



Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Trustees Extend Gulf Restoration Comment Period to Feb. 19

Gulf Coast (Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2014) --- Responding to requests from the public, the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees (Trustees) have extended the public review and comment period for the Draft Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan and Draft Early Restoration Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (draft). The draft, which proposes \$627 million in early restoration projects across the Gulf states is now available for public review and comment through Feb. 19 rather than Feb. 4, the original deadline.

We have heard your request, and we are extending the 60-day review time an additional 15 days,” said Mimi Drew, Trustee Chair. “This will allow the public more time to review and respond to the draft document. We know the public’s input is essential for developing the most beneficial restoration course of action and continue to encourage your input.”

This marks the third and largest phase of early restoration to date. Included in the draft are 44 proposed projects. Some aim to restore barrier islands, dunes, marshes, shorelines, and oyster beds. Others, such as boat ramps and park enhancements, seek to address the lost recreational use of natural resources. The draft also proposes a programmatic plan for continuing to pursue early restoration. The draft, available at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov, includes the programmatic plan and the complete list of proposed projects, with locations and descriptions. ([Click here](#) for a list of proposed projects.)

Of the \$627 million, ecological projects comprise about \$397 million, which is approximately 63 percent of the total. Lost recreational use projects make up the remaining \$230 million. Both approaches meet criteria under the Oil Pollution Act and other applicable laws and guidelines.

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Visit www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov to download an electronic copy of the draft and to view a list of public libraries and community locations across the Gulf in which copies of the draft have been placed for public review.

In addition to verbal comments at public meetings, the public may submit written comments:

- Online: www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov
- By U.S. Mail: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 49567, Atlanta, GA 30345

Early restoration projects represent an initial step toward fulfilling the responsible parties' obligation to pay for restoration of injured natural resources. Ultimately, the responsible parties are obligated to compensate the public for the full scope of natural resource injuries caused by the spill, including the cost of assessment and restoration planning.

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