

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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NEWS MEDIA ADVISORY

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Naval Air Station Oceana Fuel Spill Response Shifts from Emergency Operations to Remediation; Residents Remain Top Priority

By LT Matthew A. Childs, U.S. Coast Guard

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA – Today the Wolfsnare Creek Response Unified Command conducted a press conference announcing their transition from the emergency response phase to the assessment and remediation phase. “The Navy’s top priority remains the residents although the emergency phase has ended,” said Capt. Rich Meadows, commanding officer of Naval Air Station Oceana.

Under the assessment and remediation phase of the jet fuel spill, the Virginia Department of Environmental (DEQ) Quality's Petroleum Program will require the Navy to complete an investigation of any long-term groundwater or surface water concerns. If concerns are identified, the DEQ will require the Navy to evaluate corrective action options to address those concerns. This phase of the incident will be managed by staff from DEQ's Tidewater Regional Office. DEQ's regional office will continue to collaborate with agencies involved in the initial phase of the incident.

“For the past two weeks, the Wolfsnare Creek Response Unified Command -- a collaboration of federal state and local partners -- have worked together in all kinds of weather, and around the clock to take care of the residents affected by the fuel spill, recovering as much fuel as possible, and protecting the wildlife and environment from further damage. The Unified Command responders are the best there are. They are highly skilled, trained and dedicated to the cleanup task the fuel spill demanded,” Meadows said.

“Over the last few weeks there have been emergency response teams and equipment in the neighborhoods, along the roadside and in the ditches. Those efforts contained the spill, removed the fuel from the water, and kept it from spreading. There will be a reduction in vehicle movement, recovery equipment, and operations as we transition into a longer term assessment and remediation phase,” said Meadows.

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All recoverable jet fuel has been removed. Residents may notice patches of light sheen or slight residual odor at times. There are no health hazards associated with this and it will diminish over time.

“All respective agencies have worked together as a Unified Command,” said U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Kevin Carroll, Deputy Sector Commander for Sector Hampton Roads “We have worked collaboratively, decisively, and sought out the opinions of experts to make sure that we were doing the best we can do to serve the citizens of this community.”

“In the next phase of our response our top priority remains the well-being of our neighbors. And, we are continuing to address concerns the residents and community have,” said Meadows.

“We are very satisfied with the efforts we have taken and understand this was an extremely unfortunate event and we are taking active steps to make sure it doesn’t happen again. Our presence here is not evaporating we are going to be present if residents have concerns,” said Capt. Carroll.

“As we enter the next step of the process, we would like to thank all the residents for their patience and cooperation during the fuel spill response. We know the spill created a terrible situation. The emergency phase prevented the spill from being worse. And the next phase seeks to make it better for the families, the environment and our relationship as neighbors,” said Meadows.

For any questions, comments or concerns, please call 757-433-2162 or email:
oceanacomment@navy.mil

More information can be found at the Naval Air Station Oceana Fuel Spill website at:

<https://www.cnic.navy.mil/oceanafuelspill>

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