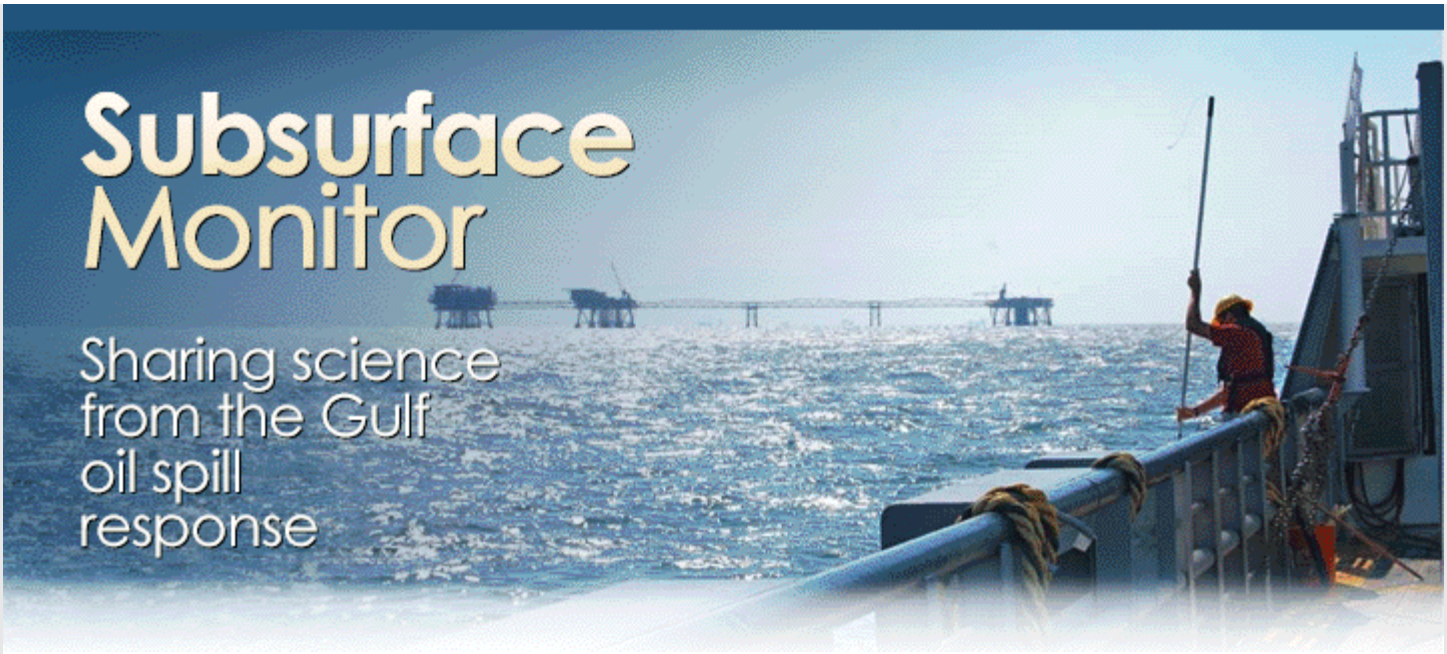
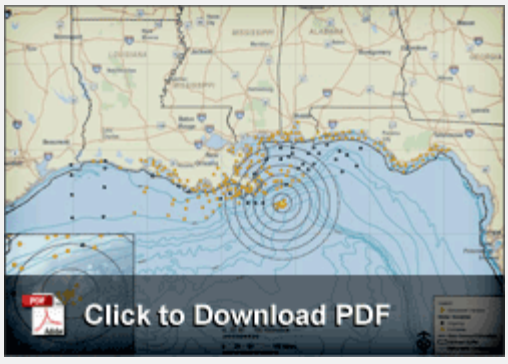



