

May 2023

Refugio Beach Oil Spill Restoration

Trustee Council Update

About the Spill

On May 19, 2015, a pipeline owned and operated by Plains All American Pipeline, L.P., and Plains Pipeline, L.P. (Plains) ruptured near Refugio State Beach in Santa Barbara County, California, sending oil into the ocean. In response, state and federal natural resource trustee agencies conducted a Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA). A NRDA assesses exposure to spilled oil, documents spill-related injuries to the environment and its public uses, and provides compensation through environmental restoration projects. The Responsible Party, Plains, is responsible to pay the NRDA costs, known as damages, for implementing restoration projects.

Settlement and Restoration Plan

Following final settlement of the case in June 2021, the natural resource trustee agencies formed a “Trustee Council” to oversee the implementation, monitoring, and completion of restoration projects and a grants program outlined in the Final Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment (DARP/EA) for the spill. Settlement details are as follows:

Birds	\$2.2 Million
Marine Mammals	\$2.3
Subtidal and Fish Habitats	\$6.1
Shoreline Habitat	\$5.5
Human Use	\$3.9
Restoration Planning, Implementation, Oversight	\$2.0

SETTLEMENT TOTAL: \$22 MILLION

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RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATES

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE TRUSTEE COUNCIL HAS AUTHORIZED AND FUNDED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEVERAL HABITAT AND RECREATIONAL USE PROJECTS:

Birds

BROWN PELICAN COLONY PROTECTION AT ANACAPA ISLAND

The Trustees allocated \$206,145 over two years for restoring brown pelican nesting habitat on Anacapa Island by removing the invasive Cape Ivy weed. Initial eradication efforts began in the Fall of 2022. The Channel Islands National Park is implementing the project.



Other Projects in Planning Phase

A map of California showing project locations. A red diamond marks a 'Spill Location' near Santa Barbara. Blue arrows point from this location to two inset boxes: 'Plover Management at Coal Oil Point Reserve' (with a photo of a plover) and 'Fishing Injury Reduction (multiple locations)' (with a photo of a bird's head). A scale bar indicates 20 km.

RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATES

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE TRUSTEE COUNCIL HAS AUTHORIZED AND FUNDED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEVERAL HABITAT AND RECREATIONAL USE PROJECTS:

Marine Mammals

PINNIPED REHABILITATION SURVIVAL IMPROVEMENT

The Trustees allocated \$1.8 million over a three-year period for the Channel Islands Marine Wildlife Institute to enhance existing stranding network capabilities along the Gaviota Coast. Funding provides multiple facility upgrades for treating injured or sick marine mammals (e.g., Sea Lions) and annual salaries for key staff members.



RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATES

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE TRUSTEE COUNCIL HAS AUTHORIZED AND FUNDED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEVERAL HABITAT AND RECREATIONAL USE PROJECTS:

Subtidal and Fish Habitats

COASTAL EELGRASS RESTORATION

The Trustees allocated \$839,626 for restoring eelgrass beds along the Gaviota Coast. Initial scoping of the project area is set to begin in the Spring of 2023. Tenera Environmental is implementing the project.



SAND DWELLING KELP PROJECT

The Trustees allocated \$385,439 for restoring sand-dwelling kelp beds in Goleta Bay. Initial monitoring of the project area is set to begin in the Spring of 2023. Tenera Environmental is implementing the project.



RESTORATION PROJECT UPDATES

OVER THE PAST YEAR, THE TRUSTEE COUNCIL HAS AUTHORIZED AND FUNDED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SEVERAL HABITAT AND RECREATIONAL USE PROJECTS:

Shoreline Habitat

BLACK ABALONE RESTORATION AND RELOCATION

Numbers of the federally and state protected Black Abalone have declined over the years, especially in rocky intertidal habitats along the Gaviota Coast. The Trustees allocated \$316,480 over three years to begin restoring Black Abalone populations north of and along the Gaviota Coast. Initial scoping of the project is set to begin in the Spring of 2023. The University of California, Santa Cruz, is implementing the project.



SANTA MONICA DUNE AND BEACH

The Trustees allocated \$89,250 to begin year one activities to restore native dune habitat along Santa Monica Beach. The project aims to restore and enhance native beach dune vegetation that has been degraded by intensive mechanical grooming. Initial protection and seeding/planting efforts are planned to begin in the Fall of 2023. The project is being implemented by the Bay Foundation of Santa Monica.



