



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 16, 2011

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State and Federal Officials Schedule Buzzards Bay Oil Spill Restoration Planning Public Information Meetings

*Public Invited to Attend Meetings at Mass. Maritime Academy on Sept. 21
and in Fall River on Sept. 22*

The Natural Resource Damages Trustee Council (NRTC) for the Buzzards Bay oil spill has scheduled two public information meetings next week as part of the development of a Restoration Plan (RP) to restore, replace, or acquire the equivalent of natural resources injured by the April 2003 Bouchard B-120 barge oil spill and spill clean-up in Buzzards Bay. The development and implementation of the Restoration Plan will be funded by a May 2011 Natural Resource Damages (NRD) settlement of \$6 million with Bouchard Transportation Co., Inc.

The public is invited to learn about the process for developing the RP and is welcomed to offer input on potential restoration projects addressing the injured natural resources. The following are the injury categories that will be addressed by the NRTC and discussed at the public meetings:

- Shoreline resources, including tidal marshes, sand beaches, rocky coast, and gravel and boulder shorelines;
- Aquatic resources, including benthic organisms such as American lobster and their habitats, and finfish such as river herring and their habitats;
- Ram Island shoreline resources, including marsh fringe, rocky coast, and gravel and boulder shorelines ;
- Piping Plovers (a federally threatened shorebird); and
- Lost uses, including coastal access, recreational shellfishing, and boating.

“We are excited to start this Natural Resource Damages process, an important milestone that will serve to restore Buzzards Bay’s precious resources,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., who serves as Massachusetts’ Trustee for natural resources. “I urge residents in the Buzzards Bay area to attend one of these meetings and offer thoughts on how best to restore these valuable resources.”

“The State of Rhode Island joins Massachusetts and the Federal Trustees in looking forward to starting the restoration process,” said Janet Coit, the State of Rhode Island Director of Environmental Management.

A range of reasonable project alternatives will be included as part of the RP. Examples of projects that restore the injuries may include: tidal marsh restoration; fish passage projects such as dam removals and fishways; eelgrass bed plantings; enhancement of shellfish beds; acquisition of properties for public coastal access; installation of coastal boat ramps or access trails; and shoreline management for piping plovers. Restoration projects will be expected to address the natural resource injuries that resulted to both Massachusetts and Rhode Island shorelines and coastal waters.

The format of the public meetings will be as follows: The meeting will begin with an informal discussion at 6 p.m., followed by a formal Trustee Council presentation at 7 p.m., and concluded by a question-and-answer session. Following the public meetings, information obtained during the meetings will be used by the Trustee Council and technical agency staff to develop the RP and project alternatives. Once completed, a Draft RP will be released to the public for review and comment.

For the current settlement, the Trustee Council is composed of representatives from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, represented by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection; Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management; United States Fish and Wildlife Service, representing the U.S Department of Interior; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, representing the U.S. Department of Commerce. The spill also affected tribal resources, and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head previously settled separately with Bouchard.

The meetings will be held at:

Wednesday, September 21st
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
[Massachusetts Maritime Academy](#)
Admirals Hall, Harrington Building
101 Academy Drive
Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

Thursday, September 22nd
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm
[Heritage State Park](#)
Visitor’s Center
200 Davol Street
Fall River, MA 02720

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