

USA: GULF OF MEXICO – OIL LEAK CONTINUES UNABATED

The failure of the planned "Top Kill" is described in yesterday's *Washington Post* - BP's three-day effort to throttle the leaking gulf oil well with multiple blasts of heavy mud has failed. The attempted "top kill" of the well was abandoned late Saturday afternoon, leaving the huge Macondo field deep beneath the sea floor once again free to pump at least half a million gallons of crude a day into the gulf.



"I can say we tried. But what I can also say is this scares everybody, the fact that we can't make this well stop flowing, or haven't succeeded in that so far," Doug Suttles, BP's chief operating officer, said in a late-day news conference.

"There's no silver bullet to stop this leak," Coast Guard Rear Adm. Mary Landry said.

The top kill -- a term most Americans had never heard until it became part of the new national vocabulary along with "blowout preventer," "containment dome" and "junk shot" -- had been seen as the best hope for turning the oil spill into something finite in volume. Now BP must fall back on a containment strategy in the near term, hoping to capture as much oil as possible.

Sitting on the sea floor and awaiting deployment is a new containment dome, what the company calls the Lower Marine Riser Package cap. With robotic submarines, the company will sever the leaking, kinked riser pipe that emerges from the top of the blowout preventer, the five-story-tall contraption on top of the wellhead. Then engineers will guide the LMRP cap onto the pipe. The cap is fitted with a grommet designed to keep out seawater and prevent the formation of slushy methane hydrates that bedeviled an earlier containment dome effort. The cap procedure will take four to seven days, officials say.

"This operation should be able to capture most of the oil," Suttles said. "I want to stress the word 'most,' because it's not a tight, mechanical seal."

After that, the company could place another blowout preventer on top of the existing one. Meanwhile two drilling rigs at the surface continue to drill relief wells. That's a long-term strategy that requires engineers to hit a seven-inch target, the bottom of the leaking well, 3 1/2 miles below the surface of the gulf. The first of the two relief wells to hit the target will send a massive dose of cement to seal the leaking well. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/29/AR2010052900561.html>

Earlier in the week, the National Incident Command's Flow Rate Technical Group (FRTG) issued a preliminary estimate of oil leakage - Based on three separate methodologies the independent analysis of the Flow Rate Technical Group has determined that the overall best initial estimate for

the lower and upper boundaries of flow rates of oil is in the range of 12,000 and 19,000 barrels per day.

Concerns continue to mount over the unprecedented levels of dispersant usage, both surface spraying and underwater oil treatment, and the vast plumes of oil suspensions reported by scientists on the *RV Pelican*. The NOAA Ship *Gordon Gunter* has been mobilised to conduct sampling in the Gulf, and will expand its mission to use its sophisticated sonar equipment and other scientific instruments to help define the subsurface plume. Another NOAA Ship, the *Thomas Jefferson*, has completed a five-day mission to gather data on surface and deep currents that are distributing the oil. On June 1, the 204-foot survey vessel will set sail again to conduct sonar surveys, measure water chemistry, and take water samples.

So far, shoreline impacts of the spill have been fairly limited – around 70 miles of the coast of Louisiana – but areas affected include sensitive marshlands. Shoreline protection and clean-up measures continue unabated and on May 27 it was reported that Admiral Allen, approved the implementation of a section of Louisiana's barrier island project proposal that could help stop oil from coming ashore and where work could be completed the fastest.

As of yesterday, the statistics are - more than 20,000 personnel are currently responding to protect the shoreline and wildlife; more than 1,400 vessels are responding on site, including skimmers, tugs, barges, and recovery vessels to assist in containment and cleanup efforts—in addition to dozens of aircraft, remotely operated vehicles, and multiple mobile offshore drilling units; approximately 1.9 million feet of containment boom and 1.8 million feet of sorbent boom have been deployed to contain the spill—and approximately 390,000 feet of containment boom and 1.27 million feet of sorbent boom are available; approximately 12.1 million gallons of an oil-water mix have been recovered; approximately 910,000 gallons of dispersant have been deployed—720,000 on the surface and 180,000 subsea. More than 450,000 gallons are available; 17 staging areas are in place and ready to protect sensitive shorelines.

SINGAPORE: OIL SPILL CLOSES SINGAPORE BEACHES



Thursday, May 27th, 2010 - An estimated 4.3 miles of beach on Singapore's east coast have been closed due to an oil spill from Tuesday's ship collision. Traces of oil were found on shore, prompting signs warning beach goers of the contaminated water. The affected beach stretches from the National Sailing Centre to the waters near Gold Kist Beach Resort.

