

Thousands of gallons of fuel dumps in South Carolina waters in treatment plant spill

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A cleanup effort is underway after thousands of gallons of diesel fuel spilled into South Carolina waters.

Oil from the Plum Island Wastewater Treatment Plant dumped into bodies of [water](#) in the Charleston area Saturday, the U.S. Coast Guard said. The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control is assisting the Coast Guard in the cleanup of Dill Creek and its marshes.

About 3,100 gallons of diesel fuel spilled into the water after leaking from an above-ground tank at the wastewater plant, according to the Coast Guard.

The red-dye diesel fuel has made for an eerie-looking scene in the marsh, pictures show.

Both the Coast Guard and DHEC are attempting to remove the fuel from the marsh and creek, which lead to main waterways such as Wappoo Creek, the Ashley River, and potentially the Stono River in addition to Charleston Harbor. A vacuum truck was being used in addition to a hard boom to absorb and extract the diesel fuel, the Coast Guard said.

There is concern the [spill](#) has spoiled part of the marsh, which is one of the iconic grassy areas that attracts people to visit the [coast](#). The marshes are full of [small animals](#)—like baby crabs and baby fish and shrimp—and are places vital to the growth of many types of marine life, including the wildlife harvested for seafood.

The Charleston Waterkeeper said the long-term effects of the spill are yet to be determined, the Post & Courier reported.

The purpose of the wastewater plant is to protect "the environment and public health," according to the Charleston Water System. "Wastewater contains pollutants and microorganisms that are harmful to humans and wildlife."

There was no information reporting any wastewater spilling into the creek or marshes.

One of the worst oil spills in recent years in South Carolina happened in December 2014, when there was a 369,000-gallon gasoline leak northwest of Belton that affected several hundred acres of farmland.

In June 1996, nearly 1 million gallons of [fuel](#) spilled over a 23-mile stretch in the Reedy River which destroyed vegetation, killed wildlife and 35,000 fish, the Greenville News reported. That spill resulted in the Colonial Pipeline Company paying \$13 million in settlements to South Carolina and landowners and another \$41 million in federal Clean Water Act fines.

Saturday's spill is being investigated by the Charleston Water System, WCSC reported.

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