

## **Chronology of Deepwater Horizon Events**

On April 20, 2010, at about 10 p.m., an explosion occurred on the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico. There were 126 people on board at the time. Fifteen of those were injured and eleven people disappeared. The Deepwater Horizon, owned by Transocean Ltd., was under a contract with BP to drill an exploratory well. BP was the lessee of the area in which the rig was operating. At the time of the explosion, BP and Transocean were in the process of temporarily closing the well, in anticipation of returning to the well in the future for commercial production. Halliburton had completed some cementing of casings in the well less than 24 hours prior to the accident. The Coast Guard responded to the explosion and fire.

The next day, on April 21, 2010, pursuant to the National Contingency Plan, the Administration named Rear Admiral Mary Landry the Federal On-Scene Coordinator. A Regional Response Team was established, including representatives of the Coast Guard, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Commerce (DOC)/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as state and local representatives. The Regional Response Team began developing plans, providing technical advice and access to resources and equipment from its member agencies, and overseeing BP's response.

A second explosion on April 22, 2010, caused the Deepwater Horizon to sink into the Gulf of Mexico at 10:22 a.m., taking with it a riser pipe which remained attached to the blowout preventer. The riser pipe broke as the Deepwater Horizon sank.

On April 24, 2010, Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) inspected the capsized rig on the sea floor and found two oil leaks from the well pipe along the sea floor (at a depth of approximately 5000 feet). The initial estimate was that up to 1,000 barrels of oil a day could be leaking into the water. This estimate was later revised to be at least 5,000 barrels per day.

On April 27, 2010, Secretary of Homeland Security Napolitano and Secretary of the Interior Salazar signed an order establishing the next steps for a joint investigation that is currently underway into the causes of the explosion. The joint investigation will have the power to issue subpoenas, hold public hearings, call witnesses, and take other steps that may be needed to determine the cause of the incident.

On April 29, 2010, Secretary Napolitano declared the incident to be a Spill of National Significance, enabling the appointment of a National Incident Commander to coordinate response resources at the national level.

On April 30, 2010, the Secretary of Defense mobilized the Louisiana National Guard to help in the ongoing efforts to assist local communities in the cleanup and removal of oil and to protect critical habitats from contamination.

On May 1, 2010, Department of Homeland Security Secretary Napolitano named U.S. Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Thad Allen the National Incident Commander for the Administration's continued, coordinated response.

On May 2, 2010, BP began drilling the first deep-water intercept relief well, which is located one-half mile from the Macondo well, in a water depth of roughly 5,000 feet. This relief well will attempt to intercept the existing wellbore at approximately 16,000 feet below the sea floor. BP estimates this process will take at least 90 days.

On May 4, 2010, the Pentagon approved the federal mobilization of up to 17,500 National Guard troops to help various states with the oil spill (up to 6,000 by Louisiana, 3,000 by Alabama, 2,500 by Florida and 6,000 by Mississippi).

On May 5, BP announced that it had stopped the flow of oil from one of the three existing leak points on the damaged oil well and riser in the Gulf of Mexico, although this action did not change the overall rate of the leak. BP made plans to deploy the cofferdam, a 125-ton, 14' x 24' x 40' structure to be set over the end of the riser (the pipe that normally goes from the wellhead to the drilling ship).

On May 7, 2010, NOAA modified and expanded the boundaries of the closed fishing area to better reflect the current location of the oil spill. After having deployed test applications of subsea dispersants, EPA halted subsea dispersant operations, awaiting additional test results. Secretary of the Interior Salazar announced that no applications for new drilling permits would go forward for any new offshore drilling activity until the Department of the Interior completes the safety review process that President Obama requested.

On May 8, 2010, BP announced that while lowering the cofferdam over the riser, an excess of hydrate crystals formed inside the dome, preventing the dome from being successfully placed over the leaking riser. The dome remains on the sea floor while BP evaluates current conditions.

