

PROBLEMS WITH OIL SPILL RESPONSE

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1. Dispersant Toxicity:

Why BP Refuses To Stop Using Chemical Dispersants

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=19434> Why does BP refuse to stop using the chemical dispersants the EPA ordered BP to stop using? ... According to scientists studying the massive underwater oil plumes, **the dispersants keep the oil underwater, away from the naked eye and satellite view.** Some of the oil plumes are over 30 foot deep and 26 miles long. ... One scientist said about using dispersants on oil: "You don't want to put soap into a fish tank." ... This discovery seems to confirm the fears of some scientists that -- because of the depth of the leak and the heavy use of chemical

"dispersants" -- this spill was behaving differently than others. Instead of floating on top of the water, it may be moving beneath it. ...That would be troubling because it could mean the oil would slip past coastal defenses such as "containment booms" designed to stop it on the surface. **Already, scientists and officials in Louisiana have reported finding thick oil washing ashore despite the presence of floating booms.**

Mobile scientists' warnings about oil dispersants ignored by BP, Coast Guard

http://blog.al.com/live/2010/05/mobile_scientists_warnings_abo.html

Mobile-area scientists warned BP PLC officials and Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen a week ago that the use of dispersants both on the surface and underwater at the Deepwater Horizon well could have grave consequences for the Gulf ecosystem. ...The scientists, Bob Shipp of the University of South Alabama and George Crozier of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, said they felt their concerns were ignored at the time.

Lawsuit Seeks Full Disclosure of Dispersant Impacts on Gulf's Endangered Wildlife: 6/2/2010

http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/news/press_releases/2010/dispersants-06-02-2010.html

Contact: Andrea Treece, Center for Biological Diversity, (415) 378-6558; atreece@biologicaldiversity.org

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SAN FRANCISCO— The Center for Biological Diversity today filed an official notice of its intent to sue the Environmental Protection Agency for authorizing the use of toxic dispersants without ensuring that these chemicals would not harm endangered species and their habitats. The letter requests that the agency, along with the U.S. Coast Guard, immediately study the effects of dispersants on species such as sea turtles, sperm whales, piping plovers, and corals and incorporate this knowledge into oil-spill response efforts. "The Gulf of Mexico has become Frankenstein's laboratory for BP's enormous, uncontrolled experiment in flooding the ocean with toxic chemicals," said Andrea Treece, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity.... **"Researchers suspect that underwater oil plumes, measuring as much as 20 miles long and extending dozens of miles from the leaking rig, are the result of dispersants keeping the oil below the surface.** ... Nonetheless, the federal government has allowed BP to pump nearly 1 million gallons of dispersants into the Gulf of Mexico. "Pouring dispersants into vital fish nursery grounds and endangered species habitat simply trades one evil for another...Studies have found that oil dispersed by Corexit 9527 damages the insulating properties of seabird feathers more than untreated oil, making the birds more susceptible to hypothermia and death. Studies have also found that dispersed oil is toxic to fish eggs, larvae, and adults, as well as to corals, and can harm sea turtles' ability to breathe and digest food. Formulations of the dispersants being used by BP, Corexit 9500 and 9527, have been banned in the United Kingdom due to concerns over their impacts on the marine environment.

USF researchers troubled by layers of oil found in Gulf

<http://www2.tbo.com/content/2010/may/28/281129/usf-researchers-find-possible-signs-invisible-oil/>

"We went for several days seeing absolutely no sign of oil whatsoever on the west Florida shelf," Peebles added. "It wasn't until we got into the Desoto Canyon area of the Panhandle that we started to see evidence of oil." And what they found truly troubled them. **Scientists found evidence of dissolved hydrocarbons that they are trying to determine if they came from the oil itself or from the 850,000 gallons of dispersants that have been used to fight the gusher in the Gulf.** They are invisible to the eye, but show up in tests and could eventually pose a serious concern to all kinds of marine life.

Gulf Oil Spill: Dispersants Have Potential to Cause More Harm Than Good

<http://www.pnewswire.com/news-releases/gulf-oil-spill-dispersants-have-potential-to-cause-more->

harm-than-good- 93424899.html

"The dispersants used in the BP clean-up efforts, known as 'Corexit 9500' and 'Corexit EC9527A,' are also known as deodorized kerosene," said Dr. Sawyer. **"With respect to marine toxicity and potential human health risks, studies of kerosene exposures strongly indicate potential health risks to volunteers, workers, sea turtles, dolphins, breathing reptiles and all species which need to surface for air exchanges, as well as birds and all other mammals. Additionally, I have considered marine species which surface for atmospheric inhalation such as sea turtles, dolphins and other species which are especially vulnerable to aspiration toxicity of 'Corexit 9500' into the lung while surfacing."**

Gulf Oil Spill Health Hazards: Report by ScienceCorps, Lexington MA, June 14, 2010

http://www.sciencecorps.org/Gulf_Spill_Chemical_Hazards_Report.pdf

Many people will be exposed to chemicals in air, water, sand, soil, and food as a result of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. It is important to understand the potential toxic effects and take appropriate protective actions to reduce exposure and harm. This report describes the toxicity of chemicals in crude oil and in the dispersants currently being used in the Gulf area.

