



Earth, Wind, & Water

Newsletter

Summer 2010

Responding to the Oil Spill

When the Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded and sank into the Gulf of Mexico on April 20, 2010, the National Park Service's Natural Resource Program Center quickly began to mobilize to assist the parks that would be affected by the spill. In the following weeks and months, many staff were deployed to the Gulf region to represent the National Park Service in the Unified Command response, which consisted of the affected states and a number of federal and state agencies. NRPC staff were deployed to collect baseline data before the oil reached the beaches and marshes, manage data, serve as resource advisors who ensure clean-up and restoration cause no further harm to the resource, develop public information materials, and manage the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process.

The NRPC's response is on-going. The recovery and restoration required to respond to this disaster will become a part of the NRPC's support role for years to come. Fortunately, the National Park Service's capable and dedicated staff have the tools in place to face this challenge and meet the agency's mission. Each division of the NRPC has contributed a significant amount of staff time to the NPS response and will continue to do so throughout the response and restoration effort. Here is a brief overview of the work being done.

Environmental Quality Division (EQD)
Immediately after the spill, EQD staff traveled to Louisiana and began coordinating the spill response and cleanup with Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) efforts. As the spill progressed, EQD staff took on the responsibility of ensuring that



National Park Service Veterinarian Dr. Jenny Powers and Cassidy Lejeune of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries release brown pelicans at Fort De Soto Park near St. Petersburg, Florida, on July 7, 2010. In total, 32 brown pelicans were rescued after being found oiled near Louisiana's coast, and were then rehabilitated at Fort Jackson, La., before being released in Tampa Bay. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nick Ameen.

the National Park Service will recover appropriate monetary damages to fund the restoration of injured resources and as well as NPS efforts on the cleanup. This work includes monitoring NPS involvement in multiple venues while advising staff on cost-tracking and on inter- and intra-agency, bureau, and departmental coordination.

EQD's case management services include coordinating and communicating with the potentially affected parks, affected regions, DOI case team, technical working groups, and other NPS staff who are working on spill. EQD staff are now serving on the Trustee Steering Committee, the Texas Trustee Council, and technical working groups to help ensure that the NRDA efforts

on all potentially affected NPS land and resources will lead to effective restoration.

Water Resources Division

WRD provided support to the oil spill response and NRDA efforts by: 1) helping staff NRDA response centers at Houma (Jeff Cross, Gary Rosenlieb, Joe Chafey) and Mobile (Bill Jackson); representing NPS on NRDA protocol work groups where Eva Didonato served as co-lead on the Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Workgroup, and Roy Irwin served on the Water Column Work Group; 3) assisting the response by serving as NPS Resource Advisors with shoreline clean-up crews at Gulf Islands NS (Bill Jackson); and 4) assisting US Fish and Wildlife Service in field

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Director's Corner

This issue of Earth, Wind, and Water documents the Natural Resource Program Center's contribution to the overall NPS response to the Mississippi Canyon 252 Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. As is now well known, the MC-252 spill is now the largest oil spill in US history and is unprecedented in its spatial and temporal scales. Because of its location in the Gulf of Mexico the spill has potential to affect natural, cultural and recreational resources in at least 8 NPS units in 2 NPS Regions. In the earliest days of the response NPS leadership was deployed to the Gulf to help coordinate the response to the incident. National Park Service Director Jarvis was installed as Incident Commander at the Mobile Command Center and Everglades NP Superintendent Dan Kimball was designated as Incident Commander at the St. Petersburg (subsequently moved to Miami) Command Center. These centers, along with centers in Houston, Houma, Roberts, and New Orleans coordinated all aspects of the coordinated Federal / BP response to the incident including spill control, oil and dispersant tracking, spill containment, spill clean-up, and natural resource damage assessment. In addition, numerous NPS staff from around the country have been re-assigned from their normal job responsibilities to support NPS response and NRDA activities. As many as 150 – 200 NPS staff nationwide have been involved in spill – related activities at any point in time and it is expected that NPS involvement in response, NRDA, and resource restoration activities will continue for the foreseeable future. The Natural Resource Program Center immediately joined in and redirected resources to support the overall NPS and Federal response to the spill, with NRPC staff becoming substantially involved in numerous interagency workgroups charged with developing damage assessment sampling, chain-of-custody, and data management protocols for over 20 categories of resources potentially affected by the spill. NRPC staff have also been detailed to the various Incident Command Centers to help coordinate NRDA activities among other resource trustees, and the NRPC Environmental Quality Division is providing overall management to and coordination of the NPS-NRDA process. This unfortunate incident provides a clear reminder to all of us of how great the challenges can be to the NPS mission to conserve resources unimpaired. It also reminds us that we are an important part of the NPS park management family, and that the most important role of the NRPC is to support and assist the resource preservation mission of parks in whatever ways we have the capability of doing. At times that means we will have to deviate from the daily responsibilities of our jobs, or from our "annual work plans" to address issues that are unforeseen but of great importance to the NPS resource preservation mission. I want to sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to the NPS Gulf Spill response and NRDA efforts and to those of you who may yet become involved in future Gulf Spill NRDA, resource restoration, and long-term resource science activities.