The Malaysian flagged tanker MT BUNGA KELANA 3 collided with the MV WAILY, a St. Vincent and The Grenadines flagged bulk carrier, early Tuesday morning May 25 in the Singapore Strait, about 8 miles from Singapore's coast.

Despite the quick response by clean up crews, the oil reached shore Wednesday afternoon. Patches of oil were also found near the coast between Tanah Merah Ferry Terminal and Changi Naval Base. The National Environmental Agency (NEA) has deployed crews to clean up both sites and is advising the public to avoid these beaches. Containment and clean up also took place at a rock bund near the SAF Yacht Club where traces of oil turned up as early as Wednesday morning. Restaurants along the coast say the pungent smell of oil is affecting their business and fish farms in the area were scrambling to protect their farms from contamination.

The Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) continue work to contain the oil spill at the site of the collision. About 15 vessels and over 120 people were deployed to clean up the spill. Original reports said that 18,325 barrels or about 770,000 gallons spilled, but experts estimate that number is higher.

USA: TRANS-ALASKA PIPELINE SPILL TOLL 5,000 BARRELS

This week's oil spill from the trans-Alaska pipeline totaled about 5,000 barrels, making it the third-largest spill ever from the 800-mile pipeline. The new estimate of the spill size Friday compares with

earlier estimates from the company that runs the pipeline that "up to several thousand" barrels spilled.

That company, Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., restarted the pipeline just before 5 p.m. Friday. Alyeska kept the pipeline shut down for more than three days after discovering the spill at Pump Station 9 near Delta Junction on Tuesday.

The shutdown forced North Slope oil companies to slash production to 8 percent of normal to keep the limited oil-storage capacity near the oil fields from filling while Alyeska dealt with the spill.

Lack of storage capacity at Pump Station 9 contributed to Tuesday's spill. During a routine maintenance check, power went out, causing a valve to open and channel oil into a storage tank, which overflowed. Oil streamed into a bermed secondary containment area. That containment area is lined with an impermeable liner and state and company officials say no oil escaped from the area. Read more: <http://www.adn.com/2010/05/28/1298543/alyeska-awaits-federal-ok-to-restart.html>

NORWAY: GAS BUILD-UP THREATENS NORTH SEA OIL RIG

Ninety [oil](#) workers have been evacuated from a North Sea rig as engineers fight to control a huge build up of pressure in a well which critics say has the potential to blow-up the platform and cause a major environmental problem. The Norwegian company Statoil has been pumping cement into an offshore well on the Gullfaks field in an operation similar to the one [being attempted today by BP in the Gulf of Mexico](#).

The equivalent of around 70,000 barrels of oil a day of production from the Gullfaks C, Tordis and Gimle platforms has been shut down and more than 90 staff evacuated from the area, which lies in Norwegian waters. The country's industry regulator said it was the third well control incident on Gullfaks in the past six months.

Jake Molloy, offshore organiser of the RMT union in Aberdeen, said the case also highlighted the continuing dangers of oil extraction off Britain's coast. He added: "The huge gas bubble under the Gullfaks has the potential to threaten the platform."

However, Statoil said today that the well was being brought under control. "We had a build-up in pressure and the barriers (through the blowout preventer) worked as they should. We are now pumping cement into the well and the pressure is starting to fall," said Kai Neilsen, a spokesman for the oil group in London. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/27/north-sea-oil-rig-gas-threat>

CANADA: OCEAN QUEST ADVENTURE DISCOVER SPECTACULAR IMAGES OF WW2 WRECKS USING TRITECH'S STARFISH

StarFish 450F, the shallow water sidescan sonar system from Trittech International, recently completed the successful deployment of a wreck dive in the low-visibility waters of Conception Bay off Canada's Atlantic Coast.

The high performance StarFish 450F sonar was able to operate at low-range, enabling the wreck team from Ocean Quest Adventure Resort (OCAR) to collect amazing detail of World War II (WW2) ships, SS Rose Castle and PLM-27, which were hit simultaneously and sunk by a German U-Boat during the war. StarFish was able to clearly scan the wreck of SS Rose Castle where visible structures, as identified in the scan images, included rigging, substructures and cargo holds. At approximately 160 feet deep, this wreck is the deeper of the two wrecks scanned by the OCAR team in Conception Bay. More info at: www.tritech.co.uk

USA: GULF OIL SPILL: NSF AWARDS RAPID RESPONSE GRANT TO STUDY MICROBES' NATURAL DEGRADATION OF OIL

To understand how the use of dispersants impacts the degradation of oil in the Gulf of Mexico, the National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded a rapid response grant to scientist David Valentine of the University of California at Santa Barbara and colleagues.

