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Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

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Fate and Effects of a Spill of Synthetic-Based Drilling Fluid
at Mississippi Canyon Block 778

[OCS Report MMS 2004-039](#)

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new report, *Fate and Effects of a Spill of Synthetic-Based Drilling Fluid at Mississippi Canyon Block 778*.

This descriptive report records the synthetic-based fluid spill that occurred in May 2003 some 60 miles off the coast of Louisiana in Mississippi Canyon Block 778 (MC 778) as the result of a riser break. The report describes the spilled material, the physical oceanography at the time of the spill, and the environmental effects of the spill.

On the basis of the information available, the study concludes that the released synthetic-based fluid dispersed into the water, settled to the seafloor, and biodegraded. No chemosynthetic communities exist close enough to the release to have been impacted. The less motile animals within the nearby benthic community could have been smothered. Impacts to fish resources and commercial fisheries would be negligible because of their mobility, the dispersion of the synthetic-based fluid, and the absence of toxicity of the released synthetic-based fluid. The Loop Current did not directly affect the MC 778 drill site the day of the spill event.

You can obtain copies of the report from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at no charge by referencing OCS Report MMS 2004-039. Here is the address.

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The Minerals Management Service is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in Federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands. MMS disbursed more than \$8 billion in FY 2003 and more than \$135 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund annually for the acquisition and development of state and Federal park and recreation lands.

MMS Main Website: www.mms.gov
Gulf of Mexico Website: www.gomr.mms.gov

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