COASTAL PROTECTION AND RESTORATION DIVISION

Protecting Coastal Resources at Hazardous Waste Sites

Coastal Resource Coordinators (CRCs) are NOAA environmental scientists who are working in EPA regional offices with Superfund program managers. CRCs improve coordination among trustee agencies and have two distinct roles at Superfund sites:

- Improving protection for NOAA trust resources by providing technical support and recommendations to EPA and other lead cleanup agencies on ecological risk and remedial issues; and
- Protecting and restoring natural resources through participation in settlement negotiations with responsible parties.

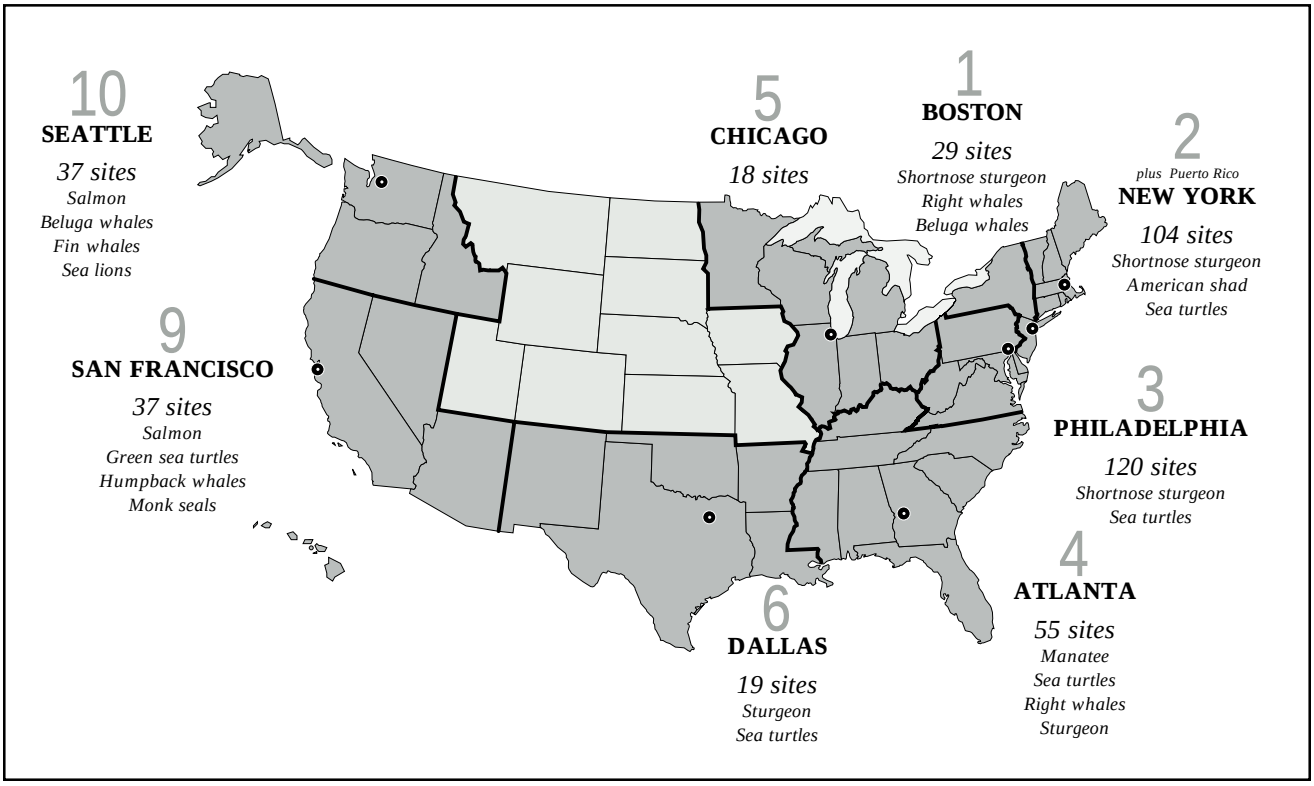
By working throughout the remedial process and considering problems in a long-term, watershed-wide context, CRCs strive to make the remedy as protective as possible of aquatic species and their habitats. Since 1985 the CRC program has worked on behalf of the public to achieve comprehensive remedies while minimizing the need for separate assessments and settlements for natural resource concerns. CRC involvement leads to a more environmentally protective Superfund program, resulting in cleaner coastal habitats and healthier commercial and recreational fish stocks.

Achieving Protection

EPA and other decision-makers have long depended on the CRC program's expertise in environmental assessment. CRCs know that the first step in designing a protective cleanup is accurately determining and portraying the risk to humans and the environment. NOAA and other trustees help assess risks to natural resources. Specifically, the CRCs and a multi-disciplinary team of technical experts help cleanup agencies define and reduce ecological risks by:

- Providing information to EPA about sensitive habitats, fish, and other species that live, spawn, and feed in the affected area;
- Describing contaminants of concern and the ways contaminants could reach

Potential active CRC sites in 1999; examples of threatened/ endangered species per federal region



natural resources;

- Designing scientifically sound sampling strategies to describe the nature and extent of contamination and potential adverse effects;
- Predicting and measuring the effects of contaminants on natural resources;
- Developing site-specific contaminant cleanup levels that will protect NOAA resources and the environment;
- Recommending cost-effective approaches for assessment and cleanup;
- Weighing the effectiveness of different cleanup options; and
- Designing remedial effectiveness monitoring plans to ensure the remedy protects the environment and natural resources.
- Implementing combined database and GIS mapping projects to evaluate coastal contamination and develop restoration solutions on a watershed-wide basis.

Achieving Restoration

When a remedy protects NOAA trust resources, there is generally no need for NOAA to file a damage claim. At some sites, the remedy will not address all of NOAA's concerns. In such cases (usually where past or ongoing injury is limited), CRCs can negotiate additional measures as part of the government settlement to ensure that natural resources will be protected and restored. At these sites, the responsible party if released from liability through a covenant not to sue for injury to natural resources. Examples of additional measures include:

- Restoring a degraded wetland;
- Improving stream habitat for fish;
- Building a fish ladder to improve fish access to habitat; and
- Implementing a monitoring program to ensure that natural resource recovery occurs.

If the responsible party agrees to the additional measures, NOAA grants a conditional covenant not to sue based on completion of the agreed-upon work. If the responsible party does not agree to these conditions after negotiation, or if the injuries to natural resources are unusually great, the CRCs refer the site to the Damage Assessment and Restoration Program as a case for damage assessment.

The CPR program is...

...Effective. CRCs have resolved natural resource trustee concerns at more than 95% of the Superfund sites of concern to the agency, with very few sitesrequiring a damage claim, and

...Efficient. CRCs have teamed with EPA's assessment and cleanup process to avoid duplication and save both the government and industry money and time.

Because CRCs are an integral part of the solution to environmental contamination, they are not limited to working on sites where there is a viable responsible party. CRCs work to protect NOAA trust resources at *all* types of hazardous waste sites, including Federal facilities, government-funded cleanup sites, and sites where the state is in charge of the cleanup.

For additional information, visit our website at **http://response.restoration.noaa.gov** or call 206/526-6317

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U.S. Department of Commerce

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration • National Ocean Service

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