Toxic Corexit dispersant chemicals remained secret as feds colluded with Big Business

http://www.naturalnews.com/028974_Corexit_dispersants.html

As reported in the New York Times, Brian Turnbaugh, a policy analyst at OMB Watch said, "EPA had the authority to act all along; its decision to now disclose the ingredients demonstrates this. Yet it took a public outcry and weeks of complaints for the agency to act and place the public's interest ahead of corporate interests." ... A newer Corexit recipe dubbed the "9500 formula" contains dioctyl sodium sulfosuccinate, a detergent chemical that's also found in laxatives.

Dispersing Ain't Cleaning: Ask Congress to Investigate Oil Spill-Dispersing Chemicals

<http://www.care2.com/causes/environment/blog/dispersing-aint-cleaning/> But isn't it better to try to disperse the oil so it goes away? Isn't anything better than the oil? Protect the Ocean observes that "Oil is toxic at 11 ppm while Corexit is toxic at only 2.61 ppm." So Corexit is about four times as toxic as the oil it is being applied to. Of course, there is way less Corexit being dumped than oil, but the relative toxicity argument doesn't really "hold water" when you consider that we're not dumping Corexit instead of oil, but in addition to it.

EPA Approves Corexit for Gulf Oil Spill Cleanup, But Nobody Knows What It's Made Of

<http://www.fastcompany.com/1643601/epa-approves-use-of-harmful-chemical-dispersants-in-oil-spill>

What the Heck is BP Putting in the Gulf?

<http://motherjones.com/blue-marble/2010/05/what-heck-bp-putting-gulf>

Chemicals Meant To Break Up BP Oil Spill Present New Environmental Concerns

<http://www.propublica.org/article/bp-gulf-oil-spill-dispersants-0430>

Gulf Oil Spill Fight Turns to Chemicals

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2010/04/100430-energy-gulf-oil-spill-chemical-dispersants/>

2.Lack of Skimmers/ Failed Logistical Response/ Safer & Effective Alternatives Not Deployed?

Bill Nelson: Not Enough Skimmers, Oil Seeping Up from Seabed (6/7/2010) MSNBC VIDEO LINK HERE

<http://seminal.firedoglake.com/diary/53369>

Appearing with Andrea Mitchell [on MSNBC] today, United States Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) says that further leakage may require more military involvement than the Coast Guard can provide. He also makes news: there are reports that oil is seeping up from the seabed due to the casing below the wellhead being pierced. Mitchell rightly focuses on the real issue here: the relief well as currently aimed may not be low enough to capture the oil if it leaking from collapsed casing below the intercept point.

Company Says It Has Solution For Gulf Oil Spill, But Being Ignored

<http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid35214809001?bctid=83772543001>

[This video originated from Tampa's WTSP: <http://www.wtsp.com/default.aspx>]

BP hiring more pleasure craft than fishing boats for oil spill cleanup, blog reports

http://www.nola.com/news/gulf-oil-spill/index.ssf/2010/06/bp_hiring_pleasure_craft_rathe.html

Bioremediation Is The Solution, Not Toxic Dispersants

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCzhmGHQ_1c

Over 20 years ago, the State of Texas offered a natural remediation technology using microbes that turn crude from oil spills literally into a safe and benign fish food. Hard to believe? Then check out this YouTube video clip produced by the State of Texas General Land Office demonstrating the benefits of microbial remediation technologies:

Polychem Dispersit a Better Answer to the Gulf Spill

<http://www.worldmarketmedia.com/1876/section.aspx/906608/polychem-dispersit-a-better-answer-to-the-gulf-spill>

Polychem's own product, Dispersit, (<http://uspoly.com/dispersit.html>) a water-based surfactant product used to clean up oil spills, has shown a significant reduction in the harm caused to both human and aquatic life. The other approved dispersant products like the Corexit 9500 are formulated with petroleum mineral spirits used as dilutents...

What Can Gulf Communities Do To Protect Their Beaches from the Oil Spill?

