

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Update 17: Unified Command continues cleanup operations

SANTA BARBARA – Members of the Refugio Oil Response Unified Command continue cleanup operations at the Refugio Oil Spill in Santa Barbara County.

The Unified Command announced today that chemical dispersants would not be used during the Refugio Oil Response.

A NOAA environmental specialist observed a black-brown oil slick with silver sheen, approximately two miles off El Capitan, in an area known for natural seeps, earlier today. It was reported to be approximately three miles long by 50-meters wide. Response crews took samples, which will be tested to determine the origin.

Responders continue to remove oil from the kelp beds by spraying water's surface with a fire monitor to create an artificial current and agitating oil from the kelp. The oil is then "herded" and collected.

Refugio and El Capitan beaches remain closed to the public and will remain closed until June 4, 2015.

Canada de Alegria to Coal Oil Point fisheries still remain closed.

A Federal Aviation Administration flight restriction has been established in the area of the response.

Aircraft not directed as part of the response may not enter the airspace of Refugio State Beach. The restriction encompasses a five-mile radius around the park with a 1,000 foot ceiling. This includes the use of drone aircraft.

A safety zone has been established on the water around the perimeter of the spill zone to protect the safety of responders and the public.

The public is advised to avoid contact with the oil and to keep pets away from the area where product has accumulated. In addition, they should not attempt to rescue oiled wildlife. Untrained individuals who attempt to rescue wildlife may cause more harm than good and may injure themselves in the process. If oiled animals are scared back into the water by pets or people, their chances of survival decrease dramatically.

- To report oiled wildlife: 1-877-823-6926

- Volunteer information: 1-800-228-4544

- Claims number: 1-866-753-3619

- For more information: www.refugioresponse.com

For more information contact:

Joint Information Center

reply@refugioresponse.com