



# TEXAS GENERAL LAND OFFICE

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## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
July 23, 2009

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### **Texas General Land Office investigates cause of spill** *Chemical analysis and gulf currents will help identify source*

AUSTIN — The Texas General Land Office Oil Spill Prevention and Response Program is assessing Gulf currents and conducting chemical analysis on tar balls that washed up on South Padre Island beaches Wednesday in an effort to track the oil to its source.

“We are working to quickly clean this up and will take any steps necessary to protect South Padre Island beaches, as well as the South Bay Coastal Preserve,” said Jerry Patterson, Commissioner of the Texas General Land Office. “Our oil spill team is the best at what they do. Texans can rest assured.”

As of Thursday morning, the cause of the spill is still unknown. The GLO is using their current tracking buoy system, Texas Automated Buoy System, or TABS, forecast models and assistance from National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration’s trajectory modelers to help determine the origin of the spill and to determine where it is likely to go over the next few days.

GLO Oil Spill crews are working with the U.S. Coast Guard and are in the process of contacting officials in Mexico, searching for information about the source of the spill.

The spill was first reported Wednesday morning at the mouth of the Rio Grande when what appeared to be fresh crude oil began washing ashore. The tar balls affected about one mile of beach from the mouth of the Rio Grande to the town of South Padre Island.

GLO Oil Spill crews began an immediate cleanup on the beaches after assessing the damage.

“This is the height of tourist season,” said Raymond Oliveira, Area Manager of the GLO’s Oil Spill Response Team. “Our four staff members were immediately on scene to assess the damage, begin cleanup, and ensure that beachgoers were safe and informed. We are working closely with U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Corpus Christi.”

GLO crews spent the day shoveling oil globules from the beach, filling seven 55-gallon drums with oily sand. The U.S. Coast Guard Gulf Strike Team, based out of Mobile, Alabama, is reroute to assist in the cleanup efforts.

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The GLO Oil Spill Program has contacted a company from Harlingen, Chemical Response & Remediation Contractors, to assist South Padre Island Public Works with the cleanup. GLO staff members will be conducting water assessment of sensitive areas and supporting all cleanup efforts until the area is clear.

The beaches are not closed, but people should avoid going near any oil on the beach. Baby oil can be used to clean the skin if contact occurs.

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