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(# of pages not including this page)

FROM: Michelle Sydeman
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MESSAGE: Pl. call me today if possible with any comments or these. thanks, MS 465-4112

RESTORING THE SOUND AFTER THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL: AN OVERVIEW

SUPERS: Stan Senner, Restoration Program Manager
REPORTER: Michelle Sydeman
PRODUCER: Terence O'Malley

SUGGESTED LEAD: As Exxon prepares to wrap up cleanup operations in Prince William Sound and the Gulf of Alaska for a second year, the state and federal governments are gearing up for what is likely to be an equally challenging job: restoring the natural resources that were damaged by the spill to a healthy and productive condition. Tonight we take a long at the first of three segments on restoration of the oil spill area.

AUDIO: A year and a half after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, scientists are looking for ways to restore plant and animal populations that were damaged by the nearly 11 million gallons of North Slope crude that poured into Prince William Sound.

SOUNDBITE (Senner): The restoration program is the positive side of the oil spill, and it's a chance to right the wrong that was brought on the environment and the people who depend on and love this environment in Alaska. (18:04)

AUDIO: Restoration is the third phase of the state and federal response to the spill: the first being clean-up and the second, scientific assessment of the damage caused by the spill. By law, the party responsible for a spill must pay the costs of cleanup,

damage assessment and restoration.

Senner?

SOUNDBITE: "We really do not know when those funds might become available or how much they might amount to. It is conceivable that we're talking millions, or we could be talking about billions of dollars that are available for restoration." (5:03)

AUDIO: Until payment is received from Exxon and others, the state and federal governments are jointly funding the restoration planning process. This process began with a public symposium on restoration in Anchorage, workshops with national experts in the field of restoration, and public meetings in communities affected by the spill.

SOUNDBITE (Senner): We're committed to involving the public, both as a source as ideas, but also to give us a sense of what their priorities are. People living in areas directly affected by the oil spill need and deserve an opportunity to be able to tell us and other decision-makers what their restoration priorities would be, what's important to them. (13:29)

AUDIO: Ideas for possible restoration projects have ranged from constructing new hatcheries to purchasing critical forest habitats to establishing an environmental trust fund. Currently, five restoration feasibility studies are underway. These include studies to identify ways to restore intertidal vegetation and help rebuild bird populations harmed by the spill.

If and when funds become available for actual restoration work, the state and federal governments will be ready with a plan for how to use those funds, and people around the world will be intensely interested in the work that's done.

SOUNDBITE (Senner): The particular restoration project we're engaged in is entirely unprecedented. There has never been an attempt to restore the environment following an oil spill at this level. It's simply unprecedented. . . . The good opportunity here for all of us is that we have a chance to break new ground and define what environmental restoration is all about, and hopefully--and really this is the goal--to come up with a program that is responsive to the concerns of all Alaskans and the nation. (10:00)

End

RESTORING THE SOUND AFTER THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL: RESEEDING FUCUS AND RESETTLING FAUNA

SUPERS: Frank Roddy, University of Alaska
Andy Hooten, University of Alaska
REPORTER: Michelle Sydeman
PRODUCER: Terence O'Malley

SUGGESTED LEAD: Last night we reported on a new state-federal project to find ways to restore plant and animal life that was damaged by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Today we take a closer look at two restoration feasibility studies being carried out in Prince William Sound.

AUDIO: University of Alaska researchers in Herring Bay have been working since early summer on a series of studies to measure how fucus, a marine algae found throughout Prince William Sound, was affected by last year's spill, and how it is recovering ~~from it.~~

SOUNDBITE (Roddy): Fucus is a brown algae or seaweed that in this area is dominant in the intertidal and it's become very important as a food source for small invertebrates and also as a substrate for herring to lay their eggs upon. . . What we're doing here is studying fucus and how well it grows in both oiled and unoiled sites and based on the information gained from this, it can possibly give us some insight into how we may go about restoring the fucus that's been destroyed in the different areas. (19:55, then 7:05)

AUDIO: Scientists are investigating the extent to which fucus eggs

Fucus in the high intertidal zone, where oil tended to settle and cleanup work was concentrated, appears to have been particularly hard hit.

and germlings are developing on rocks that were oiled and treated, in an effort to help determine how to help fucus plants return to areas where they were once abundant. Some ecologists have suggested that the state and federal governments undertake a massive reseeding program, since fucus is a critical component of the marine ecosystem.

