



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Contact: Connie Barclay
(301) 713-2370

NOAA05-R133
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 26, 2005

INTERTIDAL MARSH AND BEACH RESTORATION COMPLETED FOR CHALK POINT OIL SPILL

NOAA has completed major construction on intertidal marsh and beach restoration projects in Maryland's Patuxent River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The reconstruction has been done in response to natural resource injuries associated with an April 2000 oil spill.

The shoreline enhancement project created nearly one acre of beach habitat to benefit diamondback terrapins and other organisms, while also protecting the shoreline from erosion. Two breakwaters and a stone sill were also constructed through this project. Additionally, a six-acre intertidal wetland restoration project was built adjacent to Washington Creek, a tributary of the Patuxent River. These projects required extensive excavation, precise grading, expert positioning of rock to protect shoreline, planting native species, and protecting plants from resident geese and swans. The sites will be monitored for plant survival, marsh elevations and beach stability.

In April 2000, a pipeline ruptured spilling more than 140,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil from Pepco's Chalk Point facility into Maryland's Patuxent River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The trustee agencies--NOAA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Maryland--worked cooperatively with Pepco and ST Services, the responsible parties, to assess spill impacts and plan for restoration.

To evaluate the spill's impacts and assess what needed to be restored, trustees conducted multiple studies. They determined that the spill resulted in injuries to several resources, including wetlands, beaches, recreational opportunities and hundreds of ruddy ducks and other birds. In December 2002, the responsible parties agreed to pay more than \$2 million for projects to restore injured resources and services.

This process, from injury assessment through restoration, resulted in the Chalk Point oil spill natural resource damage assessment and environmental assessment, which laid the groundwork for restoring resources injured by the spill through multiple ecological and recreational restoration projects.

"The beach habitat and the new wetlands will provide long-term benefits to the river and the watershed as a whole, ensuring that future generations can enjoy the Chesapeake Bay," said Dr. Bill Hogarth, NOAA Fisheries Service director.

- more -

NOAA coastal zone experts collaborated on the Chalk Point case through the agency's Damage Assessment, Remediation and Restoration Program (DARRP). NOAA created DARRP to provide permanent expertise to handle injuries to coastal and marine resources. DARRP, a multi-disciplinary team of NOAA scientists, economists, restoration experts and attorneys, works cooperatively with all affected interests—the public, the responsible party and other agencies—to assess injuries and implement restoration.

Site tours for the press are available on October 26, 2005. For information on the projects, this tour or subsequent tours of the marsh and beach projects, contact NOAA Fisheries Service's John Collins at (301) 713-0174, ext. 198.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, 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. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners and nearly 60 countries to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes.

-- 30 --

On the web:

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

Damage Assessment, Remediation, and Restoration Program:

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