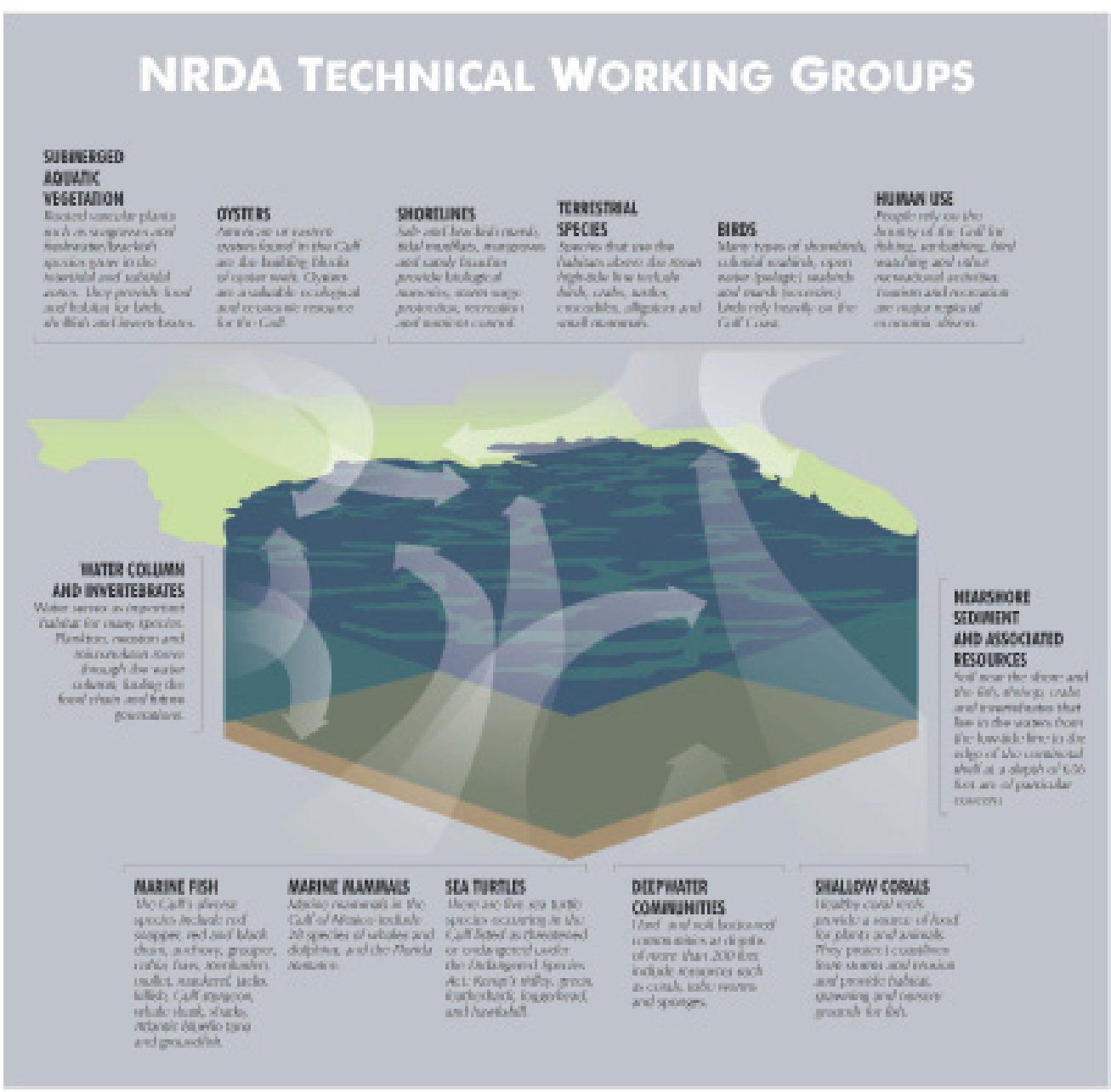
Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Damage Assessment

On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill set into motion the largest Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) in history. A NRDA is the process used by natural resource trustees to develop the public's claim for natural resource damages against the party or parties responsible for the spill and to seek compensation for the harm done to natural resources and services. It also provides for the development of a restoration plan or series of plans to restore or replace those resources.

Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

Fundamental to the NRDA process is a comprehensive assessment of a diverse range of resources. In the early days of the spill, NRDA teams began collecting data related to a wide range of natural resources and the services they provide and mobilized scores of field teams to conduct research in and around the Gulf Coast. That work continues today and will likely continue for several years.

TWGs are comprised of subject matter experts and scientists from state and federal resource agencies, universities and other institutions. They are charged with developing workplans to guide the damage assessment process and direct data collection efforts. Once samples are collected, they are sent to specific labs approved by the trustees and BP for analysis. For additional information on finalized cooperative workplans and data collected, please visit www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/gulf-spill-data.

The diagram below illustrates the various types of resources being evaluated as part of the Deepwater Horizon NRDA and provides a sense of the scope of investigations being done to fully evaluate the impacts of oil, dispersants and other response actions on the resources.