Scientists are also studying how quickly intertidal organisms, such as starfish, limpets, and snails, are returning to oiled and treated shorelines.

SOUNDBITE (Hooten): We also want to look at the impact that oiling may have had on limpets because limpets are very important grazers on the shoreline. They keep a lot of the shoreline clean for barnacles to be able to continue to filter without being outcompeted by the growth of algae. They provide a clean substrate for other organisms to be able to carry out their daily business. (6:10 c)

(Show oiled vs. un-oiled rocks, Andy by cages, etc...)

AUDIO: The results of both studies will include recommendations to state and federal officials on what, if anything, scientists can do to speed the recovery of fucus and intertidal fauna, and to help Prince William Sound and Gulf of Alaska ecosystems return to a productive and healthy condition.

SUGGESTED CLOSING STATEMENT: Tomorrow night, we'll finish this series with a look at two more restoration feasibility studies that are underway.

End

RESTORING THE SOUND AFTER THE EXXON VALDEZ OIL SPILL:

PURCHASING TIMBER RIGHTS TO PROTECT BREEDING HABITAT FOR BIRDS

Development

SUPERS: Kathy Kuletz, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Sam Patton, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
REPORTER: Michelle Sydeman
PRODUCER: Terence O'Malley

SUGGESTED LEAD: And tonight we show the third of a series on a state-federal project to identify ways to restore natural resources that were damaged by the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

AUDIO: More than 36,000 bird carcasses were recovered following the March 1989 wreck of the Exxon Valdez. Scientists estimate that as many as 270,000 birds may have died as a direct result of the spill. The state and federal governments are now looking for ways to rebuild bird populations that were damaged.

SOUNDBITE (Kathy Kuletz, FWS): As with most seabirds, there's not a whole lot you can do to restore a population in terms of providing them food. The best you can do is secure their nesting habitat and not interfere with that aspect of their life history. And so for marbled murrelets, that would include protecting some upland areas from development or encroaching on their habitat. (9:10)

SOUNDBITE (Sam Patton, ADF&G): One of the ideas that has come across in some of the restoration planning is the protection of

breeding habitat for the harlequin duck, which would be one of the more important features to help the population recover from the oil spill. Let's face it, you're not going to get any recovery without augmenting the population, and the population augments itself through reproduction. (2:10)

AUDIO: Marbled murrelets and harlequin ducks are two species of birds that are receiving attention from restoration scientists. Though they are both marine birds, they nest and raise their young inland rather than along the shoreline. They also feed in intertidal or nearshore areas. Because these areas were hit hard by the spill, these two species are likely to have been significantly affected by the spill.

Scientists are now exploring ways to bring murrelet and harlequin populations back to their pre-spill levels. Because of the difficulties involved in breeding or relocating captive or wild birds, many scientists think the best approach is not to let anything interfere with the populations' ability to naturally recover. Some citizen groups have suggested that the state and federal governments consider buying timber rights to lands proposed for logging, since loss of the habitat in which these birds nest may threaten their ability to breed.

SOUNDBITE (Sam Patton): If harlequins are going to breed along streams that are going to be logged, then the harlequin habitat is going to be destroyed and you won't get population recovery. One

of the things we're concerned about as far as the harlequin duck is concerned is kind of like a 1-2 punch: one punch from the oil and the next punch from logging, and that could drive the population down. (3:38)

AUDIO: Proponents of the proposal to buy timber rights in critical wildlife habitat areas argue that protection of habitat is a concrete and effective way to achieve the objectives of the restoration program. They point out that this approach will have long-lasting benefits to many wildlife species and to human uses, such as tourism, recreation, commercial fishing, and subsistence.

On the other hands, there is concern that purchase of timber rights would limit valuable sources of natural resources, income and employment.

At present, however, the interagency restoration team is collecting information it will need to determine whether this proposal has merit from a biological perspective. This information and the input of the public will ultimately be used to determine what steps will be taken to restore bird and other wildlife populations in oil spill areas.

End

Make more positive

Michelle
Ed to...

These benefits will need to be weighed, however, against...

S-F are evaluating on