DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

The sooner expert studies are started the better the position there is to establish a basis for later studies with an ability to detect differences that occur.

The Federal statutes[14] require that a damage assessment be prepared to evaluate the damage to the resources of the northwest Gulf of Mexico as a result of the damage from the IXTOC I oil spill.

The objectives of the management structure of the Damage Assessment Plan established are:

1 - identify and quantify the biological, ecological, and economic impacts reulting from the IXTOC-I oil spill.
2 - Produce a series of reports which will make data and information generated under (1) above available to decision makers in a useful and timely manner.
3 - develop techniques, procedures and methodologies applicable to future interagency/state assessments of damage resulting from spills.[15]

The first proposal to fulfill these objectives developed by the Federal Government seemed designed for projects by the Federal Government. The state's scientific capabilities were not to be implemented and as a result the proposal was not enthusiastically accepted by most of the State of Texas agencies. Texas has many well-trained scientists, engineers, planners, researchers and managers to whom Texas and the Federal government should be turning for help to rescue our Texas beaches and bays.

The management structure is currently being reviewed and while general overview and guidance will be accomplished by the agencies at the Washington level, operations and studies will be completed locally. This working management should provide a Washington input without hindering local response activities. A draft is currently being developed which will serve as the basis for the formal program. The National Oceanographic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has made a supplemental budget request for funds for the damage assessment but to date the funds have not been made available.[16]