



Protecting our coastal environment

As a natural resource trustee, the Office of Response and Restoration protects the coastal environment from oil and hazardous material releases and restores natural resources injured by such releases.



Oil and Chemical Spill Response

The Office of Response and Restoration's (OR&R) interdisciplinary scientific spill team responds to oil and chemical spills and other emergencies, providing critical advice for federal response efforts. Scientists forecast the movement and behavior of spilled oil and chemicals,



evaluate the risk to natural resources, recommend appropriate cleanup actions, and initiate natural resource damage assessments. OR&R strengthens the nation's response capabilities by conducting research, monitoring impacted areas, developing software products and technical guidance, and conducting preparedness activities

through training and event simulation. OR&R also represents the Department of Commerce on the National Response Team and Regional Response Teams.

Natural Resource Assessment and Restoration

As a natural resource trustee, OR&R works on a cross-NOAA team to protect and restore marine resources threatened by waste sites and oil spills. OR&R scientists and economists work in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies, the public and industry to assess risk and injuries to NOAA trust resources, provide technical advice, and recommend protective cleanup actions. OR&R conducts natural resource damage assessments by assessing environmental and economic injury and plans restoration. The Office works cooperatively with other agencies, responsible parties, and communities to resolve natural resource liability and implement restoration projects. OR&R also develops and tests new approaches for improved and cost-effective cleanup strategies, damage assessment, and restoration.

Marine Debris Clean up and Prevention

OR&R administers NOAA's Marine Debris Program. The Program was re-established in 2005 and supports domestic and international efforts to prevent, identify, remove, and reduce the occurrence of marine debris.



The Program is identifying and evaluating the adverse impacts of marine debris and designing programs to inform industry and the public of the problem and action needed to solve it. The Marine Debris Program is also developing and implementing projects that minimize the amount of debris entering the oceans and providing funding opportunities for other agencies, academia, interest groups, and communities that are also trying to reduce and prevent marine debris.

Accomplishments

Federal, State, and local agencies across the country rely on OR&R's scientific support and expertise. OR&R's contributions to the health and protection of our nation's natural resources include:

- FY 06 – FY 07 OR&R responded to 224 incidents, which include chemical and oil spills; search and rescue; and debris removal, supporting the U.S. Coast Guard.
- As part of NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program, OR&R has successfully protected natural resources at more than 500 waste sites across the country, restoring over 6300 acres of habitat and public resources.
- At the end of 2006, 179 natural resource damage assessment cases had been settled generating more than \$437 million to protect or restore many thousands of acres of habitat and return other resources and services to the public.
- OR&R's Marine Debris Program funded 102 projects to address marine debris; focusing on assessing the impacts of derelict fishing gear, efficient removal technologies, emergency response protocols and data collection, and launching outreach and education campaigns.
- The Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project has surveyed 874 square nautical miles of water along the Gulf Coast in search of submerged marine debris left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. A total of 5,230 submerged items have been identified by side scan sonar.

NOAA's Office of Response & Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment

**For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration,
please call (301) 713-2989 or visit our Web site at
response.restoration.noaa.gov**

