

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Planning for M/V *Cosco Busan*



Oiled Surf Scoter and Eared Grebe. Photo by Bob Dang

As a result of November 2007 M/V *Cosco Busan* oil spill that released 58,000 gallons of fuel oil into San Francisco Bay, representatives from state and federal agencies are working together with the responsible party to assess the ecological injuries and human use losses from the incident. This process is known as a natural resource

damage assessment (NRDA). With this assessment, the trustees can quantify the injuries to wildlife, habitat, lost use of those resources, and develop an appropriate restoration plan. The state and federal natural resource trustee agencies (trustees) will ultimately make a claim for funds from the responsible party to complete restoration projects designed to both restore and compensate for the injured resources and human activities.

Specialized resource teams have been deployed to the field daily since the spill, collecting the time-critical data necessary to document information about degree of oiling in each of the important habitats, oil toxicity, observations of dead and oiled wildlife, and other impacts. All of this information will be used to select and scale appropriate restoration projects.

Hundreds of environmental samples have been collected throughout the assessment area, including sediment, plant, fish, mollusk, water column, and others. These samples are being prioritized and analyzed using high resolution chemistry for "fingerprinting," which helps confirm source, composition, and physiochemical properties.

NRDA Resource Groups

- Birds
- Mammals
- Fish
- Sandy Beach Habitat
- Rocky Intertidal Habitat
- Saltmarsh Habitat
- Eelgrass Habitat
- Human Uses
- Historical and Cultural Resources

Public Process

There will be a public information meeting in early 2008 that will provide an opportunity for the public to learn about the NRDA process. The meeting will also allow the trustee agencies to learn about additional observations and data collected by the public or other organizations. The trustees will seek public input on appropriate restoration projects that will compensate for the injuries. When the trustees complete the process of quantifying injuries and identifying potential restoration projects, a draft restoration plan will be presented to the public. The trustees will hold public meetings to explain the draft plan and seek input on the suggested restoration projects.

Assessment Activities

The trustees started working immediately during the spill response to characterize the full extent of the injury in both geographic scope and scale. Figure 1 shows NRDA sampling locations. There are nine major habitat types/resources that the NRDA teams are currently assessing.



Figure 1. NRDA sampling locations.

Trustees

State of California: Department of Fish and Game; Department of Parks and Recreation; State Lands Commission

United States Department of the Interior: Fish and Wildlife Service; National Park Service; Bureau of Land Management

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration: Damage Assessment, Remediation and Restoration Program; National Marine Sanctuary Program

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Web sites

coscobusanincident.com
dfg.ca.gov/ospr/spill/nrda/nrda_cosco-busan.html
response.restoration.noaa.gov
fws.gov/contaminants/Issues/OilSpill.cfm

