

## ***Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Trustees Invite Public Comment on \$627 Million in Proposed Early Restoration Gulf Projects***

*Public asked to consider 44 proposed projects and a plan for early restoration decisions; 10 public meetings scheduled in Gulf states*

Gulf Coast (Dec. 6, 2013) ---The *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees (Trustees) released a draft plan that proposes \$627 million in early restoration projects across the Gulf states. The Draft Programmatic and Phase III Early Restoration Plan and Draft Early Restoration Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (draft) is available for public review and comment through Feb. 4.

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.

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality Executive Director Trudy Fisher said, "It is important that we hear from the people of Mississippi on the four proposed projects for our state. I invite the public to review the projects on our website at [www.restore.ms](http://www.restore.ms), leave comments, and plan to attend the December 17th public meeting in Long Beach. The Trustees are considering both ecological and recreational use restoration projects to restore injuries caused by the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill, addressing the physical and biological environment as well as the relationship people have with the environment."

The draft also proposes a programmatic plan for continuing to pursue early restoration. The draft, available at [www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://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.

The draft's release opens a 60-day public comment period that runs through Feb. 4. The comment period will include 10 public meetings held across the Gulf states. All

meetings will begin with an interactive open house during which Trustee staff will be available to discuss project details. The open house will be followed by a formal presentation and opportunity to provide comments to Trustee representatives. Meeting times, dates and locations are listed below.

Visit [www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://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](http://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.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
<b>Dec. 16</b>	<b>6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting</b>	<b>The Battle House Renaissance Mobile Hotel, Moonlight A, 26 North Royal Street, Mobile, AL 36602</b>
<b>Dec. 17</b>	<b>6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting</b>	<b>University of Southern Mississippi, FEC Auditorium, 730 East Beach Boulevard, Long Beach, MS 39560</b>
<b>Jan. 14</b>	<b>5:30 PM Open House 6:00 PM Public Meeting</b>	<b>Belle Chasse Auditorium, 8398 Louisiana 23, Belle Chasse, LA 70037</b>
<b>Jan. 15</b>	<b>5:30 PM Open House 6:00 PM Public Meeting</b>	<b>Warren J. Harang Jr. Municipal Auditorium, Plantation Room, 310 North Canal Boulevard, Thibodaux, LA 70302</b>
<b>Jan. 16</b>	<b>5:30 PM Open House 6:00 PM Public Meeting</b>	<b>Spring Hill Suites Lake Charles, Pelican Room, 1551 West Prien Lake Road, Lake Charles, LA 70601</b>

Jan. 21	6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting	Port Arthur Civic Center, Hall E, 3401 Cultural Center Drive, Port Arthur, TX 77642
Jan. 22	6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting	Texas A&M University at Galveston, Seawolf Parkway on Pelican Island, Auditorium, Class Room Lab Building, (Building #3007 on campus map), Galveston, TX 77554
Jan. 23	6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting	Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies Texas A&M University- Corpus Christi, 6300 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi, TX 78412
Jan. 28	6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting	Pensacola Bay Center, 201 East Gregory Street, Pensacola, FL 32502
Jan. 29	6:00 PM Open House 6:30 PM Public Meeting	Hilton Garden Inn Panama City, 1101 US Highway 231, Panama City, FL 32405

## Media Contacts

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