

BP/DEEP WATER HORIZONAND THE SAGA CONTINUES

NOTES AND QUOTES SINCE PUBLICATION

Following is a copy of the last paragraph in the *Fly Fisher* article:

“This is an ever changing - never ending story; no one can even guess how it will end. I’ve tried report and comment on situations as they exist today. A recent trip to Grand Isle confirmed that progress is definitely being made. However locals still report a smell of oil in the air at times and I still saw very light sheens in the marsh just off the island. None of this appears to be bothering fishing activities. Fishermen were out regardless of the oily past and in spite of never-ending tropical depressions. Maybe one way to finish this is just to continue it. So, this article along with periodic updates will be posted on my website www.tomtripi.com under Resume and Articles. Hopefully the story has a happy ending. Anyone having questions on where to go or what to use can contact me via my website.

UPDATE NO. 1

Grand Isle beach clean-up continues, six months after oil spill began - October 22, 2010 7:33 am; By Maya Rodriguez/Eyewitness News WWL-TV, New Orleans

GRAND ISLE, La. – Six months after the start of the BP oil spill, coastal areas of Jefferson Parish are still dealing with the effects. That is the case on Grand Isle where, amidst the quietly lapping waves, crews remain working on the shoreline.

“I don’t want people to have the impression this is over. It’s far from over,” said Deano Bonano, Jefferson Parish director of emergency operations.

At Grand Isle State Park and on the eastern side of the island, the beach remains closed to visitors, as heavy machinery rumbles up and down the shore. Marie-Louise

Rao and her husband, who were visiting from Germany, could do little but look at the beach from an elevated boardwalk.

“We always talk about the oil spill in Germany and we were very concerned about the whole thing,” Rao said.

The concern may be justified. Months after oil from the spill washed up on Grand Isle’s beach, it may look clean on the surface, but underneath, it’s a different story. Shoreline assessment teams were dispatched to see where oil had settled on the beach. What they discovered is that it varies by location: lying anywhere from 2 inches to 3 feet below the surface of the sand.

Beaches are not the only areas feeling the impact — so are the marshes around Barataria Bay, along with Grand Terre and Elmer’s Island.

“The deposits of oil still remain there, both in the marsh and on the islands,” Bonano said. “When you get high tides and changes in the wind, it actually pulls sheen out of those areas where oil is deposited.”

Grand Isle Port Commission Director Wayne Keller said he saw a lot of changes on the island, which were brought on by the oil spill.

“We’re at a transition point right now and that’s a little scary,” he said.

Keller, though, believes some things are getting back to normal.

“Housing was a major problem when all the workers were here, but a lot of those in that housing have pulled out,” Keller said. “So, we’re getting motels and places to stay. It’s coming back.”

Beaches on the western side of Grand Isle have reopened since the spill. Officials tell Eyewitness News that tests are ongoing, but, so far, the water samples have not indicated any problems

OVER RECENT MONTHS THERE HAVE BEEN VARIOUS SHORT NEWS NOTES RE GRAND ISLE – MOST STATING THAT PROGRESS CONTINUES WITH THE CLEAN UP AND THAT FISHING APPEARS TO BE UN AFFECTED....TOM

UPDATE NO. 2

November 3, 2010, by Tom /Tripi / Charlie Thomson (Redfish Guide – St Bernard Parish)

At the last meeting of the Pontchartrain Basin Fly Fishers, Capt Charlie updated everyone on the quality and quantity of redfish in areas affected by the oil spill. Yes, there is still contamination and the clean-up still continues. However fly fishing for red

fish continues to be better than ever. And, as cooler weather returns the same can be expected for speckled trout. On the shrimping side of things, my brother who is a weekend shrimper, brought in over 200 pounds of 15 – 20's (i.e. 20 shrimp per pound). They were great on the grill!!!! Very few reports of tainted catches are heard.

UPDATE NO. 3

November 3, 2010, by Richard Rainey, The Times-Picayune

As Jefferson Parish continues to struggle with ramifications of the BP oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, the money for the local response effort keeps flowing out faster than it's coming in, officials said.

The parish Finance Department and the Jefferson Sheriff's Office have estimated that local response efforts through Oct. 10 cost roughly \$7.7 million since the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded in April. BP, the company responsible for the disaster, has shelled out \$4.3 million to cover that, leaving a \$3.4 million gap. Paul Rivera, the Sheriff's Office internal auditor, indicated that the outstanding balance could push to \$4 million after officials calculate the latest round of bills.

