

New Carissa Oil Spill Natural Resource Trustees



Bureau of Land
Management, and
Fish and Wildlife Service



Forest Service



Departments of
Fish and Wildlife, and
Environmental Quality



Confederated Tribes of
Coos, Lower Umpqua and
Siuslaw Indians of Oregon



Confederated Tribes
of Siletz Indians
of Oregon

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AGENCIES, TRIBES RELEASE FINAL RESTORATION PLAN FOR DAMAGES CAUSED BY NEW CARISSA OIL SPILL

The multi-million-dollar plan to restore natural resources damaged by the wreck of the cargo ship New Carissa has been modified in response to public comments, finalized, and signed by the natural resource trustees. Its most noticeable change from the draft plan circulated for public review last spring is its aim to put most acquired lands into third party hands to protect county tax revenues. The draft plan had envisioned putting all such lands into federal management, which would have decreased county receipts.

“We’re delighted to have completed this important process, and to have added value to our work from the thoughtful input we received from the public,” said Elaine Brong, state director for the Bureau of Land management in Oregon and Washington. The Bureau of Land Management is the lead trustee for the spill restoration.

Seabirds, shorebirds and recreational opportunities were lost to the oil spill resulting from the 1999 shipwreck. According to federal law and court settlements, the tribes and agencies working as natural resource trustees for the spill will now formally apply for funds through the Coast Guard’s National Pollution Fund Center.

The features of the plan include purchases from willing sellers of seabird and shorebird habitat on the Oregon coast so that it can be managed to benefit the species. Also, predator management, habitat restoration, and public education efforts are detailed. Restoration costs are expected to top \$2.4 million, a figure which does not include impossible-to-estimate costs of land acquisitions.

The trustees determined that the oil spill killed or injured 2,465 seabirds, including 262 marbled murrelets (a species which is federally and state-listed as threatened). In addition, about 672 shorebirds were oiled and four to eight western snowy plovers (another threatened species) likely perished. Also 29,000 public

recreation trips were lost or diminished. The restoration plan details how those resources will be restored and assesses the environmental impacts of the plan.

Copies of the plan and its appendixes are available for download from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office website: (<http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/InfEd/NewCarissa/NewCarissaPage2.htm>). All documents other than the plan's appendixes also may be obtained by contacting case manager 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.

In February 1999 the New Carissa ran aground on the Oregon Coast near Coos Bay. In the following weeks, the vessel broke apart and discharged more than 70,000 gallons of tar-like fuel oil into the ocean and the surrounding environment. After a failed first attempt, most of the wrecked ship was towed to sea and intentionally sunk by the U.S. Navy. The stern remains mired in the sand.

The trustees include the U.S. Department of the Interior; U.S. Department of Agriculture; State of Oregon's departments of Environmental Quality and Fish and Wildlife; the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians of Oregon.

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