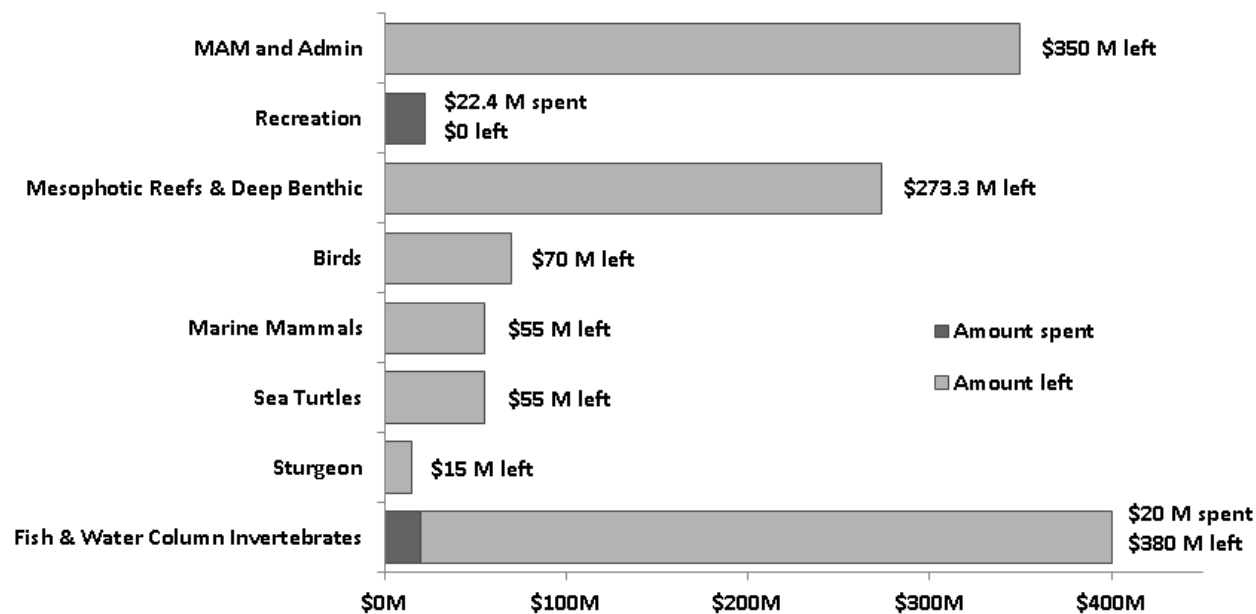


Restoration of the Open Ocean

In April 2016, a federal court approved a settlement among the United States, five Gulf states, and BP. Under that settlement, BP agreed to pay up to \$8.8 billion for natural resource damages. That money is being divided among eight different “restoration areas.” One of those areas is the Open Ocean, which will receive approximately \$1.241 billion. Below we explain how the money will be spent, who is in charge, what has happened so far, and how you can participate.

How will the natural resource damages money be spent?

The \$1.241 billion will be split among seven different “restoration types” and monitoring, adaptive management, and administration (MAM and Admin) as follows:



Note that approximately \$42 million has already been allocated to restoration projects through the early restoration process (see our [“Overview of the Natural Resource Damage Assessment Process”](#) fact sheet for more information on early restoration). This money has been allocated to five projects in two different restoration types:

Recreation (\$22 M spent, \$0 left)	Fish & Water Column Invertebrates (\$20 M spent, \$380 M left)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike and Pedestrian Use Enhancements • Bon Secour National Wildlife Refuge Trail Enhancement • Gulf Islands National Seashore Ferry • Beach Enhancement at Gulf Islands National Seashore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pelagic Longline Bycatch Reduction

Who is in charge?

The restoration program for the Open Ocean restoration area is being managed by the Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group (Open Ocean TIG), which includes representatives from four federal agencies. The members of the Open Ocean TIG are as follows:



Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group

- U.S. Department of the Interior
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Department of Agriculture

When making decisions, the TIG must reach consensus. That means that “all nonabstaining” members (i.e. those that participate in the vote) must agree to the decision.

Where are we now?

The Open Ocean TIG has yet to release a draft restoration plan. It is expected that in early 2017, the TIG will notify the public that it is starting restoration planning, and will ask the public for project ideas (see below for how you can submit those ideas).

How can I participate?

There are different ways that you can participate. These include:

- **Attend public meetings:** The Open Ocean TIG will host a public meeting at least once a year.
- **Suggest project ideas:** The public can suggest project ideas (e.g. on the [trustees' website](#)). The public will be notified when the TIG is starting restoration planning, and may be updated on those efforts.
- **Comment on draft restoration plans:** The public will have the opportunity to comment on draft restoration plans as they are released.
- **Other engagement opportunities:** The restoration projects may trigger other laws and regulations that provide the public with opportunities to engage.
- **Sign up for updates:** To keep informed about what’s happening in the Open Ocean TIG (and the other restoration areas), you can sign up for updates at www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov (scroll down the page to “Get the latest news updates”).

For more information about the Open Ocean TIG, and to find current participation opportunities, visit the Open Ocean TIG’s web page at: www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean. You can also contact a representative of the Open Ocean TIG at openocean.TIG@noaa.gov.