Bill Jackson, Acting Center Director

Life Outside the NRPC

Whose great-grandmother was the first female commercial photographer in Hawaii?

Mike Whatley's great-grandmother, Mary J. Ramos, was the first woman to operate a photographic studio in Honolulu in the early 1890s. Mike's grandmother Lydia, who lived to be 101, often spoke fondly of the studio. Mike's dad was also stationed in Hawaii in World War II but was fortunately not at Pearl Harbor during the time of the attack. Mike and his family make a point of going back to family heritage locations when they return to the islands, including the Fort and King street vicinity of the studio (now a pedestrian mall). An a separate note, Mike just completed his 40th year with the National Park Service in June 2010!



Three generations of Whatleys on vacation in Hawaii. From left to right: Tatiana (grand daughter), Mike, Jen (daughter).

Next Issue's Mystery Person:



Whose great grandfather used to go hunting with Buffalo Bill Cody?

"Buffalo Bill Cody, full-length portrait, seated, facing left, holding rifle." 1903. Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

NRPC Graphic Identity Website Launched

Bookmark this link for the NRPC logo, templates, and design elements.

<http://www1.nrintra.nps.gov/oeo/GraphicIdentity/index.cfm>



Natural Resource Program Center

Responding to the Oil Spill

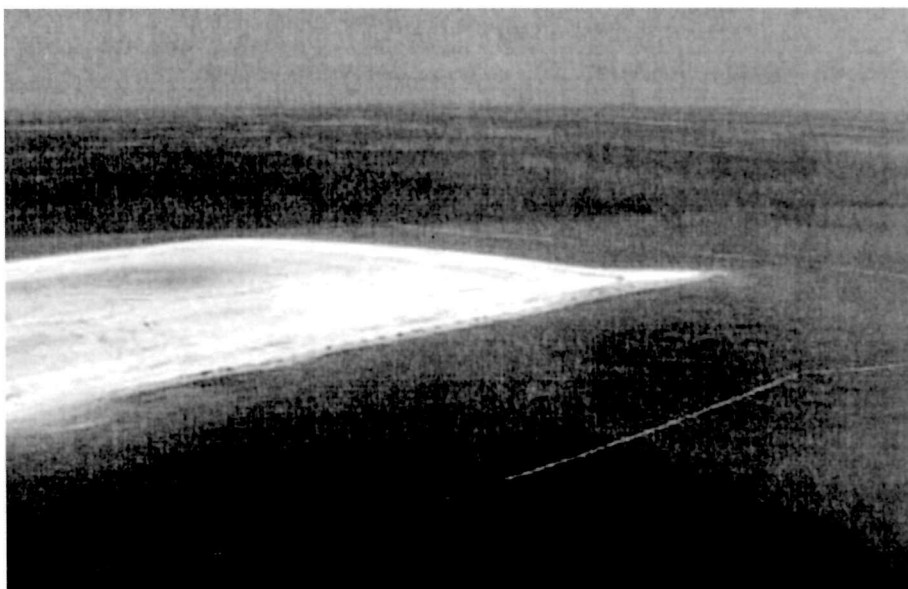
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implementation of the shorebird NRDA protocol (Joe Chafey). In addition, WRD-supported field positions (Patti Rafferty, Jalyn Cummings, Mark Ford, Marie Denn) also assisted in staffing the Mobile NRDA center, participating on NRDA protocol work groups, and serving as resource advisors to clean-up crews.

Inventory and Monitoring Division (IMD)

More than 45 federal staff and contractors from the IMD have been involved in the response to the Gulf oil spill in a variety of roles including field baseline data collection, serving on shoreline cleanup assessment teams, participating on technical working groups, providing monitoring protocols to NRDA teams, providing statistical sampling design support, development of databases and tools for tracking baseline data for NRDA, collection and processing of geospatial data for NRDA, providing data and GIS products in response to requests from incident response and NRDA teams, processing and delivery of remote sensing imagery, and assisting with long-term science needs for recovery and restoration. Federal and contract staff based in Colorado who have been involved in the effort include Peter Budde, Steve Fancy, Michelle Flenner, Brent Frakes, Mara Kali, Simon Kingston, Alison Loar, Lisa Nelson, Tom Philippi, Stephani Schupbach, Mike Story, and Sean Worthington.

