebrake, B-o-n-e-b-r-a-k-e, I'm the  
2 manager of bridge maintenance for CPKC.

3 MR. CASACELI: Great. And we talked a little bit before, you  
4 understand we're recording our discussion today?

5 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yes.

6 MR. CASACELI: And you understand the transcription of this  
7 interview will become part of the public docket and we can't  
8 guarantee any confidentiality?

9 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yes.

10 MR. CASACELI: Okay. And we discussed you could have a  
11 representative with you here today, would you like to do so?

12 MR. BONEBRAKE: No, I think Charlie's enough.

13 MR. CASACELI: Very well. Okay, so I'll start everyone and  
14 I'll ask, as you start a new line of questioning, to announce your  
15 name for the transcriptionist, to make things easy.

16 INTERVIEW OF JAY BONEBRAKE

17 BY MR. CASACELI:

18 Q. So Jay, first off, can you give me a synopsis of your work  
19 experience, taking you up to your current role?

20 A. I guess I started as a laborer in 1996, I became a supervisor  
21 in 2013, roadmaster in 2015, and I just currently took this role,  
22 MBM, a year ago, approximately a year ago. A year and a half.

23 Q. Can you talk to me a little bit about what the roles and  
24 responsibilities of a manager of bridge maintenance are?

25 A. We manage all the inspections, daily work activities for the

1 -- for the crews, come up with repair plans, scope of work.

2 Q. And when you say for the crews and the work, what work are  
3 you -- are your crews doing and what are they inspecting?

4 A. We do minor maintenance, minor maintenance. The crews are --  
5 they inspect the culverts, you have to have -- bridge class  
6 supervisor is in charge of bridges.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. Supervisor and above inspects bridges. The local crews, they  
9 go do minor work on the bridges, inspect culverts.

10 Q. So you mentioned culvert inspections there, what's --

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. -- the process or requirements or timelines for culvert  
13 inspections?

14 A. One inspection every calendar year.

15 Q. And what do those inspections entail or what does a typical  
16 inspection look like on, say, some 48-inch concrete pipes?

17 A. Well, you go give them a visual inspection, if possible, if  
18 they're not full of water. If they are full of water, you make  
19 sure that they're flowing water. And if they are -- if they're  
20 plugged, we'll put something through them, get the water to flow.  
21 If they're open, you can look inside with flashlights and a  
22 visual, visual inspection.

23 Q. Okay. And how are those recorded?

24 A. In our SAMS, it's a -- I don't even know the -- structures  
25 asset management.

1 Q. And what do those records look like, what information is  
2 contained on them?

3 A. It contains -- you have the inlet/outlet, you get a rating,  
4 it's one through five and then a nine, one being new to excellent  
5 and down the line, four, needs repair. Five is immediate repair.  
6 Nine is out of service.

7 Q. Nine is out of service.

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. So if a culvert was rated somewhere that needed some repair  
10 of some kind, was that -- will that record also include text notes  
11 of what that issue is or would that be somewhere else?

12 A. No, it will -- there is a spot in there for comments and it's  
13 usually an end separation or a ballast, ballast pile in the  
14 middle, partially blocked.

15 Q. Okay.

16 A. They're pretty brief.

17 Q. And I think you mentioned this already, but who does the  
18 culvert inspections?

19 A. Our crews, local crews.

20 Q. Okay. And so how many culvert inspections would a local crew  
21 do in a given year or a single individual do in a given year?

22 A. Oh. A thousand.

23 Q. A lot.

24 A. A lot.

25 Q. Okay. Okay, so --

1 A. And that's per crew, one individual. I always send out two  
2 guys --

3 Q. Um-hum.

4 A. -- because you're walking up and down steep banks. And it's  
5 faster, one can go down one side and one can go down the other.

6 Q. Okay. When it comes to the culvert in the derailment area,  
7 are you familiar with that culvert?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Okay. Can you talk to me about anything you know about that  
10 culvert that might be relevant to the investigation?

11 A. Well, I know the one pipe had a one and two rating, good to  
12 excellent, free flowing, no obstructions, everything good. The  
13 other culvert had a two and a three, it was previously separated  
14 and we cleaned out the top of it, laid the concrete, repaired the  
15 separation, and we did not have a truck available to knock down  
16 the pile of debris in it, ballast and sediment inside the culvert.  
17 But typically, if you get a heavy flow, that pushes out. It  
18 wasn't a complete blockage, so we rated it a three, so that's  
19 where we got the two/three rating.

