



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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NATURAL RESOURCE TRUSTEES ANNOUNCE NORTH PASS OIL SPILL RESTORATION *Federal and State Agencies Will Oversee Efforts in Louisiana*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, working with federal and state natural resource trustees, announced today that they have reached a settlement with Devon Energy Corporation to restore wetlands to compensate for natural resources impacted by a September 2002 oil spill along North Pass in the Mississippi River Delta.

Restoration will begin in the summer of 2006 with a crevasse cut along Octave Pass in U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Delta National Wildlife Refuge approximately eight miles southeast of Venice, La. The cut will promote infilling of shallow ponds with sediment-laden Mississippi River water and the establishment of marsh vegetation. The project will address natural resource injuries caused by a ruptured aboveground storage tank that spilled 12,600 gallons of oil at the North Pass facility in Louisiana's Mississippi Delta.

Trustees acting in accordance with the federal Oil Pollution Act and the state Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act include Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office; Office of the Governor of Louisiana; and Louisiana departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Quality, and Wildlife and Fisheries. Trustees are acting on behalf of the public and are responsible for assessing and restoring natural resources injured by the 2002 spill. Devon Energy Corporation, the company responsible for the spill, will fund the restoration effort.

"Federal and state agencies, in collaboration with Devon Energy Corporation, have arrived at a resolution that will create a productive and self-sustaining wetland in the Mississippi River Delta," said retired Navy Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, Ph.D., under secretary of commerce for oceans and atmosphere and NOAA's administrator. "The wetlands built as part of this project will provide a critical first defense against Gulf storms."

Trustee agencies conducted a natural resource damage assessment to determine the nature and extent of injuries and developed a plan for restoration to reverse those losses. It is estimated the oil spill affected approximately 120 acres of wetlands, shoreline, and water surface near the vicinity of the facility.

"Wetlands are a vital resource to the nation and this settlement will benefit Louisiana by restoring areas that were damaged during the Devon oil spill," said Department of Environmental Quality Assistant Secretary Harold Leggett. "This is an example of federal and state agencies working together to make Louisiana's environment stronger."

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NOAA Fisheries Service acts on behalf of the public to restore coastal and marine resources damaged by oil spills and hazardous substances releases. NOAA's damage assessment, rehabilitation and restoration program fulfills natural resource trustee responsibilities for NOAA. The multi-office program is comprised of NOAA's Ocean Service, NOAA Fisheries Service, and the Office of General Counsel

NOAA, an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the nation's coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, over 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

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On the Web:

NOAA Fisheries Service: www.nmfs.noaa.gov

NOAA: www.noaa.gov

Federal Oil Pollution Act: http://www.darp.noaa.gov/library/1_a.html

Louisiana Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act: <http://www.losco.state.la.us/regulations.htm>