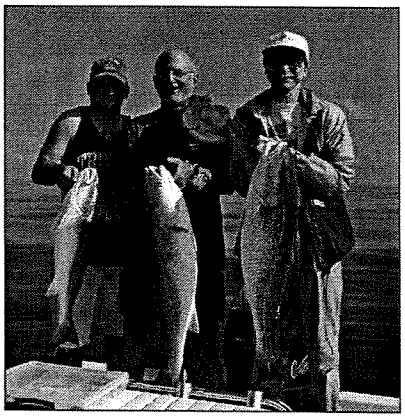
Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting
June 23, 2003

Purpose of Today's Meeting

- Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program: Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
  - Record comments from public
  - Answer questions



Why Louisiana?

- Louisiana leads the Nation in crude oil production
- Impact of oil and gas industry on the economy of Louisiana was $93 billion in 2001
- Sports fishing and coastal tourism contribute $3.7 billion to the Louisiana economy per year
- Over the last decade, about 20% of US oil spills were reported in Louisiana

What is Natural Resource Damage Assessment?

- Objective: Restore environmental harm caused by oil spills
- Natural resource trustees represent the public interest
  - Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
  - Louisiana Department of Natural Resources
  - Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries
  - Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
  - US Department of the Interior
  - US Department of Commerce (through NOAA)

Legal Underpinnings

- Oil Pollution Act of 1990
  - Trustees must assess damages and restore, replace, rehabilitate, or acquire the equivalent of natural resources injured by oil spill incidents
- Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act (revised 2001)
  - Establish a state-wide program under Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office
  - Make damage assessments more efficient
  - Coordinate with state natural resource trustees

Activities to Date

- Trustee Workgroup meetings started January 2000
- Informal Scoping
  - More than 15 meetings from October 2000 through spring 2001
- Formal Scoping – June 2001
  - Public Review Document issued for public comment
  - Notice of Intent to develop a PEIS
  - Six public meetings held
  - Established Administrative Record (www.darp.noaa.gov)

National Environmental Policy Act

- Proposed Action: Establish and Implement the Regional Restoration Planning Program
- Describing proposed actions to the public
- Public input on proposed actions
  - Public comment period runs May 9 through July 9
  - Public meetings

Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program

- Objectives of the Program
  - More restoration after oil spills
  - Faster restoration after oil spills
  - Lower cost of restoration planning process
  - Combine restoration projects to promote larger, more ecologically significant restorations
  - Reduce uncertainty by improving understanding of the damage assessment process
  - Increase public participation during pre-spill planning

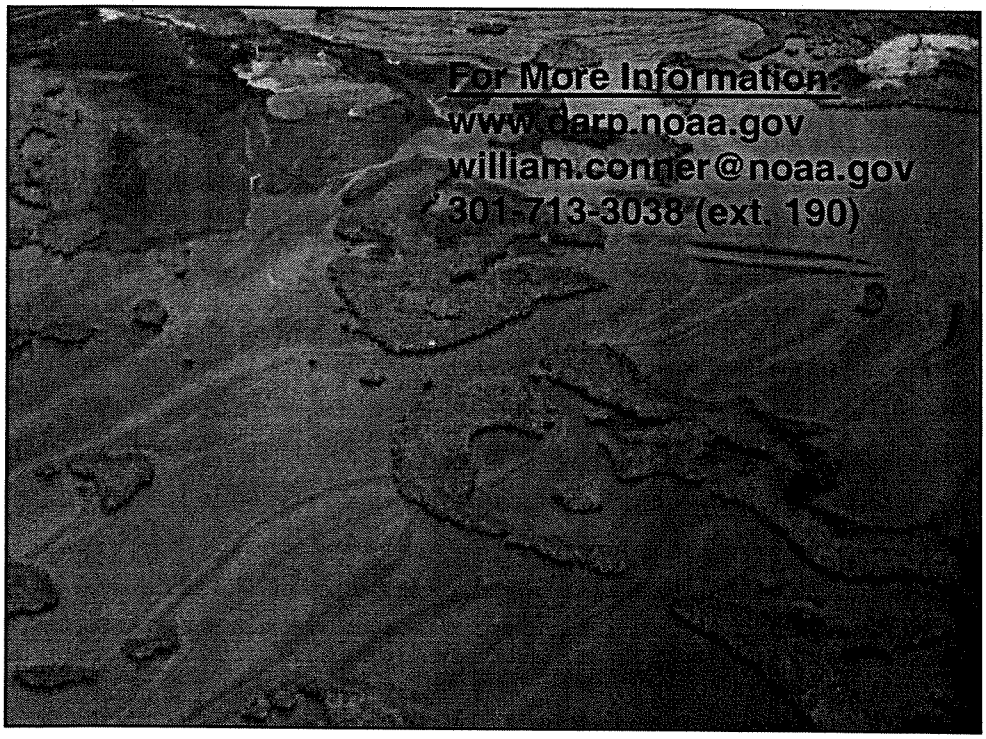
(selected from page 6 DPEIS)

Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program

- Program features outlined in DPEIS
  - Management structure
  - Natural resources that may be injured
  - Restoration types
  - Linkage between injured resources and restoration types
  - Decision criteria
  - Settlement alternatives
  - Implementation process

Louisiana Regional Restoration Planning Program

- Regional Restoration Plans
  - Nine regions in Louisiana
  - Listing of potential restoration projects
  - Establishment of unit costs for principle restoration types

Next Steps

- Public comment period closes July 9
- Trustees will consider comments and finalize PEIS
- Develop and release of Regional Plans for public comment