

Volunteers Needed for Massive Beach Cleanup in Gulf County

GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA, May 6, 2010 – Even though the oil spill is nowhere near Gulf County Beaches, County officials and representatives of BP are organizing a massive beach cleanup effort. The effort focuses on removing as much debris as possible before any oil reaches the beaches to minimize cleanup efforts in the event the oil does reach the beaches. If oil reaches the beaches all debris will be considered contaminated and have to be removed by hazardous materials specialists.

Gulf County is seeking as many volunteers as possible to participate in the precautionary clean up that takes place this Saturday, May 8th from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon and 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 9th from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. if needed. All times are Eastern. Volunteers are asked to report to Windmark/St. Joe Beach parking lot and Salinas Park on Cape San Blas for training and beach zone assignment. Due to the scope of beaches at Cape San Blas and Indian Pass, more volunteers will be needed there.

“While we are still uncertain if Gulf County will be affected by the oil spill, we need to clean our beaches now in order to be prepared,” states Bill Williams, Gulf County Commissioner. “Right now our beaches are open, safe, and the sun is shining. We hope that people will come, join our cleanup efforts and enjoy a great day on our pristine beach,” he continues.

Anyone who wants to help is encouraged to do so. No prior training is needed. Environmental awareness training will be provided upon arrival for the cleanup. Children are welcome, but children under 15 need to be accompanied by an adult. The county will be providing garbage bags and bottled water. Volunteers need to wear closed toe shoes and bring sunscreen, protective clothing, bug spray, sunglasses, gloves and snacks and drinks if they would like.

As a further precautionary measure, BP has contracted with PEC Premier Safety Management to provide affected area spill response classes for volunteers and paid contractors. These classes provide safety training to both those who will have contact with spill product or affected wildlife, as well as those that will not. The Gulf County classes began today and will continue through at least May 21st. Training schedules are being continuously updated and although classes are currently scheduled at the Honeyville Community Center in Wewahitchka, a location will be announced for training in South Gulf County shortly.

Training schedules are available at www.gulfcounty-fl.gov under the link “BP Spill Response Training Registration and Course Schedule”. Online registration is also going to be available.

For more information please visit www.gulfcounty-fl.gov/DeepHorizonOilSpill.cfm, e-mail VolunteerInfo@GulfCounty-fl.gov or call Amber Davis at (850) 541-3981.