HUMAN USE

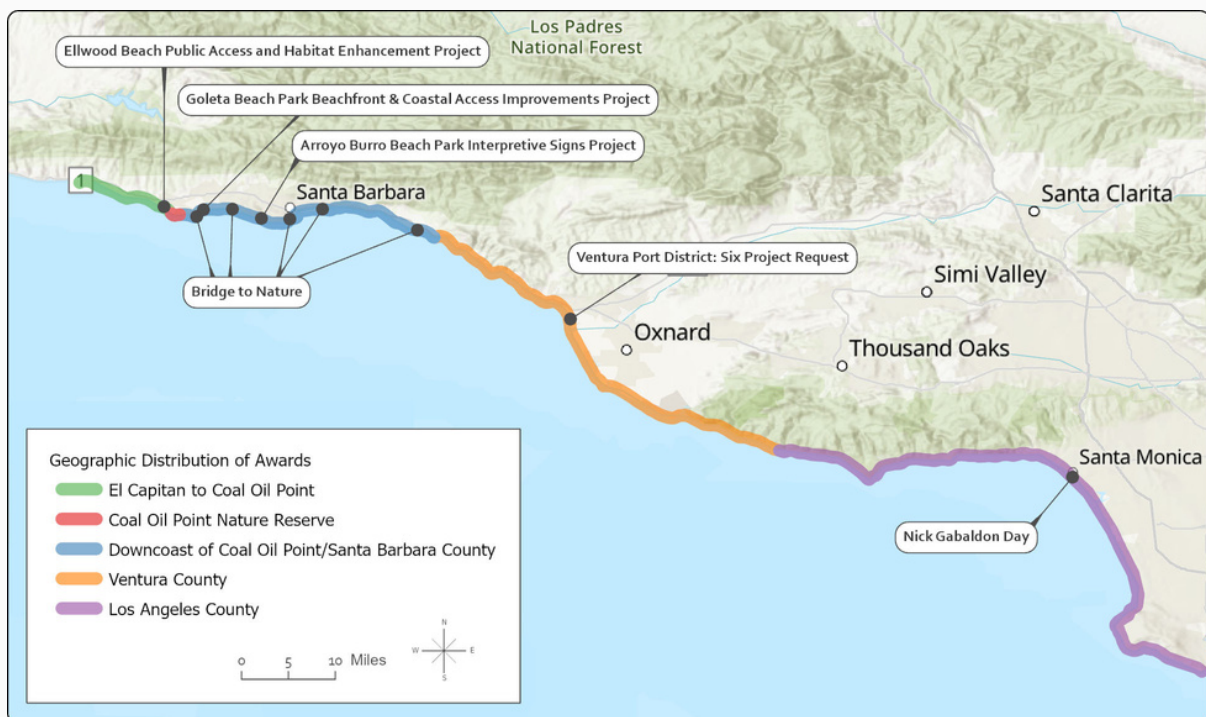
Settlement Details

\$3.9 MILLION TO COMPENSATE FOR HUMAN USE INJURIES ALLOCATED TO:

- South Coast Shoreline Parks and Outdoor Recreation Grants Program. The first round of Request for Proposals is complete. 6 project awards totaling \$866,301 have been selected. Funded projects include:
 - Ellwood Beach Public Access and Habitat Enhancement Project
 - Arroyo Burro Beach Park Interpretive Signs Project
 - Goleta Beach Park Beachfront and Coastal Access Improvements
 - Bridge to Nature
 - Ventura Port District: Six Project Request
 - Nick Gabaldón Day – Celebrating Diversity, Environmentalism, and Ocean Readiness

More information regarding the funded projects can be found at the CDFW Refugio website at <https://wildlife.ca.gov/OSPR/NRDA/Refugio>

- State Parks and University of California allocations:
 - Projects being planned & scoped.



TRUSTEES

Settlement Details

THE FOLLOWING NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEE AGENCIES ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPLEMENT RESTORATION PROJECTS OUTLINED IN THE DARP/EA:

- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California State Lands Commission
- California Department of Parks and Recreation
- University of California
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Park Service

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These agencies are identified as Trustees under state and federal laws and have the responsibility to oversee the implementation, monitoring and completion of the projects outlined in the DARP/EA.



FOR QUESTIONS PLEASE EMAIL: REFUGIORESTORATION@FWS.GOV



REFUGIO BEACH OIL SPILL TRUSTEE COUNCIL BUDGET

Amount Received

\$22,386,381

Allocations

SEA BIRD/FISHING CONFLICT REDUCTION	--*
ANACAPA PELICAN RESTORATION	\$206,145
COPR PLOVER MANAGEMENT	\$16,415
PINNIPED REHABILITATION	\$1,800,000
CETACEAN ENTANGLEMENT	--
ABALONE SUBTIDAL RESTORATION	--
SAND-DWELLING KELP	\$385,439
EELGRASS RESTORATION	\$839,626
SUBTIDAL RESTORATION	--
BLACK ABALONE RESTORATION	\$316,480
ELWOOD SEAWALL REMOVAL	--
ELWOOD SEAWALL BIOLOGICAL MONITORING	--
SANTA MONICA DUNES RESTORATION	\$89,250
VENTURA COUNTY DUNES RESTORATION	--
STATE PARKS HUMAN USE PROJECTS	--
SOUTH COAST REC GRANTS PROGRAM - NFWF	\$866,301
UC EDUCATIONAL USE	\$26,000
TRUSTEE OVERSIGHT AND RESTORATION PLANNING	\$1,313,916

Total

\$5,574,740

Total Amount Remaining

\$16,811,641

**Allocation to be determined*

