



BP Spill Potentially Grows to Hundreds of Millions of Gallons of Toxic Soup

Statement by Larry Schweiger, President and CEO of National Wildlife Federation:

Venice, LA (May 6, 2010) – “Water, the lifeblood of the Gulf’s ecology and economy is being polluted with a toxic brew of oil and chemicals – leaving the lives of wildlife and the livelihoods of Americans hanging in the balance. I want to express my deep sympathies for the families of the Deepwater Horizon workers who were killed in the explosion, and the many American whose livelihoods are being disrupted by this tragedy.

“Now, it increasingly looks like the dispersants that BP has been pouring into the Gulf of Mexico has formed a toxic mixture of oil, chemicals and water that could be in the hundreds of millions of gallons.

“It smells more like toxic chemicals than a crude oil spill.

“These dispersants contain proprietary chemicals that have unknown effects. For the sake of cleanup workers, volunteers and wildlife we call on BP to disclose what chemicals are in their dispersants, and what effects they cause when mixed with oil. We cannot afford to compound one tragedy with another.

“These dispersants are designed to spread concentrated oil through as much water as possible. The result is a brown toxic mix that looks like sewage.

“BP has not revealed how much water is contaminated when dispersants are added to their oil. A single gallon of oil could turn one hundred gallons – perhaps thousands of gallons – of water into poison. All we know is this toxic soup can be found everywhere over hundreds of square miles of ocean.

“Oil spill dispersants don't reduce the amount of oil – the oil is still there in same quantity, just in different place. Although keeping the oil offshore and out of wetlands seems to be the lesser of evils in the short-term, make no mistake: the BP oil disaster has left wildlife with no good options.

“Dispersants hide the worst potential visual impacts (such as oil-coated birds and beaches) and sweep the damage under the carpet by hiding it underwater where people are less likely to see it.

“With America's oil flowing into Gulf waters and our oil money flowing to the Persian Gulf, we need Congress to act now on a clean energy bill that protects our environment, makes us more secure, and creates jobs.”

Immediate Release: May 6, 2010

Contact: Aileo Weinmann, 202-797-6801, weinmanna@nwf.org

###