



Governor's Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness

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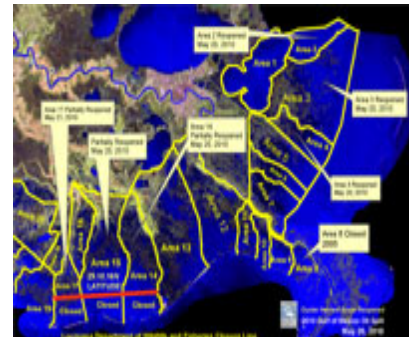
May 20, 2010

DHH Partially Reopens Oyster Harvesting Area 17

Reopening Allows Harvesters Additional Time to Gather Oysters

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals announced today that it has partially reopened oyster harvesting Area 17 to give harvesters as much time as possible to harvest their product before any potential impact from the BP oil spill in the Gulf.

Area 17, which is west of the Mississippi River in Terrebonne Parish, was originally closed May 13, 2010. The area was closed as a precaution in anticipation of oil intrusion. There has been no intrusion as of yet in the partially reopened area, and DHH officials continue to monitor the area, as well as an entire 8-million acre area off the Louisiana shoreline.



[Click on the map to view full size](#)

In addition to continued monitoring, oyster harvesters "taste test" the oysters as they are pulled from the water to make sure their product is good. Harvesters and dealers test oysters in order to provide the most wholesome product and highest-quality product available to the public.

DHH Secretary Alan Levine and State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry on Thursday signed the order to partially reopen Area 17 north of the 29.10.16 N latitude line, which will take effect at sunrise May 21.

DHH officials have been working closely with local, state and federal agencies to

monitor the oil plume that continues to grow off of the Louisiana coastline for its potential impacts on oyster harvesting areas.

In addition to regular testing schedules, DHH scientists and engineers are conducting enhanced testing of oyster meat taken from the closed beds to monitor the presence of oil. Oysters being harvested in areas open for harvesting have been deemed safe by DHH.

Areas 8, 13 and 28 remain closed. The portion of Area 17 south of the 29.10.16 N latitude line also remains closed. Areas 2, through 7, and 9 were recently reopened. Portions of areas 14 and 15 north of the 29.10.16 N latitude line were also reopened. Closures will remain in effect until officials have determined that environmental conditions are within the requirements specified by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

The public is encouraged to call a toll-free hotline, 1-800-256-2775, to report the presence of oil or an oil sheen.

For more information related to the oil spill, visit <http://www.emergency.louisiana.gov>. Connect with us on www.facebook.com/GOHSEP and on Twitter @GOHSEP. View photos in from the state's response efforts at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lagohep>.