

Re: AVIRIS quantitative paper 

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Victor F Labson ○ Marcia K McNutt, Roger N Clark
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05/23/2010 05:05 PM

Marcia,

We knew that dispersal would present a loss in volume of sea-surface oil but we had no way of knowing how much. There was an assumption on my part that at least some proportion would remain on the surface. We could refine this if we find the we can map dispersant. I hear some for lab analysis is on order.

Vic

Marcia K McNutt

----- Original Message -----

From: Marcia K McNutt
Sent: 05/23/2010 04:27 PM EDT
To: Victor Labson; Roger Clark
Subject: AVIRIS quantitative paper

Vic and Roger:

I sat in on the conference call for the team doing the analysis of video to try to come up with an estimate of flow rate. Someone on the call, I don't know who it was because I don't know everyone's voices, mentioned Roger's paper and said that he thought that the oil imaged might represent dispersed oil at the surface in the process of sinking. He said that his was significant because it would mean that the May 17 data only showed a portion of the oil and that there was a lot of dispersed oil that had already sunk.

Not long after, Captain Mike White from the NIC called to get a status update on how the flow team was doing. I mentioned the possible snag in interpreting the AVIRIS results. Mike said that this oil spill has been unusual in that calm weather has not promoted much dispersion of the spill at sea. Skimming crews have mistaken dispersed oil lying at the surface for layers of oil that were possible to skim, only to find it fall apart. This matches with what I hear from others who have responded to other oil spill crises. If the weather were really bad, Mother Nature might actually be doing more to help us out by dispersing the oil naturally. So perhaps the concern that the USGS AVIRIS data is only seeing a small portion of the oil is not such a problem because the seas have not been rough enough in the last month to naturally disperse the oil into the water column. Even with the dispersant it is hanging around the surface. At least that is what the operational groups in the field are saying, according to the Coast Guard.

Marcia

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