The massive release of oil from the Deepwater Horizon incident on April 20, 2010, has led to an unprecedented use of oil dispersants, which include a mix of surfactant compounds designed to dissolve oil and to prevent slick formation.

The team seeks to understand how the dispersants added to the spill will interact with natural compounds produced by microbes, and how this will impact the ability of different microbes to break down the oil.

"This research will use a combination of chemical and biological tools to track changes in the composition of the oil, changes in the microbes in the Gulf, and changes in the amount of surfactant present, to determine the impact of these dispersants on oil biodegradation," says Don Rice, program director in NSF's Division of Ocean Sciences, which funded the rapid response award. Read the complete report: <http://www.pollutiononline.com/article.mvc/Gulf-Oil-Spill-NSF-Awards-Rapid-Response-0001?user=2116810&source=nl:27681>

BP PLEDGES \$500 MILLION FOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INTO IMPACT OF SPILL ON MARINE ENVIRONMENT

May 24 2010 - BP today announced a commitment of up to \$500 million to an open research program studying the impact of the Deepwater Horizon incident, and its associated response, on the marine and shoreline environment of the Gulf of Mexico.

'BP has made a commitment to doing everything we can to lessen the impact of this tragic incident on the people and environment of the Gulf Coast. We must make every effort to understand that impact. This will be a key part of the process of restoration, and for improving the industry response capability for the future. There is an urgent need to ensure that the scientific community has access to the samples and the raw data it needs to begin this work,' said Tony Hayward, BP's chief executive.

The key questions to be addressed by this 10-year research program reflect discussions with the US government and academic scientists in Washington DC last week. BP will fund research to examine topics including:

- Where are the oil, the dispersed oil, and the dispersant going under the action of ocean currents?
- How do oil, the dispersed oil and the dispersant behave on the seabed, in the water column, on the surface, and on the shoreline?
- What are the impacts of the oil, the dispersed oil, and the dispersant on the biota of the seabed, the water column, the surface, and the shoreline?
- How do accidental releases of oil compare to natural seepage from the seabed?
- What is the impact of dispersant on the oil? Does it help or hinder biodegradation?
- How will the oil, the dispersed oil, and the dispersant interact with tropical storms, and will this interaction impact the seabed, the water column and the shoreline?
- What can be done to improve technology: To detect oil, dispersed oil, and dispersant on the seabed, in the water column, and on the surface? For remediating the impact of oil accidentally released to the ocean?

<http://www.environmental-expert.com/resultEachPressRelease.aspx?cid=26625&codi=170933&idCategory=0>

USA: OIL SPILL CLEANUP TRAINING BEGINS IN SOUTH FLORIDA

The first training classes for oil spill cleanup started last Monday in Fort Lauderdale for Wildlife Care Center employees, volunteers, and for people interested in working for the cleanup operation. A trainer from PEC Premier, which has been contracted by BP to train cleanup workers, gave the four-hour certification course. Other courses are scheduled in Fort Lauderdale and throughout the Gulf Coast. [Thanks to Don Johnston of ISCO Associate Member, GG & Hazmat Group] Watch video and read more: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9TotAzcrz8>

TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION NEWS SURVEY

The April 1-15, 2010 *Technology Innovation News Survey* has been posted to the CLU-IN web site. The *Survey* contains market/commercialization information; reports on demonstrations, feasibility studies and research; and other news relevant to the hazardous waste community interested in technology development. The latest survey is available at: <http://www.clu-in.org/products/tins>

MEETING OF ISAA ALL-IRELAND ACCREDITATION SCHEME STEERING GROUP

This meeting will take place at 10.30 a.m. on Thursday 3rd June at the Lisburn Office of the Northern Ireland Environmental Agency. The meeting agenda has been sent to all stakeholders on the mailing list but if you have not received a copy and would like to have one please contact the administrator john.mcmurtrie@spillcontrol.org If you are planning to attend the meeting and have not already done so, please advise the administrator.

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