

Oil-Spill Community Forums Transcripts

Biloxi, Miss., and Mobile, Ala., June 2-3, 2010

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Business and Personal Finance

Biloxi, Miss., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.
(*AUDIO STARTS ABRUPTLY.*)

(0:00:03.8)

TAWNYA:

I'm Tawnya Crockett, and I work with Mississippi State University Extension Service. I work with just personal finance, not with business. Some of yours is business, so I won't have all the answers for you. If it relates to personal finance or your credit cards, that is something that you can try. Have you tried to call credit card companies to lower those interest rates since you're current with your bills? You said you're current on all your bills, right?

AUDIENCE1:

[0:00:33.5 inaudible].

(0:00:32.6)

TAWNYA:

Okay. Have you tried to contact the credit card companies?

AUDIENCE1:

[0:00:36.5 inaudible].

(0:00:38.0)

TANYA:

Okay. Let me give you just a tool. Have you ever tried working with Consumer Credit Counseling?

AUDIENCE1:

[0:00:44.4 inaudible].

(0:00:46.1)

TAWNYA:

Okay. We have a local office here in Biloxi. They are on Pass Road in Suite 2. I can give you their contact information, because what they can do is help you talk to those creditors on how to lower your interest rates. What I have found, because I'm not a certified financial counselor, they have certified financial counselors on staff. What I found is that when a counselor from Consumer Credit Counseling calls on your behalf, that they're more successful with than you calling on your own. Because they know the right terms to say, and they have relationship with most of the credit card companies, and they can help you with that from that standpoint. That would be my first step is to call the Consumer Credit Counseling. Now, let me say this, because you will get frustrated. Consumer Credit Counseling just like any other organization has been affected by the economy. So therefore, when you call, you're going to call a toll-free number to make an appointment at a local office. Let me go on and put that out. It was the time when you just picked up the phone and

call a local number, you immediately talk to someone in Biloxi, but we're not at that time. When you call that local number, they're going to ask you pretty much the things that you just shared to me and much more before they can make an appointment. You can have an in-person, you can do it over the Internet, or you can have a phone. It's really left up to you. I know a lot of people like to sit down and talk face to face with someone. That's the first advice that I can give you that relates to your credit cards. Now, from a business standpoint, that relates to your rent a property and those mortgages, I just can't advise you on which way to go. Would you like to speak on it?

JACK: Thank you, Tanya. My name is Jack Camp. I'm a Public Information Officer with the US Small Business Administration. In response to the oil spill, the SBA has a couple of initiatives. Do you have an SBA Disaster Loan?

AUDIENCE1: *[0:02:58.4 inaudible].*

JACK: Okay.

AUDIENCE1: *[0:03:03.8 inaudible].*

JACK: Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

AUDIENCE1: *[0:03:11.5 inaudible].*

JACK: Okay.

AUDIENCE1: *[0:03:14.1 inaudible].*

JACK: I understand what you're saying. The other thing that we're offering are low-interest disaster loans. These are economic entry, Disaster Loans as we call them. They are working capital loans to help a small business pay your operating expenses including your fixed debt payments that you can't pay because of the oil spill but would have been able to pay had this spill not occurred. These loans are not designed to refinance your debt. That would help you a lot too if you refinance certainly to sell. Generate some cash flow, some real cash flow, but you can apply for one of these loans, and we'll take a look at your situation if you meet, both our under-riding and eligibility criteria. We may be able to help you with the loan to give you some working capital to keep your head above water. We typically take a look at your tax returns, compare what you did in previous years to what you're doing or expected to do, and provide you with working capital to meet any anticipated shortfalls until we think we're going to return to normal. Now, when you apply for them on these loans and before I would approve a loan for you. It turns out maybe that the effects of these are

longer lasting than we determine upfront. You do have an option to come back and ask us for additional funds to modify and increase the loan, but that would be up to you once it was approved and dispersed to follow through and kinda keep an eye on things. That's what the SBA is offering. Having some of your properties listed is a good thing. I'm sure you're keeping in touch with your realtor.

AUDIENCE1: *[0:05:38.8 inaudible]*

JACK: Yes.

AUDIENCE1: *[0:05:41.7 inaudible]*

JACK: Right.

AUDIENCE1: *[0:06:03.5 inaudible]*

JACK: The interest that we're offering are 4%, and the terms can go up to 30 years. Like I say, it's not going to refinance those credit cards for you. They would determine what your regularly scheduled payments are and ideally provide you with the funds to continue to make those payments until things return to normal. You can explain it, and then you provide your financial statements, and we're going to compare what you've done previously to what you're anticipating right now as a result of the oil spill. Another suggestion that I would make would be to contact your local SBDC, here in Gulfport- Biloxi. They have a lot of different initiatives. They provide mentoring and counseling services for small businesses. I would strongly recommend them also.

(0:07:33.2)

TAWNYA: I know that you mentioned that your house is, that you have on the market, what about any other property that you can sell to bring in money? Any other non-related to housing but any other things that you can sell that can bring again some income. I guess that's my next step. What are other ways that you can bring in some income?

AUDIENCE1: *[0:07:55.1 inaudible].*

(0:07:58.6)

TAWNYA: Okay, I got you. Just what I was wondering. Yes, that's the only other thing that I can suggest that when we're working on this that we got to find things that we can sell, because that's the bottom line we need more

income and how can we get more income. As far as employment, were your rental houses your main source of income?

AUDIENCE1: *[0:08:21.0 inaudible].*

(0:08:23.6)

TAWNYA: Okay, yes. We might have to look at that differently and find a way that we can maybe gain some employment some way to increase that income. How many of the houses are rented?

AUDIENCE1: *[0:08:35.6 inaudible].*

(0:08:44.5)

TAWNYA: So, it's all the effect of Katrina?

AUDIENCE1: *[0:08:46.9 inaudible].*

(0:08:49.3)

TAWNYA: You went to Mississippi Development Authority? Okay.

AUDIENCE1: *[0:08:54.4 inaudible].*

(0:08:57.0)

TAWNYA: Yes. The other resources that I would add, but you wouldn't qualify, to cover the property that you own, is through the Department of Human Services, Economic Assistance.

(0:09:08.1)

AUDIENCE1: *[0:09:08.1 inaudible].*

JACK: Oh yes, there's a couple of different avenues that you can take to get information. It's very easy to actually apply online. Just go to www.sba.gov. There will be a tab for Services, look for Disaster Assistance, and you'll see a link that says "Apply Online"; you can apply online. At that Web site you can also download our forms. We have an 800 number that you can call for assistance, all sorts of assistance. Let me go back to the Web site, on that Web site is all sorts of questions and answers about our program, what we do, why we do it. We even, our regulations that we are *[0:10:00.4 inaudible]* are there too. There is all sorts of information about the program on what to expect or are contained therein. You can call our 800 line, 1-800-659-2955 to get information, answer questions; they can mail you an application packet. We also have five centers located here in South Mississippi where you can actually go in and sit down with an SBA representative and talk to them one-on-one about your situation. They can assist you with completing the application,

answering any questions you have, accept the application for you and get assistance. Those centers are located in Gulfport at the Hancock Bank Plaza; that's where our SBA branch office is. We have some representatives in there. We also have an office over in Pascagoula.

(0:11:06.4)

AUDIENCE1: *[0:11:06.4 inaudible].*

JACK: Okay. There's one in Pascagoula, at the Fairgrounds. There's another one over in Waveland at the Civic Center. There are two more at Lucedale in the Emergency Operations Center; they're in the Courthouse Complex. Finally in Wiggins at the Stone County Courthouse.

(0:11:33.2)

MODERATOR: *[0:11:33.2 inaudible].*

TOM: Good morning! My name is Tom Becker. I'm the President of Mississippi Charter Boat Captains Association. I get all kinds of questions and things. They're all wondering about the SBA possibilities. Of course, we are the first ones affected when they first closed everything down up here, everything was shut down. That time the phone never stopped ringing to cancel trips for everybody, and they did not call for booking trips. This being our prime month for business, the business is basically dead in the water especially after the water came or the oil came up on Petit Bois yesterday. They're asking me what options do they have with the SBA if they need it, because they would like to stay in business, but we don't know on our aspect of it, how long this is going to last just as NOAA says and the EPA said, we don't know how long is it going to last, how long is it going to affect us be able to go out there and fish. What avenues did they have so I can get back to these guys and try to explain it to 'em.

JACK: Basically the same avenues. If they have an existing loan from Katrina or another disaster then they need to go by one of our centers or call our 800 line number, and we're offering deferments on existing SBA Disaster Loans anywhere from 6 to 12 months. If that is not enough, they can come at the end of that period, and we'll consider additional deferments. These aren't going to be made available to everybody it's on a case by case basis. That is one avenue that can give them some immediate relief if they are in that situation. The working capital loans, they apply to the charter boat captains also. It does not apply to the crew members. They've got crew members on the boat and that may go more to commercial fishing than what you do. Crew members aren't considered a business per se. The owner of the boat is eligible to apply. Once again we'll look at their financial information compare what they did previously to what they're anticipating as a result of the oil spill to provide them with working capital

so that they can continue to make their regular scheduled payments and pay their operating expenses. They're expected to use our resources and cut back where they can, you need to do that but certain expenses obviously are going to go on. That's what these loans are designed to address. Once again, we'll make a determination when you apply as to how much your eligibility is. They may look down and say okay, this is going to last 6 months or 12 months, I don't know exactly. It's on a case-by-case basis, and they'll offer a loan based on that. If in that time period, if you're still seeing effects, then your members would need to come back to us and ask for modification for an increase. The loans, one good thing about them, I think I mentioned that there 4% loans up to 30 years that can go up to, depending on the eligibility, \$2,000,000.00. We're going to be deferring the first payment from these loans for 11 months. So basically they've got a year before the payments come due. Another thing that I might mention to the business owners and this might apply to you too is to contact BP and file a claim with BP. It was their oil rig. So, file a claim with them. It's going to vary depending on what's going on there, but we'll consider any recovery they'll get from BP in our loan analysis. If you get a loan from the SBA and down the road you get a recovery from BP, hopefully they'll be able to pay down or pay off the loan.

(0:16:45.1)

TOM:

It's basically what they want to know, because most of them have applied for the loan from BP, of course that's an uncertainty as to how long that would go and that's the big problem because our slip fees don't stop, the insurance payments don't stop. Maintenance on the boat, just sitting there is not good. All these things start adding up, if they got boat notes, you refinance engines, you're looking \$70,000.00 worth of engines on a diesel boat that's what mine are. Alright, we're right at \$70,000.00 for new engines. Those bills are still due, even though the boat's paid for, the engines aren't. So, they come and get them, they sit there dead in the water. Anyway, it's something that the guys wanted to know wanted me to ask, a lot of them don't know how to ask him so, I'll come up and talk for him. I have no problem with that, as Mr. Forrester knows. Anyway, thank you for that information. I'll pass it on to the guys.

JACK:

Applying is not difficult. As I said they can apply online sba.gov or if they feel more comfortable they can come to one of our centers and sit down with one of the representatives and they'll help them with it. That's what we're here for. The SBA is committed to the small business community here on the Gulf Coast. We have the resources on the ground. We're going to stay for as long as there is a need. These loans I should mention when I say that that there is a filing deadline of February 14 of 2011. Of course if

they're feeling the impact right now as they are. They really should probably go ahead and apply.

TOM: We get our boats ready in the wintertime and spend the money that we had put away for that project like going up on a shipyards and things like that. That's not a very easy process or money-wise to go up and paint the boats and do all the things the Coast Guard wants you to do especially being an inspected vessel like myself. They come down, and they rattle the shafts, and they push on the wheels, check everything that, make sure everything is right before we're going to take out. We can drown six, all right no problem, but that seventh one we pay hell for. It's nice to see you Mr. Forrester other than on that little small screen on the table. Last time I saw him, he was goofing off somewhere in the world, having a good time. Thank you for the information. I really appreciate that. I'll get it back to the guys.

(0:19:33.9)

MODERATOR: We also have the legal perspectives room. If you need to know about filing a claim with BP you can check there as well.

SAYLA: My question is actually for Mr. Forrester. How are you? As with the captain who just left, this is our season too. My name is Sayla Carrey, I'm from the Isle Casino Hotel in Biloxi. We were looking forward to a really bright summer with our hotel occupancy especially. Now, that's kind of in limbo. We see cancellations every day and no more bookings every day. I just wanted to ask that really in lieu of our normal tourists, we know we have all these thousands and thousands I heard on the TV today in Louisiana BP is bringing in 2400 people to the coast to help work on it. I was assuming that they can be doing the same thing here in the very near future. Unfortunately with the Casino Hotel, we're kind of a disadvantage because we're not normally looked at as a corporate entity so they don't call a Casino Hotel. I called every single agency that I can think of and left messages saying we have rooms, we have rooms. As soon as they hear casino, we don't get the call back. I guess my question for Mr. Forrester is since we can't require this, I know, but since you know of all and everybody else knows all the agencies coming in. Is there any way you can do like with tourist groups, can you ask if they can do RFPs so that we can have a fair shake at who's coming in to what hotel. So that we can actually have that bid process going on, since it does look like it's going to be for the long haul. I'm not talking about 10, but 25 or more rooms for an extended period of time.

TOM: We can certainly request that of them. Unfortunately with large companies like that, they usually have whole divisions that are set aside to make their

travel arrangements for them, and they handle that. We will certainly make them aware of the opportunities. My sense is is that they're going try to find the cheapest rate they can find. Unfortunately in that instance, the fact that you are a casino, they're instantly going to think they're not going to be able to get a cheap rate there, and so they're going to go elsewhere, but we'll try to advise them.

SAYLA: That's why I'm hoping for the bid process. Right now we have two agencies staying with very small amount of rooms, but they're extremely happy with the rates that we've given them, with the accommodations that we've given them and we've given them extra meeting place and everything. They're very happy but it's just trying to get more people to understand that we can do that. I'm speaking for all the casinos not just ours. I think we're all in the same boat. Anyway, I'd appreciate it if you'll give the effort. Thank you very much!

TOM: Thank you!

(0:22:28.3)

MODERATOR: Anyone else?

AUDIENCE: The address of the SBA office in Gulfport. Could you give that to me so I can write it down because I can't remember?

JACK: If I can, I'll give all five, but I'll give yours first. In Harrison County, we're located at the Small Business Administration Gulfport branch office. They're located at Hancock Bank Plaza, that's at 2510 14th Street, Suite 103, in Gulfport, 39501. In Jackson County, at the Jackson County Fairgrounds and the Ticket Office at 2902 Shortcut Road in Pascagoula. In Hancock County at the Civic Center at 335 Coleman Avenue in Waveland. Now, we'll say about that one location, there's a lot of construction still going on over in Waveland, and actually some street construction in front of the facility. There is a fire station next door, so they're keeping the road open, it may not look like it, but you can get to him. In George County at 355 Cox Street Suite J that's at the George County EOC in Lucedale. In Stone County at the Stone County Courthouse at 323 East Cavers Avenue in Wiggins. The hours of operation, the offices in Pascagoula and Waveland are open Monday through Saturday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Our other offices one in Gulfport, here in Harrison County, in Lucedale and Wiggins are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

(0:24:59.3)

MODERATOR: Do you have any other questions?

JEFF: I'm Jeff Feinberg. I work for Northrop Grumman. We're in the process, as you all know, we're based in Pascagoula. We have waterfront management and waterfront facilities there. We are in the process of starting a sea trial coming in up here in about three weeks. We take the Navy vessel out. We've taken the Navy vessel out based on the things that we will possibly occur or incur out there when we can bring it back in, what would be required to do during the wash facilities and stuff like that. The area is along the coast. We are going to be handling it to the East. What has been set up? How they're going to do it? And how long it's going to take to do it? We have roughly a 600-foot vessel, and what are we going to incur?

(0:26:02.1)

MODERATOR: Unfortunately I don't think we have that answer in here being business and finance but if you ask...

JEFF: Isn't this the business and finance, I mean the Waterfront? Based on your chart.

(0:26:15.1)

MODERATOR: You mean what's going to be required to...

JEFF: When we come back into port, is this going to have business and finance?

(0:26:26.4)

MODERATOR: That would so is marine transportation and other working Waterfront industries, and we don't have a representative here from that. Can we get your information and find out for you?

JEFF: Okay, so you don't have a representative here?

(0:26:41.5)

MODERATOR: We do not have a representative here to answer that. I know there's people in the building who have more information on it but we don't. If I can take your contact information then we can get it for you pretty quickly.

JEFF: We'll get the information.

(0:26:56.6)

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you.

AUDIENCE3: Okay, I'm sorry. I kinda just jumped into this one. I just came from other fisheries and wildlife. My concern was for the seafood fishermen who are suffering the economic loss at this point. I've heard some of them who's trying to pay down the SBA loan to make sure the other loans don't come after them. What is your advice with people who want to talk with their

banks and try to request for deferment or some type of alternate refinance at this point?

JACK: For those people who has an existing SBA Disaster Loan, they should call our 800 line, 1-800-659-2955 or go by one of our centers that is here in Mississippi. The SBA is offering deferments on existing SBA Disaster Loans from 6 to 12 months if that's not enough at the end of that period, they can come back and ask for more. The decisions on granting deferments are made on a case-by-case basis. So, they should call. If they have an SBA loan that is not a disaster loan, it gets a little more complicated. Our administrator is urging our banking partners in the 7A and 504 and our other [0:28:55 *inaudible*] Loan Programs to consider similar deferments that we don't really have control over what the banks do so, they make to get that call. They definitely should get in touch with them. If they're having trouble with their loan payments overall, the SBA Economic Injury Loan is a viable alternative for them. It's a 4% loan with terms up to 30 years. First payments aren't do for, there's an 11 month deferment on those payments on these loans. Depending on the eligibility could be for as much as \$2 million There should be plenty of funds available for them. It's easy to get the ball rolling on that. They can apply online at www.sba.gov. They can call our 800 line number. They'll mail them an application that can answer any questions they have or they can come by one of our centers, we have five centers in Mississippi. Here in Gulfport, we have one at the Hancock Bank Plaza. We also have one in Pascagoula at the Fairgrounds and one over at Waveland at the Civic Center. We do have an interpreter, a Vietnamese interpreter here in the state.

AUDIENCE3: Is that one staff of interpreting servicing at all centers?

JACK: He's covering all of them. If we got someone who wants to come in with the need, we will have to make arrangements to make sure that he's there.

AUDIENCE3: Sure. Can I have the contact information?

JACK: What I'd recommend you do is call the 800 line number and tell them that you have someone. They actually have interpreters at the 800 line number. If they want to call in there, they have a translation service through that number. We can make arranges to have that person at the meeting. When your business person, mostly come in to visit one of the centers.

AUDIENCE3: Okay. I appreciate it a lot. I was just waiting for the next question. I'm sorry. I don't understand the acronyms. Okay, great.

With the recent disaster, I know there has been some monies funded regarding the perception issue to encourage Mississippi tourism. So, can you tell us where does that money go towards? Is it ads? I mean, can businesses apply for it for certain marketing needs?

TOM: BP provided \$15 million to the State of Mississippi. The state has used \$4 million of that money for ads that you currently see running or the Governor and Marsha Barbour inviting people to come down. The remaining \$11 million, how it will be used is to be determined by a steering committee appointed by the state with representative from Jackson, Harrison, Hancock counties and the State Tourism Department. Those monies more than likely will be used in an overall campaign and more than likely will be a national television campaign to convince the public that we are in fact open for business. Until such time as the oil comes on shore and wherever that's going to be, I would have to assume that the message will continue to be that we're open for business; there's still a lot of reasons to come to the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

AUDIENCE3: Sure. Have you seen a dip in tourism?

TOM: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We've had hotel cancelations, we've had charter boat cancelations, Ship Island Ferry was just in here a little while ago, they had 32 passengers this morning. They normally run 300 plus.

(0:33:55.7)

MODERATOR: All right. I appreciate everyone. Thank you.

END OF AUDIO.

Business and Personal Finance

Mobile, Ala., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

RICK: My name is Rick, don't worry about the last name, too hard to pronounce. I'm with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System out of Auburn. I'm in family and consumer sciences. I teach anything that has to do with money. I teach unemployment classes. I teach small business classes. We try to get IRS to come but the representative could not make it tonight. He gave me some handouts and I can try to fill some of those questions on text.

GREG: My name is Greg Dawson. I'm a public information officer, United States Small Business Administration Office of Disaster Assistance. As such it's my job to make sure no stone is unturned in getting out the information on assistance that is available to businesses that have been impacted by this Deepwater BP oil spill. The governor requested and was granted a Small Business Administration Disaster. What we are making available are loans up to two million dollars, interest rates 4%. Terms up to 30 years for those businesses that have been impacted. I've got flyers over there that will give you the facts as it relates to terms and conditions as well as where one can go and get assistance if you need it. A lot of people will tend to shy away from the Small Business Administration's paperwork. If you go to a customer service center, a customer service representative from the Small Business Administration will walk you through the application process. There is no need to fear the paperwork. We also in those centers will have translators in Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian languages for people needing that type of assistance. I've been working in disasters for a number of years. I've never worked an oil spill before. This is somewhat new. What my experience tells me is that every disaster I've ever worked on, rumors run rampant. They spread like that oil out there. I tell people as it relates to the Small Business Administration. If you're not getting it from a person that has this SBA Office of Disaster Assistance emblem on their shirt or has these federal credentials around their neck, you're not getting it from the horse's mouth that information is suspect. If you can't get into one of our disaster recovery centers located in either Baldwin or Mobile County, you can call 1-800-659-2955. That number is on that fact sheet over there as well. Also to let people know that you can go online and complete our economic entry loan application online. That information as to the website is on that application. A lot of people, I'm told, are waiting to see what's going to happen with BP. I would suggest to you that if you're interested in the SBA go in and speak with one of our customer service representatives. You do not need to wait for a settlement with BP. Should BP make you whole as has been indicated then those monies can be used to pay down SBA loan should you take one. The other thing that

people need to know is that if you qualify for the loan, you don't have to take it. It is an option that's available to you from the federal government. Thank you.

HERB: Thank you Mr. Dawson. My name is Herb Malone. I'm president and CEO of the Alabama Gulf Coast Commission and Visitors Bureau, it's a mouthful. We're responsible for tourism marketing for the Gulf Shore, Orange Beach, Fort Morgan Peninsula, lower Baldwin County, if you will. We have through the years had strong relationships with our counterparts here in Mobile, the Mobile Convention and Visitors Bureau. We also have a working relationship with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Program for our nature tourism program. We have worked together on a regional basis with these groups and other groups to help establish such things as the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, which wraps all the way around Mobile Bay. The Battle of Mobile Bay Civil War Trail, which again wraps around throughout the region recently achieved the national designation for the Alabama Coastal Connection National Scenic Byway that loops through the southern part of Mobile County down to Dauphin Island to cross with a ferry up through southern Baldwin County back to I-10 had been deeply involved in this issue from the marketing and communication standpoint since the day it happened. I'm basically here to answer questions.

(0:07:14.7)

MODERATOR: Does anybody have a question. Yeah, you have to come up to the microphone, sorry.

RESPONDENT 1: This question is for Mr. Malone. This is more of a general fact based question. What do you see in terms of cancellations or vacancies in terms of hotels and other places of business along the coast? I know it's probably an obvious question. I'm curious if you have any statistics on that so far.

