



# Cooperative Assessment Process (CAP)

**A partnership with industry, government, and the public to restore natural resources injured by hazardous substance releases and oil spills.**

**N**OAA developed the Cooperative Assessment Process (CAP) to promote cooperation among industry, government, and environmental groups to restore natural resources and their services. CAP addresses sites affected by hazardous substance or oil contamination where there is potential natural resource liability under CERCLA, OPA, CWA, RCRA, or other authorities—federal or state, NPL as well as non NPL sites. Under CAP, cooperation applies to both the cleanup and natural resource damage assessment processes.

A cooperative assessment process provides incentives for industry with pollution liability to assume responsibility for restoring natural resources. Cooperative assessments offer industry the opportunity for a greater role and more control over the timing of restoration actions without undermining the natural resource trustee responsibilities. Industry partners may also benefit from reduced damage assessment costs and reduced risk of litigation.

The goals of CAP are to expedite the restoration of injured natural resources and associated services, and encourage innovative approaches. CAP may also strengthen partnerships among stakeholders and provide meaningful public involvement.

## How CAP developed

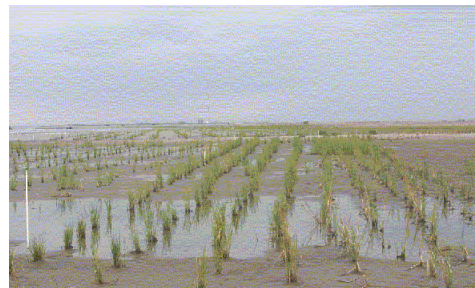
CAP developed in response to industry requests for increased involvement and flexibility in natural resource assessment and restoration efforts. This approach evolved from the damage assessment regulations requiring agencies to invite parties responsible for hazardous substance releases or oil spills to participate in the assessment.

NOAA explored the development of CAP by convening a series of meetings during 2001 with representatives from industry, environmental groups, and federal, state, and tribal agencies. Great interest and support led to the formation of a broad-based workgroup, with members reflecting their respective stakeholder communities. The workgroup is committed to developing practical ideas and options that lead to future cooperative assessment and restoration results.

## How you can help

NOAA encourages the public to suggest sites at which CAP could be applied. For more information about CAP, please visit <http://www.darp.noaa.gov/partner/cap/index.html>.

NOAA continues to provide a forum for productive discussions to promote cooperative assessments through a CAP website and ongoing interaction with workgroup members. NOAA hopes to build on its experience and serve as a clearinghouse for lessons learned in past natural resource restoration efforts while also exploring novel ways to conduct new cooperative damage assessments.



*Working cooperatively, NOAA, co-trustees, and Texaco replanted saltmarsh after a pipeline leaked 200,000 gallons of oil in Louisiana.*



NOAA acts as a trustee on behalf of the public to restore coastal and marine resources injured by oil spills and hazardous substance releases. To learn more about CAP, please contact—

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[We] support federal and state agency efforts to expedite restoration through the use of cooperative natural resource damage assessments. Its success depends on industry cooperation, continued government oversight, meaningful and extensive community participation, and sound science.

Scenic Hudson

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana

Sierra Club

Natural Resources Defense Council

Center for Public Environmental Oversight

Arbor Hill Environmental Justice Corporation

Hudson River Sloop Clearwater

New York Rivers United

Appalachian Mountain Club

Environmental Advocates of New York

Hudson Riverkeeper



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