I&M scientists from the Gulf Coast, South Florida and Caribbean, and Southeast Coast I&M networks were among the first responders, and within days following the sinking of the drill rig were out in the parks collecting baseline data and photographs and providing boats, sampling equipment (e.g., GPS, cameras, computers, sampling bottles, coolers, gloves), and data management support to the parks and refuges along the Gulf and Florida coastlines. Data managers from the I&M networks used the Natural Resource Database Template to



Boom protecting Cat Islands, Gulf Island National Seashore. NPS Photo.

quickly design a database used for capturing and documenting baseline data collection and tracking of samples sent to labs. I&M staff provided training to NPS staff deployed to the Gulf on data management, data entry, QA/QC, Chain of Custody, FTP and Sharepoint file transfer methods and etiquette, and GIS/GPS. Steve Fancy is coordinating a 12-person NPS working group to help develop a long-term science plan for the Gulf in collaboration with three other DOI bureaus: FWS, BOE, and USGS. Inventory and monitoring data collected and processed by the I&M Program both before and after the oil spill will make a key contribution to understanding the effects of the spill on natural resources and for assisting with long-term recovery and restoration efforts.

Geologic Resources Division (GRD)

Geologic Resources Division staff have supported the oil spill response, NRDA, and DOI Science Plan onsite in the unified command centers and from Colorado. Jim Woods served as NPS Resource Response branch director/agency representative from May 3 to 22 at Mobile Unified Command (MUC). Jim's support included coordi-

nating with park staff to prepare sensitive resource area maps for each park management unit and barrier island; identifying vessel and vehicle access locations, equipment staging areas, small mechanical equipment travel routes, and clean-up methods and equipment limitations for each unit and barrier island; coordinating with park staff and MUC Operations Section on containment and absorbent boom deployment to protect high-priority sensitive resources in the park; assisting MUC in the preparation of daily shoreline treatment recommendations for oil-impacted NPS shorelines; and coordinating daily field reconnaissance and resource protection oversight by NPS resource advisors.

Rebecca Beavers, Andrea Croskrey, and Dave Steensen served as resource advisors at the Unified Command Center in Houma, Louisiana, for 14-day deployments from mid-May through June 2010. While in Houma, they were primary NPS NRDA representatives and helped address oil spill response concerns specific to Jean Lafitte NHP, revised resource advisor training materials, monitored developments of the Louisiana barrier berm project, and

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provided GIS data needed by NRDA field crews. From Lakewood, Julia Brunner worked with the Lands Resources Division in Fort Collins and Atlanta to ensure that the most updated and accurate boundary maps possible of JELA, PAIS, GUIS, DESO, EVER, DRTO, BICY, and BISC were provided to the incident command team and the parks for both the response and the damage assessment. Rebecca Beavers, Jim Woods, Jodi Eshleman, and Dave Steensen continue to provide technical assistance to impacted parks and coordinate restoration project statements for barrier island concerns. Rebecca Beavers continues to work on All Hazards Resource Advisor training materials and serves as a member of the DOI Science Plan.

Office of Natural Resource Information Systems (ONRIS)

Bill Commins, information technology specialist, has been providing remote assistance to parks to help them keep up with the administration of scientific research and collecting permits. Bill's work has included close collaboration with all the impacted park research coordinators, the Southeast Region (SER) science advisor, the WASO Research Permit and Reporting System (RPRS) Team, and others to identify and support consistent permitting procedures for relevant assessment studies (pre- and post-impact).

The RPRS facilitates the administration of scientific research within units of the National Park System. ONRIS recognized the scope of the oil spill was going to result in heightened scientific research activity in impacted parks, and the NPS Director ruled that proposals for collecting baseline data and conducting other scientific activities in parks related to the oil spill are not exempt from compliance with NPS Scientific Research and Collecting Permit requirements. Tim Goddard, ONRIS chief, arranged a teleconference with the first seven parks identified as impacted or soon



Melanie Ransmeier worked with BP, state, and NOAA representatives on a NRDA team that collected shoreline data about the type and percentage of oil found in the Florida sections of Gulf Islands NS. NPS Photo.

to be impacted. As a result of discussion with the parks, the following services were integrated into the RPRS. Guidance for Park Research Coordinators was developed and conveyed. John Dennis, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science deputy chief scientist, revised General Conditions for Scientific Research and Collecting Permit for use with permits issued to investigators affiliated with responsible party. An incident-specific guidance document for applicants was developed; Todd Edgar, NRPC web manager, developed a web page to serve the guidance; and RPRS was engineered to provide a link to the web page when an applicant chooses to apply for a permit at an impacted park. John Dennis also developed application language templates to assist those applicants who need to meet the protocols required by BP and the trustees for shoreline pre-assessment projects. The RPRS system engineer, Derrick Dardano, created a report which provides a listing of all applications submitted to impacted parks since the start of the oil spill. The report may be queried

by park name, investigator name, investigator affiliation, date submitted, current status, and study title. Since that time three additional parks have been given access to these services.

