

9/15/04

Site Specific Spill Response Contingency Plan
for
ARANSAS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Gulf Intracoastal Waterway

The marshes of the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge provide wintering habitat for the endangered whooping crane, one of the rarest birds in North America. Migratory waterfowl also winter in the surrounding coastal waters and thousands of colonial waterbirds nest during spring and summer on the dredged material placement areas that serve as rookeries.

This plan is intended to serve as a preliminary guide to emergency oil spill response in the event that such a spill threatens refuge lands and wildlife. Through past spill experiences, the general consensus is that the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge may be up to three hours away from professional spill responder (contractor) help. This leaves mainly the response agencies and trustee agencies to, in some cases, be the first responders to an incident in this area. The initial response agencies are the Texas General Land Office and the United States Coast Guard, both stationed in Port Lavaca. Other agencies, primarily trustee agencies, that may be available to help are Aransas National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), USFWS Ecological Services-Corpus Christi, TPWD, as well law enforcement from both USFWS and TPWD.

Following is a Recommended Priority Response Sequence

1. Make notifications in the event of an actual or threatened discharge in the near vicinity; it is critical that all interested parties be notified. **(Contact List)**
2. Marsh openings **(see attachment A)** have been identified that are critical for the protection of a majority of the marsh located along the GIWW. Boom has been measured and pre-cut to fit some of these openings and is stored on the Aransas NWR. Refuge personnel may be the first to respond in the event of a spill and have been trained in the deployment of boom. **Notify refuge immediately.**
3. Establish an Incident Command System at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge headquarters. This is where all responders should meet to coordinate the response. Communications will be provided through the refuge (Section I). If the Responsible Party has not done so, evaluate the containment of the spill.
4. Establish security – only essential personnel will be admitted to the location. All others will be directed to the Liaison Director for information. Security should be coordinated through the Aransas County Sheriff's Department and Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Wardens. USCG will coordinate on-the-water security.
5. Once responders are on scene, a safety meeting should take place, taking into account the particulars of the incident, specifically, the type of product spilled, and any safety concerns that may govern how and where to respond in relation to the location of the spill. **(Site safety plan)**

6. Arrange an overflight of the area. If the spill occurs when whooping cranes are present **(October 15 to April 15)**, aerial operations should be conducted in fixed-wing aircraft that are much less disturbing to the whooping cranes. Helicopter traffic normally connected with a spill event will have to be prohibited, closely limited, or controlled to prevent disturbance to the whooping cranes in nearby areas not impacted by the spill. Helicopter flights by the media should not be allowed. All helicopters should maintain the 2,000-foot minimum altitude over a national wildlife refuge as required by the FAA unless a specific waiver is received from the refuge manager. **It is likely that a single Coast Guard helicopter will be used to locate the spill and will need to approach the spill site at a low level. After that, all helicopter operations should be prohibited during the 6-month time frame when the cranes are present, unless authorized in advance by the refuge manager.**
7. After the above-mentioned information has been collected, evaluate other resources that may be mobilized from Corpus Christi.
8. After booming the source, begin boom deployment in pre-designated areas based on the location of the spill and the best-known trajectory information. Prioritization will be determined at the time of a spill by the State On-Scene Coordinator and Federal On-Scene Coordinator with input from trustee agencies. [Note: Some marsh openings protect a larger area of marsh than others and have been color-coded and noted on the maps accordingly.] If the refuge boat launch will be used, flagging tape should be placed at turns to facilitate access by those unfamiliar with the refuge.
9. During and following booming operations, evaluate the spill for other information such as:
 - a. Establishing a command center
 - b. Wildlife hazing/rehabilitation (**must be** coordinated through USFWS & TPWD) (Section VII).
 - c. Alternate technologies
 - d. Threat of additional releases from the spill source.
 - e. Night time trajectory, if necessary

Directions to Refuge

From Rockport, take Highway 35 north approximately 20 miles. Turn right on FM 774, go approximately 9 miles to FM 2040. Turn right and follow FM 2040 for about 7 miles to refuge entrance.

Boom Deployment

Marsh cuts have been measured and boom has been pre-cut to fit some of the openings. Boom is stored on the Aransas NWR in labeled boxes. Refuge personnel may be the first to respond in the event of a spill and have been trained in the deployment of boom. Periodic boom deployment exercises will be necessary to ensure that the plan can be carried out expediently. However, on a low tide, marsh cuts may only be accessible by airboat and the refuge does not own or operate air boats.