<http://georgewashington2.blogspot.com/2010/05/what-can-gulf-communities-do-to-protect.html>

Sea Brat: Oil Spill Remedy that BP Is Trying to Deny

<http://seminal.firedoglake.com/diary/50810> By: johnnydiamond Tuesday May 25, 2010 10:08 pm

I make Sea Brat. The thing that has been tricky to explain is that all of our products were made for bioremediation. We mix a liquid blend of enzymes and oil eating microbes. These microbes are formulated just for these hydrocarbons. They are basically typical, natural microbes or psudomonas.

Video from MSNBC: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDGAoU1H2gM>

Summary: Two oil industry experts expressed their anger at BP's failing operation so far, and suggested that large tankers, using vacuum piping, on-board centrifuges, and robot submersibles, could circle above the well-site/oil plume and collect a large portion of the toxic oil before it spreads further afield into the Gulf.

BP enlists help from Kevin Costner in cleanup

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/06/15/oil.disaster.costner/index.html>

BP Orders Costner's Cleaning Machines

<http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/100614/acd.02.html>

Tar Sands Technology Tested on BP Spill

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/28165/20100611/bp-readies-tests-cleanup-ideas.htm> Those barges would go out into the gulf and take up the water mixed with the oil, and transfer it to tankers that could take it away to be separated.

3. Media Blockade:

(BP Official Admits to Damage BENEATH THE SEA FLOOR -- 5/30/2010 !)

[\http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/30/AR2010053002195_pf.html

Sources at two companies involved with the well said that BP also discovered new damage inside the well below the seafloor and that, as a result, some of the drilling mud that was successfully forced into the well was going off to the side into rock formations. ...**"We discovered things that were broken in the sub-surface," said a BP official who spoke on the condition of anonymity. He said that mud was making it "out to the side, into the formation."**

VIDEO Filmed June 13 by ROV Viking Poseidon: Oil plumes seep from cracks in the seafloor:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2RxIQP0IBU>

[Comment: Florida Senator Bill Nelson has said this is indeed what is happening. ALSO, as noted above, a BP official told the Washington Post (anonymously) that this is what's happening. Why is our major media not highlighting this critical problem?]

BP Well Bore /Casing Integrity Issues and Senator Nelson's Statements:MSNBC VIDEO

LINK: <http://emptywheel.firedoglake.com/2010/06/14/bp-well-bore-integrity-nelson-statements/>

Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL): Andrea we're looking into something new right now, that there's reports of oil that's seeping up from the seabed... which would indicate, if that's true, that the well casing itself is actually pierced... underneath the seabed. So, you know, the problems could be just enormous with what we're facing.

From the Ground: BP Censoring Media, Destroying Evidence

[Http://www.commondreams.org/view/2010/06/11-9](http://www.commondreams.org/view/2010/06/11-9) Friday, June 11, 2010. The Huffington Post; by Riki Ott

Orange Beach, Alabama -- While President Obama insists that the federal government is firmly in control of the response to BP's spill in the Gulf, people in coastal communities where I visited last week in Louisiana and Alabama know an inconvenient truth: BP -- not our president -- controls the response. In fact, people on the ground say things are out of control in the gulf.

Letter to Obama: SPJ urges government transparency regarding Gulf oil spill

<http://www.spj.org/news.asp?ref=977> We are writing to you in the midst of what may well be the worst environmental disaster in the history of the United States to urge that you give the public access to all monitoring data related to the oil leak in the Gulf of Mexico, including past, present and future videos

of the live feed maintained by BP of oil spilling on the seabed since the feed was started. Access to all monitoring data is crucial for scientists and the public to understand the extent of the problem, and plan for how to help the area recover and thrive.

BP Blocking Media Access? New Orleans interview:

“BP Beach Front Barricade?” NEW ORLEANS WDSU-TV <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZHnStD690U>

FSU oceanographer presses for truth on oil spill:

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/fsu-oceanographer-presses-for-truth-on-oil-spill/1102350>

Now, this once anonymous academic is the face of the scientific community's claims that BP and the federal government have understated the severity of the massive oil spill. He has railed against BP, federal regulators and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on CNN and in some of the most prestigious publications in Britain and the United States. His colleagues credit him with helping to draw more accurate flow estimates from BP and the federal government. Current reports have grown to up to 2.1 million gallons a day.

BP hires private security contractors to guard ‘black water’

<http://rawstory.com/rs/2010/0615/bp-hires-private-security-contractors-guard-oily-beaches/>

On the Gulf Coast, Media Access Can Be Hard to Come By

<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/2010/06/on-the-gulf-coast-media-access.html>

“It’s BP’s Oil”: Running the corporate blockade at Louisiana's crude-covered beaches.

