



MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES



News Release

Contacts: Robbie Wilbur, MDEQ, 601-961-5277
Lauren Thompson, DMR, 228-219-5226

July 8, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDEQ JULY 8 UPDATE ON OIL MATERIAL IN MISSISSIPPI

BILOXI, Miss. – Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) staff through aerial surveillance with the Mississippi National Guard, MDEQ response staff, and Shoreline Cleanup Assessment Teams (SCAT) have observed the following Thursday (as of 7:00 p.m.) and sent to Unified Command for review and appropriate response:

Morning flight information:

- Widely dispersed tar balls SE of Long Beach (N 30 20.16, W 89 09.45; N 30 19.08, W 89 10.97).
- Streamer of emulsified oil approximately two miles SSE of Pass Christian (N 30 13.14, W 89 16.38).
- Area of seaweed with sheen approximately two miles south of Horn Island (N 30 0.55, W 88 38.21).
- Area of 2 feet by 200 feet of emulsified oil with dispersed tar balls SW of Cat Island (N 30 12.76, W 89 11.80).
- Streamer of emulsified oil with widely dispersed tar balls intermingled with seaweed south of Cat Island (N 30 13.03, W 89 09.86).

Afternoon flight information:

- Area one-half mile in diameter of one foot mousse patties with one percent dispersion (N 30 16.32, W 88 9.69).
- Emulsified oil in the marshes of Mud Bayou near Waveland (N 30 15.33, W 89 24.33).
- Line of light sheen with intermittent tar balls of one percent dispersion (N 30 15.25, W 89 23.45; N 30 15.25, W 89 24.01)
- Line of widely scattered patties of mousse, one foot in size, mixed with rainbow sheen running west to east on the north side of East Ship Island (N 30 13.47, W 88 58.55; N 30 14.62, W 88 55.84; N 30 15.34, W 88 55.52).

Other MDEQ Information:

- Continued accumulation of tar balls long Hancock County beach from the Silver Slipper Casino to Waveland (N 30 13.91, W 89 22.95).
- Oil patties from one-quarter inch to 12 inches in diameter for a segment west of the Port of Gulfport beginning at N30 21 25.4, W89 06 46.4 and ending at N30 21 08.6, W89 07 44.2.
- Light orange sheen about 50 yards long just offshore at N30 21 21.1, W89 07 01.4 in Gulfport.
- Moderate concentrations of oiled rip rap jetty at the Ken Combs Pier at Courthouse Road in Gulfport with a noticeable sheen in the water (N30 22 37.12, W89 2 37.65).

- SCAT team assessments from the Buccaneer State Park entrance and east: tar balls and mousse patties along every segment that SCAT observed today. The amount of oiling decreased as the team moved east. In the sea wall sections, the team observed the mousse patties on the surface of the water. In the marsh areas, the team observed in some hot spots with 100 percent coverage on vegetation. On average they observed about five percent coverage on the beaches. There was also oil observed in the riprap along the shoreline. Also, the team observed oil on the vegetation across the road in the marsh where the oil came through the culvert from the beach side under the road and into the marsh.
- SCAT team began assessments at the north western shore of Horn Island and walked south along the coastline. Assessments continued along the western and southern edge of the island and observed heavily oiled shoreline at a frequency of 15 to 20 percent. SCAT relocated to the northern coast just east of a western lagoon and continued east. Tar balls observed upon landing and continued along the coast at a frequency of three to five percent. Two oiled, live birds were observed and appropriate personnel were notified with pictures taken and GPS location logged. Tar balls were discovered submerged below the sand. Oil was found as sheen in inland water.
- SCAT team assessment of approximately five miles of coastline on the southwestern coastline of Cat Island and Little Bay in Cat Island. Heavy-oiled vegetation and light to heavy oiling in the tidal zone were observed along the southwestern coastline at N30 W12.861, N89 W 06.190. Little Bay was predominately oil free. One location of light oiling as mousse patties and oiled vegetation was observed at N30 W13.280 N89 W04916.

Mississippi Skimmers Activities

- Six of Mississippi's skimmers were actively operating and reporting successful recovery. Operation locations included areas off Bayou Caddy, Long Beach, and Ship Island.

Beach Closure

Hancock County:

- The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality, the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, and the Mississippi State Department of Health issued a beach closure Wednesday for a portion of the beach in Hancock County extending from Nicholson Avenue to the Silver Slipper Casino. This area includes Mississippi beach monitoring sites 1, 2 and 3. This area is being closed due to a large number of small tar balls and tar patties with dense coverage in some places making beach access difficult. In consultation with Hancock County officials, the agencies agree that access should be **closed to public use until clean up operations have finished.**

Patches of tar balls and weathered oil are skimmed and corralled by Vessels of Opportunity and BP contractors. Skimming is used to remove streams of emulsified oil, tar balls, and tar patties. Tar balls and mousse patties on land are removed with shovels and rakes.

More information and links about MDEQ's and DMR's roles in oil spill response are available at www.deq.state.ms.us/oilspill and www.dmr.state.ms.us/DMR/oil-spill.htm.

###