



### How is DEQ responding to the spill?

Our priority is to monitor the spill. Quantifying the movement of the oil will help us determine its potential environmental impacts.

Once the spill has been contained and clean-up efforts are essentially complete, a more detailed sampling plan will be implemented. Over the next couple of days, DEQ will place instruments which allow us to continually measure the amount of Dissolved Oxygen in the waters. This information helps us determine the extent of the damage and will guide final clean-up actions. Future sampling will include collection of metals, total petroleum hydrocarbons, oil and grease, sediment, bugs, fish and other aquatic organisms.

### How is the oil affecting the aquatic ecosystems?

Each oil spill is different and effects can be both short and long-term. It is important to continue measuring the amount of oil present in the environment and to measure any ecological consequences that are observed. DEQ is just starting to obtain data now and will have a much better scope of the environmental impacts once this data is evaluated.

In general, adverse affects can impact fish, birds, amphibians, bugs, algae, and even microbes. All of these are part of the same ecosystem and oil spill effects on one group can potentially have indirect and longer lasting effects on others. Additionally, the susceptibility of species within each group also varies--further complicating data interpretation.

The severity of the any oil spill depends on the nature of the oil itself and environmental characteristics. Water movement is a primary factor when determining severity.

- In standing water, such as lakes and ponds, oil tends to remain for a longer time than in flowing water. In extreme circumstances, oil can cover the entire surface of the water body.
- In flowing water, oil tends to move to the margins of streams or river, leaving some refuge for fish and other animals in the center of the stream.

While individual circumstances vary, oil spills have larger and longer lasting effects on the ecosystems of standing waters like wetlands and lakes than they do for streams and rivers.

### How far has the spill traveled?

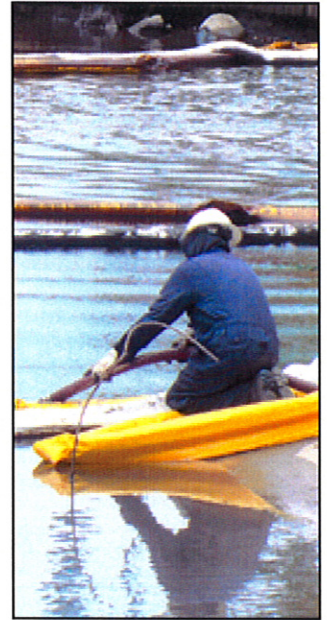
Visual observations are often the most reliable guide. Oil disperses unequally throughout the environment. As a result, it's difficult to get representative samples of spill travel.

### How long will the effects of the spill last?

It is difficult to answer that question at this point. Adverse impacts from spills can last from weeks to decades. The most important step we can take now is to continue to collect data that will allow us to evaluate the extent of the problem and make informed decisions.

### What are the relevant water quality standards of the affected waters?

Red Butte Creek is designated as a Warm Water Fishery (3B) and for Waterfowl/Shorebirds (3D). The Jordan River is classified for Secondary Recreation (2B), as a Warm Water Fishery (3B), and for Agriculture (4). Utah's Water Quality Act and the Federal Clean Water Act require that the Division of Water Quality protect and maintain the health of warm water fish and for waterfowl and shorebirds and all of the necessary organisms in their food chain.



**For questions  
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**Red Butte Oil  
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