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Gov. Bryant Announces \$69 Million in Gulf Restoration Projects

JACKSON - Gov. Phil Bryant today announced \$69 million in early restoration projects for the Mississippi Gulf Coast following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

The projects are part of early restoration activities identified as "Phase III" of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) and bring Mississippi's early restoration total to \$82.6 million.

"From day one after the spill, we have been dedicated to making Mississippi whole," Governor Bryant said. "These four projects, which extend across the entirety of our Gulf Coast counties, are an important step in that journey. Each addresses a critical part of restoration of the natural resource and recreational losses caused by the spill. In whole, they will help to restore and enhance a wide array of habitat, from oyster and fish to marshes and the public's opportunities to enjoy and better understand the intricate Gulf Coast environment."

On April 20, 2011, BP agreed to provide up to \$1 billion to fund early restoration projects in the Gulf of Mexico including the states of Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Texas to begin addressing injuries to natural resources caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Mississippi's project were proposed as a result a public comment process on the Gulf Coast and were negotiated with BP and Mississippi's federal and state partners. In the coming months these projects will go through another phase of public review and comment before work begins. Further public review and comment will take place before work on the projects begins.

Trudy Fisher, Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Environmental

Quality, said. "I am excited that we have achieved funding and look forward to providing the public with more detailed information in the months to come."

According to Fisher, the four projects announced today will accomplish meaningful work in all three Gulf Coast counties. "These projects represent a diverse plan of actions. In Hancock County, in partnership with NOAA, we will construct a living shoreline to support habitat needs of a range of species. Environmental stewardship will be enhanced through construction of ecological and educational exhibits at the Infinity Center. Both Harrison and Jackson counties will see enhancement of recreational opportunities through construction of facilities and exhibits."

The four projects approved for NRDA funding are further described below:

- Hancock County Marsh Living Shoreline (Hancock County, Mississippi): The project would provide for construction of up to six miles of living shoreline. Benefits would include reduction of erosion, re-establishment of oyster habitat, and enhanced fisheries resources and marsh habitat. Approximately 46 acres of marsh would be constructed to protect and enhance the existing shoreline near Heron Bay. In addition, 46 acres of sub-tidal oyster reef would be created in Heron Bay to protect the shallow bay and increase oyster production in the area. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$50 million of which NOAA is funding a portion.
- Restoration Initiatives at the INFINITY Science Center (Hancock County, Mississippi): INFINITY is a state-of-the-art interactive science research, education, and interpretive center located in Hancock County. Early restoration funds would be used to develop interactive exhibits at the INFINITY Science Center. These enhancements would replace lost recreational opportunities through enhanced visitors' access to coastal natural resources. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$10.4 million.
- Popp's Ferry Causeway Park (Harrison County, Mississippi): The project would provide for construction of an interpretive center, trails, boardwalks, and other recreational enhancements. This project would replace lost recreational opportunities by enhancing existing amenities allowing visitors to fish, crab and observe nature. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$4.7 million.
- Pascagoula Beachfront Promenade (Jackson County, Mississippi): Early restoration funds for this project would be used to help complete a two-mile, 10-foot wide lighted concrete pathway complete with amenities. The purpose would be to restore the loss of recreational opportunities by enhancing access to the Mississippi Sound

and its natural resources. The estimated cost of this project is approximately \$3.8 million.

Additional information is available at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov .

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