List of Contacts

Required notifications:

State of Texas Emergency Spill Reporting Hotline – 1-800-832-8224

National Response Center – 1-800-424-8802

Additional notifications as warranted:

U. S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS)

Aransas National Wildlife Refuge – 361-286-3559/3533

After hours: Charlie Holbrook (361) 286-3107
Troy Littrell (361) 582-4098
Joe Saenz (361) 580-1402

Spill Response - Corpus Christi – 361-994-9005
24 hr. pager - (361) 224-3432

U. S. Coast Guard (USCG)

Port Lavaca – 361-552-7422

Corpus Christi – 361-888-3163

Texas General Land Office (TGLO)

Port Lavaca – 361-552-8081

Duty pager – 361-501-2816

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TP&WD)

24 hr. Austin Communications – 281-842-8100

Kills and Spills Team - Corpus Christi - pager (800) 299-4099 PIN #7858

Aransas County Sheriff's Department

361-729-2222

Calhoun County Sheriff's Department (CCSO)

361-553-4646

Certified Discharge Cleanup Organizations (DCO) in the area:

Cary Construction	Point Comfort /Palacios	(361) 574-2081
Corpus Christi Area Oil Spill Control	Corpus Christi	(361) 882-2656
Midstream Fuel Services, L.L.	Port O'Connor	(361) 983-2631
Miller Environmental Services	Corpus Christi	(361) 289-9800
National Response Corporation	Ingleside	(631) 224-9141
Texas Environmental, Inc.	Ingleside/Aransas Pass	(361) 776-3100

Limitations of Plan in Reference to Threat to Whooping Cranes

An insurmountable problem that many feel is the greatest threat faced by the whooping cranes is the location of the GIWW. Hazardous chemicals are transported within 100 yards of wintering whooping cranes. More than 60% of the whooper territories adjoin the GIWW. Spilled materials could contact whooping cranes as a boat captain was reporting the incident to the Coast Guard. Even during the months of May through September when the whooping cranes are not present, a spill could destroy or seriously degrade habitat essential to their survival.

This plan is inadequate in providing full protection for the whooping cranes. Such a plan is not possible since chemicals are transported right through the center of the whooping crane wintering range. Spills of hazardous materials may threaten human health so that an approach could only be done by personnel wearing special protective suits and breathing apparatus. Spills of gaseous materials could directly kill all whooping cranes downwind of the disaster. Response time at best is 1-2 hours by the refuge staff, and 3-4 hours by spill control specialists. An event occurring at night or during bad weather (the most probable times), would slow response time further. In addition, the response of the whooping cranes to spilled materials and humans trying to haze the whooping cranes away from a spill is currently unknown.

During an oil spill event, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will jointly assume the responsibility for the cleanup and rehabilitation of oiled wildlife. The decision as to IF, WHERE and WHEN will be made on a case-by-case basis.

NOTE: Oiled wildlife can be quite dangerous, especially herons and their kin. Do not attempt their "rescue".

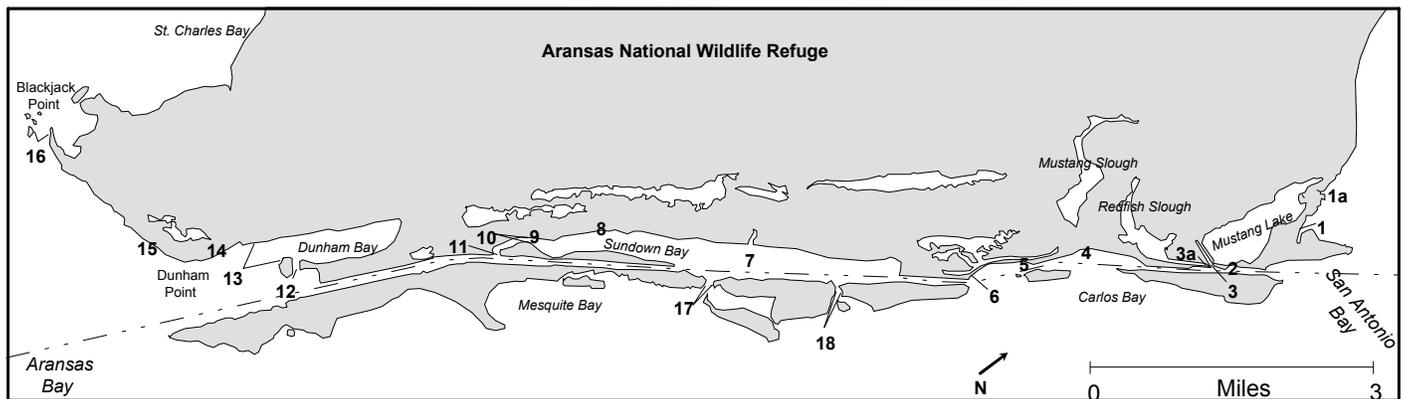
Updates to Response Plan

This document is intended to be a living document and should be periodically updated. After each boom deployment exercise or tabletop discussion, there should be a panel assembled to discuss and make additions or changes where necessary. The panel should always consist of, at the minimum, the following agencies: USFWS (Aransas NWR and Ecological Services personnel), TGLO, and Texas Parks and Wildlife, and USCG.