Finance Director Gwen Bolotte said the oil spill has cost Jefferson Parish on average \$46,000 a day.

"We're tired of getting the runaround in terms of getting reimbursement, so we're going to use any leverage we can," Parish President John Young said last week.

Young traveled to Baton Rouge last Tuesday to strike an accord with Gov. Bobby Jindal and other parish presidents to keep pressure on BP. Young said he would not agree to any plan that would let the company pull out of the area without meeting specific criteria: reimbursement, removing boom anchors and a visit from the lawyer assigned by Obama's administration to dole out compensation to businesses and residents financially hurt by the oil disaster.

Young acknowledged he had little recourse should BP decide to leave before local officials are satisfied with its response to the disaster. However, the Parish Council continues to delay hiring a lawyer to sue BP, a move that allows the parish to avoid paying a retainer while keeping a finger on the trigger should officials decide on legal action.

The bulk of the costs are related to sheriff's deputies pulling security details on Grand Isle and in the Lafitte area, where oil response work crews are stationed. Sheriff Newell Normand warned that he would begin cutting back on the details if BP remained delinquent in paying for the service, Rivera said.

"We apparently got their attention, and they have been very responsive to addressing this backlog," he said. "We have had several meetings with BP security and the

government claims office and are very encouraged by what they are planning to do. We haven't received payment yet, but they are promising something in the next seven to 10 days.

Rivera also said that BP advised it can expedite reimbursement payments if the Sheriff's Office and the parish Finance Department start separately billing the company. Until now, the bills had been combined, leading to some confusion in BP's processing offices.

"I can't say that it has made it easier since we are just now submitting our bills on their own, but that is the hope," Rivera said. "Apparently, by bundling the bills, we made them very voluminous and it was harder on BP to go through them to approve.

Todd Beyer, a spokesman for the "unified area command" center managing the response, said that BP had no comment because its reimbursement policy for governments hasn't changed since it began.

In addition to reimbursement, Young also requested that BP remove all anchors left behind in parish waterways. The anchors locked oil containment boom to the seafloor. When crews removed the boom, they simply cut it free, leaving the anchors.

Local officials have complained that the 3-foot, 80-pound anchors are large enough to damage the hulls of passing boats. BP has said that the anchors, which lay flat or are deeply embedded in seafloor sediment, don't appear to pose a hazard.

Young also said he had asked Kenneth Feinberg, the Boston lawyer placed in charge of a \$20 billion account to compensate businesses and residents harmed financially by the oil leak, to return to Jefferson for a town hall meeting. Young said he has fielded complaints that larger shrimp processing plants in the area were not receiving equitable payments for their losses.

UPDATE NO. 4

November 23, 2010, 11:58 AM Updated: Tuesday, November 23, 2010, by Mark Schleifstein, The Times-Picayune

Controversial federal estimates of how much oil remained in Gulf in July were mostly accurate, study says

A peer-reviewed [report](#) on the [controversial federal estimates](#) of how much oil from the Deepwater Horizon [oil spill disaster](#) remained in the Gulf of Mexico in mid-July found that the estimates were largely accurate, [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) Administrator Jane Lubchenco said Tuesday.

Lubchenco and other Obama administration officials released a pie chart on Aug. 4 that concluded that 26 percent of the 4.9 million barrels of oil released from the Macondo well remained as "residual," on or just below the surface as light sheen and weathered tarballs, washed ashore or buried in sand and sediments.

The original report relied on the results of the government's "oil budget calculator" that was created as a tracking system for the gushing oil, and was being used to direct response and clean-up operations, including the use of offshore in-situ burns of surface oil and of dispersants.

The new report does not address how much oil remains in the Gulf today or the ultimate impact of the oil release, Lubchenco said. That information is awaiting the compilation of results of more than 125 sampling expeditions using 25 deepwater vessels, which have produced 30,000 water and sediment samples from areas along the coast from the Texas-Louisiana border to the Florida Keys and 300 miles out to sea, she said.

Those results are part of the the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process being conducted by federal agencies, states and Indian tribes, which will result in recommendations for mitigating damages that will be paid for by BP and other parties responsible for the oil disaster.

