



RE: inquiry from WSJ on BP assessment

Marcia K McNutt o Julie_Rodriguez

06/23/2010 08:26 PM

Cc: mark_sogge, vhines, Kendra_Barkoff

Here you go, Julie. Mark and I worked on this and believe it is a reasonable answer for this spill. We won't comment on Exxon-Valdez.

BP will soon capture full flow from the well. Once this occurs, we will confirm the current flow rate. Multiplying this rate by the number of days since the spill began will give an estimate of the total flow from the well, assuming that the rate has not changed over time. The oil captured by the RITT, Top Hat, and subsequent devices can be subtracted from the total flow amount to determine how much oil was actually released into the environment. Note, though, that the uncertainty in the flow estimates from before the riser was cut (June 3) was so large that we can not be certain if flows increased following removal of the riser. If the flow was indeed lower before June 3, the calculation described above will overestimate total flow.

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From: Rodriguez, Julie <Julie_Rodriguez@ios.doi.gov> [mailto:Rodriguez, Julie <Julie_Rodriguez@ios.doi.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2010 7:52 PM
To: "McNutt, Marcia K" <mcnutt@usgs.gov>
Cc: "Sogge, Mark K" <mark_sogge@usgs.gov>; "Hines, Vic" <vhines@usgs.gov>; "Barkoff, Kendra" <Kendra_Barkoff@ios.doi.gov>
Subject: FW: inquiry from WSJ on BP assessment

Marcia,

Can you help us respond to the questions from the Wall St. Journal below:

I'm interested in writing about how to calculate the amount of oil that was spilled at various times in history.

I'd like to know how confident the BP group is that when this is all over, we'll have a firm number on how much oil was spilled, in light of continued controversy over the amount spilled

from Valdez.

<http://www.adn.com/2010/06/05/1309722/size-of-exxon-spill-remains-disputed.html>

My deadline is Thursday morning, New York time.

Thanks,

Julie

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

From: Carl Bialik [mailto:bialik@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, June 23, 2010 6:08 PM

To: Rodriguez, Julie

Subject: inquiry from WSJ on BP assessment

Julie,

I write a column and blog about numbers for the Wall Street Journal:

wsj.com/numbersguy

For which we've spoken before.

I'm interested in writing about how to calculate the amount of oil that was spilled at various times in history.

I'd like to know how confident the BP group is that when this is all over, we'll have a firm number on how much oil was spilled, in light of continued controversy over the amount spilled from Valdez.

<http://www.adn.com/2010/06/05/1309722/size-of-exxon-spill-remains-disputed.html>

My deadline is Thursday morning, New York time.

Also, will the spill totals estimated by the flow-rate group be used to assess civil penalties against BP, as described here: <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE64O75Q20100526>

If not, is it a parallel effort or something that happens later? Might it make use of the flow rate group's estimates or will it be entirely independent?

Thanks,

Carl Bialik

718 875 0272

(in New York)