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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## OIL IMPACT NOTICES RESCINDED FOR OKALOOSA COUNTY BEACHES

**OKALOOSA COUNTY** – Effective immediately, the Okaloosa County Health Department, in coordination with the Okaloosa County Board of County Commission, is rescinding all Oil Impact Notices posted on Okaloosa County beaches. Oil Impact Notice signs will be taken down today, August 13, 2010, barring any severe weather in the area.

The rescission is based on the following information:

- Since July 3, 2010, no significant beach oiling events have been reported to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP). The FDEP has conducted sampling of water and sediment (sand) samples to determine potential impacts to human health between July 4 and August 2, 2010.
- Chemicals that were consistently found in samples taken from Florida waters were placed on the chemicals of concern (COC) list. All FDEP samples collected between July 4 and August 2 were analyzed for chemicals of concern. Levels of each COC were compared to the adopted threshold value. Adopted threshold values were based upon either a chronic human health benchmark value or on the analytical method detection limit. This analysis concludes that chemicals of concern related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill have not exceeded any adopted thresholds in coastal waters of Okaloosa County since July 4, 2010.
- The FDEP also conducted a study of visibly clean sand and sediment on Northwest Florida's white sandy beaches and demonstrated that oil and its associated chemicals of concern tend to settle within a layer below the surface, and that they can be easily seen when exposed. Samples of visibly clean sand and sediment immediately above the visible oil layer were free of detectable polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). These results were repeated in multiple sample locations, indicating that people can rely upon visual cues to avoid exposure to weathered oil that is both on and in the sand.

### What Okaloosa County Residents & Visitors Should Know:

- Beaches may continue to be impacted by the oil product over time.
- Severe weather may change the oiling of all or a portion of any beach.
- It may be necessary to issue health advisories or other public health messaging in order to protect the health and safety of Florida residents and visitors in the future. (\*See attached August 9, 2010 Concept of Operations)

### To Avoid Potential Health Impacts:

- Because wave action and currents may periodically bring tar balls ashore or expose small areas of buried oil within the sand, beach goers may encounter weathered oil products and tar balls, and should avoid touching the product.
- If people accidentally come into contact with buried oil product or tar balls they should wash the residue from their skin as soon as practical. Brief skin contact is not a medical emergency, but can result in skin irritation if not removed.
- Avoid contact with dead or dying fish or other aquatic life.

### For more information:

- Okaloosa County Health Department: (850) 833-9247 or [www.HealthyOkaloosa.com](http://www.HealthyOkaloosa.com)
- Okaloosa County: <http://www.okaloosaf1.com>
- Okaloosa County Citizen's Information Line: Dial 311 – Option 8
- Florida Oil Spill Information Line: (888) 337-3569
- Florida Poison Information Centers: (800) 222-1222

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