Hudson River Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration
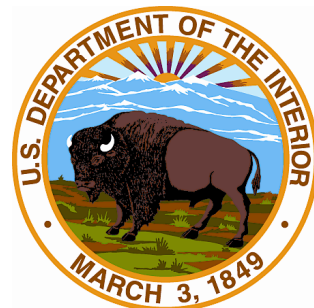
John G. Catena

Northeast Regional Supervisor

NOAA Restoration Center

Gloucester, MA

Presentation to CAG 12/11/12

Cleanup and Restoration Efforts

- **EPA Superfund** – *cleanup at hazardous waste sites to protect the environment and public health.*

- **NRDA Process** – *assessing and restoring or replacing the injured natural resources to provide for the public's use and enjoyment.*

HUDSON RIVER TRUSTEES

ASSESSING AND RESTORING YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Hudson River
Natural Resource Trustees

- New York State, represented by the Department of Environmental Conservation (**NYSDEC**)

- U.S. Department of the Interior, represented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (**USFWS**)

- U.S. Department of Commerce, represented by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (**NOAA**)

HUDSON RIVER TRUSTEES

ASSESSING AND RESTORING YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES

Role of the Trustees

- Trustees are stewards of the public's natural resources – agencies with resource management authority

- Trustees are authorized to pursue claims (damages) for injury to, destruction of, or loss of publicly held natural resources resulting from the discharge of hazardous substances

- Damage claims compensate for the cost of restoration, loss of use of the land or natural resources by the general public, and money spent to assess injuries to natural resources

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Role of the Trustees

1. Assess the injuries.
2. Identify and scale appropriate restoration alternatives.
3. Resolve the claim.
4. Develop a restoration plan.
5. Conduct restoration activities.
6. Monitor the effectiveness of restoration activities.

Assessment

The Trustees are conducting rigorous scientific studies to identify the nature and extent of the problems PCBs cause in and along the river.

For each resource and service, we are:
1) determining the nature and extent of the injury;
2) quantifying the magnitude of the injury;

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Assessment:
Injury Categories under Investigation

- Violations of State or Federal standards
  - o Fish (fish consumption advisories)
  - o Waterfowl
  - o Surface water
  - o Ground water

- Biological resource injuries
  - o Mammals (mink)
  - o Birds
  - o Fish
  - o Amphibians/Reptiles

- Remedy-caused injuries

- Pathway injuries – e.g. sediments
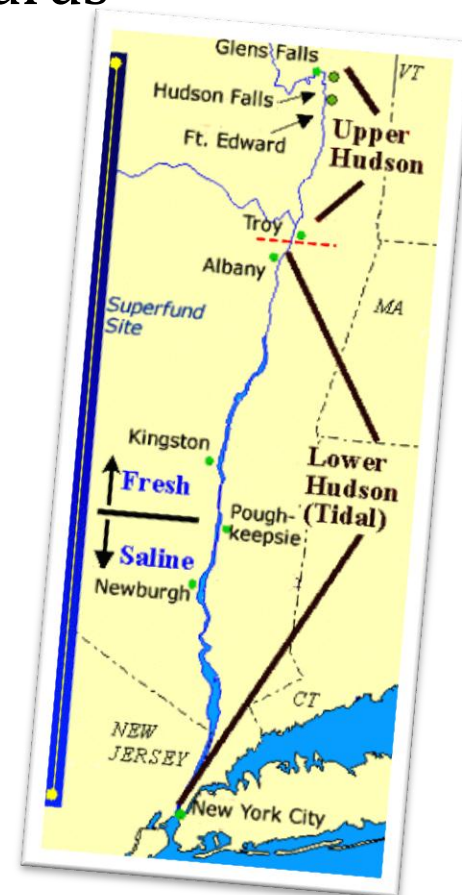
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Restoration

Steps in the restoration planning process:

