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NRDA Trustees Announce \$1 Billion Agreement to Fund Early Gulf Coast Restoration Projects

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WASHINGTON, DC-- Under an unprecedented agreement announced today by the Natural Resource Trustees for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (Trustees), BP has agreed to provide \$1 billion toward early restoration projects in the Gulf of Mexico to address injuries to natural resources caused by the spill. The Trustees involved are: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, the Department of the Interior (DOI), and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Department of Justice provided assistance in reaching the agreement.

This early restoration agreement, the largest of its kind ever reached, represents a first step toward fulfilling BP's obligation to fund the complete restoration of injured public resources, including the loss of use of those resources by the people living, working and visiting the area. The Trustees will use the money to fund projects such as the rebuilding of coastal marshes, replenishment of damaged beaches, conservation of sensitive areas for ocean habitat for injured wildlife, and restoration of barrier islands and wetlands that provide natural protection from storms.

The agreement in no way affects the ultimate liability of BP or any other entity for natural resource damages or other liabilities, but provides an opportunity to help restoration get started sooner. The selection of early restoration projects will follow a public process, and will be overseen by the Trustees.

The full natural resource damage assessment process will continue until the Trustees have determined the full extent of damages caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. At the end of the damage assessment process, the Trustees will take into account any benefits that were realized from these early restoration projects. In addition to funding early restoration projects, BP will continue to fund the damage assessment and, together with the other responsible parties, will ultimately be obligated to compensate the public for the entire injury. BP is providing the early

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restoration funds voluntarily, and is not required to do so at this stage of the damage assessment process. The agreement will speed needed resources to the Gulf in advance of the completion of the assessment process.

To read the agreement, click [here](#).

“This milestone agreement will allow us to jump-start restoration projects that will bring Gulf Coast marshes, wetlands, and wildlife habitat back to health after the damage they suffered as a result of the Deepwater Horizon spill,” said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. “This agreement accelerates our work on Gulf Coast restoration and in no way limits the ability of all the Natural Resource Trustees from seeking full damages from those who are responsible as the NRDA process moves forward.”

"One year after the largest oil spill in our history, we take a major step forward in the recovery of the Gulf of Mexico, for the environment and the people who depend on it for their livelihood and enjoyment. Today's agreement is a down payment on our promise to protect and restore the Gulf," said Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA administrator.

"This agreement is a great first step toward restoring our natural resources destroyed by the BP oil spill," said Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal. "We are eager to continue working with public, state and federal co-trustees and BP to quickly convert this downpayment into projects to restore our damaged coast and replace our lost wildlife. We encourage BP to continue to address the damages from this spill through early restoration efforts."

“Alabama’s natural resources are environmentally diverse and an economic engine for our state and nation. Ecosystem restoration is vital to the economic vitality of the Alabama Gulf Coast,” said Alabama Governor Robert Bentley. “Obtaining funding for these restoration projects is a major step forward in addressing the oil spill’s damage to our precious natural resources. I have the utmost confidence that the Alabama trustees will consider and identify projects and use these funds toward restoring our natural resources.”

"Since the day of the oil spill, our goals have been to make Mississippi whole and to assure that our coastal areas completely recover. Today's unprecedented agreement is an important first step but it is only the first step. Mississippi will continue this work and will count on our many interested citizens to contribute their ideas and input as we all work to define the scope of these early projects and develop other restoration projects. Our goals have not changed. We will remain actively engaged in these and other projects until the Gulf is restored and our state is made whole," said Trudy D. Fisher, Mississippi Trustee, Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality.

“I’m pleased that after a year of uncertainty and concerns about environmental damages which occurred as a result of the Deepwater Horizon explosion, Florida will be able to use this early restoration money to initiate greatly needed environmental restoration projects,” said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Herschel Vinyard. “Because we have worked diligently to assess the environmental damage resulting from the spill, we are well positioned to be able to quickly begin performing important restoration projects and use Florida's share of the early restoration funds to assist our coastal communities with their continued recovery from the spill.”

“While the Texas coast was not as visibly impacted by this spill, our wetlands, bays, beaches and coastal waters were affected, and it makes sense to invest in places that can help jumpstart and maximize recovery of the entire Gulf,” said Carter Smith, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department executive director. “There will be a public process in Texas and throughout the Gulf to consider and identify projects that make the best use of these funds for our coastal habitats and the fish, wildlife and people who depend upon them.”

The \$1 billion in early restoration projects will be selected and implemented as follows:

- Each state – Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas - will select and implement \$100 million in projects;
- The Federal Resource Trustees, NOAA and DOI, will each select and implement \$100 million in projects;
- The remaining \$300 million will be used for projects selected by NOAA and DOI from proposals submitted by the State Trustees.

All projects must meet the other requirements of the Framework Agreement and be approved by the Trustee Council comprised of all the natural resource trustees.

To read the early restoration agreement, click [here](#).

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