20 Q. Do you recall when this work was performed?

21 A. Approximately a year ago.

22 Q. So you said that it was previously separated, do you recall  
23 where that separation was?

24 A. I do not know.

25 Q. Okay. And just a little bit more detail on the work

1 performed, when you said you cleaned out the top of it, does that  
2 mean you dug down through the (indiscernible) section to get  
3 through it or do you recall?

4 A. Yeah, yeah. Typically, when they separate, it's on a  
5 shoulder, it's off to the side because they'll fall down, the end  
6 will tip, which opens up the top.

7 Q. Um-hum.

8 A. We'll take our clam bucket, take all the material off the  
9 top, pack it with concrete bags, cover it up.

10 Q. Okay. Do you recall any other prior history or information  
11 related to that culvert?

12 A. No.

13 Q. Do you know when that culvert was last inspected?

14 A. June 5th of this year.

15 Q. Do you know who did that inspection?

16 A. Walter Springstead.

17 Q. Do you know anything interesting about that inspection or  
18 does it --

19 A. No, I know he did the inspection and we talked about it, he  
20 said that the debris was still in the pipe, they didn't have a  
21 chance to go knock it down. But we're in the process of doing our  
22 scope of work for next year and we did put that pipe in for a  
23 replacement.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. For next year. Due to its age, location.

1 Q. And if you were able -- what would that work have looked like  
2 that was -- if it was scheduled, do you have a plan on what you're  
3 going to put in there or how you're going to do the work?

4 A. There are 48s in there.

5 Q. Um-hum.

6 A. Concrete. We probably would've put the double 48 smooth-bore  
7 steel.

8 Q. So as far as typical culvert maintenance issues, was this  
9 some sort of extraordinary failure a year ago, was this very  
10 typical work?

11 A. It's typical.

12 Q. About how many times a year will you have a culvert that  
13 needs some sort of action like this and say not just a separation  
14 but something that's, you know, a half a day or a day's worth of  
15 work?

16 A. I have only been in my position for a year, a year and a  
17 half, but when I was roadmaster, usually at springtime you can get  
18 a lot any time the ground is super saturated.

19 Q. Okay, so then it wasn't an extraordinary repair, it was  
20 fairly typical?

21 A. Yes, fairly typical.

22 Q. What's your territory? I didn't ask that at the beginning.

23 A. I go from Glenwood, Minnesota to Portal to mile -- what's  
24 Glenwood, Charlie?

25 MR. DUFFY: One twenty-four.

1 MR. BONEBRAKE: About 124 to 550.3. And then I go from  
2 Glenwood to Noyes.

3 MR. DUFFY: Three eighty.

4 MR. BONEBRAKE: Three eighty.

5 MR. DUFFY: Which is 240. Or 260, excuse me.

6 BY MR. CASACELI:

7 Q. Yeah, so ballpark, about a hundred miles?

8 A. About 700 miles.

9 Q. Ballpark, 700 miles.

10 A. With little branch lines.

11 Q. Do you know how many culverts are on that territory?

12 A. Approximately 2,000. Nineteen and some change. Right around  
13 1900, 2,000.

14 Q. So across that territory or in your experience as a  
15 roadmaster, if you were working in the same area, presumably here  
16 in North Dakota, have you ever had any experience with a culvert  
17 collapse or a subgrade failure near a culvert, is that something  
18 that's typical or has happened?

19 A. I haven't, I haven't seen it.

20 Q. Okay.

21 A. I've never seen a total collapse of a culvert.

22 MR. CASACELI: I think that's all I have for now. Is it all  
23 right if we let these guys ask you some questions?

24 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yeah.

25 MR. CASACELI: Go ahead.

1 BY MR. ANDERSON:

2 Q. Todd Anderson, FRA track safety inspector. Do the track  
3 inspectors, do the regularly assigned track inspectors, Brad  
4 Herman, does he report any of these drainage defects?

5 A. Yes. Yeah.

6 Q. And he had nothing to report?

7 A. Not recently.

8 Q. What was the distance between those two 48-inch culverts?

9 A. Approximately three feet. And I'm just going off of what I  
10 was told, I don't personally know.

11 Q. Is that on your track chart?

12 A. The culverts?

13 Q. The culvert distance.

14 A. No.

15 MR. ANDERSON: Do you know that?

16 MR. DUFFY: I don't -- this is Charlie Duffy, I don't believe  
17 that it's actually in there, the centers or anything like that.

18 MR. ANDERSON: Okay.

19 MR. DUFFY: Not of the ones that I uploaded, at least.

20 MR. ANDERSON: All right, that's all I have.

21 BY MR. SCHERBING:

22 Q. Mat Scherbing, BMWED. Do you know which one of the two  
23 culverts, was it the east or the west one that had a one and two  
24 rating?

