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NEWS RELEASE

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Water tests indicate some threat to aquatic life; Spill contained largely in Red Butte Creek

Salt Lake City, Utah – More comprehensive water tests analyzed over the last few days show the oil spill was largely contained in Red Butte Creek and did not spread significantly into the Jordan River or the Great Salt Lake.

“This is good news,” said Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality (DWQ). “It appears from analyzing the data that even though some of the oil made it to the Jordan River, the concentrations are low enough that we aren’t seeing any real threats to aquatic life.”

DWQ scientists collected water samples at 14 locations from the origin of the spill at Red Butte Creek to the shores of the Great Salt Lake, analyzing the most toxic components of the oil to determine its effects on aquatic life.

“Among the upper sites where the presence of petroleum products is still evident, the combined effect of all pollutants indicates both acute and chronic toxicity to aquatic life. However, this toxicity has decreased more than three-fold since the initial sample results. Even so, the long-term impact of the petroleum discharge is yet unknown,” Baker said.

DWQ will continue to monitor the sites during the cleanup phase while long-term monitoring plans for soils and sediments are being developed.

Results of the tests will be posted at: <http://www.deq.utah.gov/Issues/redbuttespill/index.htm>

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