GPS coordinates and lengths of marsh openings for booming at Aransas NWR

Coordinates	Size	Description
1- 28.14.32 X 96.47.09	46 yds or 138'	N Mustang lake entrance
1a- 28.14.53 X 96.47.14	21yds or 66'	NE Mustang lake entrance
2- 28.13.48 X 96.47.48	273 yds	S Mustang lake entrance
3- 28.13.41 X 96.47.44	50 yds or 150'	Boat ramp channel
*3a- same as 3	20 yds or 60'	Side channel at boat ramp entrance
*4- 28.13.02 X 96.48.47	4 yds or 12'	
5- 28.12.39 X 96.49.09	10 yds or 30'	
*6- 28.12.06 X 96.49.38	43 yds or 129'	
*7- 28.11.20 X 96.51.04	44 yds or 132'	
*8- 28.18.16 X 96.52.42	34 yds or 102'	Back of Sundown Bay
*9- 28.09.43 X 96.53.17	25 yds or 75'	
*10- 28.09.43 X 96.53.18	45 yds or 135'	
11- 28.09.25 X 96.53.26	95 yds or 285'	
12- 28.08.06 X 96.54.57	147 yds or 441'	
13- 28.08.04 X 96.55.08	Catch boom only Very large Cut	Dunham Bay
14- 28.07.29 X 96.57.52	216 yds	St Charles Bay
15- 28.07.23 X 96.56.21	7 yds or 21'	Sorbent boom
16- 28.07.34 X 96.55.47	2 yds or 6'	Sorbent boom
17- 28.10.33 X 96.51.32	137 yds	
18- 28.11.17 X 96.50.29	50 yds or 150'	

*Higher priority depending on location and trajectory of spill.



Equipment On Site

Refuge Trailer Contents at Aransas NWR headquarters

- 1) 10 anchor systems
- 2) 2 towing bridles
- 3) 10 towing ropes
- 4) 3 bales of sweep
- 5) 3 bales of pads
- 6) 3 large sausage boom
- 7) 6 small sausage boom
- 8) 5 t posts and 1 driver
- 9) 6 pom pom snares
- 10) 2 small buoys
- 11) 4 scare cannons
- 12) 4 propane cans
- 13) 1 Convert-a-ball set
- 14) 1000' boom

shovel, rake, sledge hammer, sling hoe, small air tank

Boom stored in boat barn at Aransas NWR.

Cut # & Coordinates	Size	Box # and boom
Cut #3 28.13.41 x 96.47.44	150'	Box #2 - 2 – 100' sections
Cut #3a 28.13.41 x 96.47.44	60'	Box #4 - 65' section
Cut #4 28.13.02 x 96.48.47	12'	Box #3 - 25' section
Cut #6 28.12.06 x 96.49.38	129'	Box #7 - 2 – 100' sections
Cut #7 28.11.20 x 96.51.04	132'	Box #8 - 2 – 100' sections
Cut #8 28.18.16 x 96.52.42 Cut #9 28.09.43 x 96.53.17	102' total -177' 75'	Box #9 - 2 – 100' sections
Cut #10 28.09.43 x 96.53.18	135'	Box #10 - 2 – 100' sections

Additional boom:

Box #1 - 75' section

Box #5 - 75' section

Box #6 - 95' section

SITE SAFETY PLAN - REGION III

SITE DESCRIPTION

DATE _____ LOCATION _____
HAZARDS (Yes / No) _____
AREA AFFECTED _____

SURROUNDING POPULATION _____
PRODUCT SPILLED _____
WEATHER CONDITIONS _____
ENTRY OBJECTIVES _____

ON-SITE ORGANIZATION AND COORDINATION

COMPANY REPRESENTATION _____
SAFETY OFFICER AT STATE LEVEL _____
FIELD LEADER _____
FIELD TEAM _____

REPRESENTATIVES:

Federal _____
State _____

LIST OF EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

POLICE _____ FIRE _____ HOSPITAL _____
EMT ON-SITE (Yes / No) NAME _____ FIRST AID KIT (Yes / No) _____
EMERGENCY EYE WASH (Yes / No) _____ EMERGENCY SHOWER (Yes / No) _____

PERSON COMPLETING SITE SAFETY PLAN

DATE _____ TIME _____

ADDITIONAL AMPLIFYING INFORMATION