More than 8,500 response workers are still cleaning up oil along the coast, federal officials say, with 93 miles of shoreline experiencing moderate to heavy oil impacts, including 86 miles in Louisiana. Another 483 miles of shoreline have light to trace oil impacts, including 226 miles in Louisiana.

The biggest change in the new report is in the estimate of the amount of oil that was turned into tiny droplets by chemical dispersants. The original report said 16 percent of the oil had been naturally dispersed, while 8 percent was chemically dispersed.

Tuesday's report found that 16 percent of the oil was chemically dispersed and only 13 percent was naturally dispersed. The additional oil moved into the chemically-dispersed category included 2 percent that was originally thought to have evaporated or dissolved, reducing that category to 23 percent, and 3 percent from the "residual" category.

Remaining the same were estimates of the amount of oil that was directly recovered, 17 percent; burned, 5 percent, and skimmed, 3 percent.

Lubchenco said information from sampling taken during research cruises helped the authors of the new report in changing the estimates.

The new report, authored by scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey, National Institute of Standards and Technology and NOAA, reduced to 23 percent the amount of residual oil. But Lubchenco said both the earlier estimate and the new estimate were within the range of error calculated in the new report.

The new report was peer reviewed by scientists chosen by the University of New Hampshire Coastal Response Research Center. It was ordered by the Obama Administration when questions were raised about the accuracy of the original report, after several administration officials used its findings on the day it was released to tout the effectiveness of the BP-government oil cleanup.

"I think the bottom line is that I was in error in the press conference when I said the report was peer reviewed," Lubchenco said Tuesday, saying she used the phrase "peer review" because she was aware several independent scientists had helped administration researchers in its preparation.

UPDATE NO. 5

December 11, 2010, 11:00 AM

Received my copy of the *FLY FISHER* today and as usual the editorial professionalism of Al and Gretchen Beatty was outstanding! As stated in the article I plan on keeping readers of the *FLY FISHER* up to date with respect to long term recovery from the oil spill. Unfortunately the press has other ideas, as the longer we go the less we hear. Except for really big events or discoveries, most news, when printed is buried on page 40 of a 35 page newspaper if you get my drift. One has to dig into trade and professional journals for reliable updates or cruise through outdoors-recreation blogs for actual reports. As of this update there really haven't been any changes. They are still working on beaches to clean oil that has penetrated under the sand and the fringe edges of marsh along open water remain contaminated. Local government is still requesting funds for clean-up and locals are still waiting for final payments for economic losses. Fishing reports continue to be great; the reds and specks are plentiful and reports of "mule trout" are starting to come in (mules are the big boys over five pounds). For up to date fishing information just search "South Louisiana fishing reports" on the internet. The search produces a wealth of information.....Tom

UPDATE NO. 6

December 13, 2010, 9:00 AM

Videos appear to back BP's contention that oil flow increased over time; David Hammer, The Times-Picayune

During the three months that BP's broken Macondo well was shooting orange and brown plumes of crude oil and natural gas into the Gulf of Mexico, scientific estimates of the spill's flow rate grew so much that many, if not most, people assumed there had

been a joint effort by BP and the Obama administration to soft-pedal the spill's true impact.

On May 27 -- when government scientists said 12,000 to 19,000 barrels of oil were spilling each day, dwarfing previous estimates of 1,000 to 5,000 daily barrels -- Rep. Ed Markey, D-Mass., accused BP of "low-balling the size of their accident, since every barrel spilled increases how much they could be fined by the government."

Two months later, when researchers tripled the worst-case figures from May, Markey was indignant again.

"It took over 100 days and the pressure of flow-rate calculations by independent scientists using high-definition undersea video to tell the world what BP most likely suspected from the start," he said.

Others said the government was complicit in the ruse. An environmental group, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, filed suit, with the group's director saying in September that the Obama administration "took, and is still taking, steps to falsely minimize public perception about the extent and severity of the BP spill."

When a consensus finally emerged that a total of 4.9 million barrels of oil escaped before the well was capped July 14, it seemed that the early lower estimates had been put to rest -- until this month, that is, when members of the presidential Oil Spill Commission called attention to BP's latest contention that the true number is actually 20 percent to 50 percent lower.

