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.