

## Subpart G—Trustees for Natural Resources

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SOURCE: 59 FR 47450, Sept. 15, 1994, unless otherwise noted.

### §300.600 Designation of federal trustees.

(a) The President is required to designate in the NCP those federal officials who are to act on behalf of the public as trustees for natural resources. Federal officials so designated will act pursuant to section 107(f) of CERCLA, section 311(f)(5) of the CWA, and section 1006 of the OPA. Natural resources means land, fish, wildlife, biota, air, water, ground water, drinking water supplies, and other such resources belonging to, managed by, held in trust by, appertaining to, or otherwise controlled (hereinafter referred to as “managed or controlled”) by the United States (including the resources of the exclusive economic zone).

(b) The following individuals shall be the designated trustee(s) for general categories of natural resources, including their supporting ecosystems. They are authorized to act pursuant to section 107(f) of CERCLA, section 311(f)(5) of the CWA, or section 1006 of the OPA when there is injury to, destruction of, loss of, or threat to natural resources, including their supporting ecosystems, as a result of a release of a hazardous substance or a discharge of oil. Notwithstanding the other designations in this section, the Secretaries of Commerce and the Interior shall act as trustees of those resources subject to their respective management or control.

(1) *Secretary of Commerce.* The Secretary of Commerce shall act as trustee for natural resources managed or controlled by DOC and for natural resources managed or controlled by other federal agencies and that are found in, under, or using waters navigable by deep draft vessels, tidally influenced waters, or waters of the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone, and the outer continental shelf. However, before the Secretary takes an action with respect to an affected resource under the management or control of another federal agency, he shall, whenever practicable, seek to obtain the concurrence of that other federal agency. Examples of the Secretary's trusteeship include the following natural resources and their supporting ecosystems: marine fishery resources; anadromous fish; endangered species and marine mammals; and the resources of National Marine Sanctuaries and National Estuarine Research Reserves.

(2) *Secretary of the Interior.* The Secretary of the Interior shall act as trustee for natural resources managed or controlled by the DOI. Examples of the Secretary's trusteeship include the following natural resources and their supporting ecosystems: migratory birds; anadromous fish; endangered species and marine mammals; federally owned minerals; and certain federally managed water resources. The Secretary of the Interior shall also be trustee for those natural resources for which an Indian tribe would otherwise act as trustee in those cases where the United States acts on behalf of the Indian tribe.

(3) *Secretary for the land managing agency.* For natural resources located on, over, or under land administered by the United States, the trustee shall be the head of the department in which the land managing agency is found. The trustees for the principal federal land managing agencies are the Secretaries of DOI, USDA, DOD, and DOE.

(4) *Head of authorized agencies.* For natural resources located in the United States but not otherwise described in this section, the trustee shall be the head of the federal agency or agencies authorized to manage or control those resources.

(5) *Additional trustees for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.* The Administrator of EPA and the Secretary of Agriculture shall act as trustees in connection with injury to, destruction of, loss of, or loss of use of natural resources, including their supporting ecosystems, resulting from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

[59 FR 47450, Sept. 15, 1994, as amended at 79 FR 36431, June 27, 2014]

### **§300.605 State trustees.**

State trustees shall act on behalf of the public as trustees for natural resources, including their supporting ecosystems, within the boundary of a state or belonging to, managed by, controlled by, or appertaining to such state. For the purposes of subpart G of this part, the definition of the term *state* does not include Indian tribes. The governor of a state is encouraged to designate a state lead trustee to coordinate all state trustee responsibilities with other trustee agencies and with response activities of the RRT and OSC. The state's lead trustee would designate a representative to serve as contact with the OSC. This individual should have ready access to appropriate state officials with environmental protection, emergency response, and natural resource responsibilities. The EPA Administrator or USCG Commandant or their designees may appoint the state lead trustee as a member of the Area Committee. Response strategies should be coordinated between the state and other trustees and the OSC for specific natural resource locations in an inland or coastal zone and should be included in the Fish and Wildlife and Sensitive Environments Plan annex of the ACP.

### **§300.610 Indian tribes.**

The tribal chairmen (or heads of the governing bodies) of Indian tribes, as defined in §300.5, or a person designated by the tribal officials, shall act on behalf of the Indian tribes as trustees for the natural resources, including their supporting ecosystems, belonging to, managed by, controlled by, or appertaining to such Indian tribe, or held in trust for the benefit of such Indian tribe, or belonging to a member of such Indian tribe, if such resources are subject to a trust restriction on alienation. When the tribal chairman or head of the tribal governing body designates another person as trustee, the tribal chairman or head of the tribal governing body shall notify the President of such designation. Such officials are authorized to act when there is injury to, destruction of, loss of, or threat to natural resources, including their supporting ecosystems as a result of a release of a hazardous substance.

