

TIME: 1800 CDT August 18, 2010
TO: NOAA SSC Liz Jones
FROM: NOAA Office of Response and Restoration
Emergency Response Division
Seattle, WA 98115

SUBJECT: Garbage onshore, Mason County, Michigan

For additional information, please contact Chris Barker,
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Per your request, we have looked at trajectory implications of the discovery of garbage washed up on the shore of Mason County, Michigan.

USCG sector Lake Michigan requested support on an investigation of garbage washing up on the shore of Mason County, Michigan. The garbage was first reported on August 11th. This is very similar to an incident that occurred in July of 2008. It is thought that the garbage may have come from Milwaukee, WI.

If any of this initial information is incorrect, please let us know ASAP, as it would affect any trajectory implications.

1) TRAJECTORY ANALYSIS:

We examined the possible trajectory of floating garbage in lake Michigan in the time period proceeding Aug 11th. Using currents from the NOAA COOPS/GLERL Lake Michigan model, and winds from the NDBC Buoy 45007, we ran the NOAA General Operational Forecast Model (GNOME) to assess the possible source of the garbage.

We identified two possible likely source locations (see map). One is the region nearby and south of Mason county Michigan. If garbage were released in the couple of days prior to being found (Aug 8-10), it would likely have washed up in Mason County.

The other is the coast of Wisconsin, from the area of Milwaukee North to about Port Washington, with a release between July 31 and Aug 2. Note that it looks like if the garbage had moved across from the Milwaukee region, it is likely that some of it would have washed up south of Mason County a day or two earlier.

With more detail of the timing and locations of the washed up garbage, we might be able to refine this estimate.

Map of likely source locations for garbage found on Mason County shoreline.

