



BP's Deepwater Oil Spill - Recovering Pipe - and Open Thread

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on August 26, 2010 - 9:40am

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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The problem with not watching the video feeds from the ROVs at the Deepwater site on a very regular schedule is that it becomes hard to define if anything has changed since the last time you looked. At 11 pm Central tonight, for example, the feed has switched back from the downhole camera to the ROV camera on the Boa Sub C ROV₁, and the borehole feed shows that the pipe containing the camera seems to be dangling in the water, as it has been some time ago. So it was not clear from the suggested cameras as to the current status of the fishing attempts to remove the different length of drill pipe (DP) which are still within the BOP and the stack above it.

However, switching to the Enterprise ROV₁, suddenly there is a piece of pipe being examined. It is difficult to tell exactly which piece it is, though it is apparently marked in what may be foot intervals, but the examination at the moment is focusing on the end of the pipe, which is the male end of a pipe section, and it is hard to determine whether the threads have been damaged or not. (This is being written as this occurs).



Close-up of the lower end of the pipe

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Close-up of the lower end of the pipe

Earlier the pipe had rotated so that an identification number could be seen:



The pipe has a number of spaced marks on it, with five marks higher getting to 70 (suggesting the other side of the joint might have carried a 5).



The mark just below the point where the pipe section goes into the end of the fishing tool that caught it reads 90, and then there are three individual marks and the fishing tool holding the upper end of the pipe section.

Hmm! That's interesting they have just apparently driven the open end down into the mud:



So that they could release the top and go and look at it.

And it appears, at first, that this was the piece of the pipe that was cut through by the diamond saw that the Admiral referred to in his press briefing. But then they do a close-up of the top and it is the female section of the joint at the other end of the drill pipe.



Upper end of the drill pipe

And this too gets a close examination of the threads.

Earlier in the day [Admiral Allen explained](#) some of the events that I discussed in yesterday's post, noting that the rams in the stack had become jammed because of the formation of hydrates within

Question: What chemicals were used in the recent flush to remove hydrates?

A. BP used a methanol soak as the predominant medium for melting the hydrates. They also circulated MEG water - methyl ethylene glycol (antifreeze) - to help improve visibility conditions.

Q. Will there be ROV feeds available to observe the pipe removal?

BA. will have the regular suite of ROV's on scene for the operation and the pipe extraction should be visible through the Enterprise ROV camera.

With the problem of the ram movement in the capping stack having been resolved, the plan for the day was to go down inside the stack to recover the pieces of pipe that had been found. One of these is relatively short (about 18-inches long) the second (and here the Admiral corrected a length given earlier) is some 13-ft long, and then there is the section of the DP itself.

Now the segment that appears to have just been removed would be 30-ft long if it were a standard length of DP, so I am wondering if this was a transcription error in the relevant paragraph of the teleconference?

The other issue dealt with by the Admiral dealt with the possibility that when the cement was pumped down the well it might have adhered to part of the drill pipe, and filled a gap between it and the production casing, so that over some unknown interval the DP might be effectively glued to the casing. His comment

We believe we can easily remove two of those pieces of pipe because they're standing free inside lower marine riser package. After that, we will have to determine the condition of the pipe extending down into the blowout preventer, if it goes below that down into the well, if the pipe somehow might have been cut and is suspended there and it was cut below the blowout preventer, there's no pipe we do not know any of that right now because we cannot see down there.

We are creating alternatives that will allow us to either remove the pipe if it's removable. And if it is not, plans to how we were remove the blowout preventer with the pipe attached and bring that to the surface and cut the pipe at some point. Our science team and BP engineers continue to work with all those alternatives as we move forward. We are hoping however to remove the two pieces of pipe and have a better idea today or tomorrow about the remaining piece of pipe.

Unfortunately, not having watched earlier this evening I missed how this piece of pipe was recovered, and what the sequence of events were that led to this step in the process, so the full explanation will have to wait until the morning.

Goodnight.



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