



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE
Office of Response and Restoration
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Honorable Mary C. Lorsung
Vice Chair, Governor's Citizens Advisory Committee
on the Patuxent River Oil Spill
Howard County Council
3430 Courthouse Dr., George Howard Bldg
Ellicott City, MD 21043

APR 30 2001

Dear Ms. Lorsung:

Since the April 7, 2000 oil spill at the Pepco Chalk Point facility, the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources and the Environment, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) have been conducting a natural resource damage assessment (NRDA) to determine the extent of injuries and the need for restoration. At this point in the NRDA process, our agencies – collectively referred to as the Trustees – want to begin identifying and developing restoration ideas. We want to hear about habitats and resources that could be restored and/ or enhanced, as well as potential sites that require restoration or protection. We are writing this letter to you as Vice Chair of the Governor's Citizens Advisory Committee to solicit your help with this important task.

RESTORATION PROJECTS: Attached is a Form that can be filled out and returned to us with your ideas. Please note that this is not a solicitation or formal request for proposals. The information provided in response to this request will be used by the Trustees to develop specific restoration alternatives. The Trustees will then evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives in a Draft Restoration Plan that will be presented to the public for review and comment later this year. Based on the public comments, the Trustees will prepare a final Restoration Plan and request funding from Pepco and ST Services for implementation of the preferred restoration projects.

RESTORATION SELECTION FACTORS AND GUIDANCE: The Trustees' mandate under the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) is to make the environment and public whole for injuries to natural resources and natural resource services resulting from a discharge of oil. This requirement must be achieved through the restoration, rehabilitation, replacement or acquisition of equivalent natural resources and/or services.

To guide the process of evaluating and selecting restoration ideas and projects, the Trustees have developed selection factors, based on the legal requirements of the OPA (attached). For a project to be considered, there must be a connection between natural resource injuries and losses to the public *and* proposed restoration efforts.

Initial findings from the injury assessment studies indicate injuries to wetlands, waterfowl (particularly ruddy ducks), terrapins, aquatic resources (including benthic and water column resources such as fish), muskrats and lost public uses. To help focus your ideas for restoring these types of resources, the Trustees have developed the following list of the kinds of restoration projects that might be appropriate.

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AR: Chalk Point Oil Spill

Title: Letter (30 April 2001). Jim Hoff to the Honorable Mary C. Lorsung, re: Request for restoration ideas



Wetlands

- Create new or enhance existing wetlands (wetlands creation projects generally should be less than 20 acres)
- Enhance riparian areas to increase production and biomass
- Create or enhance oyster beds to increase primary production

Waterfowl

- Outreach program on waterfowl and/or waterfowl management.
- Acquisition of wetland habitats to increase protection of waterfowl habitat
- Restoration of wild rice in upper regions of Patuxent River, an important food source for waterfowl
- Restoration of submerged aquatic vegetation and/ or wetlands to increase production/ biomass
- Develop a Chesapeake Bay duck identification guide to help educate hunters and reduce accidental kills of ruddy ducks
- Control of *Phragmites sp.*, an invasive, non native wetlands species
- Ruddy duck enhancement

Terrapins

- Nest enclosures, egg incubation and/ predator control to increase hatching success
- Create/ enhance nesting habitat

Aquatic Resources

- Oyster, wetlands, riparian and/or seagrass creation/ enhancement to improve water quality
- Aquatic hatchery production (e.g. shellfish and finfish)

Muskrats

- Creation and/ or enhancement of muskrat habitat (i.e. wetlands)

Lost Public Uses

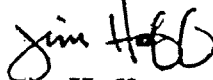
- Enhance shoreline/water access (e.g., purchase of easements), swimming, boating, and recreational fishing opportunities, and/or infrastructure (e.g. interpretive center)
- Enhance water quality to provide better recreational experience

Again, the restoration ideas provided above represent an initial list of the kinds of projects that the Trustees believe may be appropriate. We want to continue developing this list of options, and are eager to hear your suggestions.

While the Trustees have not yet established a timetable for selecting restoration ideas and alternatives, we would appreciate receiving your input as soon as possible, and no later than April 30, 2001. Please feel free to offer more than one idea, and to contact me directly (301 713-3038 ext. 188) if you have any questions or comments about our request or any other matter involving the Trustees' ongoing NRDA.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Jim Hoff

NOAA Damage Assessment Center

Attachments: (1) Restoration Idea Form

(2) Factors to Evaluate Proposed Restoration Projects under the Oil Pollution Act Patuxent River Oil Spill

Cc: Carolyn Watson, MD Department of Natural Resources
Bob Summers, MD Department of the Environment
Beth McGee, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jim Potts, Pepco
Jim Siciliano, ST Services
Ann Sloan, MD Department of Natural Resources