



Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Gulf Early Restoration Moving Forward Following Phase III Public Comment Period

Public comments, Trustee responses, now available online

Gulf Coast (June 5, 2014) ---The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees (Trustees) have published in the Federal Register, and approved for public release, the Final Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan and Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Final Phase III ERP/PEIS). The publication follows an extended 75-day public comment period that generated thousands of comments. The Final Phase III ERP/PEIS—along with the Trustees responses to public input—is available at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov and in public repositories across the Gulf.

As the third and largest phase of early restoration since the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, the Final Phase III ERP/PEIS seeks to set parameters for additional early restoration activities and proposes to select 44 additional early restoration projects.

The Trustees are proposing \$627 million in projects to restore barrier islands, dunes, marshes, shorelines, and oyster beds and to address lost recreational use of natural resources.

Proposed ecological projects make up about \$397 million or approximately 63 percent of the total. Recreational use projects make up the remaining \$230 million, which is approximately 37 percent. Both restoration approaches meet criteria under the Oil Pollution Act and other applicable laws, as well as early restoration guidance.

Next steps include the development of a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will provide and explain the Trustees' final decisions on the Final Phase III ERP/PEIS and will be made publicly available this summer. The ROD will also identify the Phase III projects selected by the Trustees, an important milestone in the early restoration process.

Early restoration represents an initial step toward fulfilling the responsible parties' obligation to pay for all natural resource injuries and losses due to the spill. Ultimately, the responsible parties are obligated to compensate the public for the full scope of natural resource injuries caused by the spill, including the cost of assessment and restoration planning.



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Media Contacts

Department of the Interior: Nanciann Regalado, 678.296.6805, nanciann_regalado@fws.gov

NOAA: Renata Lana, 301.427.8656, renata.lana@noaa.gov

USDA: Jody Holzworth, 202.720.5974, jody.holzworth@wdc.usda.gov

U.S. EPA: Julia Ortiz, 202-564-1931, ortiz.julia@epa.gov

Alabama: Patti Powell, 334.242.3484, Patti.Powell@dcnr.alabama.gov

Florida: Ashley M. Williams, 850.245.2197, Ashley.M.Williams@dep.state.fl.us

Louisiana: Jenny Kurz, 225.342.0168, jenny.kurz@la.gov

Mississippi: Donna Lum, 601.948.3071, donna.lum@neel-schaffer.com

Texas: Tom Harvey, 512.389.4453, Tom.Harvey@tpwd.state.tx.us