

Mesophotic and Deep Benthic Communities

Open Ocean MAM Strategy Workshop



Mesophotic and deep benthic communities are among the six restoration types assigned to the Open Ocean Restoration Area as part of the *Deepwater Horizon* settlement and Consent Decree. The Trustees documented injury to over 2,000 square kilometers of mesophotic and deep benthic habitats surrounding the wellhead. The purpose of this workshop is to obtain input on data needed for restoration planning, implementation, and evaluation given the established goals and approaches noted below.

RESTORATION GOALS

- Restore mesophotic and deep benthic invertebrate and fish abundance and biomass for injured species, focusing on high-density mesophotic and deep water coral sites and other priority hard-ground areas to provide a continuum of healthy habitats from the coast to offshore
- Actively manage valuable mesophotic and deep-sea communities to protect against multiple threats and provide a framework for monitoring, education, and outreach
- Improve understanding of mesophotic and deep-sea communities to inform better management and ensure resiliency



RESTORATION APPROACHES

- Place hard ground substrate and transplant coral
- Protect and manage mesophotic and deep benthic coral communities



Breakout Group Guiding Questions

There are a number of unknowns in mesophotic and deep benthic restoration; however, the workshop's goal is to focus on what science and monitoring needs may be most helpful to inform restoration planning, implementation, and understanding restoration outcomes.

What data are needed for planning/implementation?

What data are needed for evaluation?

What data are needed for adaptive management?

What are the key takeaways from our discussion today?