Issue 4 - October 21, 2010

## Research vessels complete subsurface monitoring efforts

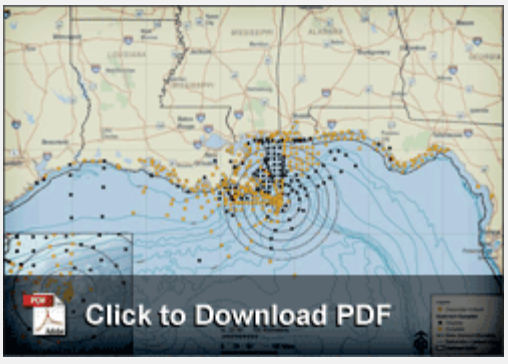
The R/V *International Peace, Gyre* and *Ryan Chouest* have completed their subsurface monitoring missions and returned to port. The R/V ***Ocean Veritas*** remains at sea, finishing the last handful of sites, and is scheduled to finish up early next week. In total, the subsurface monitoring program will have completed water sampling at more than 250 sites and sediment sampling at more than 475 sites. The subsurface monitoring program is part of the Unified Area Command, whose science teams have logged more than 850 days at sea collecting information to support emergency response, assessment and restoration efforts.

### Water




*All Completed and Ongoing Sampling Sites*

### Sediment




*All Completed and Ongoing Sampling Sites*

## What happens next?

Processing, analysis and review of water and sediment samples are an ongoing part of the coordinated effort to understand the spill's effects on the Gulf. Each vessel that collected sediment and water samples had personnel aboard who conducted specific tests while at sea. Scientists set aside additional sediment and water samples for testing at onshore labs. Some vessels brought all their samples into port, while ships on long cruises might have transferred samples to

another vessel at sea to expedite getting those samples to shore.

Once ashore, samples are transported to facilities across the nation for testing. Some of these partners and their responsibilities include:

- The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, a Department of Energy facility - sediment and water analysis for microbiological components.
- Texas A&M University - analysis for sediment-dwelling organisms and toxicity testing on water and sediment samples.
- Contract lab Lancaster Laboratories - sediment analysis for benzene, toluene, ethyl-benzene, and xylene (BTEX), grain size, total inorganic carbon and total organic carbon.
- Battelle, an independent research and development group - sediment analysis for hydrocarbons.

The Fort Collins, Colo., lab of AECOM, a government contractor, will receive, freeze and preserve additional water and sediment samples (including those set aside for academic researchers).

Understanding and reporting the data collected by the subsurface monitoring program will be an ongoing process. As data and analyses become available they will be posted on GeoPlatform and the National Oceanographic Data Center.

## Other activities in the Gulf

With subsurface monitoring changing from primarily sample collection to a focus on analysis and reporting, this newsletter will undergo some changes too. Look for periodic updates with stories on a broad range of activities in the Gulf.

Here's an introduction to some of the information you'll see in future issues:

- NOAA, U.S. Coast Guard, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries and Audubon Nature Institute collaborated in the release of more than 30 rescued and rehabilitated sea turtles today. The release, in federal waters off Grand Isle, La., included green, Kemp's ridley, hawksbill and loggerhead sea turtles, all protected species.

- NOAA Ship ***Ronald H. Brown***, the largest vessel in the NOAA fleet, is currently underway as part of a 4-year project to discover and characterize oil seeps and deep-water coral communities in the Gulf of Mexico. Data from the project will help understand and predict where these communities occur.

- NOAA Administrator Dr. Jane Lubchenco returns to the Gulf Coast this week on a trip to Alabama. She is scheduled to meet with Sen. Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), state and local officials, and local shrimpers and fishermen in Bayou La Batre and with Surgeon General Regina Benjamin in Mobile.

## About the subsurface monitoring program

The subsurface monitoring program is a scientific collaboration among academic institutions, government agencies, BP, and other entities in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The program's goals are to assess the distribution, concentration, and degradation of oil remaining in the water column and/or bottom sediments; evaluate the distribution of dispersants used in oil spill response activities and their break-down products; and identify any additional response requirements that may be necessary to address remaining subsurface oil. The data collected by the subsurface monitoring program will form a valuable foundation for long-term restoration efforts in the Gulf of Mexico.


## Useful Links

- RestoreTheGulf.gov
- GeoPlatform.gov
- NOAA Mission Log
- National Oceanographic Data Center (NODC)
- Seafood Safety
- NOAA Science Missions & Data





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