On May 11, 2010, Secretary of the Interior Salazar announced that he would restructure the Minerals Management Service in order to establish a separate and independent safety and environmental enforcement entity. Secretary Salazar also announced that the Administration would seek additional resources for federal inspectors, request an independent, technical investigation of the causes of the Deepwater Horizon spill from the National Academy of Engineers, and request expanded authority to review explorations plans.

On May 12, 2010, Secretary Chu traveled to Houston to participate in meetings with DOE and national lab staff, industry officials and other engineers and scientists involved in finding solutions to cap the flow of oil and contain the spill.

On May 14, 2010, President Obama announced that he had ordered Secretary Salazar to conduct a "top to bottom" review of the Minerals Management Service.

On May 15, 2010, Secretary Napolitano and Secretary Salazar sent a letter to BP CEO Tony Hayward reiterating that as a responsible party for this event, BP is accountable to the American public for the full cleanup of this spill and all the economic loss caused by the spill and related events.

On May 16, 2010, a riser insertion tube tool (RITT) was successfully tested and inserted into the leaking riser, capturing some oil and gas. BP estimated that it was capturing slightly more than 2,000 barrels per day but that the amount varied greatly day to day.

On May 17, 2010, a second drill rig (the Transocean *Development Driller II*) began drilling a second relief well.

On May 19, 2010, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar signed a Secretarial Order leading to the fundamental restructuring of the Minerals Management Service and the division of its three conflicting missions into separate entities for leasing, safety and revenue collection with independent missions to strengthen oversight of offshore energy operations.

In addition, Chairman Markey requested that BP immediately make its live video feed from the underwater ROVs of the leak points and undersea activities publicly available.

On May 20, 2010, Secretary Napolitano announced that U.S. Coast Guard Admiral Thad Allen would remain in his current role as National Incident Commander for the Administration's continued, coordinated response to the Deepwater BP Oil Spill after stepping down from his post as Coast Guard Commandant.

In addition, Secretary Napolitano and EPA Administrator Jackson sent a letter to BP CEO Tony Hayward stressing their expectation that BP conduct all actions in a transparent manner, with all data and information related to the spill readily available to the U.S. government and the American people.

The EPA also issued a directive requiring BP to identify and use a less toxic and more effective dispersant from the list of EPA authorized dispersants. The directive required BP to identify a less toxic alternative—to be used both on the surface and under the water at the source of the oil leak—within 24 hours and to begin using the less toxic dispersant within 72 hours of submitting the alternative.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce posted a live feed of the underwater leak at its source, which was made available by BP following Chairman Markey's request on May 19.

On May 22, 2010, President Obama signed an executive order establishing the bipartisan National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore

Drilling with former two-term Florida Governor and former Senator Bob Graham and former Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency William K. Reilly serving as co-chairs. The bipartisan National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Offshore Drilling is tasked with providing recommendations on how to prevent—and mitigate the impact of—any future spills that result from offshore drilling.

By May 23, 2010, more than 1.73 million feet of containment boom and 730,000 feet of sorbent boom had been deployed to contain the spill. Approximately 10.2 million gallons of an oil-water mix had been recovered. Approximately 785,000 gallons of total dispersant had been deployed—685,000 on the surface and 100,000 subsea.

As of May 24, 2010, approximately 65.6 miles of Louisiana shoreline had been impacted by oil.

In addition, Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke declared a fisheries disaster for commercial and recreational fisheries in the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the ongoing impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. NOAA has closed portions of the Gulf of Mexico to fishing based on the trajectory of the spill since May 2, 2010. The fisheries closure currently encompasses 19 percent of federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico.

On May 26, 2010, the “Top Kill” procedure began in an attempt to cap well.

On May 27, 2010, the National Incident Command’s Flow Rate Technical Group (FRTG) developed an independent, preliminary estimate of the amount of oil flowing from BP’s leaking oil well. The analysis estimated that 12,000 and 19,000 barrels per day were leaking into the Gulf.