25 A. I do, but not -- I don't have it with me.

1 Q. Okay.

2 MR. CASACELI: That would be on the records.

3 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yes.

4 BY MR. SCHERBING:

5 Q. Yeah. So you brought up the SAMS, I believe it was, right,  
6 for reporting the defects at culverts?

7 A. Yeah.

8 Q. Is there another program or do our track inspectors, do they  
9 report in that SAMS, as well?

10 A. Track inspectors have TAMS.

11 Q. Okay.

12 A. Track asset management.

13 Q. Okay.

14 A. They also have culverts to inspect. Typically, they work  
15 with the 36-inch and smaller.

16 Q. Okay. I come from BM, so it always --

17 A. Yeah.

18 Q. -- seems different, right, over the railroad. Yeah.

19 A. And then if they have one -- they have to do so many  
20 inspections a year, I don't remember what their quota is, but --  
21 yeah. And then if they have an issue with them, they contact us.

22 Q. Do you know if the two inspections, do they correlate, like  
23 the SAMS --

24 A. No.

25 Q. -- and the TAMS? They don't correlate. So like a track

1 inspector couldn't see what culverts --

2 A. No.

3 MR. SCHERBING: Okay, that's -- that's all I have.

4 BY MR. DUFFY:

5 Q. Chuck -- pardon me, Charlie Duffy with CPKC. Is it all right  
6 if I just try to help a little bit of clarification on the -- on  
7 the inspection process?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. And again, it's been a while since I was in the structures  
10 group, but just going back to what you were just saying, Jay,  
11 about the responsibility for track inspectors.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. I believe and again, I may -- is it okay to kind of speak  
14 freely on this, try to get this across? So my understanding is  
15 that the track inspectors do a visual inspection more or less from  
16 the roadbed, they don't hike down, does that sound right?

17 A. That is correct. They just do it visually from --

18 Q. Right. And I believe the responsibility is to do -- do it  
19 once a year and then typically either in spring or fall, where we  
20 see more water.

21 A. More flow.

22 Q. Does that sound right, as far as the process?

23 A. That's what they try to do.

24 Q. Correct, okay. And then going back to -- because you had  
25 mentioned the frequency of inspections and that was the one I

1 wanted to make sure I was -- from the red book standards, is it 36  
2 inches, the cut?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. So the frequency of inspections on pipes that are less  
5 than 36-inch, for an internal inspection, what's that frequency?

6 A. If it's in our SAMS program, it's once a year.

7 Q. Okay, because I think --

8 A. It used to be --

9 Q. -- it was once every three years?

10 A. -- every three years.

11 Q. And then the larger pipes?

12 A. That got --

13 Q. We should get clarification on that because there's, I  
14 believe --

15 A. It changed a few years ago --

16 Q. Did it? Okay.

17 A. -- to -- instead of once every three years, now it's every  
18 year.

19 Q. And then your team -- and just to clarify, I think you said  
20 this, but your team would do the visual internal inspections.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Climbing down the bank and looking in there at that, whatever  
23 that required for --

24 A. Correct.

25 MR. DUFFY: Okay. Okay, I think that's all, I just wanted to

1 kind of clarify on some of the -- I understood good on the  
2 frequency.

3 BY MR. CASACELI:

4 Q. Another question I didn't think of when we were talking the  
5 first time -- David, NTSB -- would there be a record of which side  
6 or where that previous separation was? Would that be anywhere or  
7 do you recall?

8 A. I don't recall. Like, I think -- I don't even think it was  
9 recorded, the repair. I think the culvert was already previously  
10 inspected and we got a call that we were losing ballast in there  
11 and they went and made the repair.

12 Q. So when you say you got a call, like would it have been from  
13 the track inspector or --

14 A. From the track inspector or somebody.

15 Q. Okay. What records would be available of that repair, from  
16 none to whatever?

17 A. I don't think there would be one.

18 Q. Okay. Is that typical?

19 A. Yes.

20 MR. DUFFY: Maybe, if I can -- Charlie with CPKC again. When  
21 we do see separation, I think we talked a little bit, kind of  
22 alluded to -- and this last one, we said the track inspector, what  
23 would they typically note? If we think we're having a problem  
24 with separation, what would -- what would be the visual that  
25 they're seeing from above?

1 MR. BONEBRAKE: Oh, the visual is -- it would be a deviation  
2 in the ballast line, it would be losing rock. You know, they  
3 might have to grab a shovel and fill up a little area on the side  
4 or --

5 MR. DUFFY: So you typically see some manifestation of it up  
6 on the surface side --

7 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yes.