HERB: Let me give you some generalizations of what we've see thus far. This all started right about the first of May, the very last couple of days of April. First 10 days, maybe two weeks when the forecast that they predicted or at least the media report that we had eminent presence of oil coming at us any day now kind of thing, we saw a large number of cancellations of summer vacations. Since that time our businesses have worked deeply with the consumers to want to give them some reassurance by changing their deposit and refund policies internally to make them more customer friendly. We went through a spell of about two to three weeks, three weeks or so of May with most of the oil moving west toward Louisiana and around Louisiana. Not showing much movement up north to our direction. That coupled with some aggressive marketing and some daily updates, we were able to get a good Memorial Day weekend. A lot of last-minute bookings for that. These last few days, once we started getting southwest

wind and all sort moving closer to our coast, we're back in cancelation mode. Media have asked me repeatedly what impact we expect it to be. I've told the media you tell me how much oil we're going to get and how long it's going stay, I can start calculating what we'll have. To give you what's at risk. Baldwin County represents about 2.3 billion in terms of expenditures on an annual basis and about 1.7 billion of that happens in the summer months. We don't expect to lose all of that, but we already have lost quite a bit, it's just too early to quantify what the losses are yet or even to make an accurate prediction what it's going to be. There's too many unknowns.

(0:09:42.6)

MODERATOR: Anyone else? Any more questions?

RESPONDENT 2: I have a question about the money, the application and the money.

(0:10:04.9)

MODERATOR: I'm handing this right to you.

RESPONDENT 2: I would just like to say I'm on Schooner Joshua. My business is basically six months in the summer. That's the big money-making time for me. The rest of the months are spasmodic. Mostly run out of the Grand Hotel and Dog River. There was a small fish kill, I don't know why on Dog River. Very small little fish, little pogies or something. I don't know. Somebody said they think lightning struck a big group of them up in the delta there or something. I don't know. They were coming down. I had cancellations because of that. People thought that was caused from the oil. When the oil hit Dauphin Island, yesterday is when it hit the news, I started getting cancellations. I've got college kids that work for me in the summer. They're paying their way through college, it's really terrible. I don't know anything to get the new out there to people to try to tell them that we're still in business, that we're still working when it's all ready on Dauphin Island. You have to lie to people and tell them they're not going to see any dead animals. I had one group say they cancelled because they didn't want their kids to see dead birds in the water. I just want an application. I tried to get a small business loan when I started building my boat in 1993. I started construction April 14th, 1993. It took me nine and a half years to build it. I never did get the loan. I was grateful enough SouthTrust Bank stepped forward and gave me a loan for a very small amount of the total construction. I'm looking forward to giving this another try.

GREG: Where are you located?

SCHOONER: In Mobile.

GREG: There's a Disaster Recovery Center that is located at Bayou La Batre Community Center, 12745 Padgett Switch Road. If you go in there as I indicated, somebody will walk you through the process. These loans are for businesses that have been impacted as a result of this oil spill. Don't disqualify yourself by not going. Go in sit down and speak with the customer service representative. As, I indicated they will walk you through the process. It's a relatively, I think, simple process, but again, you got individuals who are going to help you with the application process.

SCHOONER: Is there any way to know what I should carry with me, tax forms?

GREG: Typically we're going to look at the results over the last three years as it relates to your taxes but bear in mind and what we are hearing as I talk to Chamber of Commerce et cetera, they indicate the last three years have not been the norm. You got to get pre-Katrina to get to norm. I would say when you sit down with that customer service representative you want to footnote what the norm is and if that goes back five or six years then you want to go back and get records that show what the norms are.

SCHOONER: Thank you.

HERB: Ma'am have you filed a claim with BP? Have you entered that process?

SCHOONER: I did that today. I didn't want anything to do with them. Plus, I didn't know if I was going to have a loss. I guess, I'm naïve. I thought will maybe it won't get here. Today, I called that number, and I got claim number. I've not taken any money from them, and I don't want to work for them.

HERB: I understand, and I don't blame you for that. I'm not an expert on this but I've sent numerous of these forms down in Orange Beach in the Gulf Shores area. The claims process for people who make their living on the water, meaning the seafood industry, charter boat captains, fishing guys, people like yourself, dolphin tour boats, by some of their actual admission they are giving a priority to people living on the water. I would encourage you to call the 800 number, get a claim number, how soon an adjuster gets to you; I've heard all tales about that.

SCHOONER: I've even heard the checks are bouncing, you don't know if that's true?

HERB: I haven't heard of that one. I know that they have given that quite a bit of checks and they have an advanced process because I heard one of the adjusters say in a meeting full of charter boat captains that they recognize you got a boat note to pay, a house note to pay and what have you. It's small advances, maybe up to 5,000 or something like that. Nobody knows how long it's going to last, how long it's going to affect you. You may or

may not qualify for that, I don't know but I'm encouraging you to get in the process. That doesn't preclude you from being in that process either.

SCHOONER: That's thing with the SBA loan, I could possibly make the boat note interest lowered which would make it a lot easier to me the boat note.

GREG: The other caveat that I want to add to that is there will be a straight out 11-month deferment on the first payment should you qualify for the loan and for individuals who have a pre-existing disaster loans, it's going to be on a case by case basis but there will be potential deferments for people who already have loans outstanding with the Small Business Administration, that's office of the Disastrous Assistance now, that's not with the regular SPA.

SCHOONER: That sounds good maybe that will tie me over until I get a job.

RICK: I'll suggest this to you, if you have a seat, I'll give you a phone number that will help you. All of you also, there is a credit counseling service here in Mobile. I can give you their number it's, 251 area code 602-0011. Now, this is a legitimate credit counseling service. They're funded by United Way partially. They're not the scams that you see on TV. You know, you give us a thousand dollars and we'll have you A-1 credit rate, it's not one of those. This is legitimate. The reason that you may want to talk to them is they can intervene with creditors through no fault of your own, if you can't pay people they can intervene in that situation and either get payments reduced for a short period of time until you can work out a claim with BP possibly. The other thing to keep in mind under the Fair Credit Reporting Act that they just went into effect in February, I believe. You have the right to send the Credit Bureau a letter explaining why you were late on any payment. It won't necessarily change the negative information that gets put on your credit file, but if somebody picks up your credit file for a loan like SBA or if you choose to use another institution, it would explain why you were delinquent during the period of time and that's available to you also for your Credit Bureau file because we are going to have a lot of people down here that may not make boat payments or condo payments or whatever through no file through their own. They probably would be paid if it were not for the oil spill. This credit counseling agency, I just want to let you know they're legit. If any of you get to the point that you just need help, there's some agencies here, Community Action Agency gives emergency money for like electric bills, things like that. Department of Human Resources has food stamps, they also have emergency money available. Good Will Easter Seals here in Mobile also helps out. If any of you get to that point that you need help, a lot of this is taxpayer funded, so we paid forward anyway.

(0:18:15.6)

MODERATOR: Any other questions?

RESPONDENT 3: Can I ask three questions, one for each guy?

(0:18:23.2)

MODERATOR: If that is okay with the audience, sure.

RESPONDENT 3: A comment, I would suggest and that would probably be the same thing we see during hurricane seasons but get a fact sheet about that out to just a variety of places and probably through the interfaith network is one way to do it but if you want to you can even get it down to the BP claims office, that's one thing but certainly make sure that the elected officials know because they are always getting telephone calls about that. Have you heard or are you aware of any beyond, I think what is drafted in the legislation but any IRS modifications dealing with this disaster. And Mr. Dawson, my question to you would be what amount SBA disaster relief loan are you seeing, and Herb I got a question for you all, get to do this.

RICK: The best thing to do, any time Congress is in session, not only the Federal Congress but our state can pass legislation and the only you know about it is if you're a news hound and you follow that 24 hours a day. The best resource that I found is to go IRS.gov on the Internet, click under individual, and they'll have a section that is called what's new. If you check that about every other week, you can expect them to do something. What they will do is anybody's guess at this point. After hurricane Katrina, there were a lot of different things that happened both at the state and the federal level. Some of the things that you might want to keep in mind is to go ahead, there's a thing on this table that is called important papers. If you think that you will ever file a claim due the BP Oil Spill, you can go ahead and start now, accumulating probably three to five years tax returns. One of the things they are seeing already is there's people, a lot of people who work for cash that do not report that on their income tax returns and BP may ask for income tax returns. You may have to support data outside of the income tax returns, and if you do like the gentlemen suggested, maybe looking back past three years, maybe go to five years so that you can. We are kind of in a recession which is not indicative of what a normal business cycle would be. If you could go back probably 2007, 2006, 2005 in that area, you'd probably get a better indication on what to support your claim, but I think the time to go ahead to get your paper work together is now. When you sit down with these people, when they come up with these programs both at the state and federal level, you will be better prepared to get that money or that subsidy. Does that help? Thank you for that suggestion, I'll pass that on.

GREG: As it relates to a number of applications and the interviews that we've had in those two counties as of close of business on yesterday, it's 85, we have

issued 85 applications and of those 85, we've received 17 back so to answer your question, the number's not representative of what is the impact and or the potential impact. I think a lot of people are waiting to see what is going to happen but again, we're saying to people, you need to get in and get the applications complete, and see if you do qualify and have that option to make available to yourself.

RESPONDENT 3: Thank you, I appreciate that. I'm working with the Mayor's office here. I'm on these conference calls twice a day, and it's been very good to hear the SBA working particularly in Louisiana and other areas with the Cambodian, the Laotian and the Vietnamese communities who are deep in the seafood industry. You'll walk around here and you're not going to see a whole lot of them up here because it's very uncomfortable for them to come to places. Your outreach going in those areas is greatly appreciated, that's pro-active, that was good.

GREG: Just for your own notification, I was at a meeting in Biloxi yesterday, covering for my counterpart who's working in Biloxi. We got people on the ground in Louisiana, Alabama, Florida and Mississippi, and sometimes I think I'm bouncing between all four but just Alabama, I had a cover meeting on yesterday, but this meeting with BP and several people from the Asian-American for change group, we talked about the fact that we've got the translators and available but again, getting into those communities, because what we find is that for a level of trust, people relate to people they relate to. We've got that issue to overcome, but we are working with them and getting the word out. My job is to make sure again no stone's unturned in getting out our information I'm doing briefing with the mayor's office. We are getting points of contact to make sure that they got our information, the chamber are blasting out our information to all this membership. We're doing out due diligence in terms of making people aware of what's out there. Again, people need to come in and take advantage of the opportunity. One of the things that I did not indicate is that the application deadline goes through to February 14th and you'll notice the time line is quite a bit extended. typical disasters, we look at a 60-day window, in terms of that. The other thing that I want to say to people is that, in terms of turn-around time, on the SBA loan applications, we look at between 14 and 21 days, in terms of turn-around. In current conditions, any time you hear anyone say that it's taken a normal amount of time to get that application processed because we get an incomplete application, that's why I recommend that people get to a customer service center, all those customers our service representatives can walk through the process, once you bring it back in, they can make sure that the "I"s are dotted and the "T"s are crossed. What takes an application a long drawn out time is that an application starts to bounce back between our processing center in Dallas-Fort Worth and the applicant who has submitted an incomplete application.

RESPONDENT 3: A simple question, have you started working with Leon and Mayor Collier on a regional look at the impact assessment for tourism loss and its impact around here. Seeing that Joshua's getting it because of rumors of oil in the bay. Sooner or later our entire regional area is going to be looking at, have you all initiated that conversation yet?

HERB: There is cooperation in the cities around the region as you well know. Specifically to that question, we have not yet but as to the Joshua comment, when oil got on the beach on Dauphin Island yesterday, the headline that went national was "oil's on Alabama's beaches," and yes, it affected us as well. There is the state Department of Tourism has a standing relationship with an economist at AUM, Dr. Keivan Deravi. He's been for a long time preparing the economic impact of tourism report decision annually. The state now has retained him to help quantify the impacts throughout the region, not just the tourism but how it ripples up through the line. For example, I was talking to a gentleman who's a friend, who does my personal life insurance, who lives in Robertsdale He told me the moment the oil spill has happened, his phone quit ringing. It's affecting people way beyond the tourism has affected real estate industry, it has done dramatic effects, throughout the economy, that I think is my understanding is Dr. Deravi's challenge, I don't know if he will be doing it alone or a team with other economists. I have a great deal of respect for his work.

RICK: If any of you are business owners and you are going to file claims with BP, you need to know that it's not just your loss of income that will be affected for a long period of time. If you don't mind, let me use you as an example. If you lay off workers for the remainder of the summer, you're unemployment portion will change. Every time you lay someone off, they increase the cost to the business. You can also expect the long-term increase in insurance costs. We've seen that every hurricane, everything that hits, we'll go through it just a short period and they start increasing rates. Something you want to make a note of, those of you who are business owners. Take in to account that it's not just going to be business laws that you may file a claim with BP, it may be an increase in other cost like unemployment insurance and your liability insurances that you have on your businesses. All of those, you can expect those to increase and those increases typically last for number of years. Any of us who are home owners on the Gulf, we've seen that. When you file your claims, kind of think about those added expenses because over the years, that's gonna be a lot of money.

RESPONDENT 4: My name is Dianne Burnet and I'm with the South Alabama Regional Planning Commission and I have a couple of basic questions about SBA,

if you don't mind. Herb, I may need some help from you, how many condominiums are in Orange Beach and Gulf Shores?

HERB: Approximately 16,000

DIANNE: How many are, pardon?

HERB: Approximately 16,000 Units.

DIANNE: About what of those are owned by individuals, not businesses?

HERB: A vast majority.

DIANNE: Do individuals who own condominiums that are not businesses qualify for SBA loans?

GREG: I'm going to use the case-by-case analogy here. I will suggest that people go in to see if they qualify rather than disqualifying themselves. Let me read something to you. "Those businesses eligible to apply for the EIDL include, small businesses engaged in fishing, shrimping, crabbing, oyster fishing in the waters affected by the oil spill. Small businesses dependent on the catching or sale of shrimp, crab and oysters. Suppliers of fishing gear and fuel. Companies that run docks and boat yards. Companies that process, ship and sell, wholesale and retail seafood. Coastal small businesses and businesses involved in recreational and sports fishing. Employees or crew members are not small businesses and not eligible to apply." I read that because I don't like to be misquoted, and I don't want to get expectations. What I'm saying to you is that if an individual who is in business feels that he has been impacted, be he or she a condominium owner, I would suggest that that individual go into a customer service center, go and speak with a customer service representative and see if they qualify. If they can't get in call that 1-800 number so that there is no mistake.

HERB: This may or may not apply or have an impact but those individuals that own those condominiums are required to have a business license. Even if they're renting their unit listed through an agency. As the owner, whatever they're business is at, whether it is sole proprietorship or whatever, they are required about these in the city of Gulf Shores, city of Orange Beach or Baldwin County to hold a business license for the rental of it, for that rental activity.

DIANNE: So that would demonstrate that that is a business?

GREG: I would refer to that.

DIANNE: I'm not sure if it would qualify with what you read. I didn't hear what I was looking for so I'm not sure. But the other thing is, if you'd watch the real estate market, in this particular area, you'll know that there are lot of new condominium owners that may have not have the five years that are necessary. Can they take like information?

GREG: Again, my recommendation is to, I'll use an old acronym, "People come together to see how far apart they are." And that being said, I'd go in, I'd sit down with them and see if I qualified.

DIANNE: I was looking for a general answer because we've been getting a lot of calls from individual people just trying to find out what might be available. So, I'll just send them your way.

HERB: If they would call 1-800-659-2955, they would get that answer.

DIANNE: All right, thank you very much.

RESPONDENT 5: I hope I don't take longer than two minutes, I'll be very brief. This has, basically goes into what she was saying. My family has lived on the Gulf Coast all of my entire life. We've had businesses in Orange Beach; my father started Tacky Jack's many, many moons ago. We live on the water, I have always lived on the water and we own a business here in Mobile and I've had for well over 10 years. We actually had an SBA one, I am very upset because our business, looks like it would not fall under that heading, and it concerns me for people who are not, and I have many friends, our boat is at Dog River Marina. We have boats in our backyard as well, that one just won't fit in our backyard. We're in the recreational vehicle industry. I spend thousands of dollars on billboards on I-10, in campground brochures, thousands of dollars. I have upwards of 15 employees that depend on us. And it horrifies me to think about the real estate agents and people like us who are kind of stuck out there and not listed on a category and this seems to happen. I'll be honest with you; I have never even got a free bag of ice when we had a hurricane. I'm very adamant about standing up and taking responsibility for yourself but my concerns as a home owner, a business owner and someone who is involved with our community and has been for a long time, if there is going to be a lot of people who were kind of less stuck to the side. This is a very long-term issue. This is not going to go away real quick. And I'm very emotional, can you tell?

GREG: It's quite all right. Please understand though that the small business administration operates under the Stafford Act and under that legislation is how we operate. I am simply a messenger in terms of information in terms of information that is available. Those kind of issues that you have to take up with your legislative delegation. But again, I'm saying, go in and see if

you are qualified based on what you said and if you said it to me, just now, I thought I heard you say that your business is recreational and I think that category was covered. Again, don't disqualify yourself by standing back saying, well I don't qualify. Go in and get it from the horse's mouth. I can't sit here and go through a hypothesis or anything like that and say that it is yes or that it's not. One thing about me, I'm going to stick with what we call the standard talking points that come out of our office. I'm not going to deviate for them. In those cases, I will read them to you as it was given to me, so there's no question about it and I don't take expectations where they should not be.

RESPONDENT 5: I understand that.

GREG: Yes, Ma'am.

(0:36:35.7)

MODERATOR: Do we have any other questions?

RESPONDENT 6: I have a question. My name is Michael Duri, I'm a boat captain and a small business owner. I missed the first part of her question from the Joshua. But mine is to Mr. Malone, you mentioned that the national media said oil's hit the beaches. Does the CVB have a national plan of ads or programs that you're going to get out there around the country to let people know that there are areas such as Mobile Bay and Mobile Tensaw Delta that are not covered in oil, at least not yet.

HERB: Yes, in fact we have implementing a strategy as far as Gulf Shore and Orange Beach are concerned, we were beneficiaries of about 1.5 million dollars from the first round of grant money that came down from BP to the state, to the counties. In our county leadership allocated that much for tourism marketing. That helped drive the Memorial Day weekend that we had. We're working conjunction with the state office of tourism. As of yesterday at 11:15, we were told to remain at the waters, that waters south of Alabama where had been closed. We pulled all the fish ads, we knew that this was a very challenging situation, so we established this with the media that we place that with, that we know that we need to stop it on short order, we want to stop and they agree to that. Then the afternoon reports came out about oil on Alabama's beaches and the beach TV ads, the voice over the ad says so far we have oil on Alabama's beaches so we had to pull those ads. We were re- institute that next week as soon as we get those things amended. I know that the Mobile Convention and Visitors Bureau, the attractions of Mobile just like we are in Baldwin County are all working to implement things to tell the world that we are open for business in areas where we are open.

MICHAEL: Okay, thank you.

(0:38:39.2)

MODERATOR: Do anybody have any other questions?

RESPONDENT 7: Anybody if the fish is selling? We're running specials.

(0:38:48.4)

MODERATOR: It's a fun time, I've done it. It's great. Thank you for coming and please be sure to take some information. We'll also be here tomorrow morning from nine to noon, so let people now.

RESPONDENTS: Thank you all very much.

END OF AUDIO.

Business and Personal Finance

Mobile, Ala., June 3, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:01:03.4)

MODERATOR: If you guys have questions, feel free to ask them. You just have to step up to the microphone so we can record them.

RICK: I'm Rick Zapata I'm with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System out of Auburn. I'm in the Family and Consumer Sciences at Auburn. I teach Personal Financial Management. Anything that has to do with money or unemployment issues or business or finance is my area.

GREG: My name is Greg Dawson. I'm a Public Information Officer with the United States Small Business Administration. As a Public Information Officer, it's my job to make sure no stone is unturned in getting out information on assistance that's available to businesses that have been impacted by the Deepwater BP oil spill. There has been an agency declaration and it's an Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program that we're making available up to \$2 million at interest rates of about 4% with terms up to 30 years. We are in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Florida as it relates to this particular declaration. We have offices set up for Mobile and Baldwin County. I got fliers as well as fact sheets that will speak to the interest rates and the location for our business outreach centers. Customer service representatives in those locations will walk individuals through the application process. People tend to fear if you will, the paperwork associated with the business loans at the SBA, those customer service representatives, again will walk the individuals through the application process. We encourage people to go in and visit. If you can't get in to a business recovery center, you can dial 1-800-659-2955 which is also on that fact sheet. Customer service representatives will help you as well as answer any questions.

JOANNE: Good morning my name is Joanne McDonough. I'm a Nature Tourism Specialist with the Sea Grant Extension and also in partnership with The Alabama Gulf Coast Convention & Visitors Bureau. I'm sitting in for Herb Malone who couldn't make it this evening. We basically market the destination of the beaches all the way up to Fort Morgan but we also have partnerships in Mobile County with the Coastal Birding Trails, Civil War Trail and now the Scenic Coastal Byway.

AUDIENCE: Perhaps you can help me answer or frame a question here. We are a mechanical equipment company that provides pumps and systems for a lot of local industries, Gulf Coast industry. I'm one of the salesmen for our company. Particularly, one of the areas I work with is the fisheries. It seems like that's an ongoing business of ours. Lamont Fish Hatchery over

in Gulfport, Mississippi, is one of the customers I've been working with lately. I'm talking to them about possibly their securing funding for buying pieces of equipment. They are attempting to ark or wildlife bank marine life. They're juvenile species, small sea crabs and things of that nature. What they need is they need to be able to transfer large quantities of salt water to these hatchery ponds whereas they don't have that capability now. Equipment typically is a pretty long lead item so something would have to be done relatively soon. They're using smaller trash pumps now, trying to do the transfers. One question is for those guys. Another would be at the Dauphin Island Shellfish Resource Laboratory; they have species of oysters that they have just developed in conjunction with new hybrid oysters to increase shellfish production. I was just down there this week and they are looking at possibly having to shut down their salt water intakes because of contaminating a brand new system that they just put in for the Shellfish Research Laboratory. They need some filtration system in order to capture the oil before it contaminates their complete intake system. My question is how can you help them to secure funding so that they can start purchasing equipment immediately?

GREG: Are you directing that to the SBA?

AUDIENCE: I don't know which representative to direct that to.

GREG: Let me share a couple of things with you. The EIDL Program [Economic Injury Disaster Loans], and I am going to, one, identify those businesses that are eligible under that program. Small businesses engaged in fishing, shrimping, crabbing, oyster fishing in the waters are affected by the oil spill. Small businesses dependent on catching or sale of shrimp, crab, and oysters. Suppliers of fishing gear and fuel companies that run docks and boatyards. Companies that process, ship and sell wholesale and retail seafood. Coastal small businesses and businesses involved in recreational and sport fishing. Your question was long so I wasn't quite sure if I was capturing everything. If they are in those industries I would suggest one, that they go into a business recovery center and speak one on one with the representative there. If they're not able to do that, they can call the 1-800 number and speak to a customer service representative and determine if that business niche fits in that EIDL Program category. It sounds to me that it may, but I'm really not sure.

AUDIENCE: I think it's more funded by a grant such as the Shellfish Research Laboratory or the Mississippi Park and Wildlife.

GREG: The other part of understanding the program is to realize that the EIDL Program is for businesses that have suffered an economic impact as a result of this incidence. Of course, we would be looking at financials that are going to show what you did over the last three years versus what your projections may have been as it relates to this particular financial year.

One of the questions that have come in, again, we are talking on a case by case basis. People are saying, the norm has not been for the last five years since Katrina. My response to that is, add a caveat to that application or at least let the customer service representative make a note that the norm may be pre-Katrina and add those finances as well.

