

Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Trustees Announce Major Progress in Gulf Restoration Effort

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An estimated \$60 million in early restoration projects soon will begin along the Gulf Coast following the nation's largest oil spill, the *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) Trustee Council announced today.

With finalization of the "*Deepwater Horizon* Phase I Early Restoration Plan & Environmental Assessment" (ERP/

EA), eight restoration projects will be implemented. The projects provide for marsh creation, coastal dune

habitat improvements, nearshore artificial reef creation, and oyster cultch restoration, as well as the construction and enhancement of boat ramps to compensate for lost human use of resources.

The ERP/EA is the first early restoration plan under the unprecedented April 2011 agreement with BP to fund \$1

billion in early restoration projects. The funding enables the trustees to begin restoration before the completion

of damage assessment activities.

The trustees are working to move the next phase of early restoration forward. The selection process for future

early restoration projects will proceed along the same lines as the first. After reaching preliminary agreement

with BP on proposed projects, the trustees will seek public comments before finalizing any future plan.

"Having carefully planned the projects in Phase I and extensively discussed them with the public, we are confident that the projects will achieve our goal of beginning to heal the Gulf's ecosystem and people's enjoyment of it," said Alabama representative Cooper Shattuck, chair of the NRDA Trustee Council's

Executive

Committee.

The Phase I projects, including two each in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, were the focus of 12

public meetings held throughout the Gulf states and in Washington, D.C., during the months of January and

February 2012.

In addition to speaking at meetings, hundreds of citizens filed comments by mail and online. Following the

meetings, more than 500 people and organizations submitted comments, which were gathered and carefully

evaluated. The comments, as well as trustee responses to them, are included in the Phase I plan, which can be

reviewed at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov and www.doi.gov/deepwaterhorizon. The NOAA Gulf Spill

Restoration site also provides additional information about restoration planning and a [status update](#) on the

ongoing damage assessment.