8 MR. DUFFY: -- of the roadbed track area, okay.

9 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yes.

10 BY MR. CASACELI:

11 Q. And I think this will be helpful. So in a typical culvert  
12 separation or something like that, is that a failure that needs to  
13 be repaired immediately because the entire track structure's about  
14 to fall into a hole or usually you got some time on that one?

15 A. No, we usually get there the next day.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. We usually run, run to those.

18 Q. Okay.

19 A. And if we can't, if it's not up in the track bed itself --

20 Q. Like on the shoulder, like --

21 A. Like on the shoulder or something, we might -- if we're  
22 halfway across the state in a project, we'll call the section, can  
23 you go out and throw some sandbags in it, because a sandbag will  
24 wedge itself in the hole and they'll go out there and they'll tell  
25 us, they'll look in the hole and say yes, it's not working, then

1 we -- then we go.

2 Q. Okay.

3 MR. DUFFY: Yeah, maybe again -- Charlie with CPKC. Maybe  
4 again -- so train crews would sometimes report these, is that  
5 correct?

6 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yeah, train crews, train crews do report  
7 those.

8 MR. DUFFY: So what would -- you know, maybe just to be -- it  
9 might be worthwhile just as far as kind of a timeline on when  
10 these things, if and when they manifest, what would -- typically,  
11 if a train crew called in, from your understanding, how would that  
12 get communicated within CPKC?

13 MR. BONEBRAKE: A dispatcher, they'll report it to the  
14 dispatcher, the dispatcher will get a hold of either myself or a  
15 crew in the area and we get eyes on it and see what it needs.

16 BY MR. CASACELI:

17 Q. So when you say get eyes on it -- again, David, NTSB --

18 A. Yeah.

19 Q. -- you dispatch somebody out there?

20 A. Somebody will go look at it, whether it be one of the bridge  
21 crews or the local section.

22 MR. DUFFY: And then just following up on that and the --  
23 depending on what they find, are there any actions that would be  
24 expected to be taken depending on what they find?

25 MR. BONEBRAKE: Yeah, they're -- yeah, depending on what they

1 find, like I said, throw a sandbag in it, they have a bag of  
2 Sakrete in it. A lot of times it's a badger hole.

3 MR. DUFFY: Yeah. If they have more significant concerns,  
4 what are they able -- what are they authorized to do, any employee  
5 who goes out there?

6 MR. BONEBRAKE: Whatever's necessary.

7 BY MR. CASACELI:

8 Q. I want to shift a little bit for the next round, before I  
9 send it around. David, NTSB. Are you involved in any special  
10 inspections, as in things that come out from some sort of warnings  
11 or high rain events or anything like that?

12 A. I haven't been involved with that in the structures world  
13 yet. In my roadmaster role, all the time.

14 Q. So is that -- are those inspections typically performed by --

15 A. A track inspector or a manager.

16 Q. Okay. And the same rules apply to those as anything else, if  
17 they find something, they report to the appropriate parties?

18 A. Correct.

19 Q. Just like if a train crew is on that conversation you had  
20 with Charlie?

21 A. Yeah.

22 MR. CASACELI: Okay, I think that's what I have for now. I'm  
23 going to pass it to Todd.

24 MR. ANDERSON: Todd Anderson, no further questions.

25 MR. SCHERBING: Mat Scherbing, none either as of now.

1 MR. DUFFY: Charlie Duffy, no further questions.

2 BY MR. CASACELI:

3 Q. So I think we're all more or less finished with you, Jay, but  
4 is there anything you think we should have asked that we didn't  
5 ask you about, any information we should be looking for in this  
6 investigation that, as far as you know, we're not?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Is there anybody we should talk to that you don't know we've  
9 talked to yet?

10 A. Not that I can think of.

11 Q. If I have any follow-up questions, do you mind if I give you  
12 a call?

13 A. No, go ahead. Call me anytime.

14 MR. CASACELI: Okay. Well, on behalf of the NTSB, I want to  
15 say thanks for your time, Jay, helping us out here. Our hope is  
16 to do our best to find a probable cause and that the railroad and  
17 others work to make sure we don't have another one of these  
18 Bordulacs. So with that, we'll go off the record.

19 (Whereupon, at 9:03 a.m., the interview concluded.)  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF: CPKC TRAIN DERAILMENT IN BORDULAC,  
NORTH DAKOTA ON JULY 5, 2024  
Interview of Jay Bonebrake

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD24LR012

PLACE: Jamestown, North Dakota

DATE: July 8, 2024

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,  
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed  
to the best of my skill and ability.



David A. Martini  
Transcriber