

Abstract

A Cooperative Approach to Oiled Wildlife Facilities in the Pacific Northwest

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Over the last 25 years, there have been many efforts in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States to develop oiled wildlife facilities for use during oil spills. Some entities, including the Washington Department of Wildlife, Clean Rivers Cooperative/MFSA and Foss Environmental (now NRC) have independently invested in mobile equipment to be used in oiled wildlife responses according to their own plans and responsibilities. Washington State law requires that certain oil-handling facilities within the state have oil spill contingency plans in place to ensure the facility's ability to provide personnel and equipment to respond to oil spills. Recent changes to this law resulted in the establishment of an oiled wildlife planning standard that could not be met with existing resources in Washington State. As a result of these changes a stakeholder work group was organized to develop a plan for oiled wildlife facilities that would build on the existing equipment, meet state standards, increase current capacity and maximize the efficient use of resources. The plan adopted by the group calls for the use of mobile rehabilitation units (MRUs) (composed of customized trailers and soft-sided structures) that can be set up independently and in combination to match the available resources to the needs of a given wildlife response. When combined, the capacity of the MRUs will meet the facility and equipment needs required by the new oiled-wildlife planning standard. The implementation of this plan will significantly increase the infrastructure capacity for oiled wildlife response in Washington State, as well as the rest of the Pacific Northwest Region.