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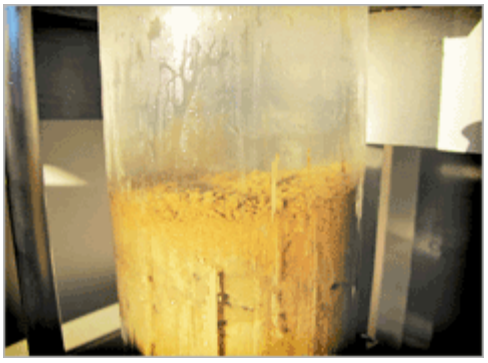
Science missions deployed to all planned sampling sites



Subsurface monitoring missions have been deployed to all planned sampling stations in the Gulf and have obtained sediment samples for analysis. The latest samples, collected by scientists onboard R/V *Ocean Veritas* last weekend, are already undergoing analysis at onshore labs, joining tens of thousand of other samples collected from nearly 100 dedicated sampling missions. As analyses are completed, subsurface monitoring data will appear on GeoPlatform.gov. Sampling sites can be accessed now on GeoPlatform.

Samples continue to undergo rigorous quality checks to confirm any presence of oil or dispersants, and fingerprint whether any oil found can be traced to the Deepwater Horizon or other sources such as the Gulf's many natural seafloor seeps. The subsurface monitoring program has not observed areas with large quantities of oil at depth. Some sediment samples have revealed oil sheen, which is not a surprise following a release of this magnitude at a depth of 5,000 feet.

Recent reports from the University of Southern Mississippi about oiled sediments are part of the overall picture. The subsurface monitoring program has consistently engaged academic partneres who have provided information about any observed oil, and looks forward to learning more about these specific reports. The program remains committed to collaboration with partners in academia and non-governmental organizations. Partners' input and research have made and will make sampling efforts a success, allowing results to be released as quickly as possible.

Partnerships support our understanding of the extent of oily sediment and the continued search for actionable oil – from the beaches to the open ocean and the surface to the seafloor. The subsurface monitoring program encourages scientists working on this issue in the Gulf to contact the Unified Area Command in New Orleans (713-323-1670 or 1671) for more information on sharing data, samples or observations that will contribute to the effort.

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

NOAA Office of Communications and External Affairs | HCHB Room 6217 | 1401 Constitution Avenue, NW | Washington | DC | 20230