



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MDEQ JULY 15 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 7:30 p.m.) and sent to Unified Command for review and appropriate response:

Flight information:

- A three to four feet sized tar mat. (N30 09.90, W89 02.72)
- 50 feet metallic sheen. (N30 13.80, W88 24.20)
- 30 feet metallic sheen. (N30 14.21, W88 55.94)

Other information from MDEQ staff:

- Small patches of a scattered oil sheen at Mars Landing in Jackson County. (located between N30 21.072, W88 46.146 and N30 21.686, W88 45.866). Cleanup crews were present and actively working the site.
- In Hancock County, sporadic tar balls with less than one percent coverage along the beach. Cleanup crews present.
- Sporadic tar balls in Harrison County with less than one percent coverage along the beach. Cleanup crews present.
- Staff in Jackson County investigated a report of oil in a grassy area at Point of Pines--no oil was discovered.
- SCAT team performed beach assessment along Cat Island. Along the southwest side of the island, the team noted long sections of oil on vegetation and minimal pooled oil locations located between N30 13.643, W89 8.041 and N30 13.596, W89 7.821. A lagoon system also located on the southwest side of the island exhibited staining along its perimeter, oil on vegetation, and a sheen on the surface--the affected area was located between N30 13.567, W89 7.381 and N30 13.540, W89 7.263.
- SCAT team performed assessment in Biloxi Bay and noted sections of heavy oiling on the marsh grass. (N30 22.442, W88 47.328)
- SCAT team performed beach assessment along the shoreline from Long Beach Harbor to the Port of Gulfport. The team noted the following:

*The western portion of the area assessed contained less than one percent coverage of tar balls.

*The eastern portion of the area assessed contained no tar balls.

*At the Port of Gulfport, less than one percent coverage of tar balls was noted. An area in the inner-port contained riprap that was heavily stained

*Less than one percent coverage of oiling was noted on the riprap and sand inside of Long Beach Harbor.

*The seawall at the Port of Gulfport had oil staining of less than one percent coverage.

*One mile west of the Port of Gulfport at Highway 49 and Highway 90, deposits of mousse patties were found 10 cm below ground. This was observed in a segment that was approximately one quarter mile long.

Beach Advisories:

- Hancock County: the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources (DMR), and the Mississippi State Department of Health issued a **beach advisory** 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 had been closed since July 7, after consultation with Hancock County officials to allow clean up operations.
- The beach advisories in Harrison County and Jackson County remain in effect. They are listed at: <http://www.usm.edu/gcrl/msbeach/index.cgi>.
- Under an advisory, the beaches are open to use; however, MDEQ and the Beach Monitoring Task Force recommend that people avoid contact with oil-related materials such as tar balls and tar mats and stay out of the water if these materials are visible.

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. Water sampling information available at: <http://opcgis.deq.state.ms.us/oilspillmap> and air monitoring data at: <http://gulfcoast.airnowtech.org>.

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