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MDEQ Investigates Oil on Mississippi Barrier Islands

(JACKSON, Miss.) -- The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) was part of a team Friday that investigated oil material related to the BP oil spill on West Ship Island and Horn Island. Approximately 10 pounds of tar balls were found on West Ship Island and about 200 to 300 pounds were observed on Horn Island.

The team included MDEQ, the U.S. Coast Guard, the National Park Service, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, and BP contractors. The material will be cleaned up by contractors working for BP beginning Friday. Earlier in the week on March 19, about 97 pounds of oil were removed by the U.S. Coast Guard from East Ship Island. It is likely the material was uncovered due to wind and low tides for this time of year.

“Even though the BP oil spill occurred nearly four years ago, it is evident from the material found this week why we remain diligent to find and remove any oil that is found. As we promised from the beginning, we would hold BP accountable for the largest man-made disaster in history, and that includes not only our restoration efforts to make ‘Mississippi Whole,’ but working to see that our Barrier Islands and coastline remain uncontaminated,” said Richard Harrell, Director of MDEQ’s Office of Pollution Control.

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