



## **NEWS RELEASE FROM NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

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### **NOAA AND FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AWARDED \$2.2 MILLION FOR SOUTH FLORIDA OIL SPILL**

Today, the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) received \$2.2 million from the federal Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund to restore beaches and marine habitat damaged by an oil spill near Fort Lauderdale, Fla., over three years ago. This is the first time NOAA has been awarded a natural resource damage claim from the Trust Fund.

“The \$2.2 million awarded to NOAA and the State of Florida helps to ensure that critical resources—such as beaches, mangroves, and sea turtles—are restored,” said James Walpole, general counsel for NOAA. “Such funding is designed to address the public’s natural resource interests.”

In August 2000, oil tar balls and oil mats began to appear on beaches near Fort Lauderdale, impacting nearly twenty miles of high-use recreational beaches, stretching from Pompano Beach south to North Miami Beach. The natural resource damage assessment conducted by NOAA and the Department documented recreational beach losses along with injury to sea turtles, marine life and seabirds.

“Restoring the beaches of South Florida provides critical habitat for important wildlife, safeguards water quality and protects our economy,” said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary David B. Struhs. “Because of the efforts of federal and state agencies, this natural area of Florida will be better protected.”

NOAA and Florida will implement the following projects to address the oil spill injuries—

- Create dunes in Broward County to develop and restore dune systems and stabilize beaches.
- Construct dune walkovers at John U. Lloyd State Park to improve access and help stabilize beaches.
- Provide disabled access at John U. Lloyd State Park for transportation over sand.
- Provide shade areas on Broward County beaches by planting palm trees and building all-natural wood huts.
- Reduce mortality of turtle hatchlings from disorientation by augmenting lighting ordinance enforcement activities in Brevard and Palm Beach Counties.
- Plant ten acres of mangroves on Virginia Key to create new habitat for fish and marine life.
- Install educational signs at the Dania Beach pier about seabird rescue and preventing bird entanglement in fishing lines.

For this oil spill, NOAA and Florida DEP are the natural resource trustees with responsibilities for assessing the nature, extent and severity of natural resource injuries, and planning and implementing appropriate restoration projects. Despite an exhaustive search, those responsible for the oil spill were never discovered.

Under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, trustees may submit natural resource damage claims to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for payment in the absence of a responsible party. Revenue for the Fund is provided by a five-cents per barrel fee on imported and domestic oil, cost recovery from those responsible for oil spills and fines or penalties collected for spills. Payment for the multi-million dollar claim will be handled through the U.S. Coast Guard's National Pollution Funds Center.

NOAA's National Ocean Service balances environmental protection with economic prosperity in fulfilling its mission of promoting safe navigation, supporting coastal communities, sustaining coastal habitats, and addressing coastal hazards.

The Commerce Department's NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources.

On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

NOAA's National Ocean Service: <http://oceanservice.noaa.gov>

For more information online please visit: [www.darp.noaa.gov](http://www.darp.noaa.gov) and [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us).

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