Billions in fines

With potentially billions of dollars in water-pollution fines hanging in the balance, some scientists are saying the smaller estimates, particularly those from May and June, may have been closer to the truth at that time than the larger figures that a government science team came up with later. The idea that the flow rate increased over time could also explain why the government and BP were constantly caught off guard by new, larger oil-discharge estimates as mechanisms for containing the oil repeatedly came up short.

A BP report from November, a document that BP hasn't publicized, challenges in great detail the findings of both independent researchers and government-endorsed groups.

While Markey scoffed at BP's latest contention, saying it "flies in the face of multiple lines of evidence," a key member of the government's science team told The Times-Picayune last week that BP's points deserve further analysis.

"More information is needed to evaluate the issues raised by BP, as well as more time," said Bill Lehr, a senior scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and a member of the government's Flow Rate Technical Group, which analyzed how much oil was escaping the blown-out well throughout the 87-day ordeal. "I have asked the BP lead flow expert to provide any additional scientific data or analysis that BP believes is relevant to this question."

If the federal Justice Department were to accept the company's figures and use them to levy the standard civil polluter penalties under the Clean Water Act, the maximum fine would be reduced by as much as \$2.5 billion. And if BP and its contractors and partners are found grossly negligent, BP's spill tally, if accepted, would slice as much as \$10 billion off the maximum fine.

Scientific assumptions

The renewed dialogue over the spill's final size is also shedding new light on the problems the government had in establishing how much oil was actually escaping.

When the leak was finally capped in mid-July, the Flow Rate Technical Group used pressure readings to get what they considered the most accurate rate. From that, they used modeling to estimate what the flow rate had been when the leak began. It's generally accepted that the pressure at the source of the oil diminishes as it releases hydrocarbons, so the government scientists assumed the flow rate must have been decreasing all along. The scientists concluded the initial flow of oil was at least five times greater than what they had estimated in May.

But videos posted on YouTube since mid-September appear to buttress BP's contention that the output of oil increased, not decreased, over time as oil, gas and sediment tore through and eroded components of the metal stack designed to shut in the well. Independent engineers and geophysicists have told The Times-Picayune that the erosion seen in the videos would have raised the flow rate at least enough to offset the decreasing pressure in the underground oil reservoir.

'Cascading errors'

Government entities have refused to acknowledge the videos and continue to base their estimates on the idea that the flow of oil was slowing down over time.

BP says the government's flawed assumptions "very likely led to fundamental, pervasive and cascading errors" in its official calculations. The company's report notes that video of the inside of the blowout preventer stack shows major erosion of closures and holes in the metal walls, suggesting that highly pressurized oil and gas forced its way out in greater volumes as time went on.

When The Times-Picayune asked the Justice Department, the Interior Department and Det Norske Veritas -- the government contractor performing forensic analysis of the blowout preventer -- to confirm the authenticity of videos showing those phenomena, they declined to answer. But experts consulted by the newspaper said the videos, which include outside views from the deck of the vessel where the blowout preventer was raised as evidence, looked authentic. When a reporter showed one of the videos to retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, the man who ran the government's spill response, he said the images were consistent with other videos of the inside of the blowout preventer that he viewed when it was still at the bottom of the sea.

In addition to the failure to account for the gradual breakdown of obstacles to flow, BP says the government scientists underestimated the temperature of the escaping fluid and failed to account for turbulence inside the blowout preventer.

Video analysis

However, independent scientists Steven Wereley of Purdue University, Richard Camilli of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, and Timothy Crone and Maya Tolstoy of Columbia University took internal pressures and obstacles out of the equation by analyzing video or acoustic readings of the oil as it entered the water. Crone and Tolstoy were able to analyze high-quality video from May 14 and other video from June 3, right after the mangled pipe leading out of the blowout preventer was cut.

Crone and Tolstoy found the flow increased after the cutting of the riser pipe made a cleaner, larger opening. BP supports that concept, but the company assailed all three independent analyses, saying their methods were too imprecise.

Crone said his video analysis is the most accurate, although it has a margin of error of plus or minus 20 percent. He and Tolstoy set the total spill at 5.2 million barrels, about 6 percent larger than the official estimate, but he acknowledges they need access to more video to see how the flow truly fluctuated over time.

"We can look at flow rates every minute," Crone said. "We can see how the flow changes on short time scales: hours, minutes, weeks and months. That's the difference between this technique and the others. You can't do pressure tests now, but if the video data still exist, then we can still get complete answers to these questions."