ONRIS also recognized that impacted parks might be overwhelmed by work load. The RPRS system manager, Bill Commins, was made available to assist park research coordinators as needed.

Biological Resources Management Division (BRMD)

Since early May, BRMD staff have been deployed to Mobile and Houma. Elaine Leslie, Jennifer Lee, Kevin Castle, Greg Eckert, Jenny Powers, Ryan Monello, and Jerry Mitchell were deployed to Mobile to work on NRDA, helping to set up and participate on many of the work groups, including birds, marine mammals, turtles, human use, and cultural resources. Kevin Castle and Ryan Monello also have led the terrestrial and aquatic species workgroup. Kirsten Leong and Jennifer Lee (on a second tour)

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worked in Mobile's newly formed Sensitive Lands Branch as the Gulf Islands Incident Command Team was rolled into Unified Command. They assisted with communication between the many branches in Unified Command to increase awareness of special needs on sensitive lands and coordinated READs and cleanup crews on Gulf Islands National Seashore lands. Margaret Wild and Jenny Powers (on a second tour) served on details with FWS in Houma as DOI veterinarians assigned to the oil spill, working in Wildlife Operations coordinating and assisting with bird rehabilitation and releases.

Staff also have contributed while stationed in Fort Collins, continuing work with NRDA work groups and other initiatives. Carol Beidleman has been contributing to the bird working groups. Peter Dratch and Nancy Brian have been coordinating and participating in the Section 7 Endangered Species Act consultation with regional SER and IMR staff, and NPS staff deployed to the NRDA teams. They have developed a set of materials on Sharepoint related to Section 7 Consultation. In addition, BRMD is providing literature to support long-term planning, restoration, and science efforts. Almost all staff have been involved in searching for pertinent articles, reviewing them for relevancy, and posting to the Gulf Oil Spill Science library on Sharepoint. Lauren Barish, Chris Buczeko, and Dave Trevino have been instrumental in this effort.

Air Resources Division (ARD)

ARD staff have provided significant support to both the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) and response segments of the Mississippi Canyon Oil Spill. John Bunyak, John Vimont, Pat Brewer, Drew Bingham, Lelaina Marin, Debbie Miller, and Melanie Ransmeier have all been deployed to assist with the oil spill in the gulf. While deployed, several ARD personnel facilitated NRDA communication

among affected NPS units, scientific technical working groups, and the other federal agencies, tribes, and states participating in the unified response. NRDA technical work groups are in the process of designing study plans related to 11 distinct resource focus areas. These plans are used to evaluate the amount of injury to natural and cultural resources that result from the oil spill. NRDA teams have collected baseline natural resource information at all of the Gulf Coast NPS units and have begun collecting initial impact data for many key resources including birds and shorelines.

Drew Bingham served as a sensitive lands resource advisor in the Perdido Key section of Gulf Islands NS in Florida. In this capacity, Drew represented park natural resource management staff and advised clean-up crews and others working in the area of appropriate actions to take when working in sensitive areas including fragile dune environments and shore bird nesting habitats. These efforts by Drew, and the other resource advisors, are critical to protecting natural and cultural resources in parks from unintended impacts that may otherwise result from increased clean-up and impact assessment activity in the parks.

Natural Sounds Program (NSP)

Over the last few months, the NSP has contributed to oil spill response by assisting with a variety of Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) activities. Lelaina Marin and Vicki McCusker were detailed to the EQD for the months of June and July, respectively, to assist with NRDA coordination. Through their efforts, which included updating/creating NPS contact lists, updating deployment/general guidance, creating a summary table of resources in parks that may be affected, and participating in various conference calls, they were able to help with improving overall NPS coordination on the oil spill response effort. Lelaina was deployed to Daphne, Alabama, as the NRDA liaison for the Mobile Sector until

August 4. Frank Turina and Emma Lynch will be deployed to Houma, Louisiana, from August 1 to 16 and August 14 to 29, respectively, as the NPS NRDA liaison for the Houma Sector.

