

# Phase I Early Restoration Plan



April 2012

## LOUISIANA OYSTER CULTCH PROJECT

### GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Oyster Cultch Project involves (1) the placement of oyster cultch onto approximately 850 acres of public oyster seed grounds throughout coastal Louisiana, and (2) construction of an oyster hatchery facility that would produce supplemental larvae and seed.

### PROJECT DETAILS

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) will contract for the placement of cultch material onto approximately 850 acres of public oyster seed grounds throughout coastal Louisiana, including 3-Mile Bay, Drum Bay, Lake Fortuna, South Black Bay, Hackberry Bay and Sister Lake. Cultch material consists of limestone rock, crushed concrete, oyster shell and other similar material that, when placed in oyster spawning areas, provides a substrate on which free swimming oyster larvae can attach and grow into oysters. The Louisiana Oyster Cultch Project will employ cultch planting approaches utilized by LDWF since 1917.

The second portion of the Project involves constructing hatchery improvements to help facilitate and expedite success of the cultch placement. In order to provide a supplemental source of oyster larvae and oyster seed, LDWF, in partnership with Louisiana Sea Grant, will contract to construct a new building adjacent to the existing Sea Grant oyster hatchery located at the LDWF facility on Grand Isle, Louisiana.

Hatchery operations will include broodstock maintenance, algal cultivation, larvae production, and a nursery system. Larvae produced at the hatchery can be released into the water directly over cultch material or be remotely set on oyster cultch to create oyster seed. When remotely set oysters reach approximately 1 inch in length they will be moved from the hatchery to a suitable growout area (i.e. public seed grounds). The facility is designed to produce 1 billion eyed larvae per season.

### RESOURCE BENEFITS AND RELATIONSHIP TO INJURY

The goal of the Louisiana Oyster Cultch Project is to produce seed-sized and sack-sized oysters on public oyster seed grounds. Oysters were exposed to oil and dispersant, as well as response activities undertaken to prevent, minimize, or remediate oiling from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

### METHODS AND RESULTS OF OFFSETS ESTIMATION

For the purposes of negotiations of Offsets with BP in accordance with the Early Restoration Framework Agreement, the Trustees used Resource Equivalency Analysis to estimate Offsets for the Louisiana Oyster Cultch Project, resulting in expected production of oysters on cultch material over time. Offsets reflect estimated kilograms of oysters produced, and will be applied against oyster injuries in coastal Louisiana injured by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill as determined by the Trustees' total assessment of injury. The Trustees considered a number of factors in estimating oyster production, including, but not limited to, typical oyster production in the proposed project area, estimated project life span and size of the project. Total estimated Offsets for the Louisiana Oyster Cultch Project are 4,000,000 discounted kilogram-years of oyster secondary production.

### ESTIMATED COST

The estimated cost to implement the Louisiana Oyster Cultch Project is \$15,582,600.

(Estimated costs for some of the projects were updated from those provided in the DERP/EA. Actual costs may differ depending on future contingencies, but will not exceed the amount shown without further agreement between the Trustees and BP.)

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Louisiana oyster clutch planting locations.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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