AUDIENCE: Do you have the phone number for the SBA here in Mobile?

AUDIENCE: No sir, would that be appropriate for me just to relay to them?

RESPONDENT: Yes, sir. If you write this down, the local number is 251-544-7401. On the filtration system, the people that are having the filtration problem, they need to file a claim with BP just as soon as they possibly can. Probably, Dr. Swann would be your best contact. What about the Auburn folks, wouldn't you all have something on the filtration system?

(0:09:45.6)

MODERATOR: Bill Walton is here. He's the facilitator of the fisheries group. He works down at the *[0:09:51.0 inaudible]*.

RESPONDENT: Dr. Scott and Dr. Valentine, George...

(0:09:59.0)

MODERATOR: Yes. Dr. Walton, you may have met him. He does some of the oyster research. He's here, if you want to talk one-on-one with him as well. Because he may already be working or they may be working...

RESPONDENT: If you could get Auburn on board with that and let them go in, the company that you're talking about or this group, get Auburn on board with that. BP might be more responsive to come forth a little bit quicker. Since it is an endangered fishery you're talking about. We're talking about days, days.

Yes, sir. I would get on that before lunch.

I work with Sea Grant also with the Mississippi State *[0:10:47.8 inaudible]* two grants I've seen come through. They're pretty fast grants. One was through BP and there's another one I saw *[0:10:58.6 inaudible]* related to research but it certainly related to the problem with filtration system.

(0:11:05.5)

MODERATOR: Dr. Walton may be working on that.

RESPONDENT: I'm sure that he is with that group.

(0:11:08.3)

MODERATOR: There's nobody here from the Sea Lab but he's on work...

RESPONDENT: I just thought Mississippi was being very proactive in trying to bank some of these wildlife species so that they can reintroduce them hopefully. If there's damage they could reintroduce them.

(0:11:25.5)

MODERATOR: Yes. I know he's been working on some baseline research there and Sea Lab as well. That's why you might need to talk to him one-on-one because he knows better than I do what's going on in the research.

RESPONDENT: I'm good. Thank you.

(0:11:40.0)

MODERATOR: Thank you. Anybody else have a question.

WALTER: I'm just going to make a comment.

(0:11:46.9)

MODERATOR: Sure.

WALTER: Good morning to you. I'm Walter Hendrix. I'm with Fannie Mae. I cover Alabama and Mississippi and handle Fannie Mae's business here. I think our biggest concern, what I'm trying to do is monitor here, what will be our response to the personal finance issues of people who may be facing foreclosure as a result of lost wages. In some way, I'd like to get plugged into that, make sure we're adequate and responding to that.

RICK: Extension has plans already under way to start doing homeowner education and we also have home buying classes and the credit repair classes that we are going to be teaching. If you leave me your card, I'd like you to be involved with that.

WALTER: I'll do it. Okay. I sure would. Any other comments, any other thoughts on it? I've been working with Dr. Epley at the USA who's at the demographer out there. We're trying to figure out and develop some model for, start to see the spiking, increase in foreclosure activities. If we can be involved with that, we're here for that.

RICHARD: Richard Rode *[0:13:28.4 inaudible]* I communicated several times *[0:13:32.2 inaudible]*

RESPONDENT: Are you familiar with what's available to businesses in *[0:13:37.7 inaudible]*

RESPONDENT: Yes. I'm fairly knowledgeable with regard to that.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

RESPONDENT: The biggest concerns I have was, not so much SBA when it comes to business [0:13:54.4 *inaudible*] as far as the claims process as far as actually getting ours done, I'm on the Baldwin County Commission. I was down at Orange Beach yesterday when the heads of BP and [0:14:04.8 *inaudible*] and other folks there. They were giving a conversation where the process just doesn't seem to be simply working and the rules continually change.

RESPONDENT: As well as the adjusters continually changing, it is becoming extremely frustrating.

RESPONDENT: I was at a meeting over in Alabama two days ago, one of things I said to BP is that it's becoming apparent that there's no standard operating procedure because I'm hearing different messages at the meetings that I go to. They indicated that it's the first time and that they're working on having something standardized. If you don't have people on the same page you're going to have total chaos [0:14:47.0 *inaudible*].

RESPONDENT: It seems like the players on their side are continually changing. Even yesterday...

They were not the same as the week before?

No. Not the same as the week before and they had a past CFO for BP. They called him out of retirement and got him down there. He'd been on the job like a week. He had not been there the week before. He's learning what's going on. It's a fluid thing and continually changing. You're not hearing the same thing from week to week. The actual adjusters that are actually talking with folks, there are folks that keep coming up to Mike, they were on their fourth adjuster as far as their claims is concerned. There's no continuity there as far as really communicating any progress. They did mention they have some procedures. If you don't have the continuity of personnel, the procedures, I don't know if this can get you... that seems to be the most frustrating thing from a business standpoint as far as the claims process.

RICK: We have plans to do some on-site education in South Baldwin County. If we can't get it approved to do it this month, we'll probably do it next month. If you talk to any business people, one of the things that's not being told there is to prepare for the long term and start laying off employees. While the unemployment insurance is going to go up then you have to [0:16:15.2 *inaudible*] State of Alabama. That's going to remain for a longer period of time. What a lot of business owners don't understand is

there's going to be some increase in cost in doing business that will impact them. They may not even be included on the playing. In those workshops, that we're going to do in the southern part of the county, we're going to try to get that information out because a lot of business owners when they're impacted like we're seeing, they don't think as clearly about the long term implications. It's just reasonable to expect that if we have a lot of business that go out of business [0:16:57.8 *inaudible*] increase license fees, insurance is going to go up. It's not just the fact that their business bottom line is going to be impacted. It's a long term process they need to improve also.

RESPONDENT: I understand what you're saying. My profession is that of a CPA, so I understand what you're saying with all due respect.

RICK: I will put you on the agenda. (Chuckle)

RESPONDENT: What they're going to come back to is, well Mr. Zapata that's all well and good but I'm going to have to be around to rebuild and experience that claim. Right now, I'm just trying to make my payroll. Right now, I'm suffering and then I've got a charter boat that can't go out and do anything. I've got a boat payment that I've got to make. I've got a restaurant here and my business is down because of the folks that aren't here. I can't make the payroll so those folks in turn can't make their mortgage payment. That's all well and good as far as the long term effects but if I can't make it there, there's no bearing on my present day situation. I got to get to there for that to make any sense.

GREG: One other thing we are currently in. That's all good but the fact of the matter is that, one, you don't have to take the SBA loan that your approved for. Two, that leaves you an option. Three, should BP make you owe and you're able to pay that off and pay it down. You got some options out there. The people have got to get in and get the information as it's out there.

RESPONDENT: I'm not telling you something that you don't already know but their response to you is going to be, why do I need to go get a loan when BP is the one that did this to me. Why do I got to go borrow money to make my ends meet?

RESPONDENT: My response to that is to have an option available to you today that you don't necessarily have. That makes a strong argument.

RESPONDENT: So are they moving from one bureaucratic quagmire to another? Is SBA, is their process; hopefully it's better to find but is it streamlined from the standpoint of getting through with it?

RESPONDENT: We look at turning around a clean package. What I mean by clean package is a package that comes in that's not being bounced back between our processing office and the individual. That's why I recommend people go and sit down with the customer service representatives who can walk them through the process. After they walk them through the process, you bring that application back in and make sure the I's are dotted and the T's are crossed. Now, we're talking about a clean package. That clean package is turned around for 14 to 21 days.

RESPONDENT: Something, if you get the chance to cut off the records of some business people, this has happened so it could be, you might gain right now and turn around and get hit with an audit with penalties and interests [0:20:01.9 *inaudible*] every dollar.

RESPONDENT: That actually came up, being a CPA (Laughter) I'm familiar with the underground economy there. There's a good bit in the restaurant and charter boat fishing area. The IRS is certainly aware of that. That actually came up yesterday in one of the, one lady who does have a number of charter boats was commenting that she does 1099 her deckhands and what have you. There are some other boats down there that are not doing those kinds of things. They're not reporting all of their income. I've talked to folks in the past, when you don't put that income, it's going to come to haunt you, when you want to sell your business or when you got a claim to file or something, it's going to come back to bite you. Unfortunately, there's going to be some folks down there like that. I don't know what you're going to do in that situation. It's not unreasonable to request their tax returns but they're going to tell you that tax return doesn't reflect all the money they're making. It probably doesn't but there's nothing else to go on.

RESPONDENT: Do you think if Extension does some smaller workshops? My experience in these areas, the bigger the group the fewer questions you have that you're able to answer. If we did some smaller workshops, maybe at the libraries holding 20 or 25 people do you think that would help? We already have done the unemployment workshops. Those are already developed and budgeting workshops and things like that.

RESPONDENT: I'm not really sure. What I sensed yesterday was an extreme amount of frustration on the part of the people. They're meeting every Wednesday at noon down there. They head in there council chambers a week before, they had more than really what their Fire Marshall wanted to allow. They moved to the recreation center, I would say yesterday, there was probably 300 to 500 people. It was pretty much packed out. The level of frustration, it was like a pressure cooker and that pressure is building. Somewhere there's got to be some relief. Quite frankly, the relief needs to be BP needs to start letting some cash go. If they did, then the cooler heads would

prevail and then people would be thinking in terms of the long term effects if you will and start talking to you and to the SBA. Realize that this process is going to take with BP. If I can get something from them to help get me over the hurdle, then I could start thinking long term. Right now, they're only thinking from one payday to the next payday. One month to the next month. They've been filing claims, they've been getting claim numbers and it's not going anywhere. It's not getting resolved. From my perspective, BP is on the other side saying, once we open these faucets and start letting money go out, is it ever going to stop? Do I hold off or do I spend the money here or do I not and we'll just go to court and see what can happen in the court if you will. They're fearful of opening the faucets if you will. What happens at that point.

RESPONDENT: Bankruptcy is still an option for them also if something happens with *[0:23:15.0 inaudible]*.

RESPONDENT: Sure. No question, bankruptcy is still an option. There was a lady there yesterday. They've been out there living in there where Exxon Valdez was, I forgot who she said she worked for, a doctor of something. Her comments were the same thing that's happening here is what happened out there. They talked a good game in terms of paying but they didn't pay. They ended up going to court and 20 years later they get 10 cents on the dollar as far as her claims were concerned.

RESPONDENT: There was *[0:23:45.2 inaudible]* I believe it was CNN who had settled the claim and ended up with I think he said *[0:24:00.3 inaudible]* all of those things. So is it worth 20 years later to end up with a lot of money.

RESPONDENT: What about your claims with BP and the county? Have you all gotten any response?

RESPONDENT: We sent in one just to check the system you could say. We've been keeping detailed records as far as our personnel that we've had over at Incident Command and the work that we've been doing in the county. It was only, I want to say, somewhere in the \$40,000, \$50,000 range for the first month or three weeks whatever. We sent it all up there to BP and it sat on someone's desk and we call and check on it and the response we got was we really don't know what to do with it. It's still sitting there. There was one lady yesterday that they had gotten some money. The adjuster that she had was very responsive in helping work her claim through and she had actually got some checks. Only one out of all those.

RESPONDENT: She was not the same lady that was there a week before?

RESPONDENT: No. She wasn't. She has SanRoc Cay down there and a number of boats and whatever. She had a good adjuster apparently. Then there are others

that said they were on their fourth adjuster. One adjuster lost all the information and they had to come up with additional information for the next adjuster and it just wasn't getting anywhere.

RESPONDENT: People might not be so hostile if they were seeing evidence of something measurable happening. If somebody was there giving testimonies...

RESPONDENT: I hope that that message was Mark [0:25:50.4 *inaudible*] down there was running the meeting and he was encouraging us as well as others for them to...they need to start paying some claims. Because the number of claims, they're very consistent as far as rental property come up with a method of dealing with rental property as far as the restaurant, come up with a method to deal with the restaurant and come up with that process. It's not rocket science once you come up with a method and information we need and the calculations, cut the check and be done with it. They've got to get past that. I think if you can get past that, then I would go back to your original question. Having some meetings down there, would be good but until things settle down. What would be probably good is the Mariner down there is having meetings with the public. Everyone's there. It would be good if there was some other agency, other groups that were there to hear that.

RESPONDENT: I'm with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. I'm working with the commission, the Baldwin County Commission and Baldwin County Watershed Coalition. We're talking about informational meetings, I would like to get your card and pick your brain about what you think is needed in that area. I live up there myself. [0:27:07.4 *inaudible*] We would like to find out what is it you think the best forum, what people need to hear, what information.

(0:27:35.8)

MODERATOR: Go ahead. We have the Small Business Administration and Mr. Zapata is with Auburn...

RESPONDENT: The Alabama Cooperative Extension. It's okay.

MARY: I'm Mary Ladnier and I was wondering, has anyone ever went out and estimated the damages of the commercial fishing industry?

RESPONDENT: Not yet. Nobody.

MARY: How would that affect it? This oil and dispersants that they put in it?

RESPONDENT: No one knows.

MARY: Will we ever be able to do it again?

RESPONDENT: The oil spill itself first of all was unprecedented. There's no way to measure what the impacts will be. My understanding from the scientists are, and you might address this, that they're going to be sampling seafood for contamination. That sampling of seafood may continue for a year or two years or three years or four years. What happened in Alaska is that's the process they went through. It may be a year or two before they even do an impact study financially. To answer your question, nobody really knows. Do you have anything to add?

(0:28:58.2)

MODERATOR: I don't but over in the fisheries. You may have been in the fisheries room already there. I know they're addressing questions on dispersants. They've got experts that we don't have.

MARY: Yes. I attended that yesterday evening but I missed this one and I wanted to come down.

RESPONDENT: Are you in the fishing industry?

MARY: Yes, I am.

RESPONDENT: Okay. You're not able to fish right now?

MARY: No. They closed off all the areas and stuff.

RESPONDENT: We have some financial information on the table. You're welcome to take any of that you like. This gentleman is with the Small Business Administration and there are loans available to businesses if you would be interested in asking that question.

MARY: I have to wait on that because you have to see if you can get another job in a different area, outside your Commercial Fishman because loans you have to pay back. That would just add to my problem.

RESPONDENT: Yes ma'am, I understand that. If you'll get a pencil, let me give you a phone number of some people here that you could call upon to help you. There is a counseling agency here in Mobile that does financial counseling. They also can intervene between you and any creditors that you start having problems with. Their number is 602-0011 and the name is Consumer Credit Counseling Service. They're partially funded by United Way. They're legitimate, they're not one of these scams like you're seeing on TV, we'll clean your credit up in a year, that's not what they're about. They're actually to help homeowners and business people. They're legitimate so you might want to call them. They may find out about any

grants or anything that comes down through the government that might help you.

MARY: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Hold on before you go. Let me just share a couple of things with you. You may not want a loan and I understand that but this is a potential option that is available to you from the government and I wish you would look at it that way. Visit one of our Customer Service Centers in Baldwin or Mobile County. I've got the handouts over there as well as the fact sheets. The fact of the matter though is, you should not wait on BP because one, you don't have to take the loan if you are qualified for it. The other part of that is that should BP make you owe, then you can take those dollars and pay that loan off or pay it down. What the government is doing is giving you some options to ride out the storm so to speak. So you really should take it into consideration or at least you would owe it to yourself to go in and speak with one of our customer service representatives so that you know the option door is open and then you can make the decision later on.

RESPONDENT: SBA has financial counselors that will work with you for free. Won't charge anything and here's their number if you want to write this down. Are you in Baldwin?

MARY: No. I live in Mobile in [0:32:37.0 *inaudible*]Creek

RESPONDENT: I think this would be your contact. Her name is Charmaine [0:32:42.1 *inaudible*].

MARY: Can I get that information, unfortunately I left my glasses.

RESPONDENT: Anyway she can help you. They work closer with SBA and she's a good contact that can help you with your business. Unfortunately, I don't think these things are going away any time soon. But this is Women's Business...She'll be glad to sit down and talk with you and help you with anything.

MARY: Okay. I ain't had none. Getting a job with BP so...

RESPONDENT: My area is business finance, anything that has to do with money. This gentleman here is with SBA and the emergency loan program.

ANDY: I'd like to talk to both of you. My name is Andy Hope. I bought a charter boat, damaged from Ivan a couple of years ago, been working on it and got it just about ready to fish and this was going to be our first season. Now we have this. As far as qualifying for some assistance, I'm out of a bunch of money that really don't look like I'll be able to recoup it in the

next couple of months or even start. How do I go about this? I don't have the last three years of tax returns to show I've been fishing. I've got a boat (Chuckle) A hole in the water which I pour money into. What can I do?

RESPONDENT: Did you buy a business license?

ANDY: No. We're not ready to fish yet.

RESPONDENT: Did you go through any kind of training for your captain's license?

ANDY: Yes, I got a 500 ton Master. I've been running harbor tugs here in the port. I dock and sail ships.

RESPONDENT: Since you've bought the boat, have you taken any training?

ANDY: No. I've fished for the last 20 years. Just ran other people's boats and I've had a chartered boat in the past back in the 90's and got out of it. Got a son that turns 14 on Saturday. I was trying to get back in it a little bit for his say-so. He wanted to fish. We were going to charter it and he was going to work as a deckhand. Now this happens.

RESPONDENT: From the SBA side from what you're saying. I'm not sure, just to be honest with you. Let me tell you what you need to do. If you look at that location sheet over there as well as the fact sheet. Go in and speak to one of our customer service representatives. We got people here in Mobile County as well as in Baldwin County.

ANDY: Okay. I got them.

RESPONDENT: Present the case. I'm sorry I'm not sure on that.

ANDY: I should have known better than to buy a boat. (Laughter) I had that second happiest day years ago. I decided I wanted another one.

RESPONDENT: Have you filed or thought about filing a claim with BP?

ANDY: No, and that's why I showed up here today to inquire some more. I talked to a fellow captain yesterday and he's got a chartered boat in Orange Beach and he told me I needed to go by the Foley office and fill out a claim. I think it's at Hutchinson and Moore engineering firm there in Foley in their office.

RESPONDENT: From a tax perspective the IRS, you can go to IRS.gov, when it gets closer to the end of the year. There may be a situation where you could claim the loss, but I would certainly encourage you to pursue it with BP. What you might have to do since you do not have the supporting information from

prior years, records of income. You may have to do that through an affidavit and you can go to Office Depot or any of the business stores and get affidavits on file on the *[0:36:57.1 inaudible]*.

ANDY: Yes, we're fine with that.

RESPONDENT: Yes, they're fairly inexpensive and you might have to do it through affidavit forms showing the intent was to open a business and this would be prohibiting you from opening a business.

ANDY: I've got two billboards on 98.

RESPONDENT: The advertising cost would certainly show your intent. Any contractual agreements that you've had in relation to that. If you contracted with someone to build the boat or rebuild or repair the boat or any of those contractual agreements...

ANDY: We've been doing it ourselves because 17 years ago, I was involved in that construction. It's hard to pay somebody when you think you can do it better yourself. But no I'm...

RESPONDENT: But you purchased, you've purchased the supplies and things like that.

ANDY: Yes, I'm on a first-name basis with West Marine and Blue Water.

RESPONDENT: If you come up with those receipts. They may charge you a little bit extra to go back and report anything that you can come up with. If you tell them the purpose of it, they might not charge you, if you can come up with that. If you could establish intent, I think your chances will be pretty good. But I don't work for BP.

ANDY: No. That's fine. Right. I understand. Okay.

RESPONDENT: I think that would be a good place for you to start.

ANDY: Go to the claims office there in Foley and then...

RESPONDENT: Yes sir and then start getting...

ANDY: Start the process. Okay.

RESPONDENT: Start getting all your data and your affidavits up, get your back up info from the advertising and doing, get all of that. When you get ready to submit all of that, it would be as complete as possible.

ANDY: Okay.

(0:38:41.9)

MODERATOR2: Now are you living in Orange Beach?

ANDY:

I live at Perdido Beach, Palmetto Creek. That's where the boat is, in my front yard. The signs are on 98 on either side of County Road 97.

(0:38:52.4)

MODERATOR: Because they also opened an office behind the Wintzell's in Orange Beach.

ANDY:

Okay. There's one there behind the bank there in Foley across from the hospital, so there's no problem.

(0:39:00.1)

MODERATOR: That's probably closer to you.

RESPONDENT:

Well, all right.

RESPONDENT:

See you all later.

END OF AUDIO.

Data and Monitoring

Biloxi, Miss., June 3, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

[AUDIO STARTS ABRUPTLY.]

RESPONDENT: With the sunlight coming down and the gulf temperatures rising, is there a chance that that chemical dispersant is going to affect the temperature of the Gulf of Mexico to get warmer and maybe produce a more dangerous storm?

PANELIST: We had conversations with that as well. The way that I'm looking at that is in terms of size. You have the size of a hurricane. Go back to Katrina, go back to Ike, 1969, go back to Camille, the size of these storms. You could have some localized changes in temperature. Really, the hurricane is being affected by a bigger area. If you think about it, the size of the oil spill relative to the size of, say, Ike that covered mostly the Gulf of Mexico. I think what we're going to see is so much momentum, so much energy going into the hurricane that is going to feel such a wider area besides where the oil is. I don't think there's going to be much impact on the strength nor the direction of the hurricane. I think the biggest effect would be once again, the previous question, will be in the surge itself. If you look at geographically, I don't think there's going to be much of an effect. Good question though. If you have them, write them on your card. Our office is only about half hour away over in Slidell, so if you have them, write down your questions. We'll get answers to you.

AUDIENCE: I've been watching the maps. My daughter has made me just start watching them once a day. I look at them once a day. I noticed that, of course with the tides and whatever, is there a chance it's going to move a great distance? It looks like it's really moved south of us in Alabama in the last few days, where it was primarily under Louisiana there for a while, is there a chance it won't come ashore here and it's going to move again with the tides?

PANELIST: From our perspective, we're dealing with the meteorology aspects of this. There's so many different things are going through it. It's the winds, it's your currents. It's a lot of different factors that go to the oil. What I can say is, one thing that you keep in mind too with the hurricane. Think about the direction that the hurricane rotates. That's where we're trying to, what we're concentrating on right now. We do get some sort of hurricane that occurs west of here. Let's say, if we're really speaking with the Mississippi Gulf Coast, if the hurricane hits Louisiana, the onshore flow could push some of that oil in. Now, if you get a hurricane on the opposite direction

towards Florida, you can in essence get the offshore flow to blow the oil out. So, when I get the questions about where's the oil going to go with the hurricane, it is completely dependent on where the hurricane goes. An Ike type of thing will blow it back towards the east. It will depend on the actual direction, but you're talking tides, currents, winds. There's so many different factors that add up. And to be honest with you, a lot of unknowns with it. I kind of answered the question, but I turned it back to the hurricane.

AUDIENCE: I'm not even thinking of hurricane. I'm thinking about natural. It just looks like I'm, you go 72 hours out. Within 24 hours, all that changes again.

PANELIST: You know what's going to change again, if you look at the forecast, we have a, it's a non-tropical system, but there's a small low that's actually in the gulf that's gonna bring us some showers, watch the showers and thunderstorms start to increase significantly tonight. It's going to come through, right over the spill area, right over the Gulf Coast area, you're going to see a lot of rain. And, once again, you try to get ahead of the game and where things are going to go. And now, we got a system developing that's going to change the winds, you're gonna have some, you know, rotation. And they're non-tropical again, so don't get excited there. But, that again changes the whole ball game. Just like the old saying down here, if you don't like the weather, wait a minute. It's the truth. It's the same thing with this, we got another system and it's going to impact where things go.

