



VANISHING
PARADISE
A program of National Wildlife Federation

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VANISHING PARADISE RESPONDS TO LANDMARK GULF OIL SPILL SETTLEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Today's Agreement on Settlement Dollars Puts Gulf on Road to Recovery

NEW ORLEANS, LA - This morning, BP, the U.S. Justice Department, and the five Gulf states made public the terms of a settlement agreement regarding the company's role in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. BP will pay \$18.7 billion in penalties and damages for its role in the largest offshore oil spill in U.S. history.

Steve Bender, director of Vanishing Paradise – a national coalition of more than 800 sportsman and outdoors groups, organizations and businesses working on Gulf Coast and Mississippi River Delta restoration – released the following statement in response:

“Today's settlement moves the wildlife and habitat of the Gulf Coast forward on the road to recovery. It's time to look ahead to the future and work toward getting real, on-the-ground restoration projects done.

“Because Congress passed the RESTORE Act in 2012, 80 percent of the money BP pays as a result of the Clean Water Act penalty will be returned to the Gulf Coast for much needed restoration and to improve the region's long-term resiliency. Repairing the ongoing damage from the oil spill is also of utmost importance going forward, and the settlement dollars BP pays through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment will help the areas devastated by the spill – including habitat that supports world-class hunting and fishing.

“The Gulf Coast region is an ecological and economic driver for the entire nation, and sportsmen and women care about ensuring this national treasure is restored for future generations to enjoy. With as many as 14 million waterfowl migrating to the Gulf's warm shores annually, and salt and freshwater fishing unlike anywhere else on the planet, we must make sure this entire region – including the endangered Mississippi River Delta – is on the path forward to long-term health and recovery. We look

forward to working with federal and state officials and the RESTORE Council to make sure every dime of oil disaster money goes to meaningful, comprehensive restoration.”

Background: Since the Gulf oil disaster more than five years ago, ongoing findings deliver truths omitted by BP’s ads: the oil disaster’s negative effects are increasingly clear, present and far from resolved.

This [infographic](#) depicts ongoing impacts of the Gulf oil disaster five years later. And over the past year alone, new scientific research has surfaced:

- A 2014 [study](#) found evidence of a 1,250-square-mile area of oil contamination on the ocean floor around the Macondo wellhead in deep Gulf sediments.
- A previous [NOAA study](#) found a large number of dead dolphins in heavily oiled places, including Barataria Bay, La.
- Recent [studies](#) estimate 1,000,000 birds died as a result of being exposed to BP oil.
- Modeling for a recent stock assessment projected that between 20,000 and 60,000 Kemp’s ridley sea turtles died in 2010 as a result of the spill.
- A [2014](#) study found concentrations of PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon) – which can cause harmful effects in many birds, fish and wildlife – in Barataria and Terrebonne marshes, which may persist for decades.
- A 2012 [study](#) found that oiled marshes in Barataria Bay eroded at double the rate of non-oiled marshes.
- A recent [survey](#) found that 70 percent of Americans believe BP should pay maximum fines under the Clean Water Act for its role in the 2010 Gulf oil spill.
- Our Coalition has identified [19 projects from Louisiana’s Comprehensive Master Plan for a Sustainable Coast](#) that have the greatest potential to restore our coast.

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