Office of Education and Outreach (OEO)

OEO staff have supported the response effort from Fort Collins and in the Gulf. Sara Melena formatted an NPS/FWS handout about sensitive lands and drafted content for the "Responding the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill" handout. At the request of the NRPC director, Todd Edgar developed a SharePoint site for the oil spill; the contents are being maintained by EQD.

Three OEO staff were deployed as public information officers (PIOs) with the Joint Information Center at the Mobile, Alabama, Incident Command Post, each serving two consecutive deployments of 14 days. Lynne Murdock responded to media requests and supported field PIO staff stationed at GUIS. She wrote daily updates for InsideNPS, prepared media advisories, and gathered information for NPS publications relating to the spill and for media requests. Ginny Reams and Todd Edgar worked with the information products group. Ginny wrote, edited, and designed publications about NPS efforts and supported the Unified Command by designing publication templates and creating facts sheets about response efforts for the Joint Information Center. She is working to complete several additional publications. Todd served as webmaster, creating videos of NPS employees involved in the response effort and updating the GUIS oil spill response webpages. He worked with NPSFocus staff to develop guidance for photographs taken by NPS staff in units affected by the spill (the guidelines remain a work in progress). Todd created a webpage on nps.gov to display the videos and publications: www.nps.gov/archive/features/oilspillresponse/index.htm.

Coming & Going

The Biological Resource Management Division is pleased to announce that **Dr. Tanya Shenk**, research scientist for the Colorado Division of Wildlife and Faculty Affiliate with Colorado State University, has accepted the position of climate change landscape ecologist starting July 26.

Dr. Shenk brings vast national and international experience on the application of the tools and principles of landscape ecology and ecosystem science in terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. She will be offering technical expertise on biological issues arising from climate change, energy development, habitat fragmentation, and migratory species, as well as addressing policy in accordance with the June 2009 Joint Secretarial Memorandum of Understanding regarding coordination amongst federal agencies and states in identification and uniform mapping of wildlife corridors and crucial habitats.

Also joining the BRMD staff will be **Rick Kahn**. Recently retired from a 32-year career with the Colorado Division of Wildlife, Rick served as the state's terrestrial wildlife program manager, managing all research and wildlife management activities for the Colorado Division of Wildlife. Rick's primary function will be to work with the states, NGO's, and federal entities on the implementation of wolverine restoration in the Southern Rockies. In addition, Rick will bring his extensive expertise and knowledge to the Service to support parks and regions on issues related to terrestrial wildlife management. Rick will be joining the National Park Service in mid-August.

The Environmental Quality Division is very pleased to announce that **Mark Husbands** has joined the Environmental Planning & Compliance Branch as a project manager/environmental protection specialist. Mark began his federal career in 1996 with the

wilderness program at Inyo National Forest. He then joined the National Park Service in 2000 as a commissioned seasonal ranger and worked at Mount Rainier National Park, Boston National Historical Park, and North Cascades National Park. In 2005, Mark took a position with Yosemite National Park's Division of Project Management as an environmental compliance specialist and then moved to the division's design branch as a project manager in 2007.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of California at Berkeley, a Master of Science from the University of Washington's College of Forest Resources, and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Washington's Evans School of Public Affairs. His areas of specialization are environmental policy, social science/visitor use, and wilderness management. Mark is a certified Project Management Professional.

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Sara Melena
Education Specialist
Office of Education & Outreach
Natural Resource Program Center

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Post to: NRPC Sharepoint>TAGs>OTAG>
NRPC Newsletter

Or write to:
Ginny Reams
virginia_reams@nps.gov



**Natural Resource
Program Center**

People in the News

Director's Award for Professional Excellence in Natural Resources: **Margaret Z. Beer**, Inventory and Monitoring Network Data Manager, National Park Service. Margaret was the motivating force behind natural resource information systems to link all resource applications, the Integrated Resource Management Applications (IRMA) project. In addition, she established a Memorandum of Agreement between inventory and monitoring networks and superintendents that has become the model for all I&M networks with responsibilities for maintaining park species information.

Park Science Earns Recognition for Excellence
Park Science, the NPS research and resource management journal published by

the Natural Resource Program Center, has won an Apex Award of Publication Excellence for 2010. **Jeff Selleck**, of the NRPC's Office of Education and Outreach, is the editor of *Park Science*. The honor was given as part of the 22nd annual Apex awards competition recognizing excellence in publications work by professional communicators. The awards program is sponsored by Communications Concepts, Inc., publisher of *Writing that Works*, a bimonthly newsletter covering business writing, editing, and publishing for communicators in corporate, nonprofit, agency, and independent settings. Read more at <http://inside.nps.gov/index.cfm?handler=viewnpsnewsarticle&type=Announcements&id=9329>.