What we are doing

Since May of 2010 we have been getting samples from the air and water along the Gulf Coast.

We are doing research in Grand Isle, LA, Gulfport, MS, Gulf Shores, AL, and Pensacola, FL.

Our first goal is to measure the crude oil contaminants at these sites. A second goal is to learn how these contaminants change with time. Lastly, we would like to find the best ways to get our results and information to the public.

More Information:

http://oregonstate.edu/superfund

http://ehsc.oregonstate.edu

OSU Oregon State University

Funded in part by National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Air and Water Safety Information

Visit the U.S,. Environmental Protection Agency
http://www.epa.gov/bpspill/

Seafood Safety Information

Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration
http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodSafety/Product-SpecificInformation/Seafood/default.htm

Or

National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration
http://www.noaa.gov/deepwaterhorizon/

This project is funded by
NIEHS Grants R21 ES020120,
P0 ES000210 and P42 ES 016465

Gulf of Mexico Coastal Air and Water Pollutant Research

Srp Superfund Research Program

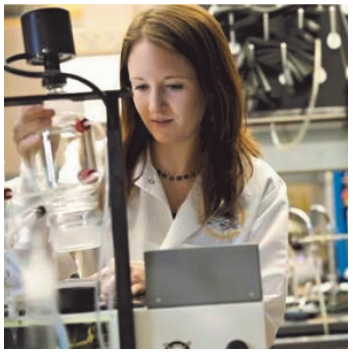
Oregon State University | Environmental Health Sciences Center

Who we are

Our research team is from Oregon State University (OSU).

We have specific expertise on contaminants found in crude oil spills and outreach to educate the public. This expertise has been developed through OSU's national Superfund Research Program (SRP) and Environmental Health Sciences Center (EHSC). The SRP and EHSC are funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). NIEHS funds research and education related to environmental pollutants and health.

A researcher loads a PSD in a cage to measure the air quality.



Later in the lab, the PSD is tested for chemicals from the environment.

How we collect samples

We put passive sampling devices (PSD) in the water and air.

The PSD is called “passive” because it does not need a power supply or any maintenance once it is set up.

The PSD looks like a clear bicycle inner tube but acts like a high tech sponge. It absorbs chemicals like a living creature such as a fish, bird or person.

After the PSD has been in the air or water, we simply remove it from the protective cage and replace it with a new one. The PSD is then returned to OSU to see what chemicals it picked up from the environment.

Why we are studying oil

Crude oil is a mixture of many chemicals. A part of that mixture is a group of chemicals called polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). Some PAHs can be toxic or cause cancer in people or wildlife. Since our team specializes in studying PAHs and using PSDs, we were able to start this gulf research project right after the spill.

PSDs used to measure water quality are secured to a pier in cages and placed in the water.