(0:04:22.9)

MODERATOR: *[0:04:01.8 inaudible]*. Let's get started. We have *[0:04:13.0 inaudible]* that are here to answer your questions today. *[0:04:19.4 inaudible]*. Starting in the front row, do you have any questions?

RESPONDENT: It's a different question though.

(0:04:34.0)

MODERATOR: Okay. We'll get you in a minute. There's not many people in here. How about you? Do you have any questions? How about you? Okay, please step forward.

JOE: Hi, my name is Joe Magaziki *[0:04:53.5 sp?]*. I have a question regarding to the ecosystem. Are there plans to deploy technologies outside of satellites to monitor the damage done to the marshes, done deep into the marshes, where the ecosystem is most affected? And, if so, what would those technologies be?

RESPONDENT: Maybe I should quantify or qualify what this group can answer. That is more of a ecological question is probably for the fisheries group. We can

answer the questions related to public health, to the air monitoring we're doing, and the water sampling we're doing and the results of that. Things related to fisheries and ecological impacts to the marshes.

BRYON:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I'm the director of the Gulf of Mexico program that Stan recognized in his opening remarks this morning. The fact of the matter is that particular question can be actually directly answered in a number of ways. The Gulf of Mexico region actually operates under a group of capacities, not the least of which is the emergence of the Gulf of Mexico Governor's Alliance. The governors' Alliance is a real merger between federal, state and local capacities. In this particular regard, you can look into the future. It may not be the technologies because there was not the anticipation of such an oil spill in many of those inundated areas. The integrated capacity of the science agencies, again both federal and state and private and academia, is a guaranteed outcome of the process of both dealing with the resource damage assessment as well as basically, the response framework. You have all noticed in recent days, the \$500 million research grant applied by BP. Just as an example, that research capacity will begin to come out of largely academia as to how to use other technologies than just the satellite systems and the remote sensing to begin to get a feel in a much more capable approach as time emerges on how to get into the actual affect of the constituents in those areas. So, I didn't want you to go where I'm thinking there wasn't an answer to that question because we're all posed right now with a problem that we did not anticipate prior to April, late April. The fact of the matter is, we do have a lot of assets that we'll be reestablishing framework on.

LARRY:

That was a very good question, that was a very good answer, but I just wanted to add a couple of other points. As I said in my opening remark, one of the most important things with NOAA and the federal trustees and state trustees was having a baseline of what was out there before this incident occurred. Part of that assessment has been the extent of the marshes that are out there. We've flown aerial flyovers, we have mapped and photographed these areas. We know how much is out there. We've also done stock assessment on fisheries, we've done assessment of aquatic species of these areas. We know what it looks like for the most part prior to the event. And then, we will follow up, post-event to see to what extent these resources has been impacted. Some of them, you can do from an airplane, you can do it from a satellite, but many of these observations, you're going to have to get out of the field without a lot of high technology but a lot of scientific expertise about what's happening in these systems. Because a lot of it is observing these types of biological processes or these evidence of them sort of on an up-close and personal basis. We've used a

lot of technology to get an idea of what's out there. You can get a gross picture of what's happening after this is done. But, the particulars of what happened is a, you know, a much more difficult question. There isn't any off-the-shelf technologies other than knowing what level of contaminants are out there, for example, that can answer that type of question.

TOM: It kind of piggy back. My name is Tom Drunnet. Our aircraft has been in the New Orleans area for about quarter of a month now. We've got hyperspectral equipment in it. We've been flying day and night, about eight hours a day. We also have scientists, geologists that's been taking soil samples, water samples. I'd like to know what agency we can coordinate with to perhaps share all this information that we have, which is very detailed. Because we can actually, with our equipment, we can fingerprint this oil so that if it shows up someplace else, it can be attributed to that oil, that type of thing.

That's a federal organized structure to provide that type of information to. I'll give you that however I would like to bring to your attention that tomorrow at LSU, we're hosting a science conference. And one of the undercutting, cross-cutting themes of that conference is how do we engage more effectively the non-federal science community in helping us not only with the response to this but the long-term science questions associated with this. If you could get anybody there, that would be...

TOM: If I can get any information from you later, I'd appreciate it.

LARRY: Just sort of a point, I've also, we, my former NOAA center, we've actually flown hyper spectral images of all of the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve just before, just after this event occurrence. We have some of that baseline...

TOM: We do also.

LARRY: Yes, that we want to get in there too. So, I think there's a structured process for that. We'll inform you that. Any baseline data that is out there, it's going to be very helpful in determining, doing this damage assessment in the long term.

TOM: Thank you very much.

SUZANNE: Good morning. My name is Suzanne Huber. My question is who has the information as to how many gallons of oil-and-water mixture is being removed daily from the gulf? We know how much is going in. But how much is coming out, and exactly where is it going? How is it being recycled? Who would have that information?

RESPONDENT: The information itself is being managed *[0:12:51.2 inaudible]* at the area command, the unified area command. It's available. I don't have it for you, but we can point you to the websites to get that information. All that information is as far as what's being collected, how it is being disposed of. It's all publicly available. I can give you, if you write down your information, I can get you the website. There are actually a number of websites that are being maintained by EPA, by the Coast Guard, by NOAA that have a lot of information on what's going on, data, health effects, ecological effects. Probably it would be helpful.

SUZANNE: It would be helpful if that was all on one site but that doesn't seem possible.

RESPONDENT: There are links. Normally, even that we have separate sites, sites themselves have links to other agency sites.

[0:13:59.5 inaudible]. You'll find the dispersants used by gallons both surface and subsea. I've noticed it is not updated daily. There are periods of time. There's probably a reason for that, which the cycle stops for either weather or what have you. The one consistent reporting site has been Horizon spill response site, which is the one that is aggregate managed by BP's postings.

SUZANNE: As far as the amount of boom that has been laid and most of the information unfortunately is bits and pieces from the media. The million miles or million feet of boom, which translates into what, under 200 miles, which definitely doesn't cover the coast line. The fact that it is containing the oil temporarily. Why aren't there the larger skimmers or vacuum units that can remove over 120 thousand gallons a day being used to stop this prior to it going past the booms.

BRYON: Unfortunately that's not a response of federal government. That's actually a BP question, and I don't think those representatives are here.

SUZANNE: Okay. Thank you.

JERRY: Hopefully I'm in the right place. I'm Jerry Becker. I work with Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding. We're just wondering, what's the best way, the best practice to clean the hull of the ship. Is it with high pressure water? Do they use, mix it with dispersant. If so, we would be washing pier side. Would we have to do any monitoring data?

PANELIST: We found that high-pressure washing is effective. However, it should be coordinated with the Coast Guard. Use of dispersants anywhere within the

waters in United States is regulated by either EPA or the Coast Guard. So, and there are some plans in place, in fact, out of the Mobile Unified Command, there's a specific plan for cleaning of vessels, oiled vessels. It has been effective, so far, to just use high-pressure water.

DAVID:

I'm David Pose, and I'm also of Northrop Grumman, with the trial coordination department. We are, currently, in the process of reevaluating our upcoming sea trial to try to avoid the oil area. Daily, it's becoming more difficult. As it's pushing us farther into the east to avoid any of the sheen. Due to our reverse osmosis units on these Navy ships, according to the tape manuals having a zero part per million ingestion. Filters are exceptionally high for these. And once ingested of oil, they are not cleanable or replaceable. There's some discussion going about what a level is possibly is able to handle. Doesn't look like it is going to be much. I have a question that I'm probably not get an answer to, but we need someone who can answer it. We need to know what parts per million are in the Gulf subsurface so that we'll know where we can run and where we can't run these ships through. It also affects our heat exchangers, our saltwater cooling, the spy-ray radar heat exchangers, and miscellaneous other equipment. I really need a contact on where we can get some definitive information.

TERRY:

I guess I want to go to the website, we do post, we do some water monitoring in the gulf. We do post some of that data. Of course the problem is that ship is over time as you mentioned. Information that you have today may not be relevant to you for tomorrow. The Coast Guard would be the best source especially out of Mobile, depending on where you are will be the best source for that information. EPA is providing water monitoring for the Coast Guard. They have that information. So, that might be your best source at this point.

RESPONDENT:

We're looking for a little more information from the fairway out to one to 200 miles. That doesn't seem to be available anywhere. Quite frankly, the Deepwater Horizon Incident site it's not up to date generally, as the speaker over here had commented to, it tends to be a little out of date. In fact, the modest pictures that are available anymore because most of them have been taken off line are a week old. There's no visible high-resolution pictures to look at anymore. We need some clear answers and someone to contact. I will write that down.

TERRY:

You're correct. Our focus has been, for water sampling for human health and ecological concerns, which are relatively close to shore and that was in the 100-mile area.

(0:20:40.9)

MODERATOR: Real quick, I will remind everyone that you an extra panelist [0:20:44.0 *inaudible*].

VANESSA: Good morning. I'm Vanessa Gibson and I'm a resident of Jackson County, Gautier, Mississippi. I'm also representing Jackson County Civic Action, community action agency. I do hear that the air quality is being tested and that there's no significant danger at this point. But, I am concerned for the children and elderly populations and people who do have respiratory problems. In my personal experience has been that on one particular Sunday while gardening, there was a very strong smell of diesel in the air and after about 15, 20 minutes of being outside, I didn't want to be there anymore. My eyes did burn and it was itchy. Whether or not there is significant air quality issues or not, may not be what we need to hear. We need to know when we need to stay inside. Or if you're burning, then let us know in advance that there may be some stuff going on. Is there something in place to warn the community about it before it actually happens?

RESPONDENT: Those are very good questions ma'am. Just so you know that all the air monitoring that's being conducted right now, the samples that are being done from [0:22:43.0 *inaudible*] from the fixed locations and from the roving teams. Those results are sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They are actually doing a screening with health guidance values. These screen levels are determined based on susceptible populations and children. These are for intermediate exposures. Basically, being exposed to these chemicals for over a year. Basically, we're not finding any hits that we're considering health significance when means hits that are prolonged at those levels that we anticipate seeing any adverse health effects. No, does that mean you're not going to be able to smell it? No. The good thing about petroleum products and the stuff we're seeing coming off them is our noses will pick them up way before they become a health concern. We're sensing them there. There are some people that are susceptible to it who may have, like you're saying, eyes watering, allergic reactions. In that case, our recommendations would be that if you start sensing these things, the BP has a number to call to report these odors. And when these calls come in, the protocol that we're handling is, the calls come into the BP contractor and to the EPA's and on-scene coordinators. They're sending out teams to check up on all these odor complaints or odor notifications we're getting and are taking real time readings there. If they see readings that exceed the health guidance levels that we're looking for, that's when we take it one more step. Are they finding something that's a localized source? We start looking at particulates from the burning that you're talking about. They're basically using the screen that they use for air quality. I live in Atlanta. We have very poor air quality there with all the cars. So, the same screening levels that we're using there is what they're using here. Basically, what they're doing is they're measuring particulates

in the air. Now, if you happen to be taking these tests during a windy day on the beach, you're going to get higher particulate levels there. If you're burning, you'll get the particulate levels there. They're looking for a localized source. When they start getting to a level where they start reaching of a health concern. That's when you'll start seeing notices coming out. The reason why you haven't seen any notices is we haven't hit that level yet. But, we have plans in place to get the words out to the community members and to our health contacts with the states and local government. We are here to basically protect the general public.

FEMALE:

I just like to say that if you are experiencing those symptoms that the recommendations from the health department are just to stay indoors, turn on your AC to a more better ventilated air source. The odors can cause lightheadedness, nausea, vomiting in certain people. If that's what they are starting to experience, go indoors. If it does persist, we do ask that you seek care from a health care provider.

PETER:

Dr. Robinson, I'm Peter Hoar. As I've mentioned, I used to work for NOAA coastal data and was the manager at the Grand Bay Research Reserve prior to that. You had indicated that there was going to be a meeting tomorrow for how the role was going to be defined for non-government organizations. Could you elaborate on that a little bit and where it's going to be?

LARRY:

The meeting is going to be held at LSU. Actually, there is a reception I believe it's six o'clock. The meeting starts tomorrow morning from eight to five PM. One of the primary goals of the meeting is to bring into this overall discussing in some organized fashion. Non-federal scientist who could help play a role in a federal response but also in long-term issues that we hope, are going to be actively defined by the participants at this conference. And the reason that we're having it here, and the reason is that we know that it is very important to have people who know about these particular systems that are being impacted, as well as other scientists from around the nation. We're having it here for that particular reason. So, it will start out with plenary session with an overview of what we are doing in a federal sector. Dr. Lubchenco, the NOAA administrator, will be there herself to provide that. As well as a presentation by Dr. McNutt from USGS and Tim Killeen [0:27:39.4 sp>] from NSF. The rest of the meeting however is three concurrent break-out sessions facilitated by the Consortium for Ocean Leadership. We anticipated 100 to 150 participants from the non-federal scientific community to address what are the immediate thing, midterm things and long-term questions that we need to address here. With that cross-cutting theme I'd talked about earlier, that is data, data quality data availability. Basically information of the type people have talked about here this morning. It's available not only to the scientific community, but to the lay public as well.

RESPONDENT: That's excellent, directly relevant. Jennifer, there was one other thing I wanted to perhaps remind you of. Following hurricane Georges, LSU did a video survey of the entire coast of Mississippi. At the time we did that, I was able to engineer them doing overflights of Grand Bay NERR. So, we do have those data as well. I talk with you a bit more,, that's Karen Wesfall.

(0:29:00.9)

MODERATOR: *[0:29:00.2 inaudible]*

JAMIE: Hi, I'm Jamie. Regarding environmental more than human health. For water and sediments sampling, and I'm sorry, if this is on your website, do you have a long-term plan at this point and what are the contaminants of concern if you do?

TERRY: We do have a long-term monitoring plan or sampling plan actually for Region 6, which is Louisiana and Texas. For Region 4, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. The plan really starts; we've, let me step back, we've taken samples as a baseline all along the coast. We also plan to take samples if oil impacts the coast and it looks like it is. For sediment, along the beaches, along the inland water ways and the bay out to three miles and beyond if we need to... It may be on the website, but we have a listing, and I can give you further details. On the side, we're looking for volatiles and semi-volatiles, metals, total petroleum hydrocarbons. Let's see here, see if I miss anything, mercury, pesticides and PCBs. That's an initial damage type assessment oil is hit. And then we have a plan to do follow-up as clean up proceeds. There's a long-term, there's a concept of a long-term plan that we're still working on as to what to do and what sort of sampling that's going to be necessary. That's something that we'll work out between EPA and NOAA and the Coast Guard and others and the states.

(0:31:30.8)

MODERATOR: There is one more follow up.

JAMIE: Sure, it's Jamie Mitchell. The contaminated sediments for disposal, where would they be disposed of?

TERRY: There is a disposal plan. There are some disposal facilities whether or not sediments will be excavated has to do more with a trade-off between damage to ecosystem and whether it's a good idea to actually take up sediments. There are landfills and there are disposal facilities that have been already identified within the area, as well as there is a big push to do recycling obviously of reusable oil.

GLENN: My name is Glenn *[inaudible]*. Just a quick question. Can you go over the decomposition of oil? What we should expect, 10% will evaporate, 20%

will remain for a year, and, I don't know, 10% will remain forever. Is that known on the type of oil we've got leaking, spilling?

PANELIST:

We can talk about the life cycle of oil, but I want to make sure that you understand the information I'm providing I got from our brothers and sisters from NOAA. I was asked to help regional states come up with a pictorial fact sheet on oil. You know the crude comes up, right? That's where you get the slick from. It floats on top of the water. As it starts breaking down, you get a really thin layer. That's what's called a sheen. I'm sure if you've seen any pictures, you've seen the sheens that they're showing from the aerial photographs. As the slick is running on the water, floating underwater, all the volatile organics start coming off it. That's why we're not getting hits here on shore because we're losing most of it out at sea. As it starts weathering, you go from being a slick to this like pudding or mousse-like type of structure. From there it goes into being tar balls where they get harder and they start floating and sinking. That's the life cycle. What percentage and how long it takes for it to depose of? I'm not a petroleum chemist, I can't really tell you that. That's not my expertise. That's the different life cycle of this oil is doing. When you have the sheen and they start breaking up the oil, that's what they were talking about the microorganisms in the ecosystem helping to break it down. Oil seeps occur naturally here in the gulf and throughout the country or throughout the world. The ecosystem is used to having petroleum get into it naturally and it breaks it down. What we're seeing from this spill now is that carrying capacity is being overloaded or stressed. How much can it take until it starts environmentally impacting it? I can't answer it and I wouldn't want to because that's not my expertise. That's something that the federal government and our partners are looking into. When we're talking about the dispersants, the toxicity of it. We're talking about the toxicity it's having on the ecosystem not on the public health. I hope that answered your question, Sir.

CYNTHIA:

Good morning. My name is Cynthia. I have a product that's been EPA approved and it's biodegradable, it's 100% natural. It absorbs the oil out of the water, it surpresses the fumes, but I can't seem to get this product in anybody's hand. I'm catchin' "go see this person," "call this number," "fill out this form," but that's not helping the oil slick that's on top of the water. Who do I need to see? And, where can I go to get this product out there?

PANELIST:

EPA, as well as the Coast Guard, has set up a specific organization to look at new products. You say your product is EPA approved then make sure that it's on the product list. There is actually an EPA product list for oil dispersant products or absorbents or other things. Again, if you fill out the green list, the green form, we'll get you the group that looks at, up and coming or new products.

CYNTHIA: OK. That'll work.

JEFF: I'm not sure whether you can answer this. My name is Jeff Feinberg, I represent Northrup Grumman Trials Coordination. Went to the other room to ask this question, there was no representatives there to answer the question. The question is, as my counterpart said earlier, we're in the process of getting ready to take a vessel out, into the Gulf. Not necessarily what we do with it when we're out there, but as we return, our requirements that we have to come through a wash station. This is roughly a 600-foot vessel. What are the requirements? How long will it take to vessel back in to get it washed? Do we have to go through a wash? Can somebody here address that question?

PANELIST: Actually there is a vessel decontamination plan for deep-draft and inshore vessels. It's being run by the coast guard for deep draft. They're doing the commercial like tankers and stuff coming in. I would suggest if you contact them, they would be able to give you more specific information because that's not our area of expertise. That makes any sense?

JEFF: Who is them and do you have a name?

PANELIST: I would contact the Unified Command and ask for the operations decon vessels group. There's a whole group just assigned for vessel decontamination.

JEFF: Is that out of Mobile?

PANELIST: Yes, sir.

(0:38:27.6)

MODERATOR: *[0:38:27.6 inaudible].*

RESPONDENT: Mine's back to the air quality.

(0:38:37.5)

MODERATOR: What's your name?

LINDA: Linda Alfonso. I don't feel comfortable with our governor on TV telling everyone that the chemical fumes that we're smelling are not toxic. Does he know that? I feel like they are. The few days that we have smelled it on the coast, I have experienced, as she said, the burning in the chest. I could not go outside. Are we going to be smelling that every day if this comes ashore? Are you going to be able to tell us the truth? We're talking about so many thousands of people who would panic if they knew that they may get ill and it could have some long lasting effects. I'm worried. I'm

concerned. I live here, rebuilt my home after the storm. Am I going to lose it again? Am I going to have to leave because of the air quality? I felt that if I had to smell that every day, I would be or I can't stay inside every day, all day. I have to go out.

PANELIST:

That's a really good concern. There are a lot of people that have these problems, smelling these odors. Again, when we do our risk analysis and we basically looked at the data. We basically set a screen level that is extremely conservative. It's basically based on a child. It's based on a child being exposed to these chemicals for up to a year. We basically set it for a level where we're not expecting to see. We look at a data point. We look at post exposure. At this point, a child might start seeing symptoms. At this point, children are not showing any symptoms at all. Then, we basically put in a protection factor that lowers it anywhere from a hundred to a thousand decimal points back away. That's our screening level. Basically looking at the most conservative number we can to protect the public as much as possible. When we do the evaluation of the data and we're looking at the stuff that comes in from EPA and BP's contractor and now the states are putting the information so their air sampling is going in with this other data set. We're looking at these levels and we're screening against that most conservative number we have. Once the trigger is hit that says these are elevated, we could start anticipating public health hazards occurring. That's where they'll start putting in the notices and looking about whether or not they have to evacuate people, which we don't anticipate at this time.

(0:41:24.4)

LINDA:

You are talking about exposure for a year...

PANELIST:

No ma'am. These levels are very conservative that we set on. It's called an intermediate exposure. We're basically looking at using that as a screening tool that if someone had this exposure at that level for a year, there would not be an adverse effect. We're looking at that closely to say, okay, if they're not getting it at this level, the acute level is usually higher than that. This is the lower level. We're anticipating that at this level we're not seeing any health effects. If it starts getting higher than that, we are going to basically tell people to either stay indoors or to relocate to another area. Those are decisions that are made by the public health advisers.

(0:42:09.0)

LINDA:

If it does hit the land here, are we going to be smelling that every day? Because I know I'll have to leave.

PANELIST:

The potential is or possibility is, yes.

(0:42:22.1)

LINDA: We've been lucky these last few weeks. It's only been...

TERRY: What I wanted to say is we're not just doing sampling, air sampling here on the coast. We've also done sampling out where the spill is, out where the continued leak is. We're trying to be as conservative as we possibly can. Our air sampling, we look at every single day, some of it is continuous, some of it we get the next day. We're not seeing levels that are...even looking at it very conservatively is of concern. It doesn't mean you're not going to smell it every day. I've smelled it.

(0:43:08.8)

LINDA: Or make us sick, yes.

TERRY: A smell can.

(0:43:12.9)

MODERATOR: Some of us, yes.

PANELIST: Yes, right. Smell can make a person sick. There's no doubt about that, and will get worse if hits the shore? Most likely, the smell will get worse. Are we expecting to see levels of concern, levels that we're going to ask people to stay indoors or to leave an area, I don't think so because we've sampled out to sea and we're not seeing those levels. It doesn't mean it's not going to happen. It doesn't mean that we're going to stop sampling, stop air monitoring, stop doing what we're doing on the coast, we're not. We're doing it every single day. There's a map in the back that shows you all the places we've been. We're there today. We will continue to be there tomorrow, but it doesn't mean that you're not going smell it and it doesn't mean you're not going to feel ill. That's it. Personal thing, it happens to be that the oil continues to leak. Until it stops...

(0:44:11.9)

MODERATOR: What about those men that were...

PAMELA: My name is Pamela Hancock. I teach at St. Stanislaus, which as you know is a lovely school, right smack dab *[0:44:29.1 inaudible]* on the beach. We were awarded grant to be in part of called BWET program, which is a program to monitor the water up and down the coast with a number of high schools involved. We also have a robotics program which we're switching over to an ROV program. In the meantime, we had hooked up our ROV to do water sensing, water monitoring to find out what was out

there. Now, I have a question about whether that's going to be able to continue because I don't think we want to expose our students to oil if there's oil in the bay. On a more long-term basis, do you foresee the local science teacher, science student community being able to participate maybe a year down the road once the spill comes ashore, the immediate disaster has been mitigated for us to go back to participating in water sampling?

