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FLORIDA DEEPWATER HORIZON RESPONSE MAY 19, 2010

TALLAHASSEE – Under the leadership of Governor Charlie Crist, the State Emergency Response Team and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are actively coordinating and responding to the Deepwater Horizon incident.

The following is a summary of state and BP response actions to date, as well as tips for residents and visitors to take precautions both pre- and post-landfall.

Landfall Predictions:

- On Wednesday, May 19, the United States Coast Guard confirmed that tar balls collected from Fort Zachary Taylor State Park **are not related to the Deepwater Horizon incident.**
- In 2008 and 2009 there were 667 and 681 reports respectively of oil and petroleum incidents along Florida's waterways and beaches so these types of occurrences are not as unusual as one might think. Specifically in the Florida Keys (Monroe County) there were 53 incidents in 2008 and 72 incidents in 2009 of oil and petroleum products being reported in their coastal waters.
 - It is important that residents, visitors and especially the media await confirmation of the testing on these tar balls before assuming where they came from.
- Deepwater Horizon continues to discharge an estimated 5,000 barrels (210,000 gallons) per day.
- BP continues to evaluate numerous options to contain the oil discharge and is continuing efforts to drill a relief well.
- Winds/currents continue to keep the plume away from the Florida coast for at least the next 72 hours.
- Florida continues to monitor the location of the loop current and make preparations to safeguard the state's shoreline.
- According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), satellite imagery on May 17, 2010 indicated that the main bulk of the oil is dozens of miles away from the Loop Current, but that a tendril of light oil has been transported down close to the Loop Current. Learn more at the [NOAA website](#).
- Floridians and visitors are reminded that the state's beaches and other attractions remain open for public enjoyment.

- Impacts to Florida’s coastline could include [tar balls](#), [oil sheen](#) or tar mats. Individuals that observe oil on Florida’s coastline should report the incident to BP’s hotline 1-866-448-5816, or the State Warning Point at 1-877-2-SAVE-FL (1-877-272-8335), or by dialing #DEP from any wireless device.
- BP has opened seven claims offices in Florida. Offices will be in operation seven days a week at the following locations:

Location	Office Hours	Open Date
Escambia County 3960 W. Navy Blvd. Suite 16 Pensacola, FL 32507	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 13, 2010
Santa Rosa County 5668 Gulf Breeze Parkway Unit B-9 Gulf Breeze, FL 32563	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 14, 2010
Okaloosa County 348 SW Miracle Strip Parkway Suite 13 Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32548	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 15, 2010
Walton County 5008 US Highway 98W Unit 6 & 7 Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 16, 2010
Bay County 7938 Front Beach Road Panama City Beach, FL 32408	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 17, 2010
Gulf County 106 Trade Circle Suite A Port St. Joe, FL 32456	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 18, 2010
Franklin County 194 14 th Street Suite 105 Apalachicola, FL 32320	8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Seven days a week	May 19, 2010

- Walk-ins are welcomed. BP asks that calls be made to the claims hotline in advance at 1-800-440-0858 to expedite the process. After the initial call, a claims adjuster is estimated to call back in 48 to 72 hours.

State Actions:

- The State Emergency Operations Center remains activated at a Level 2 or Partial activation.

