



Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Lost Recreational Use

Under the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) of 1990, trustees determine injuries to natural resources caused by oil spills and spill response activities and lost uses of those resources, including the public's lost recreational uses, through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process. Once trustees determine the nature and extent of the resource injuries and lost uses, they develop a plan to restore those losses.

Restoration means any action, or combination of actions, to restore, rehabilitate, replace or acquire the equivalent of injured natural resources and the services they provide. Losses of both ecological and recreational services provided by natural resources are eligible for restoration. Examples of projects to compensate for lost recreational uses include actions to enhance or protect natural resources that are used for recreation; improve public access to natural resources for recreational use; increase the quality of recreational experiences; and promote better public stewardship and responsible use of natural resources.



Every year millions of people, including visitors from beyond the Gulf regions, travel to and enjoy recreational activities in and around the Gulf of Mexico. From fishing to beach-going to bird watching and countless other recreational activities, people depend on Gulf Coast waters and nearshore environments for valuable recreational, cultural and ecological resources and services.



Background

On April 20, 2010, the *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill set into motion the largest natural resource damage assessment in history. A natural resource damage assessment 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 the services they provide. It also provides for the development of a restoration plan or series of plans to restore or replace those resources.

Natural resource trustees are persons and agencies entrusted under the Oil Pollution Act and other applicable statutes and regulations to restore injured natural resources and lost services resulting from an incident.

During early restoration, an opportunity to implement some initial restoration projects prior to the completion of the natural resource damage assessment, the *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees (Trustees) are considering the widespread recreational losses caused by the oil spill, and how best to compensate the public for those losses.

Early restoration is only the first step in the restoration process and occurs simultaneously with the natural resource damage assessment. The Trustees are assessing the full scope of damages and are committed to holding the responsible parties fully accountable.

RECREATIONAL USE