<http://motherjones.com/environment/2010/05/oil-spill-bp-grand-isle-beach>

CNN’s Anderson Cooper, 6/8/2010: Federal officials blocking reporters:

Exactly why federal officials now make it impossible to get pictures like this is not clear to us. This is the reality of what oil does to birds. This is the reality everyone should be able to see.

Government Collusion with BP to Block Information Flow Means We Need an Independent Commission to Handle Spill Response: By: Jim White June 10, 2010 6:50 am <http://seminal.firedoglake.com/diary/53862>

BP and US Government 'Command Center' Guarded by Company From Afghan Embassy Hazing Scandal

<http://www.thenation.com/blog/bp-and-us-government-command-center-guarded-company-afghan-embassy-hazing-scandal>

AL GORE: Stop Censoring News From The Gulf: June 14, 2010 :

http://blog.algore.com/2010/06/stop_censoring_news_from_the_g.html

“A pilot wanted to take a photographer from The Times-Picayune of New Orleans to snap photographs of the oil slicks blackening the water. The response from a BP contractor who answered the phone late last month at the command center was swift and absolute: Permission denied.” ... This de facto form of censorship needs to stop.

Restricted media access hinders spill coverage

<http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20100610/ARTICLE/6101075/2055/NEWS>

By JEREMY W. PETERS The New York Times

Last week, Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., tried to bring a small group of journalists with him on a trip he was taking through the gulf on a Coast Guard vessel. Nelson's office said the Coast Guard agreed to

accommodate the reporters and camera operators. But at about 10 p.m. on the evening before the trip, someone from the Department of Homeland Security's legislative affairs office called the senator's office to tell them that no journalists would be allowed.

News networks say access to oil spill 'slowly being strangled off':

<http://rawstory.com/rs/2010/0529/media-coverage-oil-spill-strangled-off/>

The Associated Press, CBS and others have reported coverage problems because of the restrictions, which officials say are needed to protect wildlife and ensure safe air traffic. ...Ted Jackson, a photographer for The Times-Picayune newspaper in New Orleans, said Saturday that access to the spill "is slowly being strangled off."

BP's Photo Blockade of the Gulf Oil Spill

<http://www.newsweek.com/2010/05/26/the-missing-oil-spill-photos.html>

Photographers say BP and government officials are preventing them from documenting the impact of the Deepwater Horizon disaster... Photographers who have traveled to the Gulf commonly say they believe that BP has exerted more control over coverage of the spill with the cooperation of the federal government and local law enforcement... "It would be funny if it were not so serious."

BP withholds oil spill facts — and government lets it

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2010/05/18/94415/bps-secrecy-keep-facts-on-gulf.html>

BP, the company in charge of the rig that exploded last month in the Gulf of Mexico, hasn't publicly divulged the results of tests on the extent of workers' exposure to evaporating oil or from the burning of crude over the gulf, even though researchers say that data is crucial in determining whether the conditions are safe. Moreover, the company isn't monitoring the extent of the spill and only reluctantly released videos of the spill site that could give scientists a clue to the amount of the oil in gulf.

CBS Cameras Turned Away by BP, Coast Guard

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/05/18/national/main6496846.shtml>

CBS News correspondent Kelly Cobiella reports it's an ominous sight. The oil is thick and black and stretches about a quarter mile down a beach... When CBS News tried to reach the beach, covered in oil, a boat of BP contractors with two Coast Guard officers on board told us to turn around under threat of arrest.

U.S. Coast Guard Under 'BP's Rules' VIDEO <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6496749n&tag=related;photovideo>

WEAR TV, ABC Channel 3, Pensacola, FL: Government to Oil Plume Discovery Team: Shut Up

http://www.weartv.com/newsroom/top_stories/videos/wear_vid_8434.shtml

Over the weekend, a research crew from the University of Southern Mississippi found evidence that there are 3 to 5 plumes... About 5 miles wide, 10 miles long and 3 hundred feet in depth. ... But after giving that information to the press, the lead researcher now says he has been asked by the federal government... Which funds his research... To quit giving interviews until further testing is done.