Admiral Allen, approved the implementation of a section of Louisiana’s barrier island project proposal that could help stop oil from coming ashore

The Subcommittee on Energy and Environment held a hearing entitled “Combating the BP Oil Spill”. The hearing examined the ongoing response to the oil spill at the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig site.

On May 28, 2010, President Obama traveled for the second time to the Gulf Coast. The President announced that he has directed Secretary Napolitano and Admiral Allen to triple the manpower in the places where oil has hit the shore or is within 24 hours of impact in order to further intensify the response effort.

On May 29, 2010, BP announced that it would cease its unsuccessful attempt to use the top kill technique to cap the well.

On May 31, 2010, NOAA extended the northern boundary of the closed fishing area in the Gulf of Mexico. The closed represented 61,854 square miles, slightly less than 26 percent of Gulf of Mexico federal waters.

In addition, BP CEO Tony Hayward made a claim that BP had found "no evidence" of underwater oil plumes, despite evidence documented by scientists.

On June 1, 2010, Attorney General Eric Holder visited Louisiana to coordinate the administration's legal response to the BP oil spill.

NOAA extended the northern and southern boundaries of the closed fishing area in the Gulf of Mexico to include portions of the slick moving into waters off eastern Alabama and the western tip of the Florida panhandle. The closed area now represents 75,920 square miles, which is slightly more than 31 percent of Gulf of Mexico federal waters.

On June 2, 2010, Admiral Allen directed BP to pay for five additional barrier island projects in addition to the one he approved last week to protect coastal communities from BP's leaking oil.

On June 3, 2010, the Obama administration sent a preliminary bill for \$69 million to BP and other responsible parties for response and recovery operations relating to the BP/Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. The Administration stated that it will continue to bill BP regularly for all associated costs to ensure the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund is reimbursed on an ongoing basis.

BP cut off a portion of the riser and prepared to lower a containment device over the area to capture the oil leaking. Following the cut of the riser, the flow of oil is estimated to increase by as much as 20 percent.

BP CEO Tony Hayward admits that BP "did not have the tools you would want in your tool-kit" and "it was entirely fair criticism to say BP dropped the ball when it came to planning for a major oil leak."

U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke declares a fishery disaster in Florida due to the economic impact on commercial and recreational fisheries from the BP oil spill, increasing the affected area from the May 24 determination which included Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

After repeated requests, BP released the live feeds from all 12 underwater cameras to the public. The cameras are mounted on automated rovers working on the oil spill.

On June 4, 2010, President Obama made his third trip to the Gulf Coast.

BP placed the containment cap over the source of the leak.

NOAA opened more than 16,000 square miles of previously closed fishing area off the Florida coast. Additionally, the agency closed a 2,275-square mile area off the Florida panhandle as a precautionary measure to ensure that seafood from the Gulf will

remain safe for consumers. The closed area represented 33 percent of Gulf of Mexico federal waters.

On June 5, 2010, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson and the National Incident Command in Houma, La., convened a meeting of science and technology experts to explore new ideas and methods for coastal protection and clean up technologies

On June 7, 2010, the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a field hearing entitled “Local Impact of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill” in Chalmette, Louisiana. The hearing examined the impact of the oil spill at the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig site on the Gulf region.

On June 8, 2010, President Obama announced plans to travel to the Gulf Coast for a fourth visit on Monday, June 14, and Tuesday, June 15.

On June 9, 2010, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis traveled to Louisiana to inspect efforts to ensure the health, safety and well-being of workers affected by the BP oil spill.

The Subcommittee on Energy and Environment of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a briefing entitled “Beneath the Surface of the BP Spill: What’s Happening Now, What’s Needed Next” at which witnesses discussed the evidence of underwater plumes and suspended oil pollution in the water column.

On June 10, 2010, The Subcommittee on Energy and Environment of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce held a hearing entitled “The BP Oil Spill: Human Exposure and Environmental Fate.” The hearing examined the potential impacts to humans and the environment that are associated with the spill.