

Summary of Project

The Department of the Interior's Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment (ORDA) is responsible for overseeing DOI's Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) Program. We work with co-trustees, including tribes and tribal nations, to restore resources that have been injured due to an oil spill or hazardous substance release. By conducting damage assessments with our co-trustees, we assess the injuries that have occurred to provide the basis for determining the restoration needs that will address the loss and use of natural resources.

Tribal cultural losses in the realm of NRDAR can be challenging and complex. In an attempt to better understand these issues, our office is launching an effort entitled 'Evaluation of Tribal Cultural Resource Issues Associated with Natural Resources Impacted by Hazardous Substances Releases and Oil Spills'. As part of this effort, ORDA is conducting three different informal listening sessions with tribal members to be held in areas of the country where a number of tribes are undertaking or considering such assessments: the Midwest, Southwest, and Northwest. These sessions will assist DOI in better understanding the issues involved with tribal natural and cultural resource claim development methods as related to NRDAR cases. Upon completion of the three listening sessions, technical contractors working on behalf of our office will develop a scoping paper summarizing what was learned. Our intention is to be able to present and discuss preliminary findings at a legal and technical workshop in the Spring of 2016 before finalizing the scoping paper.

The contractors that have been hired to draft the scoping paper are from RTI International and IEc, both of which have extensive background and experience in NRDAR claims and issues.

The listening sessions are being facilitated by two facilitators (Patrick Field, Managing Director, Consensus Building Institute, Inc. and Lucy Moore, Lucy Moore Associates, LLC.) Both of these facilitators have extensive experience in not just facilitation but also in the natural resource arena working on various environmental issues around the country as well as experience working with the US EPA and DOI and with numerous tribes across the country.

Thank you for your participation in these listening sessions – your feedback and comments are critical to help us better understand these issues and move forward towards building stronger NRDAR claims in the future. We look forward to your participation.