

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



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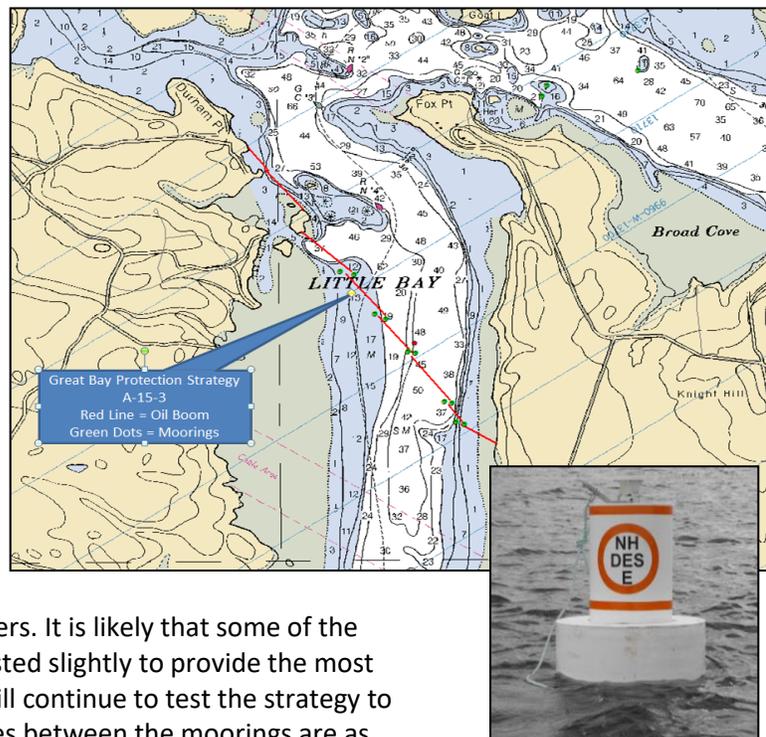
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Little Bay/Great Bay Permanent Moorings

The Great Bay Estuary has long been recognized as a critical habitat for species associated with the health and well being of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem. Efforts have been under way since the early 1980s by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and New Hampshire Fish and Game to prepare for an oil spill that could impact this area. NHDES has funded several studies and participated in numerous exercises in an attempt to determine the most effective strategy to prevent or limit the environmental impact that a spill would have on Great Bay.

Accordingly, NHDES worked with the local oil terminals, through the Piscataqua River Cooperative, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the US Coast Guard and a professional contractor to develop this strategy. Part of the newly revised strategy requires the placement of 10 permanent moorings, which, in the event of an oil spill, will allow first responders to quickly attach and deploy booms at strategic points around the bay area. Large lighted buoys attached to the permanent mooring act as connection points for deflection booms to redirect the flow of oil so that it can be collected by boat- or land-based skimmers. It is likely that some of the mooring locations may need to be adjusted slightly to provide the most effective oil diversion system. NHDES will continue to test the strategy to verify that the angles and exact distances between the moorings are as designed. Training exercises for deployment of the strategy will continue on an annual basis.



There are three oil storage terminals and three power generation facilities on the Piscataqua River that store up to 127 million gallons of petroleum. Annual deliveries of petroleum to these facilities total approximately 750 million gallons per year. Given the high tidal fluctuations and strong currents in the Piscataqua River oil travels very rapidly. Therefore, it is essential that protection strategies be deployed in the quickest time possible. The use of permanent moorings has been demonstrated to decrease the amount of time needed for deployment. For more information about NHDES' spill response efforts, please visit the Spill Response and Complaint Investigation Section's webpage.