

## Protecting and Restoring Coastal Resources at Hazardous Waste Sites

**C**oastal Resource Coordinators (CRCs) are NOAA environmental scientists who work in EPA regional and state offices with Superfund project managers. CRCs have several roles at contaminated sites:

- Improving protection for NOAA trust resources by providing technical support for cleanup decisions;
- Making recommendations to EPA and other lead cleanup agencies on ecological risk and remedial issues;
- Protecting and restoring natural resources through settlements with responsible parties; and
- Coordinating among all agencies and interested stakeholders to improve coastal areas.

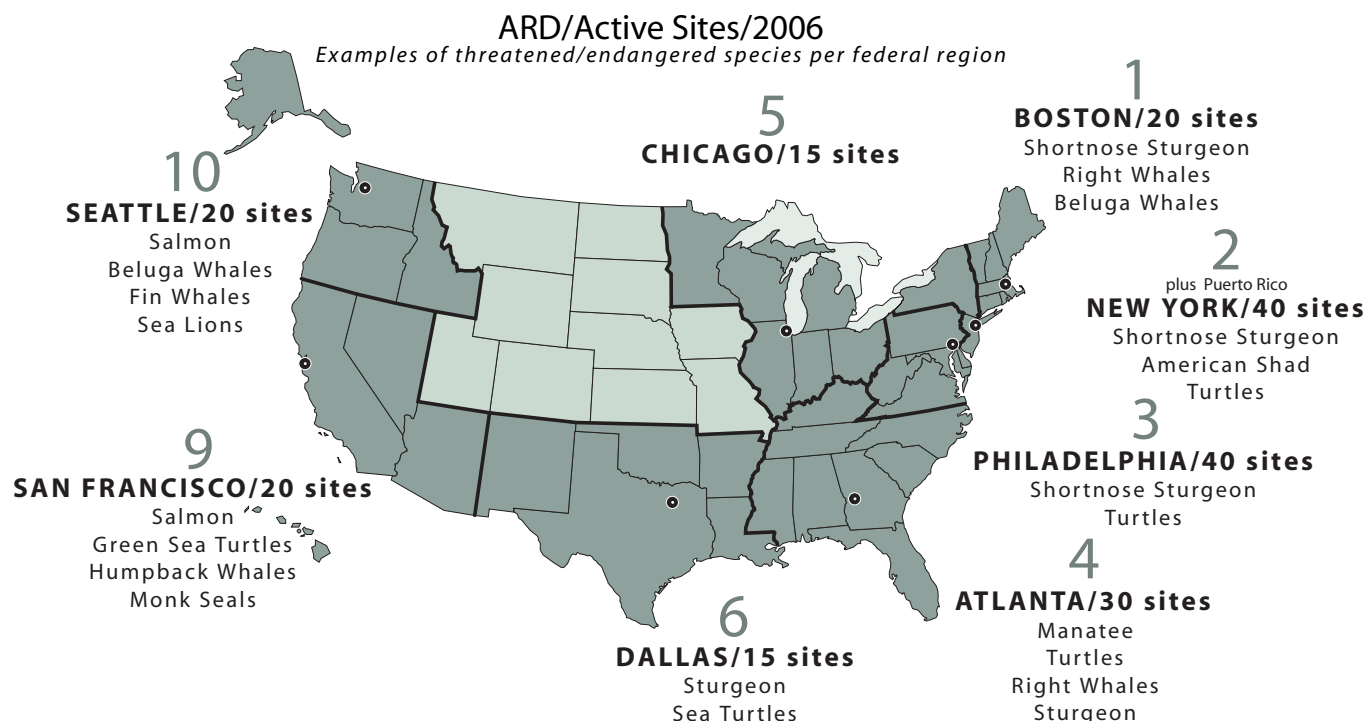
By working throughout the cleanup process and considering problems in a long-term, watershed-wide context, CRCs strive to make the remedy as protective as possible of aquatic species and their habitats. Since 1985 the CRC program has worked on behalf of the public to achieve comprehensive remedies while

minimizing the need for separate assessments and settlements for natural resource concerns. CRC involvement leads to cleaner coastal habitats and healthier commercial and recreational fish stocks.

### Achieving Protection

The Assessment and Restoration Division (ARD) is part of the NOAA Habitat Program which works with EPA, other cleanup agencies, co-trustee agencies and other stakeholders to develop strategies that protect coastal natural resources. The first step in designing a protective cleanup is accurately determining and portraying the risk to humans and the environment. NOAA and other trustees help assess and reduce risks to natural resources. Specifically, the CRCs and a multi-disciplinary team of technical experts located in Seattle help cleanup agencies define and reduce ecological risks by:

- Providing information about sensitive habitats, fish, and other species that live, spawn, and feed in the affected area;
- Describing contaminants of concern and the ways contaminants could reach and affect natural resources;
- Designing scientifically sound sampling strategies to describe the nature and extent of contamination and potential adverse effects;



- Predicting and measuring the effects of contaminants on natural resources;
- Developing site-specific contaminant cleanup levels for contaminants that will protect NOAA resources and the environment;
- Recommending cost-effective approaches for assessment and cleanup;
- Weighing the effectiveness of different cleanup options;
- Designing remedial effectiveness monitoring plans to ensure the remedy protects the environment and natural resources; and
- Implementing combined database and GIS mapping projects to evaluate coastal contamination and develop restoration solutions on a watershed-wide basis.

### **Achieving Restoration Cooperatively**

When a remedy protects NOAA trust resources there is often no need for NOAA to file a claim for natural resource damages. At some sites, the remedy will not address all of NOAA's concerns. In such cases, CRCs cooperatively resolve natural resource damage (NRD) liability under CERCLA and work with Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) to reach agreements as part of universal government settlements to ensure that natural resources will be protected and restored. Cooperatively resolving NRD liability at waste sites involves collaborating with PRPs on all aspects of injury assessment, scaling restoration, achieving solutions, designing restoration, working with parties to implement and monitor success of cleanup and restoration. At these sites, the responsible party is released from liability through a covenant not to sue for injury to natural resources. Examples of additional measures as compensation for injury to trust resources and lost services include:

- Restoring a degraded wetland;
- Improving stream habitat for fish;
- Building a fish ladder to improve fish access to habitat; and
- Implementing a monitoring program to ensure natural resource recovery occurs.

ARD has reached agreements or settlements for integrated protective cleanups and restoration projects at more than 50 waste sites to create and/or rehabilitate nearly 2,000 acres of coastal habitat (e.g., Spartina marsh, forested wetlands, mangroves and riparian habitat), and to conserve over 3,000 acres of valuable supporting habitat for NOAA trust resources. Restoration projects are now completed at nearly 50% of these sites.

### **ARD is...**

...Effective. ARD has addressed natural resource trustee concerns at more than 300 of the Superfund sites of concern to the agency.

...Efficient. ARD has teamed with EPA's assessment and cleanup process to avoid duplication and save both the government and industry money and time.

Because ARD is an integral part of the solution to environmental contamination, we are not limited to working on sites where there is a viable responsible party. ARD works to protect NOAA trust resources at all types of coastal hazardous waste sites, including Federal facilities, government-funded cleanup sites, and sites where the state is in charge of the cleanup.

For additional information:  
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## *NOAA's Office of Response & Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment*

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**For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration,  
please visit our Web site at**

**<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov> or call (301) 713-2989.**

