

Oil Spill Response

Thursday, May 20, 2010

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

De Soto National Memorial
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On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico. Since then, the well has spilled large amounts of oil off the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama coastline. Currently, BP has reported limited success in containing the ruptured well, which continues to release oil threatening several park units in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico. Recent imagery and models suggest surface oil may have also entered, or is poised to enter, a southeasterly flow of water called the loop current. The path of this loop current could bring oil to five additional National Park Service units located in south Florida, including De Soto National Memorial.

Current Status

Two National Park Service incident management teams continue to coordinate the oil spill response in the Gulf. Many other park service employees across the country are supporting the response with technical information and assistance. Human safety and resource protection are the focus of the National Park Service in the eight parks—from Louisiana to Florida—that may be affected by the oil spill.

Baseline assessments have concluded at De Soto National Memorial. These assessments were completed with support from National Park Service staff and other divisions of the incident management team. These assessments will be used to document the pre-spill condition of coastal areas in park.

What's at Risk?



De Soto National Memorial is home to many amazing animals, habitats, and cultural resources. Eleven prehistoric Indian shell ridges and middens of archaeological significance are some of the many resources within the park that may be affected by the oil spill. Mangroves shelter inland areas from storms and are breeding grounds for many commercially and recreationally important species. De Soto also is home to many indigenous marine fauna that may be affected by the recent oil spill.

What Are We Doing?

The park is working in concert with the unified response effort. Based upon results from the baseline condition assessments, the National Park Service will help guide the potential implementation of any necessary mitigation efforts. Should remediation be necessary, the National Park Service will direct the cleanup efforts of BP and their contractors for the protection of the resources in our care.

Park Status

The park remains open and all park activities continue as scheduled. For more information on park response efforts, contact the public information office at (305) 224-4125 or email: SouthFloridaNPS@gmail.com

How You Can Help

Fortunately, south Florida national parks have thus far been spared. However, volunteers are currently involved in the larger response effort. For more information on volunteering, please call the Deepwater Horizon Response Volunteer Request Line at (866) 448-5816