

Media Relations

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Committee Chaired by UNH Prof Releases Final Gulf of Mexico Restoration Report



Caption: University of New Hampshire professor Larry Mayer chaired the National Research Council committee that just released a report on restoration of damage done to the Gulf of Mexico by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Credit: Lisa Nugent, UNH Photographic Services.

DURHAM, N.H. – To assess the impact of losses due to the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the Gulf of Mexico, officials should consider the broad realm of goods and services provided by the Gulf to inform decisions for restoration, finds a new report from the National Research Council. University of New Hampshire professor Larry Mayer, director of UNH’s Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping, chaired the committee that produced the congressionally mandated report, released Wednesday, July 10, 2013.

“For many years, restoration efforts following oil spills have attempted to replace individual resources like acres of wetlands lost or numbers of fish or wildlife killed on a one-for-one basis,” Mayer says. “In this report, we recommend a more comprehensive approach to restoration that takes into account the benefits that these ecosystems provide to people -- like recreation, tourism,

food, or storm protection.”

Damages to natural resources could impair these so-called ecosystem services, leading to social and economic effects that may not be apparent from an assessment of environmental damage alone. In the report, the committee illustrated how an ecosystem services approach to damage assessment could be applied to coastal wetlands, fisheries, marine mammals, and the deep sea.

Mayer, whose primary research concerns ocean mapping and sonar imaging, worked in the Gulf of Mexico on the NOAA ship *Thomas Jefferson* after the spill. He was tapped to chair the 16-person committee in early 2011, and he and others on the committee briefed congressional staffers as well as NOAA on its findings earlier this week.

Read a [summary](#) of the report, or learn more about the [report](#) from the National Research Council.

The study was sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The National Research Council, along with the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, is part of the National Academies. They are private, independent nonprofit institutions that provide science, technology, and health policy advice under a congressional charter granted to NAS in 1863. The Research Council is the principal operating agency of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering. For more information, visit <http://national-academies.org>.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

Photograph available to download: http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2011/jan/bp31mayer.jpg

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that just released a report on restoration of damage done to the Gulf of Mexico by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Credit: Lisa Nugent, UNH Photographic Services.

-30-

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