NATURAL RESOURCE DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

CASE FILE: Westchester—Louisiana

November 28, 2000, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana—The Motor Vessel Westchester grounded in the Mississippi River at mile 38, discharging about 500,000 gallons of crude oil downstream from New Orleans. The incident resulted in injuries to fish, shellfish, birds, as wells as lost fishing and hunting opportunities.

Trustees

The federal, state, and tribal agencies responsible for the natural resources impacted by this oil spill are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the State of Louisiana.

The M/V Westchester sits at anchor in the Mississippi River with containment boom, November 29, 2000. Photo credit: PA1 Jeff Hall, U.S. Coast Guard.

Spilled oil works its way past containment boom into a waterway beside the Mississippi River in Port Sulfer, LA. Photo credit: PA1 Jeff Hall, U.S. Coast Guard.

Settlement

The case was settled on September 10, 2003. The responsible party implemented a marsh restoration project in South Pass, LA, along with a multi-purpose recreational dock in the Pass a Loutre State Wildlife Management Area. A crevasse in the Mississippi River Delta capable of creating more than 25 acres of wetlands was constructed.

Recreational access was increased by building a boat dock, upgrading an existing boat ramp and improving public camping grounds.