LARRY:

Thank you. First of all, congratulations on being one of the recipients of one of those BWET programs, they're very competitive. I would think that if the beach is closed, obviously you don't want kids out there. That's pretty clear. However, the potential for reopening once cleanup work has been done, beach declared as safe, as a learning opportunity for students is rather tremendous because if you have pre- and post-spill data, that would be tremendously valuable for students who sort of understand how these things might impact these precious ecosystems. I think the learning opportunity is going to be tremendous for students in this region. Particular who are as close to this as you are and then who have funding to do the type of work is going to be necessary to do, high-quality research. I was going to encourage that. Hopefully, you get yourself in a nice NOSB and Ocean Bowl team together and compete against my team in Florida one day.

PAMELA:

It's another school-related question. I teach math primarily. I'm the robotics coach, but I also teach math. One of the things we've been talking about in math is the sense that, I'm sure someone is doing mathematical modeling. There's a certain amount of oil coming out every day, a certain amount is being burned, a certain amount is being skimmed off, you would think that one of the things that would... eventually the laypeople would be able to access is, what mathematical models are you using because at this point I'm sure know, on ongoing basis if you're getting so much oil per day and you're only mitigating part of it, if you're only taking care a part of it, you got part that's out sitting out there, getting ready to come on shore somewhere. So I guess from a mathematician point of view, it would be nice if that piece of it was a little more transparent because I think that... Also as a citizen, it would be nice to know what we're dealing with in terms of numbers.

LARRY:

As you're probably aware, there was a flow rate technical group that released this report last week. It was announced in Washington. One of the methods was the mass balance method. We're trying to put it all together. What you think is coming out of the well, how much you think has been skimmed, how much have been burned, how much has been weathered or biodegraded by other means. That report, I believe, is available for public

consumption at this time. There might be another education for your students.

(0:47:57.3)

PAMELA:

Can you think of reports online?

LARRY:

I believe so but I know for at least the last week in a press conference in DC. We'll get that information to you.

PLEASANT:

My name is Pleasant McNeil. My background is in air quality modeling. Just a follow up on the modeling question, I have another question about the plume. You talked about all the data that you're collecting, the mobile stations, do they also include wind data? Do you include meteorological data at all the mobile stations? My bigger question is, are all the air quality data that you're doing, I know that it would be difficult to model something the size of the plume and the air coming off of it. Is there an attempt being made to model that data, to correlate all the sampling that you guys are doing?

PANELIST:

You have two questions, first one is the fixed locations. There are five fixed locations. That we're specifically looking at within Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. There's more fixed locations but these are we focused on right now. Also, have meteorological information that's taken as part of that. Those are actually State locations. EPA has installed some additional air sampling equipment there but those are fixed State locations. Yes, number one. Can you repeat again your second question?

PLEASANT:

The question was basically, is some organization attempting to create a model that correlates all the data that you guys are collecting?

PANELIST::

Well, yes and no. Yes, we are working with models. No, in that especially on the air front, mostly what we're finding is zeros or what is commonly found here on the Gulf Coast at this time of year as Mr.Meiburg had said. We need more input into the model to actually show a correlation. From the water perspective, we're not finding anything from the air perspective. Not yet. We're not finding anything.

PLEASANT:

The follow up question would be what third party sampling is going on? I know that there's a bucket brigade that goes out and collect samples. Is that data going into your database or somebody else?

TERRY:

Sampling is conducted (air sampling, air monitoring, water sampling, sediment sampling) is conducted by all three states, EPA. There's a certain amount that NOAA also conducts. The responsible party, BP, conducts samples. All that information is brought together in one database and is

correlated and looked at. Those are the entities. I don't know if we can consider it a third party, but those are the entities in conducting sample in monitoring.

SUZANNE:

My name is Suzanne Huber. I own Keith Huber Incorporated which is a vacuum mobile loading equipment. We manufacture equipment for the petroleum industry and the waste industry and we have for over 28 years. We are in Gulfport, Mississippi, on Highway 49. Being both a resident and the in the industry for so many years has led me to the questions that I was asking today previously about the amount of oil and water that is being removed daily from the Gulf. I appreciate the forum, and I appreciate you taking your time to answer all the questions about where to find the information and making plans for the future for when it reaches the soil or the shore. My question to you and actually to everybody in the audience is, why isn't everyone focusing more on stopping it before it gets to shore? Why aren't we receiving any of that information? These are questions that each and every one of us should be asking that isn't being answered that focuses on the spill at the site, what are we going to do when it comes to shore. Maybe it's because we become too complacent waiting for hurricanes to come in and we know we're going to clean up afterwards. The information needs to us prior to it reaching the shore, we can stop it before it reaches the shore, there are methods of doing it and there's a gap in that information. When you were asking about the mathematical equations, there's many that you can get for flow rates. You're talking about actual models that are done by retrieving the information on how much oil and gas is being removed and the fact that is going to recycling centers and being burned off. These are questions we need to be asking. My questions is, who can I talk to today or forum or committee that can tell me what is happening out there, not who is planning things for when it reaches shore.

(0:53:55.5)

MODERATOR:

Actually, she needs a whole... That's the question.

PANELIST:

They're great questions. We would need a Coast Guard representative. The cleanup is being directed by the Coast Guard. EPA is doing air monitoring, air sampling. That's why we're here. The Coast Guard is directing cleanup. We don't have a Coast Guard representative in the room.

SUZANNE:

I have spoke with the coast guard, I have spoke now with the EPA, I have also spoke with BP directly and several of the station sites and commanders. I have spoke to Gene Taylor, Thad Cochran have a conference hopefully coming up with that one. None of these questions can be answered by anyone. They're always passed to the next department. I thank you for hoping that it was the Coast Guard, but that's not the answer either.

MILTON:

Hi I'm Milton Williams. Dr. Robinson, I don't know if you were here at the beginning of the process of asking questions. You can understand our concern. When we hear reports of the Louisiana shrimpers that are out there, and getting sick and taken to the hospital. Now, there are reports that they're cutting down, stopping the work on the oil platforms because of the fumes, and the workers can't work out there. We get a report on WLOX yesterday that the count of animals and birds that have died, over 400 in sea birds alone. And, what troubles me is that they only found oil on about 75 of them, what killed the 325? These are on the ground like we are. They're close to the surface. Multiple times we have smelled the oil or whatever, the diesel coming in in Pass Christian, which is closer to Louisiana. It's my concern. I don't have a question about that. My question really would be probably for NOAA, Dr. Robinson, the National Hurricane Center has forecast a very high storm. What is the procedure? BP's trying now to do something where they can put a semi-cap that will siphon off from a 21-inch opening, a 6-inch pipe. They're saying, they're going to get the most of the oil. I'm not a mathematician, but that doesn't sound it would really work. My real concern is that even at that attempt and it works, when we have a hurricane, everybody has to leave the Gulf. What are they going to do if they are successful and there's a storm coming or multiple storms, do they abandon the process? Now, we have it flowing again. I know you really can't answer that. May I submit something that the Lord gave me as I was coming in here today, it's a... Thank you for coming. Thanks for being on this team. Do what you can. You are the authority over us for our protection. So, thanks.

DIANE:

I'm going down the human aspect. I did go away to town for two weeks, and I did come back last Monday or Tuesday. You've heard me coughing in the back. Maybe there's something in the air, and the birds in our neighborhood have been doing, what I refer to is Alfred Hitchcock. They've been coming up underneath my deck in a really strange fashion that they've never done before. I'm just kinda making a statement. I do want to ask about the air conditioning because we do have a little bayou that comes behind our house that's very close. Say something does come up, are our air conditioner filters going to be able to handle the smell if it does come in? Is there some kind of filter we should be getting? I have been coughing a real lot. It might be coincidence. I never get sick. But, I want to know that that the filters will be able to handle the smell because you say to go into the home. I know sometimes when we get those stinky white flowers that comes out, sometimes I can smell through the filter. This question is for you, I don't know if there's a special filter we can get. (Chuckle) The air conditioner filter. You had said something about going in the house, crank up your air conditioner.

PANELIST: I don't know if I can address the actual air conditioner filter question. That was our recommendations. I'll tell you what the health department is doing to address the air quality and the public health effects. We are monitoring coastal hospitals for surveillance, looking at rash, respiratory and other, the nausea, vomiting, headaches to look to see if we've had increases in our ERs. We've been monitoring that since the beginning of May, shortly after the oil leak happened. As of yet, we haven't seen any problems. No significant increases in our coastal communities. So, that's a plus. Not to say that you're not experiencing these. Individuals are going to experience a different... I don't know of a special filter on your air conditioner.

DIANE: We're playing the what-if game right now.

PANELIST: Right.

DIANE: We don't know if this is...

PANELIST: If the smells do get in, maybe this is where EPA or somebody else might fill to step in, it would at least lessen the effect of being out in the open air. At least it would cut it down at least to half or at least some than being out in the true open air, being exposed to it. Do you all know of a certain filter?

LARRY: The reason when they say, go inside your house and turn on the air is the fact that if you go in your house and you leave your windows open with the fans, it's going to follow you inside.

DIANE: Yes. We know that.

LARRY: The logical thing is okay, basically, a lot of the air conditioners are circulating air from inside the house and bring a little bit of recharge from outside. That's the logic behind going inside your house and putting your air conditioner on.

DIANE: Yes. That makes sense.

LARRY: The only other thing I can think of is I wouldn't want you to go out and buy one of these things. They have those air systems that have a charcoal filter. That would soften the air. We're not anticipating high enough levels to justify going out there and spending that large amount of money...

DIANE: Yes, because we got water right behind us. It was just a thought because I'm trying to do other things. Like I said, I have been coughing so much that this rib is...

LARRY: I moved from Arizona to Atlanta when they transferred me to work for CDC. I don't know what it is, twice a year, I can't breathe at all. I usually didn't have any allergies but there's something that comes in the bloom that I can't even walk out of my house.

DIANE: Like I said, I never get sick other than migraines. That's occasionally... Thank you.

[1:01:34.5 inaudible]

It might be something that's going to be important.

SANDRA: I'm Sandra Price with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. I can't really find a room where this is the appropriate question. I see powerful folks in here and I'm going to ask it in here. When we respond to natural disasters, FEMA's our go-to group, we know how that works and it works well. As far as we know right now, FEMA's not involved. Is FEMA in the conversation about what happens if there's a hurricane with oil because all of our disaster response groups are going to need training in what specially needs to be done. We need to know how we can fit in with the current structure as the VOAD group, so that we can be part of the solution. I know that we're not going to do the cleanup because BP's paying for that. Does that make my question clear?

It's as clear as mud.

All right.

LARRY: Let me see if I can handle it. This is an oil response which is covered under the National Contingency Plan and OPA, the Oil Pollution Act of 1990. During a hurricane, when the president declares a natural disaster and basically has a Stafford Action, am I correct? Basically, what that does, that's when FEMA jumps in and brings up all the emergency support functions in which nongovernment agencies like the churches come up and set up these shelters and feeding facilities come in place. That's the mechanism to do that. This is not a Stafford Act over here. We don't have any those emergency support functions. If a hurricane happens, and they have that declaration, what they'll do as part of their response plan will include if oil contamination is of concern that will be added into it. The oil is considered separately right now.

STILMAN: Some of the same agencies that would be here for hurricane or here for the [1:03:56.9 inaudible] or the oil spill including EPA and the Coast Guard. In an oil incident during a hurricane, EPA is in charge of the cleanup. We're given that function. We're in charge of clean up on the inland zone anyway, we're given that function. If there is a contamination incident

that's associated with the hurricane, that would be EPA's responsibility to do clean up, to be in charge of training along with OSHA, who would also be here in charge of training.

SANDRA: You might train our groups if we're going to be allowed to participate.

STILMAN: If you would be in an area that has contamination and you have to have a certain amount of training as far as the Stafford Act, activation of OSHA would be here and then most likely will take care of that. EPA would be in charge of any cleanup or decontamination if needed.

(1:04:59.8)

SANDRA: How can we be involved if there is no hurricane? Is there a way?

RESPONDENT: I don't know if this is the right place, but we are working with MEMA, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. They do have a 1-800 number. That might be a point of contact. We can write that down for you. That might be at least a place to start here within Mississippi.

[1:05:22.1 inaudible].

ROBERTA: Material training and then be deployed. They'd be managed through that volunteer reception center. So, VOAD is absolutely at the table.

SANDRA: You made sure Mississippi VOAD come out...

ROBERTA: Yes.

DAVE: My name is Dave Tradell. I have a question on some of the oil degradation. Since this is a multi-viscous material and is sitting at 5000 feet. I'm not sure what the water temperature is, I would imagine it's around 38 or 40 degrees around there on the bottom. You addressed earlier that the oil life cycle, what could we expect if the oil were to stop flowing today of revitalization for the material that's on the bottom? Since we're talking about crude, does it degrade at a various rates? Is that going to be reintroduced two, three, four years or continue afterwards?

(1:06:58.9)

AUDIENCE: Would you go back to the Exxon Valdez exactly what happened because of the temperature issues. The Prince George, Prince William Sound Citizen's Advisory Council has a whole lot on there of what they found based on temperature of the life cycle of the oil.

DAVE: I'm guessing, probably about 60 feet. We're talking about 5000 feet to the ocean floor. When it does degrade, there's an absence of bacteria. We count on bacteria to break down the oil. So, as it's going to break down at a slower rate. This could continue for some time. And if it does continue to break down further, let's go back to worst case scenario with the storm surge, is that going to be reintroduced in two, three, four years now if we do a mitigation and we do clean up and we don't see anything for the next couple of years... Five years down the road, are we going to see reintroduction.

[1:08:01.3 inaudible].

AUDIENCE: This is for gentleman from the EPA. There are a number of people who have gotten jobs doing oil cleanup. I was down to the Mississippi Hancock County WIN Center and talked to a number of them. My concern is for job site monitoring. So far, when I have watch those people who were being trained, albeit not that well. They're certainly not getting the respirator training. They're being trained in a very shortened 40-hour HAZWOPER training. My concern is that they're also wearing their boots and everything into McDonald's, they're wearing it in the community. That sounds to me like a a very bad idea to take contamination from a job site and move it into places where children are crawling on the floor. I'm also concerned about the job site monitoring, who's going to be monitoring the air at those job sites when the oil comes on shore. Because we know when oil moves, for example, it comes on shore, 90-degree heat, it releases VOCs again. Even the tarballs release some. Is that the EPA who'll be the job site monitoring or are those the subcontractors who'll be doing job site monitoring?

TERRY: Essentially, the first line is the employer which is BP. However, having said that, EPA is working with Center for Disease Control to bring in NIOSH folks to do oversight of exactly what you're talking about there. Since there's oil in Louisiana, there's already NIOSH employees in Louisiana. We're bringing in NIOSH folks to do to do the same thing that you're asking about. It's a concern not just for EPA and CDC but also for the Coast Guard to make sure that we're very tight on... while oil is not here yet, we're very tight on worker safety and making sure they're not spreading any contamination outside the work area.

LARRY: I'm not going to speak for any states, but when I started my career after college, I worked as a county sanitarian. Those issues you brought up are very important. I agree with you. There are concerns. The best avenue to report those things would be through your local county health department because they're the ones that have the regulatory authority over the restaurants. Basically, that would be their *[1:10:37.2 inaudible]*. If restaurants need to put up signs, if you're oil responders that do not bring

in any oily clothes to our restaurants. That would be something going back to BP saying, here's the bill we had to pay if someone who comes in and get oil out of our carpets and all that. Your people are bringing it in here. It's a full cycle. There isn't a quick fix. If there's a county inspector or someone, if I walked in and found oil being dragged into a restaurant, that would be the first thing I'd be dealing him for.

AUDIENCE: A follow up question for that would be to the one, you're from Mississippi Department of Health... It sounds to me a great community outreach then to the community would be to make people aware when you go into a restaurant, make the oil spill workers aware also. Maybe two pamphlets put out. If you see this happening, report it. If you're an oil spill worker, don't do it. I have grandchildren, so my mind always goes back to my grandchildren, not that they crawl on the floor of McDonald's, but children do. They're going to be exposed, especially those of us on beachfront communities where the oil spill worker are going to be coming in and out of our restaurants.

(1:11:50.4)

MODERATOR: That's a good point. We'll bring that back to our environmental department. I don't work in that area. They might be working with our local health departments, but I'm writing notes as we speak. So, thank you.

RESPONDENT: Thank you.

PLEASANT: The other question I have about modeling was the dispersed plume. He was talking about the oil being released to 5000 feet. During that mile of it coming up, you're going to get at lot... I would assume the water is going to reach solubility. You're going to have dissolved plume plus you got the dispersants that's going to disperse the oil creating dispersant plume. My question is, when you go on the NOAA website and you see the maps that show where the plume extent is, I've been assuming that that's the surface spill. Is there a modeling or tracking of the dissolved plume? One specific question would be, has there been water quality samples on the coast to confirm that at this point we're not being hit with the dissolved plume? At least here in Mississippi.

LARRY: You raised some very good points. They are very important to us. First of all the fish closure are based upon surface, sheen, oil, where we anticipate the oil going. However, we've heard a lot of questions about so-called subsurface plumes. We have looked. In fact, we are looking for those. Our data today shows that we have a found PPM levels of oil at depth. The majority of that is in the vicinity of the incident itself. That doesn't mean that there aren't other patches of subsurface dispersed oil in places we haven't looked. We have looked in transects that are important for two reasons. One, it coming to shore, and another concern we were trying to

address is the entrainment of the subsurface or in the loop currents. We have another transect that we're looking at there. So far, we have had some un-calibrated fluorescence data that shows something below the surface. We have looked at the water samples that show relatively small amounts. We're trying to get the calibration of those parameters to see what they may have seen based upon the fluorescence signals we saw. Of course, as you know, that signal could be from zooplankton beneath the surface, etc. But, we weren't satisfied with just that. We've actually gone back and collected water samples at depth. We actually have now with EPA and others what we're calling a joint analytical group to try to analyze this data to see to what extent this oil is beneath the surface. So far, so far, we've only found it in the PPM levels. It might be droplets of oil dispersed in a manner that you are describing based on what we've seen as oppose to a plume that we hear about finding there.

PLEASANT: What indicators would you look for? What parts of the crude are most soluble and what tend to travel the farthest?

LARRY: We're looking for any sign of...

PLEASANT: Any TPH? Like TPH, total petroleum hydrocarbons.

LARRY: Yes.

PLEASANT: Has there been sampling done on the beaches to confirm that there's no dissolved plume or dispersed plume showing up. I've heard a couple of anecdotal references where people went out to the barrier islands, and they said it looked beautiful. We waded out, and we felt like our skin was oiled. We had oil on our skin.

LARRY: That in your end, you're not talking about subsurface. Basically, we're talking about surface. If you can wade in it, we wouldn't be surprised if some oil due to wave action is being distributed at that level. The depth, basically, we're trying to figure in more detail is that from a mile down to the surface, away from the coast. Is there something moving out there that we need to be concerned about? That's what we're tracking..

PLEASANT: A follow-up question specifically on the beaches...

(1:16:35.4)

MODERATOR: *[1:16:35.3 inaudible]*. Is there anyone else who has a question?

AUDIENCE: My question is, will the oil actually hit the Mississippi coast and what are the possibilities of it coming here?

LARRY: Yes. We're tracking the oil as we speak. The reason we're here is because there's a distinct possibility that it could make it to the Mississippi coast. We can't tell you when, and we can't tell you how much. Due to the prevailing winds at the moment, there's a very good likelihood that it will make it to the Mississippi coast.

SLATER: What exactly is it doing to the fish out in the gulf? How long after this is over will it be before we can fish again? H.S. Slater.

LARRY: Okay. NOAA is responsible for fish closure as I said this morning. We have in collaboration with FDA, EPA and the State Partners, a plan for food safety. Now, what we do, our closes on is based upon visible evidence of all or projections that it might move into areas where fishermen might take fish. The food safety part however has to do with taking actual fish samples and measuring all evidence of oil or contaminants in fish. That is done through our partners at FDA. Until they are confident that fish taken in these impacted areas are free of these contaminants then I got to recommend that these areas be reopened. I can't tell you exactly how long that's going to be. What we all inclined to do in this case is to err on the side of caution with regard to allowing fish impacted by oil to arrive at our marketplaces.

SLATER: This isn't the first time this ever happened. You all have data from the past in other oil, right? This isn't the first time it's ever happened, so you have past data to go with what it did to a certain area and what it did to the wildlife.

LARRY: Every situation is different.

SLATER: Yes. There are guidelines you can use.

LARRY: There are guidelines...

SLATER: Can you tell me those? That's what I'm asking. Specific information more than generalize we're going to do what we can.

LARRY: Okay. The guidelines are very clear for FDA. Any evidence of fish being tainted by oil would suggest that those fish are not able to go into the marketplace. Areas closed will not be allowed to...

(AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY)

(End of Part 1)

RESPONDENT: The guidelines are very clear for FDA. Any evidence of fish contaminated by oil would suggest that those fish are not able to go into the marketplace. Areas closed will not be allowed to be opened under those circumstances. They are very specific.

RESPONDENT: Okay. I would assume you all have to have that.

RESPONDENT: We don't know, because we are in the midst of an ongoing spill. We don't have this thing capped yet for anyone could tell you that they know exactly when an area is going to be opened. I think would be a misrepresentation.

AUDIENCE: Our water quality...you're doing the crab sampling it seems pretty regularly and the air quality. Are you doing the same thing with beach water sampling just to see if there's a dissolved [0:03:36.2] in the water. Is that data also available?

PANELIST: We are doing...I think the states are doing more right now with water quality sampling. EPA is also doing water quality sampling. We're trying to mirror the previous locations to give us information about, so we can compare to the baseline on water and sediment EPA sediments, beach and also out into the Gulf, 40 or 50 feet into the Gulf. The EPA information is available when it comes in on the EPA Web site.

RESPONDENT: You're saying that ppm levels in the water, I got the impression that's more out to sea, towards the spill site, it's not on the beaches or you're actually seeing ppm level of TPH or crude oil constituents on the beaches of [0:04:38.3 *inaudible*] islands. At this point you can say at least if there is a dissolved [0:04:41.7 *inaudible*], and they've made it to the coast.

RESPONDENT: [0:04:50.5 *inaudible*].

RESPONDENT: The sampling includes detectable levels; it's not just high levels or [0:05:04.8 *inaudible*]. You're looking for detectable levels of TPH.

RESPONDENT: [0:05:09.0 *inaudible*].

RESPONDENT: That indicates that there's a dissolved [0:05:28.1 *inaudible*] there?

RESPONDENT: [0:05:29.7 *inaudible*].

AUDIENCE: This might fall upon the gentleman's question if you may. The Federal Government has set a standard of the barrier or where the fisheries are closed. At some point, this may have come up earlier, but is there a variance between the state standards used and what the federal standards

has for the closed offer. This may have come up earlier. I walked in in the middle.

PANELIST: *[0:06:11.9 inaudible]*. No, I have that authority. I had this with me. I wish I had *[0:06:34.1 inaudible]* while I was *[0:06:35.2 inaudible]*. We do have a pamphlet here about seafood safety that really walks you through some of these details. If in lay person's terms, even I could understand it, as a scientist. I think it's very important to get this in people's hands to have the type of concerns that I'm hearing about seafood safety.

AUDIENCE: Okay. My question was what the standards are in the DMR, MDEQ can be using be using different standards then what NOAA is or EPA as far as...

PANELIST:: I'm not aware of that.

AUDIENCE: *[0:07:14.1 inaudible]*. Thank you very much.

