

Cleanup Guidance for Field Operations Monitors – Bayou Perot Oil Spill

The goal of the cleanup activity is to remove sizeable pools of free oil and the thicker stranded oil without causing environmental injury greater than that posed by the oil itself – in short, “do no more harm than good.” Best Management Practices should be constantly enforced such that the response actions are as environmental friendly as possible. Most of the habitat in Bayou Perot is highly sensitive and physical impacts from airboats or foot traffic may never recover. The following guidelines provide instruction to aid in managing an effective cleanup in the canal and marsh habitats within Bayou Perot:

Airboat Operations

- Airboat trips into the marsh should be planned to maximize efficiency to keep the total number of trips to a minimum.
- Airboats should stay out of the marsh as much as possible; use open water/mud flats as much as possible. Transits in marsh should be as short a distance as possible.
- Turns in the marsh should be slow and wide to prevent cuts into the substrate.
- Minimize repeated transits over the same tracks. When a track starts to show damage to vegetation and cuts into the mud, move to a different track.

Cleanup Operations in General

- Minimize the amount of foot traffic in marsh areas.
- When recovering oil in marshes, use plywood as work surfaces (esp. the vacuum hose operator) and along paths of repeated foot traffic.
- Closely monitor any shoreline flushing operations to make sure that there is no sediment erosion or vegetation damage. Many habitat areas are not appropriate for flushing operations.

Sorbent Use

- Sorbents should be used after gross oil removal is completed, more as a polishing step.
- Sorbents can be used for free oil recovery after vacuum/skimming operations become inefficient (pick up more water than oil) when working in oil pools and only small amounts of oil remain.
- Sorbent pads can be used in small pockets of oil in the marsh where it would be inefficient or too difficult to access with the vacuum recovery system; make sure that sorbent selection and use is most effective, considering the current state of oil weathering.
- Make sure that all sorbent pads are recovered. Do not deploy sorbent pads and leave them unattended as winds may blow them away from the site.
- Sorbent boom may be staked along the edge of oiled marsh vegetation for passive recovery of sheens and minor amounts of oil mitigating a secondary pollution threat to wildlife.
- Make sure that sorbent booms are changed out as soon as they are saturated or no longer effective.
- Minimize sorbent use by only deploying sorbents where they provide an effective return and skimming or vacuuming systems would be ineffective.

Oiled Debris Removal

- Loose oiled vegetation (wrack) and peat-like organic debris that is oil-saturated should be removed from the marsh edge, preferably working from boats.
- Make sure that no unoiled or live vegetation is removed and avoid collateral damage.



Do Not Allow flushing that results in sediment erosion.

The photograph to the left shows improper flushing technique.

Closely monitor any shoreline flushing operations to make sure that there is no sediment erosion or vegetation damage. Many habitat areas are not appropriate for flushing operations.



Minimize the amount of foot traffic in marsh areas.

When recovering oil in marshes, use plywood as work surfaces (esp. the vacuum hose operator) and along paths of repeated foot traffic.

The photograph to the left shows improper field technique. The worker in the marsh is not using plywood for a platform to stand. The result is physical habitat damage and entrainment of oil into the marsh sediment. Physical damage may be permanent.



When conducting squeegee operations on mud flats, insure that the teams work from the nonoiled flat. Also insure that only the oil is removed with minimal amounts of mud and sediment.

The photograph to the left shows an acceptable cleanup operation. The endpoint would be similar to the center swath shown in the photograph to the left. Only a very thin smear of oil, if any, should remain.

Avoid damaging adjacent marsh habitat and the use of sumps should be avoided or minimized. Fill in any depressions created.