### **§300.612 Foreign trustees.**

Pursuant to section 1006 of the OPA, foreign trustees shall act on behalf of the head of a foreign government as trustees for natural resources belonging to, managed by, controlled by, or appertaining to such foreign government.

### **§300.615 Responsibilities of trustees.**

(a) Where there are multiple trustees, because of coexisting or contiguous natural resources or concurrent jurisdictions, they should coordinate and cooperate in carrying out these responsibilities.

(b) Trustees are responsible for designating to the RRTs and the Area Committees, for inclusion in the RCP and the ACP, appropriate contacts to receive notifications from the OSCs/RPMs of discharges or releases.

(c)(1) Upon notification or discovery of injury to, destruction of, loss of, or threat to natural resources, trustees may, pursuant to section 107(f) of CERCLA, or section 311(f)(5) of the CWA, take the following or other actions as appropriate:

(i) Conduct a preliminary survey of the area affected by the discharge or release to determine if trust resources under their jurisdiction are, or potentially may be, affected;

(ii) Cooperate with the OSC/RPM in coordinating assessments, investigations, and planning;

(iii) Carry out damage assessments; or

(iv) Devise and carry out a plan for restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, or acquisition of equivalent natural resources. In assessing damages to natural resources, the federal, state, and Indian tribe trustees have the option of following the procedures for natural resource damage assessments located at 43 CFR part 11.

(2) Upon notification or discovery of injury to, destruction of, loss of, or loss of use of, natural resources, or the potential for such, resulting from a discharge of oil occurring after August 18, 1990, the trustees, pursuant to section 1006 of the OPA, are to take the following actions:

(i) In accordance with OPA section 1006(c), determine the need for assessment of natural resource damages, collect data necessary for a potential damage assessment, and, where appropriate, assess damages to natural resources under their trusteeship; and

(ii) As appropriate, and subject to the public participation requirements of OPA section 1006(c), develop and implement a plan for the restoration, rehabilitation, replacement, or acquisition of the equivalent, of the natural resources under their trusteeship;

(3)(i) The trustees, consistent with procedures specified in the Fish and Wildlife and Sensitive Environments Plan Annex to the Area Contingency Plan, shall provide timely advice on recommended actions concerning trustee resources that are potentially affected by a discharge of oil. This may include providing assistance to the OSC in identifying/recommending pre-approved response techniques and in predesignating shoreline types and areas in ACPs.

(ii) The trustees shall assure, through the lead administrative trustee, that the OSC is informed of their activities regarding natural resource damage assessment that may affect response operations in order to assure coordination and minimize any interference with such operations. The trustees shall assure, through the lead administrative trustee, that all data from the natural resource damage assessment activities that may support more effective operational decisions are provided in a timely manner to the OSC.

(iii) When circumstances permit, the OSC shall share the use of federal response resources (including but not limited to aircraft, vessels, and booms to contain and remove discharged oil) with the trustees, providing trustee activities do not interfere with response actions. The lead administrative trustee facilitates effective and efficient communication between the OSC and the other trustees during response operations and is responsible for applying to the OSC for non-monetary federal response resources on behalf of all trustees. The lead administrative trustee is also responsible for applying to the NPFCA for funding for initiation of damage assessment for injuries to natural resources.

(d) The authority of federal trustees includes, but is not limited to the following actions:

(1) Requesting that the Attorney General seek compensation from the responsible parties for the damages assessed and for the costs of an assessment and of restoration planning; and

(2) Participating in negotiations between the United States and potentially responsible parties to obtain PRP-financed or PRP-conducted assessments and restorations for injured resources or protection for threatened resources and to agree to covenants not to sue, where appropriate.

(3) Requiring, in consultation with the lead agency, any person to comply with the requirements of CERCLA section 104(e) regarding information gathering and access.

(4) Initiating damage assessments, as provided in OPA section 6002.

(e) Actions which may be taken by any trustee pursuant to section 107(f) of CERCLA, section 311(f)(5) of the CWA, or section 1006 of the OPA include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

(1) Requesting that an authorized agency issue an administrative order or pursue injunctive relief against the parties responsible for the discharge or release; or

(2) Requesting that the lead agency remove, or arrange for the removal of, or provide for remedial action with respect to, any oil or hazardous substances from a contaminated medium pursuant to section 104 of CERCLA or section 311 of CWA.