



Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment

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The Deepwater Horizon oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees have issued the following statement in response to today's press release and report from BP concerning the health of the Gulf of Mexico:

GULF OF MEXICO, March 16, 2015 -----

In a news statement released today, BP claims that the "...Gulf environment (is) returning to pre-spill conditions" although the Deepwater Horizon oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees (NRDA Trustees) are still assessing the injury resulting from the largest offshore oil spill in our nation's history. It is inappropriate as well as premature for BP to reach conclusions about impacts from the spill before the completion of the assessment.

Citing scientific studies conducted by experts from around the Gulf, as well as this council, BP misinterprets and misapplies data while ignoring published literature that doesn't support its claims and attempts to obscure our role as caretakers of the critical resources damaged by the spill.

At over 100 million gallons of spilled oil, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill is more than 10 times the size of the Exxon Valdez. From decades of experience with oil spills, we know that the environmental effects of this spill are likely to last for generations.

The state and federal trustees, including our scientific colleagues at universities and institutions around the Gulf, are engaged in a rigorous, scientific process of injury assessment and are still analyzing the data, conducting studies, and evaluating what happened.

Our obligation under the Oil Pollution Act is to restore the public's natural resources injured by the Deepwater Horizon spill to the condition they would have been in but for the spill and to compensate the public for the services of those natural resources that were injured or lost. In addition to assessing the damage, we are undertaking early restoration and developing a long-term restoration plan with public involvement to meet that responsibility.

The assessment is a thorough and time-consuming process by which we evaluate the best scientific evidence available to ensure we understand the injuries caused by the spill, as well as the most appropriate means to restore those injuries and to compensate for the lost use of the Gulf's resources while they are injured. The restoration planning effort involves a great deal of public outreach to ensure we consider the public's perspective when making restoration decisions.

The natural resource trustees from Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, NOAA, DOI, USDA, EPA, and DOD to the extent of DOD-owned lands are conducting the NRDA through a coordinated effort.

For additional information about the Deepwater Horizon oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment, visit <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/>.

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