1. Identify categories for types of projects.
2. Develop restoration ideas.
3. Solicit additional ideas from the public.
4. Scale restoration.
5. Review and select preferred projects.
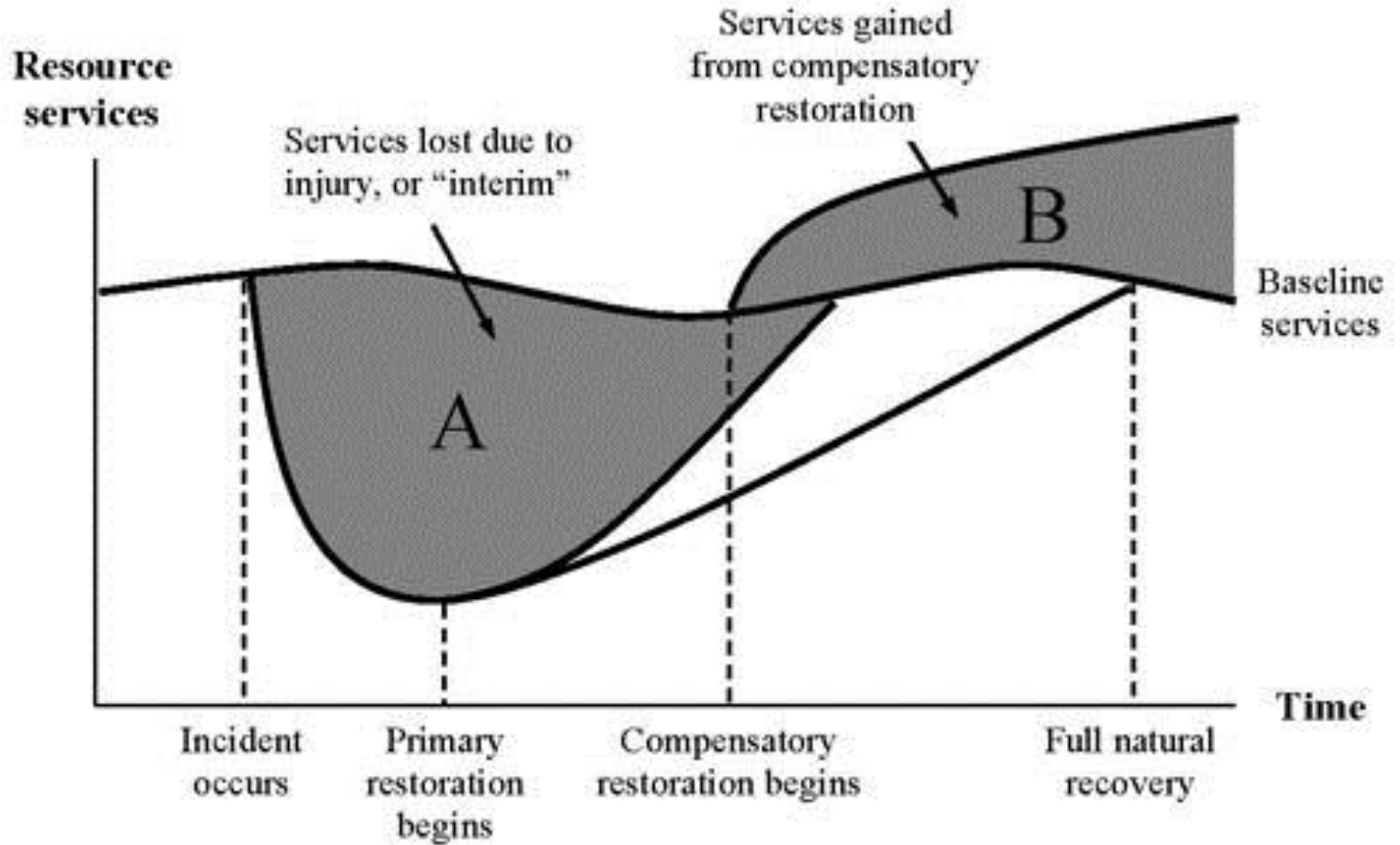6. Develop the Hudson River Restoration Plan.
7. Implement the plan.

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Scaling – How Much Restoration?

Project Selection Criteria

Guidance for restoration project selection includes:

- Link to injury
- Legality
- Efficacy
- Feasibility
- Cost-effectiveness
- Ecological leverage
- Nexus to existing plans
- Results of response actions
- Potential for additional injury
- Potential effects on human health and safety

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Restoration Alternatives under Consideration, Include but are not Limited to:

- Dam removal and fish passage

- Restoration of secondary channels

- Restoration of flows to wetlands

- Restoration and protection of floodplains

- Creation of grasslands

- Human use projects

  - Develop trails, boat launch sites, and canoe/kayak portages

  - Develop and improve access points for boats and fishing

- Ground water protection
- Restoration Dredging

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Current Status and Next Steps

- Injury assessment studies are ongoing

- Identifying and evaluating restoration alternatives

- Laying groundwork for developing draft restoration plan

We Need Your Input!

- Comment on draft study plans.
- Attend public meetings.
- Propose project ideas.
- Comment on draft Restoration Plan.
- Learn more on the Trustees' web sites, fact sheets, and through the listserve.

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Have More Questions?

Trustee web sites
  NOAA –
  www.darrp.noaa.gov/northeast/hudson/index.html
  NYSDEC –
  www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25609.html
  FWS –
  www.fws.gov/contaminants/restorationplans/
  HudsonRiver/index.html

To join our Listserve
  Send an e-mail to: requests@willamette.nos.noaa.gov
  Type in the subject line: Subscribe hudsonnrda

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