
source: Charlie Riedel/AP

Do we now have the iconic image of the BP oil spill? The photo above — of a laughing gull soaked in oil — appeared in newspapers, on line and on the air yesterday. It seems to capture, as no words can, the tragedy we face as millions of gallons of oil continue to spew from the bottom of the gulf. Is it 2010's Cayahoga River burning? Will the image of the oil soaked gull lead to public cries for action to do something big? Ramp up significantly the regulation of the oil industry? Reduce our dependence on fossil fuels through public support for alternative energy and improved energy efficiency?

Somewhat ironically, perhaps, NPR reported today that the laughing gull in the photo is likely to be okay — he was rescued early enough to clean him up.

Another image that eerily captures — for me at least — the tragedy of the crisis is PBS's oil spill clock that ticks away to show the number of gallons spilled to date. I couldn't upload it to the post but you can see it here. As of this posting PBS estimates that 22,008,720 gallons had spilled so far, with more than 500,000 being added per day.

The image of the laughing gull and the ever ticking gallons-of-oil-spilled clock pretty much sum it all up for me. So I'll say no more, at least for now.