STEVE: My name is Steve Wenzel, I'm with Green Light Technology. I'm from Alabama. Since day one, I've tried to reach several people, and there's a lot of levels, the RT, the Federal On-site Commander. There's a pre-authorization in placed to okay alternative technology in the time of emergency to clean up crude oil or any kind of mess. But I can't seem to get to that person. It's a little frustrating, I'm a small guy and only half as good looking as Kevin Costner. I've had some dilemmas and yet what I want you to tell me if you could. Is there someone who I can show, and I'm not a snake oil salesman. But in this bag I have the stuff from out there, what I do to it, and we have eight years of development in this project in our product, and EPA says 90 days. I've more tests than are required for EPA with my toxicity reports by an EPA-approved lab in the United States. I have a global toxic technology lab with all our toxicological studies. Now, I have the test and ongoing some tests currently with what my product does with the current oil that's out there ongoing, because we do clean up the contaminants as well. My question is, can you all give me to the person who can actually say, "Doggone it, you could actually clean up these marshes"?

AUDIENCE: The next question is I'm going to ask several times today, and we don't have *[0:09:56.0 inaudible]*.

STEVE: Supposedly I'll meet Mr. Graham tomorrow, so I'm busy. I'm going to head that way, but as I try to help with where it's happening and I keep getting another level, it's been a little frustrating. In the old days when I was as good looking as Kevin Costner, I might have been able to get in there, but I'm a little frustrated. I'll give you my number, and we have a Website with all our MSDS and everything. I'm just going to show you these two jars. I know all you guys are doing all this testing...Okay, that's

all I need. This is what's out there; it's pretty bad. When I mix it with one part of mine, I create a water soluble product. This does not stick anything, your fingers, your hands, plant life, marshes or anything. My product is completely non-toxic, 625 times safer than baby soap and I have proof of that. Yet people don't pay attention.

AUDIENCE: Last question for the gentleman from the EPA, a question for you. When I go on the EPA Website, it helps me here's all the monitoring stations and I can look on the map and see where they are. When I go to view what the information is from the air quality monitoring station, it gives me the very elaborate text file which somewhere in there contains the information. Is there any chance that you guys are going to give that to us in a converted form or do we have to figure out how to convert that, all those files? Because literally it's just an ASCII[0:11:52.7 *inaudible*] file. I checked this morning, and it's still in just raw data form.

TERRY: I guess as we speak we're working on a Google Earth application that actually gives a much better representation. I'm hopeful in a few days, they'll have something. I have also been on the EPA Web site and it is data, it's not roll data it's quality-assured data.

AUDIENCE: Right, but it's on the format that anybody who doesn't know how to read it is going to be able to read. It's all characters.

TERRY: I understand that. Normally when we give out data, we don't give out data on our Web site. When people want data, we give it to them, one-on-one and give you your information. In an effort to give out as much data as we possibly can, that's what you're getting.

AUDIENCE: I think either if we knew how to read it, that's one, or if it was in a format that was already converted, I think it's going to answer a lot of questions that citizens have about what's happening, because when you look at that file, most people are going to look at it close up and go, "I have no idea." There are some people who'll stay with it and try to figure it out, but ultimately I think it would help the air quality concerns you heard here. [0:13:23.3 *inaudible*] those down to reasonable because people would feel like okay, they're out there, they're giving me numbers; I understand.

TERRY: I hear your concerns. We're actually meeting with the administrator tomorrow morning to go over a new application that's a lot more user-friendly as long as you have Google Earth, which is a free download. You'll be able to review the data and hope for the next few days you'll see on the Web site as if what you're seeing now. I hear your concern and actually if you can write it down, it will also help out, because we also have the same concern from the field. We have operational maps. That's

what you're seeing there. We can look at the data and it makes sense but what gets shipped to the EPA portal are these data files. They are available to anybody who wants some, but as you mentioned they are not as readable as they certainly could be.

(0:14:20.7)

MODERATOR: Okay, great. Thank you.

AUDIENCE: *[0:14:22.9 inaudible].*

(0:14:31.4)

MODERATOR: Are there any more questions? We're getting to the point where we're going to wrap up our thoughts. If you think you've got a question, you can hold onto it until the end.

AUDIENCE: *[0:14:41.2 inaudible].*

(0:14:50.8)

MODERATOR: I think you did an excellent job. Can we give a round of applause?

(Applause.)

[0:14:56.0 inaudible]

AUDIENCE: Thank you, sir, I appreciate it.

RESPONDENT: *[0:15:02.9 inaudible]* The problem is, I'm...

END OF AUDIO.

Data and Monitoring Mobile, Ala., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:01:55.6)

JENNIFER:

We're not giving essays today, we're just asking some quick questions, to try to get as many questions asked and answered as we can. One thing I will say upfront is that these guys are all great in their field areas but there are some information that we just don't have, if we have to say, hey we don't know the answer to that question but we'll do our best to find out what it is then we'll ask that you write that question down on a green piece of paper and then we'll find an expert. That expert might still say, we just don't know, that can be an answer and please just accept that fact, we're doing the very best to give you answers tonight and so just be a little patient with us. I'm going to start with the microphone and hand it here to Mr. Stilman.

TERRY:

Hi, I'm Terry Stilman, I'm with EPA's emergency response and local branch out of Atlanta. My area this evening will be the work that EPA's doing in the area of water monitoring, air monitoring, air sampling and everything related to that.

LARRY:

Good evening, I'm Captain Larry Cseh. I'm with the US Health Public Service Centers for Disease and Control Prevention agency for Toxic Substance Disease Registry, I have a very long card. I'm here in the assistance of EPA to basically look at the air data and the water data on the stand point of public health so we help them with the public health calls.

KEN:

I'm Ken Graham, I'm the chief meteorologist National Weather Service New Orleans. We've had basically, the responsibility of providing all the forecast for the response since, pretty much from the explosion. Tomorrow we hit the 1,000th mark in the number of spot forecast that we've issued for this event. It's been an unprecedented response, and we have meteorologist deployed down at the command center, we have meteorologist separated out of the schedule actually in the office providing those spot forecasts for the response. Like our mission says, it's protection of life and property. We got a lot of responders out there that we are trying to keep safe. In the last week we've had several thunderstorms, we have quarter-sized hail, we've had tornadoes over the water, we've had water spouts. It's our job to watch around the clock to make sure we keep those guys safe. I can talk about hurricane season and answer your question there and oil and we can go through that today.

RUSS:

My name is Russ Beard. I'm the director of the Coastal Data Development Center, which is located 90 miles west of here, at Stennis Space Center. We're a [0:04:46.0 *inaudible*] data center and our primary responsibility is data integration and visualization that's being collected on the survey cruises. We've recently analyzed the first four cruises that was funded by BP, the Brooks McCall survey. That data will be presented tomorrow at the science meeting in LSU. They'll soon be publicly available, the results from those cruises.

(0:05:14.1)

JENNIFER:

My name is Jennifer, I'll be one of your facilitators tonight. We have Mike. We have, lost your name. We have Miranda and Julian. We're from all different kinds of places around here on the Northern Gulf Coast. If you need assistance with something please ask one of us and we'll be glad to help you or show you to another room if you need to go. I do want to point out that, it was unfortunate but we were not able to get a representative of the Coast Guard in here tonight so some of the issues that you are asking may require an answer that only a Coast Guard person could answer. We do have one of those representatives in the fisheries and wildlife room, which is located in that small room that was off the main room you came from. I want you to feel free to get up and move to another room at any time that you'd like. You're not trapped in here, we're not just going to keep you here. Again, I will say that we're going to take one question at a time. You can ask a question, and you can have one follow-up question. If you have more questions you just get back in the queue and when everybody else has had a chance, we'll give you another chance to ask a question.

RESPONDENT:

[0:06:32.4 *Inaudible*].

(0:06:34.1)

JENNIFER:

No, you stay in your space but I'm going to take one row at a time, and then the queue moves and then you come back, and I'll do it again. Instead of making you guys get up and stand in line, I thought this might be easier. If you have any suggestions as we go, you can't hurt my feelings so let me know. I will be tough on you so you get one question and one follow-up question. (Chuckle) Again, we're going to be talking about the monitoring type of activities that are going on associated with the spill. So, try to keep your questions on target as possible and we'll do the very best. Sometimes some of the facilitators know the answers to some of the questions. These people are all experienced as well and we'll do the very best we can. Are you guys ready?

PANELIST:

Just to let you know, we can talk loud enough for you to hear us in the back row but we like to use the mic for recording purposes.

(0:07:32.7)

JENNIFER: There will be a transcript that comes out of this meeting and not only will all the questions that you ask at the microphone but also the questions that you write down on the green piece of paper and the answers will be included in that transcript when it comes out.

AUDIENCE: Where is it going to be out?

(0:07:49.5)

JENNIFER: At this point I don't know what site it's going to be posted on but that would be a great question that you could write on here and I'll find out for the next meeting, there you go. There'll be probably links from several sites to this publication. To get started, again I'm going to start with the front row. Does anyone have questions in the front row? Would you step to the microphone please? State your name for the record and then ask your question.

WILLIAM: My name is William Cannon. I live up Mount Vernon North Mobile County. My question is about the dispersants that are being poured out, a million gallons I believe they said so far and they're still pouring it out. Why pour poison on top of poison? I don't understand why in the world you all are letting this bunch pour more poison on top of the oil. Why can't we clean up the oil? Why do we got to clean up the dispersants too? Do we get MSDS sheets on this? Are you going to send one to everybody on the Gulf Coast? We need to know what this stuff is. What's in this chemical that you're pouring out? If I'm a truck driver, and I spill one gallon out here on the highway, I got the EPA and everybody else down on me, but you're letting them pour a million gallons into our ocean out here, into our Gulf of Mexico? I just want to know more about these dispersants, I want to know what they are and how we're going to deal with that.

LARRY: Thank you for your question sir. The easiest thing I can tell you is if you go online to cdc.gov, there's a link to oil spill page in which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention actually put out three different fact sheets on dispersants. Basically, what this stuff is, is a type of product that's almost like soap. As they use it out there to break up the oil, it basically has a half life of 15 days. After 15 days, it starts breaking down in the environment. When you read those fact sheets we have in there, and you start seeing when it says for general residents and the start showing you about for the medical screening and all that. You start getting concerned because it starts talking about, ooh if I get this I might aspirate or might burn me or I might choke. The main hazard that they're talking about for this stuff are the workers who are putting this on the aircraft or spraying it or the ones who are pumping it who are working with the raw product who may by accident swallow some of it from drinking, which I don't know you'd want to or might get a splash in the eye which will cause

irritation. That was one of the effects we saw. One of our doctors basically says that, if you drink it and vomit, you might aspirate it which might cause you to have problems breathing. When you read the medical one or the one that, NIOSH put out for worker safety, it'll scare you but if you read the one for the general public it tells you what it is. Now what EPA has done is EPAs been going out there and sampling the air and the water for the constituents of the dispersants and they haven't found it which tells me that by the time it gets close to shore it's gone. Once it hits the water and starts working on the oil doing what it's supposed to do, it's breaking up, we're not seeing it. FDA, another part of the public health service, has basically said, they've looked into the components of the dispersants and said, listen we're not worried about it tainting the fish because some of it is actually a food additive.

WILLIAM: Aw. Come on.

LARRY: Seriously, if you look at the components in there and I know they used over a million gallons of it so far but it's like everything else, you put soap in your sink, you put a lot of soap, you eat off dishes, drink out of a glass that has soap in it from your camping trip, what do you get? Diarrhea. Now, they're using this stuff in salt water. We look at it from the stand point of exposure pathways, when we look at it from the stand point of toxicity. How many people are going to drink a liter of salt water a day for a year?

WILLIAM: Fish, birds.

LARRY: Again, I'm looking at from the standpoint of public health.

WILLIAM: You don't care about our fish and all that. They mean to kill as many fish and birds as they need to kill.

LARRY: No sir. I'm not saying that, I'm basically saying that, the stuff we're looking at is for public health. The people for Fish and Wildlife and EPA look at it from the standpoint of how is this affecting the ecology and that's why the EPA basically says that there's a lot of unknowns. When they start using this large amount, let's face it, this is a record time, they never expected to use this much dispersant over a short period of time. That's why the administrator for the EPA says, hey we need to go back there and see how this is affecting the ecology. We have a good idea of it might be affecting human health, we want to see how it might be affecting the ecology out there. That's why she's asked for the additional sampling done and testing.

WILLIAM: Do you have any data to support any of this BS? You can stand up here and say anything. How do we know this stuff breaks down in 15 days? I want to see some data. I want to see some proof. I want to know that if I eat some fish out the Gulf of Mexico in 10 years it's not going to kill me or cause cancer in one of my children because of some of these dispersants. I want to know the truth.

LARRY: Sir, you are asking about the MSDS, material safety data sheets, on these dispersants. If you actually go to the Deepwater Horizon website, they have the MSDSs listed there.

CECELIA: I'm Cecelia Redmond from Mobile, Alabama. One of my questions is, my husband works on an offshore supply vessel. He has already experienced some over-powering scents from working on a Fourchon. My concern is since you're talking about doing air quality checking and stuff and you're doing it from the shore. What about when he's out by the rigs?

TERRY: As Mr. Meilberg [*sic*] said, there's two EPA regions. EPA Region 4, is doing the sampling here in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. EPA Region 6 is also participating in sampling along with NOAA out near the spill. Larry can talk about some of those effects because there have been some oil workers getting sick, and we also have folks out of CDC that are looking into that. Larry can address to that.

LARRY: To answer your question, when people start getting sick working out there, a request went through to have NIOSH which is a National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. Which basically again, another part of public health service who assists OSHA which is Occupational Health and Safety Administration who basically has the regulatory authority for employees. NIOSH basically is like a scientific consultant who goes out there and does health hazard evaluations for employers when employees start getting sick from occupational exposure. When the sampling's being done of the vessels out there, people were getting sick and that's part of the site safety plan that the Coast Guard and BP put out to ensure the safety of their workers out there. How much medical monitoring is being done, air sampling whether they should be in respirators, what type of PPE they should be wearing. Because some people got sick they weren't quite sure what it was. Was it the fumes, was it heat stress, what was causing it? The states and CDC have a monitoring system in-place where they're looking at poison control calls, hospitalizations in the Gulf Coast region to see if we're seeing any trends of people who are possibly getting sick from petroleum products. These workers who are getting sick raise the red flag, and that's why NIOSH is out there and they're getting this assessment at this time. They're also looking at putting out more industrial hygienist on the boats to basically do more air monitoring out there to determine if they're using the proper protective equipment for those people out there.

Again, most of the offshore operations with the scheming and all that is being managed by Region 6. Exactly what type of testing and all that is being done, I don't feel comfortable answering that because I'm not working over there. Does that make sense? We are looking into it. We, being the federal government, is assisting in looking into it. I'm not the one doing it.

CECELIA: You're talking about the people that are working directly for BP right now on those boats?

LARRY: We're talking about anyone who's doing oil response operations.

CECELIA: I'm talking about a regular marine sea corps employee who is working out of Fourchon and have to move through this oil going to rigs that are already in Fourchon area that have oil around them.

LARRY: Basically, if they're starting to show symptoms as you're talking about they need to report it to, I don't have the number for it but I'm sure if you call the 1866 number that BP setup for hotline, they can give you the contact name for the Department of Health and Human Services medical unit out there who's setting up a registry. They're trying to find people who are getting sick so they can record that. That basically came from our secretary survey list because they were concerned about this, not the people doing the response but other people in the area whether it's private citizens or others working.

CECELIA: When you work offshore OSHA doesn't have anything to do with you, it's all Coast Guard. The minute you step out of the boat OSHA steps over there, Coast Guard's out here. I'm a 1,600-ton master so that's how I know, the two don't normally meet. If there's some aspect of OSHA and you guys and the Coast Guard coming together, for those people who are not directly working for BP is what I'm trying to say right now for those who are working in the oil field like the 11 that got killed.

LARRY: That is a very good question and if you will fill out a green card, I'm not trying to push this off, it's not one of my expertise, but I can contact the CDC and get your contact name and number for that.

CECELIA: Okay, thank you.

LARRY: You're welcome.

HOMER: My name is Homer Singleton. I'm from Alberta, Alabama, over near Perdido Bay for those of you who needs a reference point. I'm interested specifically on the water quality monitoring on the estuaries I'd like to know what parameters are being monitored for and where in the water column the monitoring is being done.

LARRY: I can't directly tell you what specifically what in the estuaries but I can tell you what's being done over the well head about a 50-nautical-mile box at this point. Primarily what we're trying to determine is the spatial and temporal dispersion of subsurface oil so we can get a handle on where the plume is, can we determine min-max values for oil detected in the water column. Again, this is in the 50 nautical mile box around the centroid well location itself. Is the presence of the oil related to other factors like dissolved oxygen as oil biodegrades, oxygen is used up. It might be a good indicator that we do have hydrocarbons present and we're trying to identify if there's any kind of bathymetric steering, essentially think about winds it's being steered by the mountains much like currents and oil would be steered on the bottom by subsurface features. We're trying to get a handle on where the plume and oil exist in the water column and then how will the ocean conditions affect the transport and fate of the oil as well. What we're doing is looking at historical records that date back to the 1900s in the Gulf of Mexico. We have over 122,000 physical parameters and observations and comparing that to the first four surveys that have been taken so that we can hopefully identify variants and anomalies that are in the water column. I hope that answered some of your question.

TERRY: As far as what we're considering near shore which is anything within three miles including the bays, EPA and the states have taken water samples and sediment samples, and we looked for volatile inorganic compounds, send these volatile organic compounds, total petroleum hydrocarbons, metals, mercury, pesticides and PCBs. Since there's reports of the oil getting closer and also some reports of some tar balls or tar patties on some of the barrier islands, we're going out to these locations and doing additional water samples, looking for the same things including, at this point we've added some of the potential constituents of dispersants.

PANELIST: Just to add on, one program that NOAA's carrying out is to start out the short line the coastline teams which go out sample water near shore, dig holes, collect sediment samples, photograph and actually take the hydrocarbons they find, bag those and send those off for further lab results. There are shoreline teams that are actually assessing what's happening near shore.

BARB: My name is Barb Comsack and I live in Daphne. That's on the east side of Mobile Bay. I want to comment about the coastal volunteers are doing shoreline assessments, too, we're going along this visual. My question is, I want to know if there's websites out there that will train us how to do water clarity test and then also if there's a website that can tell us before we go out what the wind speed is, what the surf height is, other factors that might affect us while we're out in our canoes and kayaks. Thank you.

KEN: I can tell you where to get the weather information anyway, you go to weather.gov, very simple and slant Mobile, slant New Orleans, slant your favorite major city, and you'll be able to go to the National Weather Service sites for the weather information. You can see the feeds and we got the Mobile folks there. I'm in New Orleans and if you hit New Orleans, you'll have that. Actually, at the very top of the page you'll see a link to the Deepwater Horizon site, it's got every single piece of information you'd ever dream of when it comes to the weather and the response. You'll have wave steepness and everything so with the kayak, you'd probably be pretty interested in that I would imagine.

PANELIST: *[0:24:28.3 Inaudible].*
I know Dauphin Island Sea Lab has a website for water clarity but I'd also recommend NDBC.NOAA.gov. Those are the buoys that actually take the meteorological information so you can get way high barometric pressure, those types of observations. NDBC.NOAA.gov, it's also part of the National Weather Service it's the National Data Buoy Center located at Stennis Space Center.

JENNIFER: If you're close to a National Estuarine Research Reserve, the SWAMP data which stands for System Live Monitoring program has online data where you can go and get near real-time data on water quality as well as weather data. In this area that would be Weeks Bay or Grand Bay. I'm from Grand Bay so there you go.

RESPONDENT: Also at the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, you can hook up to some of the real-time data systems and that is mobilebaynep, you may have to try org or com there. I'm not sure which is which, mobilebaynep.org.

JENNIFER: Thank you, do you have any follow-up?

AUDIENCE: No, I'll come up with another question.

LANCE: My name is Lance Lincecum. I live on the east side of Weeks Bay. Concerning the dispersants, I know it was mentioned earlier this evening that EPA is requiring BP to do follow-up testing and data collection because the long-term effect is still unknown. Mister Cseh mentioned that he feels like it's fairly safe, kind of a two-part question, if the long-term effects are unknown, how do we know that it's safe? Secondly, I've read in the past that the EPA has asked for BP to quit using this specific dispersant and switch to one that's less toxic, and they refused to do so.

TERRY: With regard to that, the operational components of dispersants' use, I'm not really in a position to discuss that because that's an area I don't have an information on. As far as how can we tell it's safe, what we're doing as a follow-up is to do this surface water or the sediment air sampling looking

for dispersants, looking for the breakdown product of dispersants. Because even if we think it might be safe or we think it might breakdown in 15 days or what have you, the err on the conservative side we're looking for it, we're sampling it, it's being sampled where the spill sight is being sampled for all along the coast, not just here but also in Louisiana and Texas to try and find any evidence if there is. I'm not a fish tissue expert, but I know we're also taking samples of fish tissue looking for not just the components of the oil but also potential components of the dispersants.

AL: My name is Al Ranasheck Jr., I'm from Mobile, Alabama. I've got a career in analytics and I noticed that this is for monitoring and data but what I'm really seeing and reading across the news is this really going to become a command center. Do any of you all have any information on where and how well the command centers for BP, for the government, for the Coast Guard, for NOAA, for the EPA, they set up and locate it on the Gulf Coast. I'm talking about Mobile, Biloxi and New Orleans. The second part is, staffing levels for both monitoring and logistics as far as clean up and time to ramp up these operations realistically. Thank you everyone.

TERRY: I can try, I'm trying to answer questions, trying to get organized in my head. I think you wanted to know that are there command centers or commands post, yes.

AL: Ramping up significantly in New Orleans. I'm wondering what's being done in New Orleans and is it going down to Biloxi and Mobile in the same manner?

TERRY: There have been federal, state, local responders, BP responders here in Mobile since the end of April. I've been working for EPA for 20 years, I've responded to hurricanes, responded to many different things. This is the largest response I've been associated with as far as folks out in the field and folks at the command center here in Mobile doing work and that's since my arrival. I arrived a week after, April 25th so before that it was already at the Mobile Convention Center, it recently moved, but there are, within this area within what we consider this zone, every responsibility, there's thousands of workers, not mostly at the command center, mostly in the field but there's hundreds at the command center doing logistics and getting the crews ready for each day's work. They're working around the clock. Every day there's more people that come in as needed. We don't have the oil like they have it in Louisiana but it doesn't mean, given the seasonal changes it doesn't mean we're not expecting. In fact, you can see on the news, and I know that they're projections that there's likely to be some or potentially some oil beaches here and Mississippi and possibly in Florida so those activities have ramped up. There are teams in the field now who do shoreline assessment. There are teams that are continually doing clean up of what they find. There are more than hundreds, thousands of folks placing boom continuously

around. You're asking for a timeline, what I'm saying is, those folks are already here doesn't mean there won't be more if needed and especially with the oil coming. You can count on more folks out on the water and on the beaches.

LARRY: Just to add to that is we've also got resources back in our headquarters, whether it's Atlanta, DC, and like NOAA's talking about there, we get our resources from the West Coast. It's not just people here, it's people supporting us back at our main offices.

AL: The follow-up is it seems like the BP's out there, a lot of these organizations are mentioned that are out there, it's almost like our first blush at what are we going to get here in Mobile and can you give us some idea of what's going on out at Dauphin Island and how does that impact us on the coast.

