

Deepwater Horizon Restoration. Ecosystem Scale Restoration in Texas's Bahia Grande

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On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) mobile drilling unit exploded, caught fire, and eventually sank in the Gulf of Mexico, resulting in a massive release of oil and other substances from BP Exploration and Production's (BP's) Macondo well and causing loss of life and extensive natural resources injuries. As part of a 2016 settlement, BP agreed to pay up to \$8.8B in natural resource damages. The settlement allocated over \$238M in the Texas Restoration Area, administered by the Texas Trustee Implementation Group (TIG).

To maximize the restoration potential of this funding, the Texas TIG decided to focus much of their restoration efforts in regions of the Texas coast that have stakeholder developed ecosystem restoration plans, including the Bahia Grande in the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge in South Texas. Efforts to restore the Bahia Grande have been ongoing for at least two decades. The Texas TIG has leveraged the DWH settlement funds with other funding sources to implement key projects in the Bahia Grade restoration plan. This presentation will focus on the TIGs collaborative efforts to restore the system's hydrology, fish and wildlife habitat, and to conserve key tracts of land into the Laguna Atascosa National Wildlife Refuge to expand the wetland and terrestrial buffer to the Bahia Grande.

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