



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
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MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
TRUDY D. FISHER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

(JACKSON, Miss.) -- 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.

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality's Executive Director Trudy Fisher said, "It's important that the public be given adequate time to review and comment on this document, and this extension insures that we will go forward with thorough input from the public which is essential to all restoration efforts.

"We want to hear what the people of Mississippi think of the Phase III Proposed Early Restoration projects, and I would encourage everyone to visit www.restore.ms to review the projects and leave their comments," said Fisher.

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.

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.

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.restore.ms
- 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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