



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[RTID 0648-XF761]

Deepwater Horizon Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group Draft Phase 2

Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #8.1: East Orleans Landbridge

Restoration and Raccoon Island Restoration

AGENCY: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for public comments.

SUMMARY: The Deepwater Horizon (DWH) natural resource Trustees for the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (Louisiana TIG) have prepared the Draft Phase 2 Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment #8.1: East Orleans Landbridge Restoration Project and Raccoon Island Restoration Project (RP/EA #8.1). The Draft RP/EA #8.1 proposes alternatives to help restore wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats impacted by the DWH oil spill. The Draft RP/EA #8.1 evaluates three design alternatives for each project under the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) including criteria set forth in the OPA Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) regulations, and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA, as amended). The total estimated cost to implement the Louisiana TIG's two preferred alternatives is approximately \$246.7 million. The Louisiana TIG invites the public to comment on the Draft RP/EA #8.1.

DATES: The Louisiana TIG will consider public comments on the Draft RP/EA #8.1 received on or before **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: *Obtaining Documents:* You may view and download the Draft RP/EA #8.1 at <https://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/louisiana>. You may

also request a flash drive containing the Draft RP/EA #8.1 (see **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**).

Submitting Comments: You may submit comments on the Draft RP/EA #8.1 by either of the following methods:

- Web Site: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkplanning.nps.gov/LATIGRP8-1>.
Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.
- Mail: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Gulf Restoration Office, 341 N. Greeno Rd., Suite A, Fairhope, AL 36532. To be considered, mailed comments must be postmarked on or before the comment deadline given in **DATES**.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Public Webinar: The Louisiana TIG will host one public webinar to facilitate public review and comment on the Draft RP/EA #8.1. The webinar date, time, and registration link is as follows:

- Monday, June 8, 2026 from 12:00pm - 1:00pm Central Time. Register at:
<https://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/louisiana>

After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email with instructions for joining the webinar and how to make comments during the webinar. Shortly after the webinar concludes, the presentation material will be posted on the web at <https://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/louisiana>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – David Reeves, NOAA Restoration Center, (225) 726-1914, *louisiana.TIG@noaa.gov*.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Introduction

On April 20, 2010, the mobile offshore drilling unit Deepwater Horizon, which was drilling a well for BP Exploration and Production, Inc. (BP), experienced a significant explosion, fire and subsequent sinking in the Gulf of America, resulting in the release of millions of barrels of oil and other discharges into the Gulf. Under the authority of the OPA, designated Federal and state Trustees, acting on behalf of the public, assessed the injuries to natural resources and prepared the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Final PDARP/PEIS), and the Record of Decision for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (ROD), which sets forth the governance structure and process for DWH restoration planning under the OPA NRDA regulations. On April 4, 2016, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana entered a Consent Decree resolving civil claims by the Trustees against BP.

The Louisiana TIG, which includes the State of Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Oil Spill Coordinator's Office, Departments of Environmental Quality, Wildlife and Fisheries, and Natural Resources, the NOAA, the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, selects and implements restoration projects under the Louisiana TIG's management authority in accordance with the Consent Decree. The Final PDARP/PEIS,

ROD, Consent Decree, and information on the DWH Trustees can be found at

<https://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-planning/gulf-plan>.

Background

As provided for in the Final PDARP/PEIS, TIGs may propose conceptual projects for funding of a planning phase (*e.g.*, initial engineering and design [E&D]) in a restoration plan. This allows the TIG to develop information needed to fully consider a subsequent implementation phase of the project in a subsequent restoration plan. In the Final RP/EA #8, the Louisiana TIG selected conceptual projects to fund for E&D, including the East Orleans Landbridge Restoration project and the Raccoon Island Restoration project. Both projects have design alternatives that are now at a stage where proposed construction alternatives may be analyzed under the OPA NRDA regulations and NEPA. Therefore, in the Draft RP/EA #8.1, the Louisiana TIG is proposing to implement the preferred design alternatives to construct the East Orleans Landbridge project and the Raccoon Island Restoration project.

Overview of the Louisiana TIG Draft RP/EA #8.1

The Draft RP/EA #8.1 is being released in accordance with OPA NRDA regulations, NEPA, the Final PDARP/PEIS, and the Consent Decree. The Draft RP/EA #8.1 provides OPA NRDA and NEPA analyses for a reasonable range of design alternatives and identifies the Louisiana TIG's preferred design alternative for each project. The preferred design alternative, East Orleans Landbridge Restoration Alternative 4 (EO Alternative 4) would dredge and place approximately 5.0 million cubic yards (3.8 million cubic meters) of sediment dredged from a nearby inland borrow source to restore up to 1,320 acres (534 hectares) of a wetland complex. EO Alternative 4 would also include 14,867 linear feet (4.53 kilometers) of shoreline protection. The approximate cost to implement the preferred alternative is \$101.2 million. The preferred design alternative, Raccoon Island Restoration Project Alternative 3 (RI Alternative 3) would

dredge approximately 2.9 million cubic yards (2.2 million cubic meters) of sand from an offshore borrow source to restore up to 410 acres (166 hectares) of barrier island habitat. RI Alternative 3 also includes maintenance of existing Gulfside breakwaters, construction of four bayside breakwaters, and construction of nine living shoreline structures. The approximate cost to implement the preferred alternative is \$145.5 million.

Funding to implement any of the alternatives ultimately selected by the Louisiana TIG would come from the Wetlands, Coastal, and Nearshore Habitats Restoration Type allocation. The total estimated cost to implement the two preferred alternatives is approximately \$246.7 million.

Next Steps

After the public comment period ends, the Louisiana TIG will consider and address all substantive comments received before making a final decision on which, if any, alternatives to fund and implement. A Final RP/EA #8.1 and Finding of No Significant Impact, as appropriate, identifying selected alternatives will be made publicly available.

Administrative Record

The Administrative Record for the Draft RP/EA #8.1 can be viewed electronically at <https://www.doi.gov/deepwaterhorizon/adminrecord> under the folder 6.5.5.2.16.

Authority

The authority for this action is the OPA of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2701 *et seq.*), its implementing NRDA regulations found at 15 CFR part 990, and the NEPA as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*).

Dated: May 14, 2026.

Carrie Diane Robinson,

Director, Office of Habitat Conservation,

National Marine Fisheries Service.