TERRY: You mean operationally what's going on? They're operationally doing various things. The first line of defenses is boom. But strategic boom. Putting out boom in an open-water environment is very difficult to say the least. You try and place them where you can't protect sensitive areas. There's also, on Dauphin Island, there's also shoreline assessment that continues. In shoreline assessment with regard to oil is we're looking for areas that have oil or tar patties or tar balls, and then advising cleanup teams, which have also been on Dauphin Island, what to pick up and what not to pick up. There's also air monitoring and air sampling that continues on Dauphin Island as well as water sampling. Not right on Dauphin Island but obviously 40 or 50 feet out. Those activities are really along the coast for us from this area from the border of Mississippi–Louisiana, past Pensacola, but not everywhere and every time that the oil hasn't arrived yet. They were seeing certain signals that the oil might arrive. As oil arrives, then you'll see more people in the areas that will need more response.

PAUL: My name is Paul Bonner, and I work for Bonner Safety Service here in Mobile. From my understanding, one of the materials that is a dispersant is the Corexit 9500. From reading the MSDS today on the website, I noticed that there was no toxicological study ever performed on that particular product. Then I hear about your analytical testing that has been performed, and it's normally on the everyday things the we hear about the PCBs and all of those kinds of things. What can you actually tell us is being tested on this particular disperse that is being put out there about the millions of gallons that we talked about and we'll be talking, are toxicological issues to the wildlife, and of course humans ourselves.

TERRY: We are sampling for, we're doing air sampling and we're doing water sampling for the dispersants and for potential breakdown products. We

didn't do that initially, but we in this area, but we are doing that now all along the coast, Larry if you had specific information like Corexit or not.

LARRY: It was explained to me that the question you're asking for is for proprietary information, in which I can't tell you what it is, but if you go to our website and look at the OSHA fact sheet they put for workers' safety, it lists it there. Yes, it's there. Like I've said, we aren't supposed to tell what the chemicals are...

MAN: Oh, come on. Bullshit, man.

LARRY: But if you look at the...I have a copy that I can get to you.

PAUL: I've read some of that. One of the proponents in it is glycol polyol which is one of the products we removed from any brands which then tells me that any...

PANELIST: Actually, that's ethyleneglycolic you removed...Propylene glycol is basically what the put in cough syrup. There's different products you need to be careful in...

PAUL: How can we sit there and not know they were ever toxicological studies done on these products and be putting it into our water system, and then it sounds like to me what you're monitoring is occurring right at the coast, what we noticed is that going on right at the site out there?

TERRY: We're not doing monitoring out there, another the same thing. I'm not sure going about, I don't have the information about.. Because I'm not going to tell you that they're monitoring for the same thing we're doing here. I believe so only in that region 4 and the Region 6 EPA synced up their mind sampling plans. We sample for the exact same things. I'm going to hand it back to Larry because I know CDC did look at the toxicological effects of the components of the dispersant. While the exact composition is not being sent out, we have looked at toxicological profiles and potentials.

LARRY: That was on that fact sheet that I've told you about. I have a copy of it here that I can give to you.

PAUL: Like I said I think it's already out there and I can't quite understand how we can just go ahead. We hear it plenty of times that this was an issue before it was to be put in the water, but basically EPA said we shouldn't be using it.

BRYON:

I'm Bryon Griffith, and I'm the director of the Gulf of Mexico Program. It's easier to be there in the audience than listening to the questions and write the answers, and not be up here and answering the question. I'm filling half of the blanks, I was talking with the state of the actual monitoring regime. With the EPA Deep Blue Water is not a normal setting for us. It's actually not a normal setting for any of us in this table. The consequence of the dispersant when they're actually utilized, they are not allowed to utilize without this companion monitoring plan that is actually implemented by BP. You heard from the EPA administrator if you watch the news, or caught the news in the last several of days, she does not accept that as decisional science and has started a very regimented Texas to Florida water quality, air quality, sediment quality management plan that is underway. She does not accept the private sectors' science as the independent decisional science, period. With respect to the 5,000 feet, we don't go 5,000 feet, NOAA doesn't go to 5,000 feet. You heard earlier the Scripps lab and others have engaged the assets that they have, and they are now helping us fill in the blanks. That's why we are in cooperation with NOAA, and several of the other agencies to fill this knowledge void that we're involved in right now. Sir, your question about the assets that we deployed, you're probably here during, I guess you've been around a couple of times, you're here during several working strikes. You know that needs one, whether that was Frederick or Kurt, Katrina or Ike, is an incident-related demand for manpower. We are in the stage right now of deciding having to watch and deciding how much that incident commands. The consequence, as Terry pointed out, we are not only mobilized, and I believed what the Coast Guard representative this morning and again this evening suggested this scene about command 7600 personnel. That's a huge deployment. In the EPA specifically make it more EPA eccentric when the demand becomes greater than Terry's operation or anybody else's operation. We have ten regional offices that are all companion regional offices are likely with Katrina. We have exchanged, we are actually cooperating between the Dallas regional offices and the Atlanta regional offices. Region 3 office, is it still out here? It's in Philadelphia. Our Region 3 office is the immediate next responder to load backload personnel that have that capacity, when we wear them out.

MICHAEL:

My name is Michael Kessler. My question is about baseline data. The pre-spill conditions, water quality, habitat, plant animal species. What's your confidence level that you've got enough baseline data even if it's unlikely we could ever restore it to its original conditions or pre-spill conditions, but do we know enough how comprehensive is the data that we have and what's being done to get more data.

PANELIST:

There's several efforts underway currently to assess the Gulf of Mexico in terms of data. As I said earlier, NODC, the National Oceanographic Data Center, has over a 12,200 observations in the Gulf of Mexico getting that

in 1900. Also the GCOOS, which is the Gulf Coasts Ocean Observing Systems which Dauphin Island is a member of Texas A&M University, many universities, and in national levels service, ourselves are members. And Texas A&M, as you can imagine, has a huge collection of Gulf of Mexico data, all the way from Campeche over to Florida. Additionally, there's big assessments in the universities within the Gulf Institute, which makes up Dauphin Island and Florida State, University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University and LSU. So those data sets will also be made available, and recently, a contracting firm that has over 50,000 still photographs of benthic habitat. The habitats that exist on the bottom of the near shore has been made available. We're now parsing that specifically for those areas that are being affected, so that we can build a baseline to work from. I hope that answers some of your question.

(0:44:27.6)

JENNIFER:

Do you have a follow-up? Okay. Moving on to the next person.

RESPONDENT:

[0:44:40.4 Inaudible].

KURT:

Oh, my name's Kurt Burns, and I live in Mobile. That was one of my concerns was the transparency of the data collected. If we rely totally on the government to tell us one set of data, that's not true. If we rely on BP to tell us another set of data, that's not true. Which sets it up for this legal wrangling, and I can see this drawing out for years and years about whose data is true. I think Bryon just said that they're not going to accept a private data, scientific data. So if I own waterfront property, and we know the dispersants are suspending the hydrocarbons, it could look really good from the surface, which it's doing, which was part of the reason for sinking it from the beginning, in my opinion, 'cause out of sight, out of mind. Now we got this good-looking water on the surface, but due to this dispersant, it's holding all these hydrocarbons which are messing up all the wetlands anywhere that grass touches that water, it's going to be dying in years to come. Now, who's going to be out there in the marshes that's independent that we as citizens can trust, that's transparent, that's going to walk out to my place and stick a tube down there and say that you've got so many hydro-carbons per particle, you know, per density study, whatever it is, so that I know that my bayou is safe? And if it's unsafe, who's going to pay?

PANELIST:

I think I can answer from the perspective of conflicting interest of BP and NOAA, the work that we're doing offshore...was actually funded, the cruises were funded by BP. Like for instance, when we have our daily conferences to look at the data, to visualize and present the data, BP is on the phone call, but they do not have access to what we're analyzing. So they are at least hearing what we're doing with the data, but they are in no way biasing, or getting access to the products that we are building. I can

assure you that at least from my perspective and my experience, we're doing this independently of BP.

KURT: Is there any website as they do, like the gentleman says setting up these command centers? Is there going to be transparency to where we're can actually see the studies that they're going to setup in grids, you know, kind of like a city like Bayou La Croix is trashed or Bayou [0:47:20.0 *inaudible*] is trashed, so we can kinda monitor because they all tie together, and they're going to be affected.

PANELIST: My focus is primarily the deep ocean and eventually it will become coastal as more of it comes ashore. The data that we're working on will be made public actually tomorrow at the LSU meeting, at the Cook Center, at LSU. The first four cruises that went under way, and the data's now been like contours of oxygen, fluorometry data, conductivity and temperature and depth probes to give you temperature and salinity. We're trying to identify what's happening to the ocean structure now, with the spill and the dispersants, but also about that base line we're talking about. All of that will be publicly available.

TERRY: I just wanted to add. EPA data is posted on EPA's website. There's also deepwater website that has additional information. While EPA does independent sampling and analysis, we also do oversight of BP's contractor, and we try as much as possible to look for the same, or use the same listed analysis, so that the information we get should match up as far as independent sampling. I guess I have a question as to what do you mean by independent sampling. There's state sampling going on, federal sampling going on, there's company sampling going on.

KURT: Right. That's what I was wondering. If we could bring state samples of our soil or our water, and if it will be accepted as true data.

TERRY: The state sampling, we're actually sharing data with the state, the state shares data with us. In fact, much of that state data, from all four of the states is probably going to be brought together. Right now, it's being brought together into one package so that a person can look to see where they lived and what data is available and who has taken the samples. EPA generally accepts, and states generally accept our data.

LAURIE: My name's Laurie Gerald, and I live here in Mobile. I came here tonight primarily concerned about the dispersants. In our food, in our water, and in the air. I was at Ground Zero with the Red Cross. The EPA, at the time, it said that the air was safe and we ingested a lot of chemicals. Things that what we're talking about with these dispersants by what you described tonight don't even compare with what we were breathing out there. Glass, plastic, chemicals, burning bodies. Believe me, we took a lot of stuff into

our lungs. I came home, I went to the hospital, it's been nine years, I was in the hospital for respiratory distress. It's been nine years, my lungs are clean. I continue to have chest X-rays. My lungs have been clean. I want to say to you all is thank you for everything that you're doing. I know these guys are working around the clock, they're away from their families, heaven help them if they're in hotel rooms, living out of suitcases, eating fast food all day. At some point, we're going to have to trust them. They're working for our best interest. These guys are not making money off of this. Any extra money, commission, bonus. They're here for our health. Each and every one of our health. They're here for our wetlands, our beaches, our quality of life, our health and at some point we need to recognize that, and credit them with that. They want us to heal, as much as we do. I'm glad Scripps is down here, they have an outstanding program, in Marine Biology and they will be very forthcoming.

(0:51:35.5)

JENNIFER:

You have 15 seconds to complete the question. Phrase it as a question.

LAURIE:

I don't have a question. I just want you all to know that you deserve the recognition for all the hard, good collaborative work you are doing.

JAY:

My name is Jay McRae, I'm with the Cedar Point Fishing Pier. First of all, I've been in the other meeting, so these questions could have been asked, and I apologize if they have. But we're concerned about the disbursements from a fishing stand point because we've had a fishing pier for 25 years. We don't really know what the disbursements, the EPA says they don't know what the disbursements are doing. We were just in a meeting with the FDA guy, and he said that as far as the FDA's concerned, the dispersants are not a problem. That concerns us because he said he knew three of the compounds, the other compound was proprietary for the company. It was toxic, but he didn't think it was too toxic. And then we hear the EPA, earlier,

MAN:

It'll kill you a little bit.

JAY:

Do what?

MAN:

It'll just kill you a little bit.

JAY:

Yes. It was kind of concerning because he was so sure that it was safe, but he didn't know what was in it. I don't know how that's possible. Then we hear the EPA tonight say "Well, we don't really know because it's never been used in this amount, but yet we think it's the lesser of two evils." Our concern is the long-term future, what this going to do to our whole ecosystem. The plankton and everything that will work backwards from the beginning. So, I don't know if somebody asked you this earlier, but he

said that they are limitin' BP to 15,000 gallons. How's that monitored, and obviously, I hope you all are not trusting BP because they haven't told the truth from the beginning. First, they wasn't any oil spill and this amount, and they knew all along how much was spilling. How do you know if they've only pumped a million gallons? You know, they have no-fly zones, so you can't really, the public cannot really monitor it. We have to go by with whatever, whoever can get in there. Basically, our question is, are you trusting BP and how you verifying?

TERRY: I can partially answer it, the questions. First of all there are Coast Guard and NOAA vessels at the site of the spill. That's how we monitor what goes on at the spill and as well as how much dispersant is used. There's also a program in place to do sampling of not just water, or air, but also fish tissue. Long-term, we'll have to see how what the effects are, and the only one who can really tell is to continually do the sampling, not just in water but also sediment. There's a program or a process to reopen the fisheries and part of that is to look at shellfish and fish and see if there's any potential for health effects.

JAY: He didn't tell me how they're measuring what BP, he just said that the Coast Guard, how do they know when they reach 15,000? How do they know it's a million gallons?

TERRY: I don't have any information because EPA is not on the spill site. Coast Guard is on the spill site. I'm not saying it's not being done, I know there are Coast Guard assets there, I know there are NOAA assets. EPA is not there, so I can't give you operational information that I don't have.

BOB: My name is Bob Suberry, I live in Orange Beach, Alabama. We live on the water. I'm just wondering if there's been much effort trying to take advantage and utilize the volunteer help that is available from all feedback that we get, you know if you volunteer for any of these projects and come up, you get these 'thank you for volunteering' we've had an overwhelming response. You need to be trained in this, and you need to be trained in that. You try to find out how you can get Hazmat training, and keep running into dead ends. How to get trained for wildlife rehabilitation. I haven't been able to get any information with that. It seems like you have a tremendous manpower available. You know, people that just want to volunteer. I, myself, am retired, so I have plenty of time, but you need the training, and you need the certification to get out there. I know the Coast Guard has a program called CAN, Citizens Action Network that they pioneered up in the northwest. It is been so successful that it has spread to other Coast Guard stations and sectors around the country. They're utilizing people that live on the water to monitor the waterways both environmentally, and also for law enforcement. I'm wondering if you guys are really putting effort into that area to utilize the people that live on the

waterway to do testing. I do testing with the Wolf Bay Waterway Watch. I have a degree in biology. I'd love to help out in any way I can. But, there doesn't seem to be the resources or the training available. That's my question.

TERRY:

I can only answer for what EPA's using. I know that there's volunteer programs everybody else has the information, I'm sure happy to share it. As far as EPA, we are using volunteers through Coast Guard's Vessels of Opportunity Program. We actually go out when we do our sampling we go out on volunteer vessels, so we're working through the Coast Guard's command to use volunteers where we can.

ROBERTA:

Hi, I'm Roberta Swann, I'm with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. The challenge with using volunteers for this particular incident is that there are several people in these rooms or that showed up tonight that want work. BP has said that they will pay workers to clean the beaches, to monitor for tar balls or oil. And, so we've been challenged as a program and working with the community collecting all of this volunteer information, and then being told that volunteers cannot touch any of the hazardous materials. So, even if you do get HAZWOPER I training, which is basically safety training, you still can't go out and do any of the actual work that would bring you into any contact with the oil, or the mousse, or the tar balls, at this point. If we were, what I've been told by VOAD, which is the volunteer response unit in Unified Command, is that if it does get really bad, if the coast is hit really hard, they will then setup volunteer response centers, one in Robertsdale and one in Bayou la Batre, where volunteers will have to go re-register at the volunteer reception centers, be trained, be issued equipment to go out on the beaches and to do the beach cleanup in effect. And they will be bused to the sites, and then bused back. They want full control over the volunteers. What we have been doing as a program, in particular with Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, actually, is supporting volunteer water monitoring programs. We'll continue to do that, with our citizens advisory committee working with, there's 13 some odd, grassroots organizations like Wolf Bay Watershed Watch throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties. We're going to continue to work with them to do water quality monitoring, however, as you well know, the water quality monitoring that you're doing with Alabama Water Watch, we're not monitoring for the types of things that would show up as a result of an oil spill. It's a catch 22, we are looking for opportunities to get volunteers out there to work with people who actually own coastal properties. One of the ways that you might want to get involved is Alabama Coastal Foundation is now doing a volunteer field observer protocol program, and you can get trained to do that when you're on shoreline assessments throughout the course of this event and beyond to just to gather data on what the shoreline looks like pre-spill and then post-spill, and to keep an eye out for any arrival, if you will.

AUDIENCE: I have a follow-up question.

(1:01:44.5)

MODERATOR: Could you use the microphone please.

BOB: I got trained today for that volunteer effort. My question is, maybe I wasn't very clear, is the training. You have to go through the training first whether you use this or not. There are a lot of people willing to go through that. It's got to be made available. It all takes time.

ROBERTA: The Unified Command response to that is, the training takes, for the level of effort that the volunteers will be undertaking because they won't be coming into contact with the material, the level of training is approximately a one-hour, HAZWOPER I training. The way they have designed this process, this is a state of Alabama process, through don't ask me what it stands for but they're called VOAD, Volunteers of Alabama Disasters, I guess. You would do all of that in one fell swoop when you register yourself at those volunteer reception centers so that they can manage the volunteers.

RESPONDENT: I can answer a part of that question for you because I will be manning the volunteer registration center for Hands On South Alabama. If you want to register now, for your name to be put on the list, to be called for one on the registration centers, there's two ways. One, you can go to www.serve.alabama.gov. In that list, they are trying to accumulate all of our lists into one list. It's www.serve.alabama.gov or you can go to our website which is www.handsonsal.org. It's actually hands on S-A-L all one word. Handsonsal.org. There's a link there that says 1-800-volunteer to register for volunteers there. I have on that site already, the volunteer registration centers list. You can look for oil spill when you register at 1-800-volunteer, which is if you go to our website, click on 1-800. It will immediately will take you to a site for you to register again. All these registrations, I know are a pain, but we're trying just to coordinate everybody. If you will do a search or a keyword search for oil spill, I've made sure that all responses is in for your agencies because Tom called me first. I was one of the first persons he called. It says oil spill. If you look it then, do a keyword search for oil spill, you'll see the volunteer response centers or registration centers and their transportation opportunities. There's receptions opportunities. Basically, what we have been told through VOAD is that the volunteers are going to be used initially for administrative purposes. Basically, they want to keep the volunteers away from the hazardous materials. That's why you're not finding the opportunity for volunteers to go through that training, which is what she said. That's what they're going to do. We're going to be organizing it because we are the team EMA, the Mobile County and Baldwin County

emergency management volunteer coordinators. Also if you want to, just to put in for this. We're also doing the same for hurricanes. If you want to register for us, for volunteer registration centers for hurricane response. We're doing the same thing. We're going to be having a training coming up. It was going to be on our website at handsonsal.org.

(1:05:47.0)

JENNIFER:

It's not your turn yet. You have to hold. Back row? Do you a question?

AUDIENCE:

Hi, actually this is for Mr. Beard. It's a NOAA question regarding the data that was released regarding the 2010 hurricane season which appears to look like an active season that we're coming toward us. Do we have any idea what we're looking at for the ability of a major storm.

RUSS:

I'm going to defer to our National Weather Service expert.

AUDIENCE:

Okay. It seems like a first case scenario or maybe I'm wrong but do we have any idea what a major system has the ability to lift oil out the water and drop it in remote areas?

KEN:

You saw our forecast, and it's going to be active. You saw that El Niño is going away and we're going to be pretty neutral on that and no shear in the gulf. That's not what we want. That's was our saving grace last year. The Atlantic is four degrees above normal. We're primed. The forecast that we're issuing is reminiscent of some of the strongest years that we've had. It's pretty serious. We're looking at an outlook that has those kind of numbers. When it comes to the oil, a couple of things to think about, one thing that I keep hearing in the different meetings that I go to, you have oil. That should reduce the evaporation and maybe things will be better type of thing. The reality is, there's no such thing as *[1:07:20.6 inaudible]* and smooth. There is no such thing as smooth water by the way. We don't have smooth water with the hurricanes. You're going to have things tossed around in a hurricane, you're going to have high seas. Went through Katrina, you got 40-foot seas that we measured out there, just incredible things. You're going to stir it up quite a bit. The reality is, you look at the relative size of the spill versus like an Ike, if you look at hurricane Ike. Ike was huge. You're talking about a lot of momentum, a lot of energy coming out of the Caribbean into the Gulf. Really you look at the modeling. There's still some unknowns. There's some modeling going in and some big brains putting their heads together trying to figure out what would happen. It looks like there are probably won't be a whole lot of influence to the hurricane when it comes to where it goes and how strong. That's the one thing. That sort of thing. What we need to be concerned with is the storm surge. It's one of the big things that we have to be looking at because that's... I'm out of the New Orleans office, that's our biggest threat. There has been a lot of talk about that. The reality there is, as far as

the storm surge goes inland, you could have oil and contaminants in it as far as that goes. That at a new component of our hurricane season this year. We've had some cases in hurricane Katrina where there was some releases of oil. St. Bernard Parish for example and some other places. We had to clean up. The big message there is, when I go to community meetings, I'm telling everybody, hey we're going to prepare. Hurricanes are going to get us like they always have. So, we need to prepare for the hurricane season. I know we have oil and that was the big focus in this section. I know we need to talk about that. The reality is, when I go to these community meetings, churches or official meeting for the emergency management, we're going to prepare for the hurricane still. The reality is, there could be contaminants in the storm surge. To dispel some of the questions I'm getting, I've had calls as far away as Canada going, what are we going to do when it rains oil? No. (Chuckle) Looking at, putting our heads together and looking at some of the modeling data, you could get some spray right along the beach front coming from the wind. Popping the oil up, blowing that. It's probably not going to go far inland. The fact is, probably not so much in the rain as well. I think the biggest threat we're going to have to really look at is whatever is in that storm surge. We all know, we all live here like I do. I live in Slidell. We know how far inland the storm surge can go. The other thing to think about in your head too is all that's going to depend on the hurricane track as we all know. If you have a hurricane or some sort of tropical system towards the east. Think about the rotation around that hurricane. It's going to push it out, right? That's an interesting dynamic. If it's something, we have a hurricane landfall in western Louisiana, you have onshore flow, very strong onshore flow. That's going to change it again. All that and it's hard to say. I get the questions and I'm like, it's going to depend on the track. It's going to blow it in whatever direction the winds are going from the possible track.

AUDIENCE: But to clarify, centrifugal forces aren't going to lift it up and drop it in remote areas.

KEN: No.

(1:10:45.1)

JENNIFER: Anybody that's in the room that has not had any chance to ask a question that wants to ask a question. Anyone?

DIANE: Good evening. My name is Diane Brunet, and I apologize if you've answered this already. I was in a different session and came in a few minutes ago. The EPA standards have been lowered recently for air quality standards, correct?

TERRY: For certain things.

DIANE: Have there been some air particles, particles from the oil found in the air?

TERRY: No, we have continually sampled since the end of April. The state had six locations that sample, have been sampling for quite a while not associated with this. EPA is along with the state is continually samples since the end of April. We haven't found any whether it's a particulate or volatile or semi-volatile beyond what is already here or is already expected to be here given this time of the year and the industry in this location.

DIANE: I understand that. There were rumors and I cannot recall where I heard that people who were claiming in the Louisiana area became ill. Did you hear that as well? Is that air related?

LARRY: I can call it a rumor. I don't have any actual set down thing. I heard that some people are, something was reported was heat stress related. Others that they overcame from the decon solution that were using for doing cleaning of booms and because there is a lot of unknowns, is one of the reasons why, Secretary Sebelius with HHS asked BP to allow them to go in there and do a health hazard evaluation of the workers to determine what they're being exposed to and why they were getting sick. That's being done by NIOSH.

DIANE: Could you tell us what NIOSH is?

