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

Fundamental to the NRDA process is a comprehensive assessment of a diverse range of resources. From the early days of the spill, NRDA teams have been collecting data related to a wide range of natural resources and the services they provide. Scores of field teams are conducting research around the Gulf Coast, and more than 100 research cruises have been launched to assess the spill's offshore impacts. Work of this type continues today and likely will continue for several years. **Technical Working Groups** are comprised of subject matter experts and scientists from state and federal resource agencies, universities and other institutions. They have developed 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 workplans and data, please visit www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov. The diagram below illustrates the various types of resources being evaluated as part of the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill NRDA and provides a sense of the three-dimensional scope of investigations under way to evaluate the impacts of oil, dispersants and other response actions on the resources.