- On May 17, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist announced that BP will provide Florida an additional \$25 million for a national tourism advertising campaign. These funds are in addition to the \$25 million Florida has already received for preparation efforts.
- On May 14, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist announced that the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) approved disaster loan funds for businesses along Florida's Gulf coast that have been impacted by the Deepwater Horizon incident. ([Press Release](#)) Learn more at: <http://www.sba.gov/services/disasterassistance/>.
- On May 12, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist directed DEP to issue an [Emergency Final Order](#) to accelerate preparedness and restoration in the 19 coastal counties under the Governor's state-of-emergency Executive Orders.
 - Government entities, BP and its contractors making emergency permit application requests pursuant to the Emergency Final Order can obtain DEP's emergency application form at: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/publications/pdf/emergency/DEP73-303EmPerApp-w-insts.pdf>
 - The following link provides additional information about activities that may take place seaward of Coastal Construction Control Line: [http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/default.htm#DEEPWATER_HORIZON - Gulf Oil Spill](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/beaches/default.htm#DEEPWATER_HORIZON_-_Gulf_Oil_Spill).
- On May 11, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist issued ([Executive Order 10-101](#)) creating an Economic Recovery Task Force to facilitate efforts by Florida businesses and industries in recovering from the loss of business and revenues due to the Deepwater Horizon incident.
- On May 10, 2010, Governor Charlie Crist and Attorney General Bill McCollum called on former Attorneys General Bob Butterworth and Jim Smith to chair a Legal Advisory Council to explore options relating to the Deepwater Horizon incident and oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. [Press Release](#)
- As of May 11, 2010 at 8:00 a.m. the Florida Oil Spill Information Line, 1-888-337-3569, was activated to provide Floridians with response information and resources about the Deepwater Horizon oil incident from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., seven days a week. Additional phone numbers have also been established for persons with disabilities: (800) 955-8771 (TDD) or (800) 955-8770 (voice).
- DEP conducted water and sediment sampling to use as a baseline and is monitoring air quality data. Statewide air quality monitoring is conducted in coordination with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Learn more at <http://www.airnow.gov/> or <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>.
 - Air quality reports for Tuesday, May 18, revealed that air quality was considered moderate for ozone in Pensacola and good throughout the rest of the panhandle area. The fine particulate matter (PM) measurements were all considered good. "Good" means the air quality is satisfactory and air pollution poses little or no risk. "Moderate" means air quality is acceptable for most people.

Boom Placement:

- To date, an estimated 224,800 feet of boom has been placed in Florida and an additional 51,000 is staged.
- Placement of boom is based on tides and where the oil is threatening, as well as direction given in each region's area contingency plan.
 - To view the Coast Guard Mobile Area Contingency Plan visit: <http://ocean.floridamarine.org/ACP/MOBACP/StartHere.html>.
 - To view the Coast Guard St. Petersburg Area Contingency Plan visit: http://research.myfwc.com/features/view_article.asp?id=3482
- The Unified Command Operations Group is asking boaters to avoid damaging boom. Boom cut or broken due to boater traffic jeopardizes the protection that has been set up for the environmentally sensitive areas across the coast.
- Stolen or misplaced boom should be reported to local authorities.

Health Effects:

- At this time, there are no indications of any health risks to Floridians due to the Deepwater Horizon incident. The Department of Health (DOH) and DEP are closely monitoring health and environmental impacts to Florida's beaches and will notice an advisory if conditions become unsafe.
- For most people, an occasional brief contact with a small amount of oil, while not recommended, will do no harm. If contact occurs, wash the area with soap and water.
- Learn more at: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/files/faq_doh_051010.pdf

Fisheries & Seafood:

- The fisheries, wildlife and seafood off of Florida's coast in state waters are safe and there are no alerts at this time. [Press Release Florida saltwater fishing regulations](#) remain in effect as usual. More information is available online at www.MyFWC.com/Fishing.
- The recreational red snapper season in the Gulf will remain closed until June 1. However, FWC will use federal funds to survey Gulf charter boat catches each week during the 53-day season to see if catch rates are lower than previously anticipated. If so, state and federal fisheries managers could use that information to determine if the season can be extended or if an additional period of harvest can be allowed later in the year. Learn more at: http://www.myfwc.com/RULESANDREGS/Saltwater_Regulations_RedSnapperIndex.htm.
- On May 18, 2010, NOAA modified and expanded the boundaries of the closed fishing area and extended the fishing restriction until further notice. The closure affects commercial and recreational fishing in the oil-affected area of the Gulf of Mexico. Learn more at: http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2010/20100518_closure.html.
- Fishermen who wish to contact BP about a claim should call 1-800-440-0858.
- FWC urges citizens to report oiled wildlife to the Wildlife Distress Hotline at 1-866-557-1401.

