



March 7, 2017

## Closing Out The Refugio Oil Spill Unified Command

On March 2, 2017, the interagency Unified Command that was formed to coordinate the cleanup of the 2015 Refugio Beach oil spill, on which the County served as the Local On Scene Coordinator (LOSC), was officially disestablished following the completion of all clean up end points and monitoring of spill affected areas. Section 5 monitoring was the remaining component of the plan that had not been closed out. With the storms of February 17 and 18, the rainfall totals required as part of the Section 5 Monitoring Plan were met and exceeded. Rainfall at the El Capitan and Gaviota Stations both exceeded 3.5 inches in a 24-hour period. Given that these trigger conditions were met, an inspection occurred at the site on February 24, 2017. County Environmental Health participated on the monitoring team site inspection. There was no spill oil detected during the inspection. Therefore, all required monitoring is now complete. The County, acting as the LOSC, concurred with the disestablishment of Unified Command.

The Unified Command structure, which involves federal, state, and local agencies as well as the responsible party, is used for most oil spill response operations under The National Oil and Hazardous Substance Contingency Plan. The Unified Command for the Refugio Beach oil spill response was concerned with coordinating cleanup operations. Although public agencies represented on the Unified Command are involved in other matters related to the oil spill, such as investigations, natural resource damage assessments, environmental impact studies and updates to plans, the need for Unified Command is no longer required.

As reported to the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors previously, the U.S. Coast Guard, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and Santa Barbara County have each prepared After Actions Reports (AAR) that detail the response's actions and lessons learned. The County Office of Emergency Management and other County staff are continuing to work with the subcommittee working groups to ensure that the updated Los Angeles-Long Beach (LA-LB) Area Contingency Plan (which includes Santa Barbara County) and our local Oil Spill Contingency Plan incorporates those actions identified in the AARs. The LA-LB Area Committee is a permanent group that consists of representatives from federal, state, and local governments who are responsible for maintaining an Area Contingency Plan that outlines the strategy for a coordinated response to a discharge of oil or a release of hazardous substances. Government agencies, industry, academia, environmental groups, and other non-government organizations have input to the process at the subcommittee level.

Subcommittee Work Groups are focused on the following:

- Applied Response Technology/Research Vetting
- Information Management

- Command and Control
- Operational Needs

County staff is participating in three of those groups, Information Management, Command and Control and Operational Needs. Specifically, staff is working on changes to implementation of Local On Scene Coordinator in Unified Command, Public Information in the JIC and establishment of Incident Command Post locations. Staff will continue to participate in this process as well as updating our local Oil Spill Contingency Plan with a target completion of the end of 2017. In addition, through negotiations among the County, State and Federal governments, the County is participating in the Natural Damage Resource Assessment (NRDA) process which is designed to evaluate and quantify damages to natural resources, including lost recreational uses, caused by the oil spill. This is conducted both by scientific and economic studies. –end-