

What's New On The Blue Beat:
Gulf of Mexico Story Ideas

Louisiana Master Plan for Coastal Protection and Restoration

The state Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority is completing a 2017 5-year update of its \$50 billion, \$50 year plan.

Sources:

CPRRA web -- <http://coastal.la.gov/a-common-vision/2017-master-plan-update/>

Restore the Mississippi River Delta, coalition of environmental groups, including Environmental Defense Fund, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana, and Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation, has invested more than \$25 million in supporting the state restoration effort.

<http://www.mississippiriverdelta.org/>

Walton Family Foundation, funding a variety of efforts in support of Gulf Coast restoration efforts, including Louisiana.

<http://www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org/our-impact/environment/coastal-gulf-of-mexico>

The Save Louisiana Coalition is a group of fishers that are working to block state plans to build major sediment diversions on the Mississippi River as part of its restoration plan, contending they will hurt shrimp, oyster and other fisheries by changing salinity.

<http://www.thesavelouisianacoalition.com/>

The Water Institute of the Gulf, an independent think tank associated with the state that is helping provide review of state restoration projects, including setting up an independent review panel for sediment diversions.

<http://thewaterinstitute.org/>

<http://thewaterinstitute.org/river-diversion-expert-advisory-panel/>

NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune stories on the coastal Master Plan.

http://search.nola.com/coastal+%22master+plan%22/?date_range=all

The Advocate stories on the coastal Master Plan.

http://www.theadvocate.com/search/?l=25&sd=desc&s=start_time&f=html&t=article%2Cvideo%2Cyoutube%2Ccollection&app=editorial&q=coastal+%22master+plan%22&nsa=eedition

Aftermath of BP Oil Spill

Response to the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill includes a variety of players, many of whom were assigned roles through settlements with BP stemming from the private and public agency lawsuits filed against the company.

Federal Court files. Major rulings are here.

<http://www.laed.uscourts.gov/case-information/mdl-mass-class-action/oilspill>

Justice Department files.

Main consent decree <https://www.justice.gov/enrd/deepwater-horizon>

Transocean settlement

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/transocean-agrees-plead-guilty-environmental-crime-and-enter-civil-settlement-resolve-us>

Halliburton settlement

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/halliburton-agrees-plead-guilty-destruction-evidence-connection-deepwater-horizon-tragedy>

RESTORE Act – Congress set aside 80 percent of Clean Water Act fines, totaling \$5.328 billion, paid over 16 years, for natural resource and economic restoration projects. It's overseen by the U.S. Department of the Treasury and Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council, made up of trustees representing the five Gulf Coast states and six federal agencies.

<https://www.restorethegulf.gov/>

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – under Transocean civil/criminal and BP criminal settlements, NFWF oversees more than \$2.5 billion for restoration.

<http://www.nfwf.org/gulf/Pages/home.aspx>

Natural Resource Damage Assessment. BP agreed to pay another \$8.8 billion under the Natural Resource Damage Assessment provisions of the federal Oil Pollution Act. Projects to be decided by trustees council, separate from the RESTORE Act council .

Here's NOAA trustee site - <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/co-trustees>

Good site to keep numbers straight is Environmental Law Institute - <http://eli-ocean.org/gulf/>

BP also has site addressing its post-spill actions -- http://www.bp.com/en_us/bp-us/commitment-to-the-gulf-of-mexico/gulf-mexico-restoration.html

Spill environmental damage and restoration plans – good review is the official programmatic damage assessment and restoration plan. Here's NOAA link to the document. <http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-planning/gulf-plan>

Bottlenose dolphins – NOAA declared an “unusual mortality event” that began before the spill, but included the spill and lasted until 2014 for the northern Gulf Coast because of thousands of deaths of dolphins and stillborn dolphins, and other cetaceans.

http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/health/mmume/cetacean_gulfofmexico.htm

A part of a separate settlement of private claims with BP requires the company to pay for health impacts. The Garretson Resolution Group is in charge of this portion of the settlement, appointed by the court, and has already paid more than 25,000 claims. The settlement provides ongoing checkups for many claimants.

<https://deepwaterhorizonmedicalsettlement.com/>

Status updates: <https://deepwaterhorizonmedicalsettlement.com/en-us/courtbrdocuments/claimsadministratorsstatusupdates.aspx>

An early voluntary payment by BP of \$500 million created a 10-year independent Gulf science program, called the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative. The company has no say in what the money is used for, beyond initial broad general categories addressing Gulf issues involving oil and spills. <http://gulfresearchinitiative.org/>

The BP settlements also produced several environmental research money pools. Under the RESTORE Act, 2.5 percent of the money goes to a science program that will be run by NOAA -- <https://restoreactscienceprogram.noaa.gov/science-plan>
Another RESTORE Act 2.5 percent is split among five state-run "centers of excellence" programs -- <https://www.treasury.gov/services/restore-act/Pages/COE/Centers-of-Excellence.aspx>

And the Transocean civil-criminal and BP criminal settlements provided \$500 million for a 30-year Gulf Research Program overseen by the National Academies of Science -- <http://www.nationalacademies.org/gulf/about/index.html>

Gulf Of Mexico Dead Zone/Hypoxia

The dead zone/hypoxia problem in the Gulf has its own task force that has so far failed to reduce the amount of nutrients moving from the Midwest to the Gulf since it was formed in 1997. <https://www.epa.gov/ms-htf>

The researcher who has spent most of her career tracking hypoxia off Louisiana's coast is Nancy Rabalais, who has a joint appointment now at Louisiana State University and the Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium -- www.lumcon.edu/research/faculty.asp?name=nrabalais

Don Scavia at University of Michigan also has been involved in Mississippi River hypoxia research -- http://www.snre.umich.edu/tags_general/hypoxia

The Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences is monitoring hypoxia in the Chesapeake Bay -- http://www.vims.edu/research/topics/dead_zones/forecasts/cbay/index.php

UNESCO also has been tracking hypoxia world-wide -- <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/ioc-oceans/sections-and-programmes/ocean-sciences/global-ocean-oxygen-network/>