



BP's Deepwater Horizon - Nearing Intersection - and Open Thread

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on September 16, 2010 - 10:28am

Topic: [Environment/Sustainability](#)

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Update, 11:15pm: The well intersection has taken place! Intend to proceed with the bottom kill.

According to Admiral Allen:

"I have received extensive briefings over the last 24 hours regarding the final effort to intercept the Macondo well. Through a combination of sensors embedded in the drilling equipment and sophisticated instrumentation that is capable of sensing distance to the well casing, BP engineers and the federal science team have concluded that the Development Driller III relief well has intersected the Macondo well. This determination was made based on a loss of drilling fluids that indicated communication had been established beyond the relief well, the pressure exerted against the drill bit as it came in contact with the well casing and, finally, an increase in pressure in the choke line of the Macondo well blow out preventer. While each of these indicators taken separately would not necessarily be conclusive, the aggregate data available supports the conclusion that the two wells are joined. It is also important to note that none of the measurements supported a scenario where the annulus of the well is in communication with the reservoir. Accordingly, we intend to proceed with preparation to cement the annulus and complete the bottom kill of the well. Further information will be provided as cementing procedures are completed."

Progress on the Deepwater Horizon well is going well enough that the Admiral [considers it likely](#) that the remaining work (other than plug and abandon) may be completed within the next four days. According to the transcript:

.. just to summarize again, in the last 24-hour period we proceeded to go ahead and

drill to the intercept. At the time we started drilling we estimated that we were 3.5 horizontal feet away and 50 feet away from the intercept. We drilled down (inaudible), we went through the drill string, we put in a ranging tool just to make sure that we wanted to calibrate what the ranging tool told us versus the equipment that now allows us to do some ranging measurements from inside the drill bit.

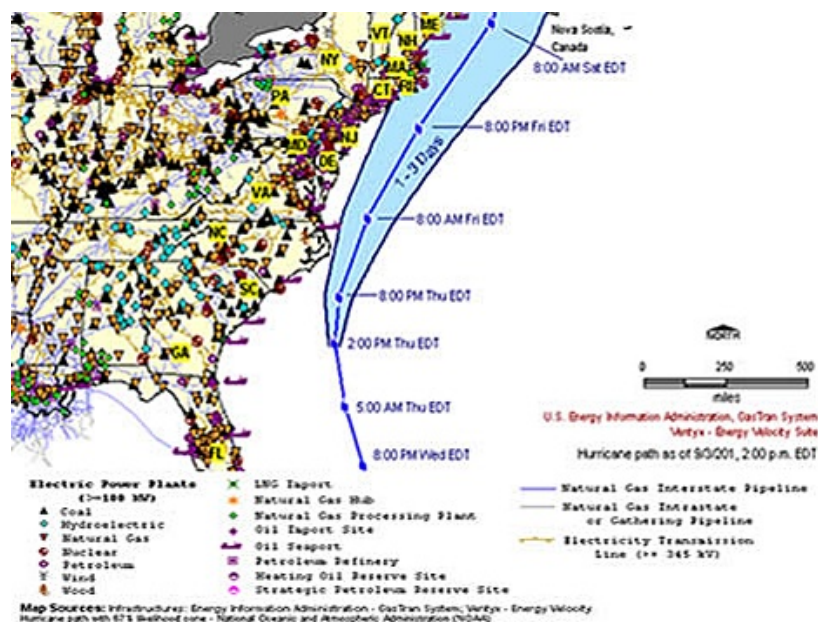
The drill string is now packed and it's commenced drilling so the air at this moment as we're speaking drilling that last 20/25 feet and they are almost touching the well at this time. That's the report I got just before I came out here. When we do the intercept, which will be imminently I will say in the next 24 hours because they may elect to pull that drill bit back do another ranging run, which would add time. That's the reason I'm not going to say it's going to happen in the next hour.

Sometime in the next 24-hour period, we should do the well intercept. Once the well is intercepted, we'll have to understand from the pressure differentials and the drilling fluids the nature of the annulus. Once that's been determined decision, will be made on cement and then once it's cemented the cement will have to adhere and be pressure tested.

That entire element from this morning I would estimate to be about 96 hours.

It is good that the remaining critical work will be done in this time. Right at the moment there are two Category Four hurricanes in the Atlantic (something that hasn't happened since 1926). While both of those are likely to head North up the Atlantic, Tropical Storm Karl may turn into a Hurricane after [it crosses the Yucatan](#), which may be some cause for concern because, when it re-enters the Gulf, it will be quite close to the [offshore Mexican wells](#), where over 2 mbd is produced.

The possibility that global warming is causing an increase in hurricane intensity, if not overall numbers, is something that climate scientists [continue to debate](#), but the possibility of another series of hurricanes of the likes of Katrina and Rita clobbering the oil supply/distribution network, regardless of cause, is something that the EIA has to consider, and that is the topic of the [front page of the TWIP](#), this week. The EIA is introducing a Hurricane page, which will, on a hurricane specific basis, show the projected path of the hurricane, and the facilities that might be at risk.



On another topic, it appears that the trapped miners in Chile will have [a lot of job offers](#) when they get out safely. We can only hope that this comes sooner rather than later.



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