CNN: Anderson Cooper, 'AC360':

<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/podcasts/ac360/site/2010/05/18/cooper.podcast.monday.cnn>

BP, on Saturday, 5/15/2010; "We're not going to take any extra efforts now to calculate flow there at this point. It's not relevant to the response effort, and it might even detract from the response effort." -- Tom Mueller, BP Spokesman

4. VOC's/ Air Quality / Volatile Chemicals/ Public Health Hazards

Rep. Maloney: Address Health of Gulf Cleanup Workers Now, Before They Lose It

<http://workinprogress.firedoglake.com/2010/06/09/rep-maloney-address-health-of-gulf-cleanup-workers-now-before-they-lose-it/> OSHA needs to conduct a monitoring program independent of the recovery effort of BP and the Coast Guard... If we don't act now, and if OSHA continues to provide cover for BP, Gulf cleanup workers will suffer for the rest of the lives, and BP will wash its hands thanks to the complicity of OSHA.

OSHA Fronts for BP After Congressmen Press for Worker Safety

<http://workinprogress.firedoglake.com/2010/06/06/osha-fronts-for-bp-after-congressmen-press-for-worker-safety/>

Quite frankly, it sounds like OSHA has been co-opted into the labyrinth of BP cleanup operations...

NIOSH health safety bulletin re: Dispersants:

http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/oil_spill/dispersants_and_your_safety.htm

GULF OIL AIR UNSAFE, RICKI OTT VIDEO: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TllyqCDf2hA>

Rikki Ott, marine toxicologist and Exxon Valdez survivor talks about the effects of air pollution due to oil spills and findings that show airborne levels of toxic chemicals like hydrogen sulfide, and volatile organic compounds, now far exceed safety standards for human exposure currently in those areas.

As We Rush to Protect the Gulf Coast Environment, are Responders Being Protected?

http://scienceblogs.com/thepumphandle/2010/05/as_we_rush_to_protect_the_gulf.php

NIOSH has now posted health and safety bulletins for the dispersants, one of which contains 30-60% 2-butoxyethanol and the other 10-30% petroleum distillates. 2-butoxyethanol can destroy red blood cells; the NIOSH recommended exposure limit for a full work shift is 5 parts per million. For petroleum distillates in mist form, NIOSH recommended exposure limit is 15 minutes.... On May 7, the United Commercial Fisherman's Association in Louisiana and the Louisiana Environmental Action Network (LEAN) won a Temporary Restraining Order from the U.S. District court...

Fisherman's wife breaks the silence

<http://www.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/06/03/gulf.fishermans.wife/index.html?hpt=C2>

"I received several calls from him saying, 'This one's hanging over the boat throwing up. This one says he's dizzy, and he's feeling faint. ... Arnesen believes it was vapors from the oil and the dispersants from the BP Gulf oil disaster that made her husband and the other shrimpers sick. She says they were downwind of it, and the smell was "so strong they could almost taste it."

Gulf oil spill is public health risk, environmental scientists warn

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2010/may/28/bp-gulf-oil-spill-pollution>

Pollution could do lasting damage to locals' health... Prolonged exposure to crude oil and chemical dispersants is a public health danger, environmental scientists warned today...

6. Blocking Volunteers from helping

Ricki Ott, Ph.D.: From the Ground: BP Censoring Media, Destroying Evidence

www.huffingtonpost.com/riki-ott/from-the-ground-bp-censor_b_608724.html (<http://www.rikiott.com/>)

With oil undisputedly hitting the beaches and the number of dead wildlife mounting, BP is switching tactics. In Orange Beach, people told me BP wouldn't let them collect carcasses. Instead, the company was raking up carcasses of oiled seabirds. "The heads separate from the bodies," one upset resident told me. "There's no way those birds are going to be autopsied. BP is destroying evidence!"

EXCERPT of a letter from a Florida Volunteer: What I have learned over the past 5 weeks from trying to volunteer all over 3 states, is this: The cleanup / rescue effort by BP is very minimal. BP, with the help of our government and the corporate media, have the whole thing completely locked down. Hardly anyone has been allowed to get information or photographs to the media from the clean up crew and others, paid by BP. The police are patrolling oiled areas and they have even stopped most reporters from fly-overs. Very few people are being allowed to volunteer. I have friend who live just north of Tallahassee, licensed professionals who have been e-mailing me for help because they were sent through the same runaround and put on a list and never called. BP's qualifications for clean up are extremely high and there are currently only one type of wildlife and hazmat training they will approve or accept.

Even our wildlife rescue centers were told yesterday that they will not be able to clean wildlife. Tri State Bird Rescue, one the two orgs BP is using to clean oiled wildlife, will set up in St Pete, AFTER oil comes in here. Noone without 6 months of wildlife training, a professional license and hazmat training will be allowed to rescue wildlife. What this will mean is, if wildlife gets in oil, there is almost no hope of saving it, unless there are changes very soon. The media is not putting this out. See New York Daily News, Matthew Lisiac's article yesterday. Our local radio stations finally seem to be catching on but it will take a large public outcry to get attention from politicians.