

DRAFT 6/24/2004
NEWS RELEASE

Coos Bay – The public is being invited to participate in a planning effort to decide how to restore natural resources harmed by the oil spilled from the New Carissa shipwreck on the southern Oregon coast. Five years ago, the 600-foot New Carissa bulk freighter ran aground on the beach near Coos Bay, spilling over 70,000 gallons of tar-like fuel oil.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 established a process for designated trustees to assess damages and restore resources lost after major oil spills. The Natural Resource Trustees for the *M/V New Carissa* are the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State of Oregon Departments of Environmental Quality and Fish and Wildlife, the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians of Oregon.

Through a number of studies, the trustees have determined that the oil spill killed or injured 2,300 seabirds, including 262 marbled murrelets, a species which is federally and state-listed as threatened. In addition Trustees documented that about 460-800 shorebirds were oiled as a result of the incident and 29,000 public recreation trips were lost or diminished.

The restoration plan being prepared will outline several alternatives defining how those lost or damaged resources could be restored. Along with the plan, an environmental assessment will be prepared to analyze the impacts of the alternatives in the plan.

The trustees are inviting the public to participate in the planning process by providing comments and information now as the planning begins, and then again when a draft plan is prepared along with the environmental assessment. Interested individuals and groups are being encouraged to request an information packet with additional information on the natural resource damage assessment process and the type of comments needed. Information can be obtained by contacting Larry Mangan by telephone (541) 751-4231 or by mail at: Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR. 97459; or by email: coos_bay@blm.gov Information is also available on the web at: <http://www.or.blm.gov/coosbay>. Comments for this initial ‘scoping’ phase are due by: July 30, 2004. There will be an additional public comment period when the draft restoration plan is released.

In 1999 the *M/V New Carissa* ran aground on the Oregon Coast near Coos Bay. In the following weeks, the vessel broke apart and discharged oil into the ocean and the surrounding environment. After a failed first attempt, it was towed to sea and scuttled by the U.S. Navy. Trustees have estimated that in the process, the *M/V New Carissa* spilled over 70,000 gallons of oil.

###