



BP's Deepwater Oil Spill - Waiting, Berm Update, and Tropical Storm Hermine - and Open Thread 2

Posted by [Gail the Actuary](#) on September 7, 2010 - 10:20am

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

Tags: [deepwater horizon](#), [oil spill](#) [[list all tags](#)]

There is not much new to report, except that Tropical Storm Hermine has hit northern Mexico, so I will re-run yesterday's post.

The BOP has been brought to the surface and is being examined as forensic evidence at a NASA facility in Louisiana.

The next step two steps are

1. Controlling the well at the source through the intersecting relief well, and
2. Putting the well into reserve status through a "plugging and abandonment" procedure, under the oversight of the Department of Interior and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

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This was the discussion of the timeline from [Saturday's press conference](#). The relief well is to be started some time this week, at a time that has not yet been determined.

Question: When do you think drilling will resume on the relief well and do you have any concerns about the thunderstorms kicking up in the far southwest part of the Gulf?

Thad Allen: Well we're continuing to watch those thunderstorms. And I might add I just got a note that the capping stack is safely secured above on the Discoverer Enterprise. In response to your question, we need to reinstall the riser pipe to the Blow Out Preventer and at that point there are some diagnostics that will be attempted to further understand the condition of the well.

At that point BP will present a way forward. It will be renewed [reviewed?] by the science team in conjunction with the Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management. And we will make a decision on the next couple of steps.

We will be in a position as we go into the next week to begin the relief well. But we will make sure that any steps that are necessary before that will be taken and coordinated with BOEM. So, we're in a period here where we're kind of moving with two coordinating structures and making sure we both understand what's going on moving forward.

But we should be ready to move forward with the relief well again sometime this next week. What I would hope once we get the BOP on deck finish the riser installation. We will give you a firm timeline. But I'd like to hold off right now until we get all that information completed.

Berm Progress

You may remember the plans for sand berms off the coast of Louisiana to protect against spilt oil. We noticed [this article](#) yesterday, discussing their limited progress to date.

As Jindal attempts to get permits to expand the project — plus more funding to transform the sandy sections, called berms, into longer-term barrier islands — the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is collecting comments from environmentalists and federal agencies. Many of them questioned the idea when it was first proposed and continue to challenge the project even as it is well under way.

So far, the state has spent about a third of the money reserved for the project and has built about one-tenth of the berms, according to records from state and federal agencies. The state Department of Natural Resources reports that it has written slightly more than \$120 million in checks as of Sept. 2 from the \$360 million that oil giant BP set aside for the berms.

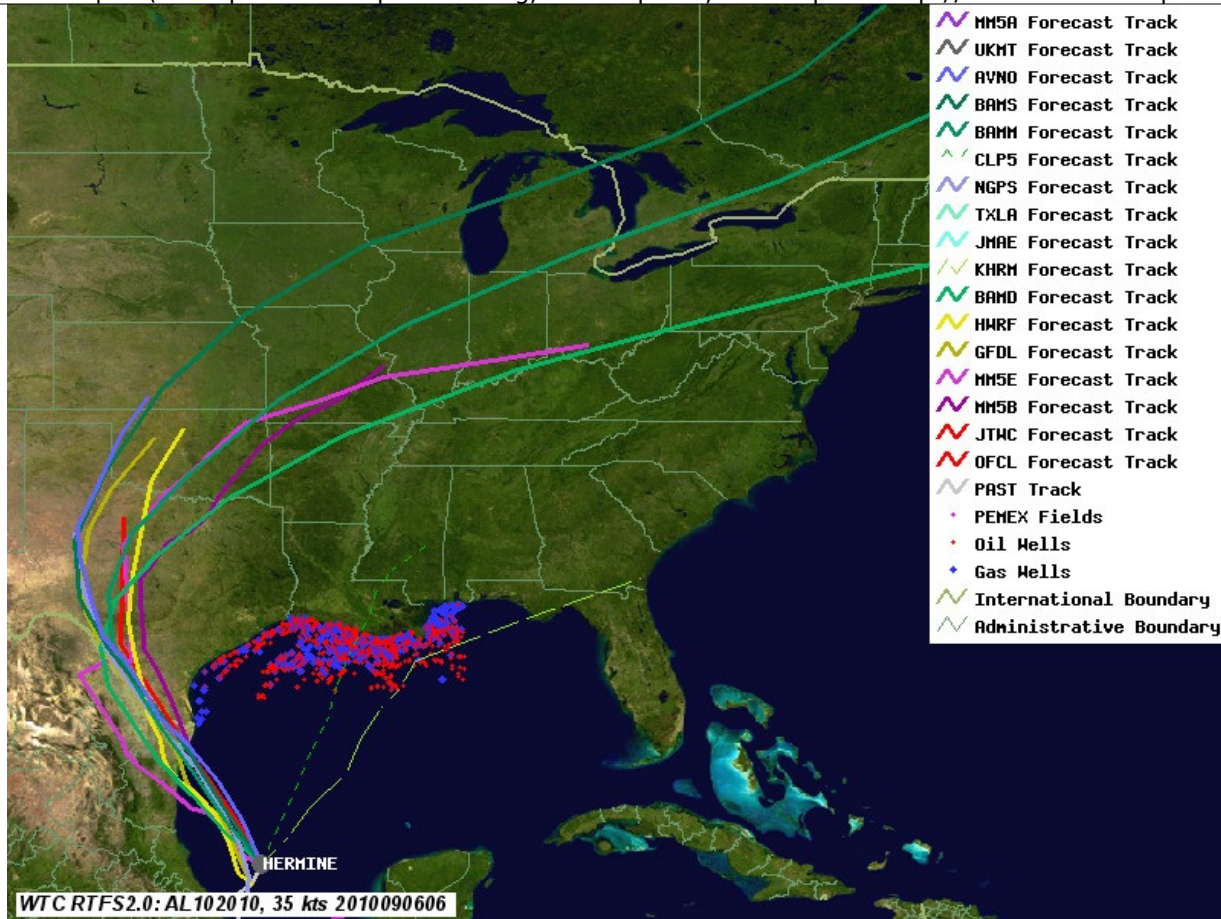
About 3.6 miles of berms have been built, leaving about 31 more miles to be done under the current permit, according to the Aug. 30 daily report to the corps by contractor Shaw Environmental and Infrastructure Group, which received the contract to manage the project and construct the berms.

So it sounds like the controversial project is barely started, now weeks after the oil has been contained, and way over budget.

Tropical Storm Hermine

Chuck Watson (on our staff) reports:

Tropical Storm Hermine has formed in the Bay of Campeche, and will be quickly moving north towards the Texas/Mexico border. Latest data shows tracks shifting to the north, so a landfall between Corpus Christi and Brownsville seems likely. It is probably not going to reach hurricane strength before landfall, but in today's cautious environment will undoubtedly force a few evacuations and shutdowns. These are unlikely to exceed 15% of US Gulf of Mexico production, and will not persist much past the end of the week. The waves and winds are well within the design specifications for offshore assets, so no significant longer term damage or disruption is expected.



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