- For the safety of the public as well as the safety of animals, rescues should be conducted by trained responders. Untrained rescuers may cause more harm than good. Learn more at: http://www.myfwc.com/NEWSROOM/10/statewide/News_10_X_OilSpill2.htm

Closures:

- Currently there are no Florida State Park or beach closures. Learn more about Florida State Parks at: www.floridastateparks.org.

Tourism:

- Florida's pristine beaches and famed fishing grounds remain open to residents and visitors. Currently, there are no impacts to Florida's more than 1260 miles of coastline and 825 miles of sandy beaches. Florida's shores are clear and open for business.
- If planning a trip to the Sunshine State, VISIT FLORIDA, the state's official tourism marketing organization, encourages visitors to check with local destinations in order to get the most up-to-date information.
- Through www.VISITFLORIDA.com, vacationers are able to view live Twitter feeds and read up-to-the-minute information on the status of any city or region in Florida, allowing them to see first-hand whether or not an area is currently affected. The following link also provides helpful local links to check on the status of your Florida destination: http://www.visitflorida.com/florida_travel_advisory/.
- The Florida State Park website will be updated daily and will list any parks that may be impacted by the Deepwater Horizon Incident: <http://www.floridastateparks.org/>. Visitors with camping or cabin reservations will be notified if their stay will be impacted. If you have any questions, please call 1-850-245-2157.

Tips for Homeowners

- While the state appreciates the concern expressed by Floridians and the ingenuity of those seeking alternative measures to help protect the state's shoreline, the following tips are offered to ensure that these measures are helpful and not harmful to Florida's coasts, wildlife and water resources: [Tips for homeowners](#).

Tips for Businesses and Consumers:

- Florida residents are discouraged from signing any documents provided to them in return for money from BP or anyone else until they know the extent of their loss, which may be significantly higher than the money being paid. These may be fraudulent or premature.
- The Attorney General's fraud hotline is open to receive any reports of fraud or price gouging. The hotline is 1-866-966-7226.
- The Florida Agriculture and Consumer Services Commissioner gas price-gouging hotline is also operational. The toll-free hotline number is 1-800-HELP-FLA (1-800-435-7352).

- Florida’s coastal businesses should be prepared to make loss of earnings claims for damages incurred as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In all circumstances, affected businesses should file a claim with BP via the hotline number – 1-800-440-0858 or claims office. Learn more at <http://www.myfloridacfo.com/> or by calling 1-850-413-3089 or toll-free at 1-877-MY-FL-CFO (1-877-693-5236).

Volunteer Opportunities:

- The Governor’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is encouraging Floridians and visitors to watch for oiled wildlife, vegetation, and beaches by becoming a Coast Watch volunteer. Learn more at www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org.
- Report injured or oiled animals to the Wildlife Distress Hotline: 1-866-557-1401.
- Report oiled shoreline to: 1-866-448-5816.
- Report a change in Air Quality to: <http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/>.
- For information on scheduled beach cleanups and other volunteer opportunities, visit <http://www.volunteerfloridadisaster.org/>.
- BP has established a volunteer program and set up a toll-free number for those interested in volunteering. Learn more by calling BP’s community information line at 1-866-448-5816.

Learn More About Florida’s Response:

- DEP launched a Twitter account, www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert, dedicated to providing updates on Florida’s response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.
- DEP in coordination with the state Emergency Operations Center established an email sign-up for information alerts on its website as well as a resources page containing fact sheets and tips. Learn more at: www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon.
- For a list of Unified Command, BP and Florida phone numbers, visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm#numbers>

For additional information regarding Florida’s response to the Deepwater Horizon incident, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon, or follow us on Twitter at www.Twitter.com/FLDEPalert.

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