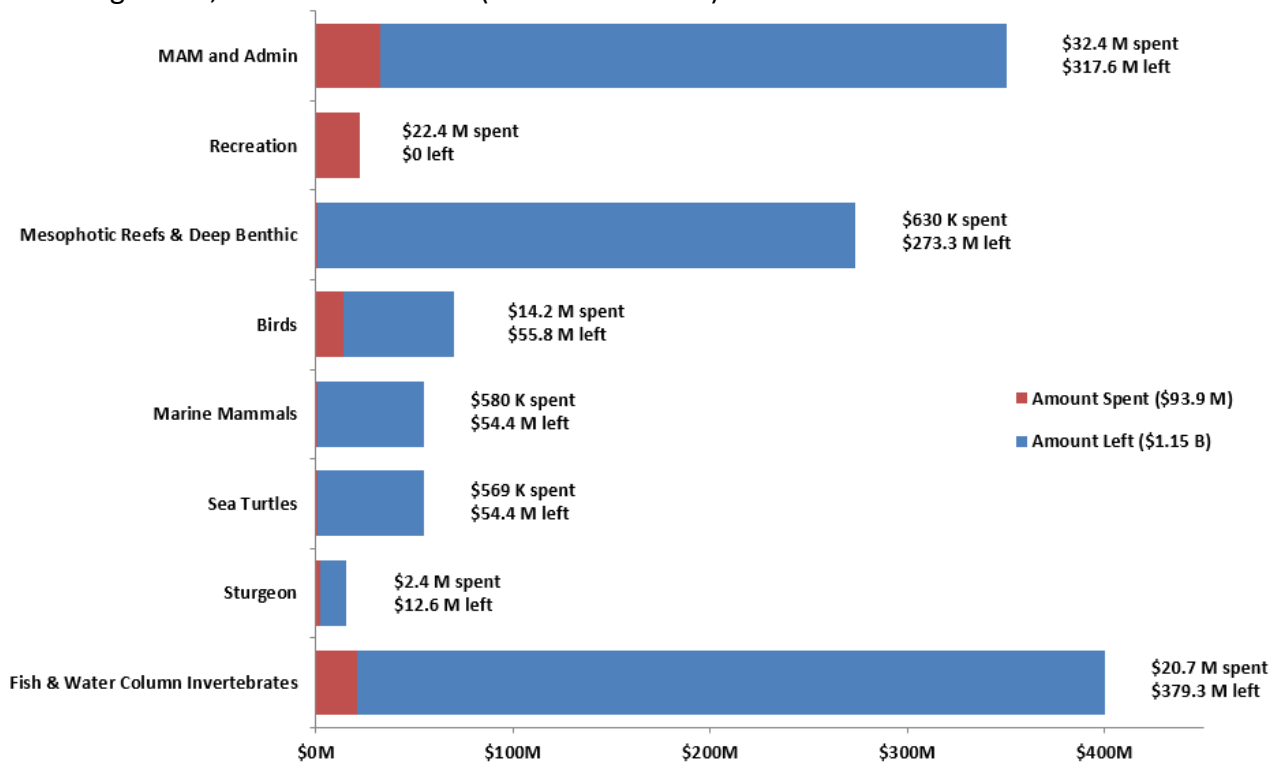


# Restoration of the Open Ocean

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 \$1.24 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 \$1.24 billion will be split among seven different restoration types and monitoring, adaptive management, and administration (MAM and Admin) as follows:



Note that around \$93.9 M has already been allocated to restoration projects and planning, and to MAM and Admin costs. That leaves approximately \$1.15 B.

## 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?

In March 2017, the Open Ocean TIG [announced](#) that it was “planning restoration activities for the 2017-2020 planning years” for six restoration types. The public was invited to submit project ideas through May 2017. In February 2018, the TIG [notified](#) the public that it had initiated planning for its first and second post-settlement draft restoration plans.

In October 2018, the TIG [released](#) its Draft Restoration Plan 1 for public comment. The draft plan contained 3 projects for \$16 million, aimed at restoring bird and sturgeon species. In March 2019, the Open Ocean TIG [approved](#) the [plan](#).

In May 2019, the TIG [released](#) its Monitoring and Adaptive Management Strategy, a document aimed at promoting effective and efficient use of restoration funding. Also that month, the TIG [released](#) its Draft Restoration Plan 2 for public comment. The plan specifies 18 projects for \$226 million, aimed at restoring fish and water column invertebrates, sea turtles, marine mammals, and mesophotic and deep benthic communities. It has not yet been approved.

### 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](#)). Note that, even if project ideas were not submitted in time for the May 2017 deadline, they will still be considered for future restoration plans. 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, as well as the other restoration areas, you can sign up for updates at [www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov) (scroll down the page to sign up).

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](http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean). You can also contact a representative of the Open Ocean TIG at [openocean.TIG@noaa.gov](mailto:openocean.TIG@noaa.gov).