



Protecting and Restoring Natural Resources in Puerto Rico

Issues

- The coastline of Puerto Rico houses large expanses of coral reefs, mangroves, and sea grass beds, all vital trust resources for NOAA and Puerto Rico.
- Puerto Rico's natural resources help sustain a healthy local economy by providing food, jobs, and protection from storms.
- The cumulative impact of vessel groundings, anchor damage, hazardous waste sites, past military activities, and oil spills on fish, wildlife, and the environment can harm the businesses and communities that depend on them.

What we do

NOAA's Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program (DARRP) acts as a trustee for natural resources on behalf of the public. DARRP collaborates with federal, state, and tribal entities and also works with cleanup agencies (such as EPA), local organizations, the public, and those responsible for the incident to:

- protect coastal and marine natural resources;
- respond to discharges of oil and hazardous substances;
- assess risks and injuries to natural resources; and
- restore injured natural resources and related socio-economic benefits.

How we do it

DARRP acts as a trustee for natural resources to:

- work cooperatively with those responsible for the incident;
- develop innovative approaches and techniques for remediation and restoration;
- work with the public to select restoration options to compensate for injuries to natural resources; and
- design and implement or oversee natural resource restoration projects and monitor their success.



Barge Berman Oil Spill - see case highlights.



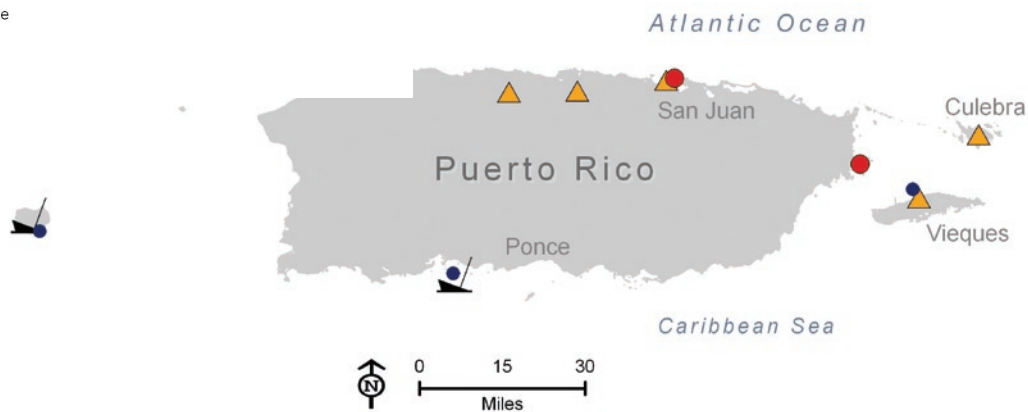
M/V Margara Ship Grounding - see case highlights.

DARRP Accomplishments

- Restoration and/or protection of 302 acres of marine habitats, approximately 4 acres of corals, and more than 11,000 coral colonies in Puerto Rico (completed and planned activities).
- Settlements have resulted in 4 protection and restoration projects in Puerto Rico.
- Cleanup actions promote recovery of coastal resources and communities at 5 hazardous waste sites.
- DARRP is also working cooperatively with DOD, USFWS and EPA to facilitate cleanup and restoration of the coastal resources of Vieques. Via funding from Congressional appropriations beginning in FY 05, DARRP is conducting numerous projects including an Underwater Ordinance Hydrographic Survey Demonstration Project and the web-accessible watershed database and mapping project.

2007 DARRP Activities & Associated Restoration Sites

- ▲ Hazardous Waste Site
- Spill Case
- Restoration Sites
- ⚓ Ship Grounding



Historic and ongoing case highlights

- Fortuna Reefer ship grounding, Mona Island - Reattached 1,857 fragments of *Acropora palmate* coral.
- M/V Margara ship grounding – Reattached more than 10,000 corals as part of emergency restoration work performed by DARRP, co-trustee and responsible ship owner. (top photo on page 1).
- Barge Berman Oil Spill – Over \$10 million in restoration settlement funds will be spent on several projects, including the acquisition of a 270 acre parcel within the Northeast Ecological Corridor (bottom photo on page 1).
- Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Area (AFWTA), Vieques Island – Working cooperatively with co-trustees, EPA, and the U.S. Navy to provide technical support for activities related to environmental and munitions response actions; continue to provide information to assist in cleanup, restoration, and protection of the natural resources of Vieques.
- Roosevelt Roads Naval Station (former) – Working with co-trustees and the Navy to improve tidal circulation to 1,000 acre mangrove forest as restoration for a 1999 oil spill.
- PREPA Palo Seco, Toa Baja – Working cooperatively with co-trustees and providing technical support to EPA regarding the evaluation of ecological risks to the Former Bayamon River Channel and Ensenada de Boca Vieja.
- Vega Baja Solid Waste Disposal Site – Working cooperatively with co-trustees and providing technical support to EPA regarding potential migration of contaminants into the Rio Indio and Boca del Cibuco.

For further information about DARRP, please visit
<http://www.darrp.noaa.gov>