PANELIST: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

DIANE: Right, but no results yet?

PANELIST: No, they haven't released a report. In fact, I talked to a lieutenant commander who's working the teams, They're slowly working their way this way. They were in Houma this week and last week. Now, they're working some of the tracks over here. In fact they ask me where we're staying for hotel rooms.

DIANE: Alright, thank you very much.

MIKE: My name is Mike Week and I'm from Mobile. I just had a couple of questions. Number one, the president said that we as a government are fully engaged. My question to you is, as far as water quality and monitoring, at the site of the well, Bryon mentioned that we can't go 5,000 feet. We don't have the capability but what about our Navy? Don't we have bathyspheres and submarines that could monitor? I saw in the news last night that one of the oil executives that's not tied to BP said that the film that we're getting from the site is managed. There's four cameras on the

bottom and they're only showing us the good scenes not the bad. I'm wondering, are we going to be able to as a government monitor this a little bit better using our Armed Forces, our Marines or our Navy?

PANELIST:

I used to work for the Navy, spent 15 years of naval oceanographic office over at Stennis. I can tell you, they are getting ready to deploy three Navy gliders that will be able to go to depth and through the plumes with a number of sensors on it. Between the Navy and submersibles with academics, we can go deep, it's just we've never tried to specifically address this type of issue at that depth. You can imagine as you put a glider into the oil. It's going to cover your sensors. We recently looked at a data set from one of the cruises yesterday. The data set not the cruise itself. We're doing an oxygen, dissolved oxygen test and a profile, and we encountered it at about 600 meters, the sensor started giving a lot of background noise all the way down to 1,000 meters. In that 400-meter interval, there's something that's fouling that oxygen sensor, probably hydrocarbons. As it went back up to the water column, the sensor then became defouled by the natural sea water. We are able to sample it. It's that this is the first time we ever put it in such a viscous, as you can imagine, body of liquid. There's some issues with how do you parameterize the data and take out that background noise because of that.

AUDIENCE:

The 3,000 foot or 3,500 foot deep swath of oil that was supposed to be 22 miles long, BP denied that it's there. Do we know is it there that swath of oil that was heading towards Florida at 3,000 feet.

PANELIST:

I can't answer that one, that particular question but the work that's ongoing right now at the Office of Restoration with the first cruise data that's come back to NOAA that BP funded. We're looking at, again, I don't know if you're here in the beginning. We're looking for the min-max values of oil detected in the water column. We're using the dissolved oxygen and fluorometry to get an indication of the possibility of presence of hydrocarbons. I know that the ship the Thomas Jefferson will be going out sometime this week that will have sonar. The idea is to map the density changes so that you might be able to get a more aerial...the aerial extent and map a plume underwater.

(1:17:02.8)

JENNIFER:

You ahead.

BRYON:

I like to pose a question to the group for the record. Again, I'm the director of Gulf of Mexico Program. EPA has three great water body program: the Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. The government, the table up here and it could have been suited with a lot more people, the government works for you, we don't work for each other. Each region defines its constituency. Defines its kinds of assets it has to

deal with. I would give you this to think about. Today, the horizon incident has left us with a lot of unknowns. Tomorrow, there'll be another incident at some point in time. You as citizens need to think about whether you want us to be in the same situation 10 years from now as we are today or different. If we're going to be different, we cannot make it different, only you can. When it comes time to rattle the cages that say I want it different. I want to know a lot more tomorrow than I know today. Then you're the ones that have to do that. We're simply the responders. So, just think about that. Our region does not look like the other regions in consideration of capabilities. Yet, we are, without question, the most valuable marine ecosystem in the entire world.

(1:18:39.1)

JENNIFER:

We've gone through the room once and we're getting close to the time where will be ending here soon. We're going to go through a second time. I ask you to keep your questions short and stay on point whenever possible so that maybe everyone gets a chance to ask that second question.

STACY:

I'm Stacy Redmond again. Mainly, I'm asking you, Mr. Beard, because when you were speaking in the other room, you said that there are four vessels going out now doing the search on these plumes. What the gentleman was asking a minute ago is, are you admitting that there are plumes that are moving in the Gulf of Mexico at this time? Also, in those plumes and based on what you were saying about it, the dispersant dissipating within 15 days. There's still in existence passed the 15-day mark. How do we measure and equate in our brains the response that you're going to have to that as a government agency but how do we look at that?

How do you recommend we look at that as a potential threat to us?

RUSS:

Let me start by I'm not passing the buck. I'm not empowered to say whether or not there are plumes or if they exist or not but OR and R, the Office of Response and Restoration, is working on that issue right now. What we do in my office, is take that data and visualize it into the best possible degree that the subject matter experts can then look at that and make that assumption. Is the oil plume there, I can tell you as a private citizen what I think and having worked for an oil company but I'm not going to do that. I'm not really trying to pass the buck, but I think you're going to find more information coming out henceforth, as these surveys get underway and this data becomes public. I hope that answered some of your question.

STACY:

In that, are you looking at the potential threat that is holding to us or are you looking at that just for does it exist.

RUSS: No, we're looking for fate and transport, where is it going, where is it going to end up? Does it get into the Loop Current? Does it go to the Florida Straits? Does it go up the Atlantic Coast? I don't know. The scientists at NOAA are looking at the fate and transport. They're trying to get those trajectories down, where the plumes exist and where they may come ashore.

(0:18:18.5)

JENNIFER: Are there any more questions? Want to pass for a minute?

AUDIENCE: No, I have a question.

(0:18:26.8)

JENNIFER: Is this the first meeting you've been in or have you been in others?

AUDIENCE: No I have been to others. Let's see, we have NOAA, who else do we have?

PANELIST: National Weather Service.

PANELIST: CDC.

PANELIST: EPA.

RESPONDENT: My question, first of all, for EPA, I know Lisa Jackson reported that there were some new trials being done on dispersants in Florida, that was a week ago. Tonight it was reported that if it's approved budget-wise, that there is some kind of comprehensive testing on dispersants. That was a conflicting part of information and I'm sorry that if those test haven't already started to happen as far as finding the least toxic and the most effective for Gulf of Mexico crude. Anyway, that's a disappointment that I kind of got out of the earlier comments from EPA tonight. On NOAA, NOAA has about five research vessels I understand, and there are only two right now that have been, started doing research, what do we have to do? What kind of noise do we have to make to have all five NOAA vessels in our Gulf of Mexico?

PANELIST: I won't have a job tomorrow. That message needs to be heard by your legislative bodies, Senator Shelby and Sessions and those folks. What does NOAA need to bring the bear. I can assure you, I have seen what NOAA has been doing and I'm not saying this because I work for NOAA, they have a lot of dedicated scientists, the two ships that are going out are top of the line. They have a number of small boats that go out that do not make the news because they're smaller boats. Before you came, I did mention that the first four survey crews are called the Brooks McCall

survey was funded by BP with a number of scientists aboard and those results will be forth coming in very short time. NOAA is gearing up.

RESPONDENT: What time frame was that done in?

RUSS: Over the last weekend, I got a call Saturday. (Laughter) Yes, I got a call over Saturday night and said, work over Sunday, Memorial Day. We presented, put together current data from the actual four cruises plus historical Gulf of Mexico data for the same area so you can look at the anomalies, the variants. We have seasonal averages, monthly averages and then comparing that to the data that was collected aboard the ship and you'll be able hopefully to establish the baseline and what's there now. You're going to see more and more assets and resource from NOAA being sent to the Gulf.

PANELIST: I understand that there were three vessels. Two of them had some NOAA affiliation, the Pelican and the University of South Florida, and then the Gustav Ocean Futures vessels, who actually did some excellent photography and that was publicized. I heard the NOAA press conference today and NOAA has still not acknowledged that there are these plumes that are consisting of dispersed oil. Even though the hydrocarbons have been measured and the oxygen levels have been measured and it's very disappointing.

(0:21:47.6)

JENNIFER: Please finalize your question.

PANELIST: What?

(0:21:51.8)

JENNIFER: Please finalize your question.

PANELIST: Take your time. (Laughter)

AUDIENCE: Finalize my question? Other than state agencies and the governor, what about the White House? Would that do more for...tonight I've heard a lot of government agencies say that we have to ask BP, we don't have to ask BP anything because the government is in-charge of this. I would urge all government officials to re-think the comment let's, BP has to answer that, because we are in charge. I think that you all have to empower yourselves and understand that you've got to be creative, and you've got to find some answers and we don't want oil on our shores.

PANELIST: I understand that. Let me answer that the best I can. I'm a civil servant, I work for you. Civil service is second only to military service in terms of

what you could do for your government. We are working as hard as we can to answer some of those questions that you have. I have to tell you, this type of disaster, there's so many unknowns, and it'd be wrong for me to sit up here and tell you that we know the answers, we're working on it. Before you came in, specifically in terms, I hate to repeat myself, but you didn't get this, we're looking for the first four cruise datasets to establish the special and temporal (?) distribution of the sub-surface oil. We're looking at fluorometry and dissolved oxygen to draw correlations is hydrocarbons in the water column, are the oil locations correlated with bathymetric features, in other words, steering mechanisms. What's the vertical structure of the ocean, in terms of the dynamic features and how that might steer the oil. We're currently looking at a 40-kilometer box, around the well, around the centroid to get a better understanding at the dynamics that's recurring on site such that it can be extrapolated out through effects of the loop currents and long shore currents. We're also looking at the, again, as I said earlier, the ocean conditions that affect the fate and transport because that's really what we want to know. If the plume exists, where is it going to go?

AUDIENCE: More than one?

PANELIST: Absolutely.

AUDIENCE: With two vessels?

PANELIST: Again, I can take that message back, trust me I am hearing everything that you are saying, we work for you, I'm telling you that from my heart, I work for you and I know these people will too. We'll do the best we can to make sure that you have the best solutions to your problems, to our problems. I live here too.

AUDIENCE: Thank you.

(0:24:39.1)

JENNIFER: Sir, do you have a question?

AUDIENCE: Yes. I've got a follow-up question, I've heard a couple of people. They addressed a couple of my questions, but I'm still not clear on what the Unified Command is on this whole disaster as far as the oil, as far as the monitoring, the data, the logistics, and the operations. I'll ask this straight out. Who is calling the shots now with capping and clean up the oil on the Gulf Coast, is that BP or the government. If it's both, what are you all's

organizations roll for BP or the government and what questions are you all asking and what decisions are being made by the Unified Command that's basically leading to an official response to this disaster?

TERRY: Under the Oil Pollution Act, on coastal zone spills, and this is a coastal zone spill, the Coast Guard is in charge of pollution response. For this spill, the Coast Guard, while part of what we are calling Unified Command, is in charge, they direct clean-up operations, and that's really all operations not just clean up, but also they direct EPA to do monitoring, NOAA provides technical support to the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard directs BP operations. There is a Unified Command that includes the states and includes Department of Interior and EPA here and in region 6. As well as an area command that provides resource brokering between here and in Louisiana. The purpose of the Unified Command is to bring all resources bear under the direction of the Coast Guard. We follow a national incident management system, that was developed first by the Forest Service during forest fires but is now implemented by Department of Homeland Security. That system has an incident commander with operations sections and finance and planning and logistics. It's a very structured system that is all focused on field operations, supported of field operations, maintaining situation awareness but is all directed by the incident commander who's with the Coast Guard. For both locations, it's the sector captain, the captain of the Mobile sector for here. It is a very structured system, and it's a tested developed system and long tested over 30 years of forest fires.

(0:28:16.9)

JENNIFER: I'm giving the two-minute warning. I'll be taking two more questions. We're going to start with the questions. If you could.

AUDIENCE: Back to the dispersant stuff, it is my understanding even under prior proprietary information under emergency situations that that be available to those who respond to a situation like that why I have that made available? Is this not enough of an emergency situation to verify that information?

TERRY: Two things, one is that, the dispersants used have to be on what is called the EPA product schedule. To get on EPA schedule, the company who develops the dispersants has to provide, not just what they would give to the general public but the actual chemical composition and tests that go along with that, that has been done. Subsequent to the spill when the dispersants are being used, the chemical composition was also given to Centers for Disease Control to look at the potential effects. We do have that information even though it is proprietary. We have looked at it. Again, it's not the best solution, but it's the solution we have for right now, but it doesn't mean that we're comfortable that the dispersants will not

have a long-term effect, that's why we are doing monitoring, sampling here and at the spill site.

(0:30:00.2)

JENNIFER:

One more question.

AUDIENCE:

I heard recently that there is a larger platform out in the Gulf, the Atlantis, several times in volume larger than this platform and that it may have some of the structural compromises that this did. Can you confirm or deny? I'm not sure who to address this to. I'm asking whether it would be reasonable and prudent to shut it down until we find out whether we find out if it's safe or not because I'm trying to imagine anything bigger than this. I don't know whether it's true or not it's something I heard on the news.

PANELIST:

I would have to say, I also have heard hearsay through the news but my understanding the moratorium is to cut down all wells, deep-water wells that are not in production and or may be in production. I think the answer to that as I read the public information, they are going to stop not only deep but I think they can classify deep up to 500-foot deep wells, meaning 500-feet of water.

AUDIENCE:

This is farther out, I heard it was deeper water and a much higher volume. It sounds very scary.

PANELIST:

Again, same thing I have read out of the Times Picayune, and other papers that it's probably going to be shut down but I'm quoting the newspaper.

Okay, so you know as much as I do?

PANELIST:

Exactly.

I saw that Obama kind of cherry-picked through, I know he shut down some but there was never any specifics about which ones whether it's prudent...

(0:31:56.9)

JENNIFER:

You can write that on a comment slip if you'd like, turn it in. We have come to the close of our meeting. I want to thank all of you for coming tonight, contributing as a commentator or as a participant up here on the stage. I do want everyone to give the panel a hand because they did their very, very best to answer your questions tonight, and I want to remind you if you still have a question, it's not too late to fill out a green form and turn them into us. Put your contact information on there along with your question and someone will personally get back in touch with you. As we

leave tonight, I want to say have a safe drive back, and let's all keep our fingers crossed. All right. Thank you all.

END OF AUDIO.

Fisheries and Wildlife Biloxi, Miss., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(AUDIO STARTS ABRUPTLY.)

(0:00:00.5)

AUDIENCE1:

Now, I'm aware of a lot of efforts that are going on right now to monitor the wildlife -- marine mammals and birds and turtles and a lot of the things. There's a lot of endangered and protected species both that are going to that are being affected or going to be affected by this. I know there's a lot of shoreline activity going on. What I'm curious about is what's going on out in the areas that are being affected. I've heard estimates that the spill depth and where it's all being affected is up to 3,000 feet deep, as well as the breadth and how far it goes across. What's being done to monitor the wildlife that that's already out in those areas? Like I said I know there's lots of stuff going on in the shoreline with turtles and dolphins and those kind of thing showing up on the shore, but there's a lot of impact already occurring out there and how is that being monitored?

BUCK:

Right from the beginning of the oil spill now with started over flights basically going parallel lines off from the shore out past where the spill site is doing aerial surveys for counting turtles, different species of things if it was possible. Also marine mammals, different types of dolphins and sperm whales and things like that. Those are ongoing, so whenever they have flown over both waters that don't have oil or the ones that do have or at least on the surface, they are still doing those surveys every day. That's an ongoing thing. We're in the 44th day or 46th day, I can't remember. That started almost immediately for those surveys. They are ongoing. They also have ships out there that are doing well, NOAA ships, also University of South Florida, the Miami and Louisiana research vessels are also being coordinated out there doing different topics. But specifically to your question about plumes and things, there has been acoustic work and also, which is a very, very fine frequency that looks for differential in water density, and they're mapping that out to where it's going. They're also taking plankton samples when they plan to see if there are fish eggs and larvae in those areas. They're also taking a contract with charter vessels and commercial fishing to catch yellow fin tuna and such to test the quality and see if there's any oil signs or dispersants in the flesh of the fish as well. There's a whole combination of, I think right now there's seven research vessels that are out there between the university and NOAA, also working with EPA to do not only water samples but air samples as well. There's a whole array of things that are going on for water quality, air quality and fisheries and as well as endangered species. That is reported

out daily, and there's NOAA website has all the information on at least marine mammals and for sea turtles and for both on ones that have been spotted as well and the ones that have been necropsied with the ones that did, unfortunately, pass away earlier in May.

(0:03:53.4)

AUDIENCE1: So you said that data is being made available to the...

BUCK: It's on the deepwaterhorizon.noaa.gov website.

(0:04:06.7)

RESPESS: Thank you. Next, Dave.

DONNA: I have a question. How many Mississippi vessels are Hazmat trained and ready to go to work? It's been reported 900 plus boats are already trained, yet many of my family and friends who have turned in their vessel of opportunity contracts have never been contacted by BP to work in any manner, any capacity. Anybody have that answer? See a lot of it.
(Chuckle)

(0:04:42.2)

LOGAN: We don't have the body here specifically for Vessel Opportunity or BP unfortunately this morning. If I can get you with Marian back at the back to fill out the question card, we will get that information for you.

DONNA: Okay, thank you very much.

(0:04:55.8)

LOGAN: Because we don't want to take a stand at something that we don't know the answer for.

DONNA: Thank you.

(0:05:00.7)

LOGAN: Next Dave. Have you want to make mention we do have Peter Nguyen here so if anybody would like a translational skills, he's the man to go to.

AUDIENCE2: Hi, my question is I was going to write it down. In general, pertaining to the general public that I see on the beaches and fishing, consumers that are buying seafood right now, the commercial fisherman which is my husband, seafood business that sell the seafood daily, and the health issues that can come about from this disaster oil spill, what are we suppose to be doing right now? When I see children swimming, elderly and young fishing off the Coleman Avenue Pier. My husband is still going out and realized that the smell and picking up crab traps, there was a sheen in the water right by Bayou Caddy. He got dizzy. Him and my grandson got headaches. Why is this still happening? This is in general. I'm shocked that someone who has authority has not mandated more concern for just

the common sense approach to what can come about with all this. Does it not question in your mind when you see children in the beach waters in Bay St. Louis and that Bayou Caddy and I'm sure all the way down the coastline. You got that supposedly the cleanup people. Then, and FDA that's supposed to be concerned for the consumer, is this seafood safe to eat? I don't understand it. It's like a bigger picture and nobody's addressing to me the general public's concern.

(0:07:09.2)

LOGAN:

It's kind of a two-pronged question. You got one in the seafood safety and consumers and the other is actual human health physical contact in the waters as well and why.

AUDIENCE2:

It's like everything is continuing slowly but I don't see red flags going up and concerns. I thought by now the beaches would be no swimming. When I was a little girl in Lake Pontchartrain, I live in New Orleans, and Lake Pontchartrain got polluted. There wasn't oil spill. There wasn't dispersant. It was polluted. You couldn't go swimming out there. You got oil and dispersants out there that are highly toxic, and the public is out there swimming and fishing and eating this? You had teenagers on the pier saying, I can't wait to go home and fry up my little croakers they were catching. My heart went out wondering.

(0:08:02.3)

LOGAN:

Absolutely, thank you very much. Two-pronged question, one about seafood safety if anyone was to handle that and then the human health issue as well.

BOB:

I can address the seafood safety issue. NOAA and FDA and EPA have been developing a protocol for the reopening of fisheries across the Gulf of Mexico. We're hoping and we're working very

closely with the states so that they can adopt the same type of protocol.

Basically the sequence goes like this. Once an area has a visible presence of oil, that would be oil sheen or submersed oil, those fisheries are closed. NOAA puts a buffer zone around those areas where it has been identified. Once that evidence of oil is gone after it has come over fishery that was closed and it was closed. Once the evidence of the oil on the water or on top of the water is gone, then testing begins. NOAA and EPA and FDA will go in and start sampling the seafood from that area. It will go to a series of tests. The first test is a sensory and it's a sensory assessment because petroleum contaminated seafood has a definite odor to it. We have trained assessors to examine the fish, the different types of seafood coming out of those waters. Once if they detect the petroleum taint, then those waters remain closed and the fisheries closed. When the taint is gone, then the follow up analysis is instrumental chemical analysis for the detection of the specific subset of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons,

which are components of the oil. Those are the compounds that we're concerned about for the public. Those analyses will also be conducted after the sensory assessment. If both of those steps show that there is no detectable taint, no detectable PAHs in the seafoods that are being sampled and analyzed, then the fisheries will be considered for reopening by NOAA. NOAA will reopen the fisheries in consultation with FDA and EPA. That it handles the seafood safety, issue but the waters are generally closed by NOAA. NOAA has the authority and should speak to this. It has the authority to close fisheries and reopen fisheries, and they do that on the basis of where the oil is, where they expect it to be in federal waters, and then the states have control within that 3-mile limit.

PANELIST:

First, I want to thank you for coming. It's a very good question. I appreciate you asking it. I want to speak to a few things. I want to let you know some of the things that we've been doing on a state level to try to address some of your concern about seafood safety because it's very important for us also. I can assure you. We have been for well over a month doing flights over the Mississippi Sound and adjacent waters. If we see any discolored water or anything that looks suspicious, we have a boat that usually goes out under the plane or we'll send a boat up to the coordinates and we'll take samples and get those analyzed. Barring what I said earlier on the area that we've closed on the eastern side of the state, we had some knowledge of oil and we took action. We'll continue to do that. Of those flight operations that we've been running for well over a month, we have not had anything come back with any problems from our samples. As far as oil being detected in those samples. So those samples have come back clean. We've also started doing what I call a pro-active water sampling program. We started this about three weeks ago. We sample top and bottom water samples on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays in all of the passes. We sample west of Cat Island and between Cat and Ship, Ship and Horn, Horn and Petit Bois and East of Petit Bois. Those samples have been run, like I say, about three weeks now and those samples have come back fine every time they've been run. That's another thing we've been doing. I don't appease read the paper this morning or seen in the news but did decide we're going to open up shrimp season at 6:00 AM on Thursday. We wanted to make sure and go do some extra sampling before we open up shrimp season to make sure that we could answer questions such as yours about seafood safety. We took some shrimp tissue samples last Wednesday, and we sent them up to the state chemical lab to have them analyzed. We got the results of those yesterday. They came back fine. We have been doing several things. We took some fish samples yesterday that are being sent off today to be analyzed. It takes about seven days to run these tests. You can't just send them off and get results the next day. These tests are complicated. It takes time to run them. Fish tissue samples are being sent off today. It's just a precautionary thing that we're doing. We're planning on doing some oyster tissue sampling and

we're going to continue this type of sampling through the summer to keep on top of this type of thing. In complaints that have come in to the DMR, the Incident Command, there's certain teams and scant teams that they send off to investigate complaints. We've had a number of complaints to different thing on the water. We send people out to check them. We take water samples to see if there's anything to be concerned with. We have not had anything that we needed to take an action on prior to yesterday. With that, thank you again for your question.

BUCK:

Actually, most of the seafood safety questions are already answered. As far as the closures go, every morning at about 7:00 we get the projected oil spill trajectories and looking at for what's happening for 24, 48 and 72 hours. There's also an area that's projected around the area basically a buffer zone just like the gentleman said and what we tried to do is we make a decision by 9:00 every morning whether we're going to change the boundaries or not. If they are changed then we post the new dimensions for the closure that's happened yesterday for example that pushed the closure south actually all the way to the US-Cuban border. Water EEZ border and push a little bit east towards, off of Florida. Those are then posted on the NOAA fisheries southeast regional office website by noon and then go up those changes go into effect at 6:00 PM that evening. Those affect the federal waters. That's from off of Mississippi here is three miles outside of the island so that's a little bit different. I just want to make sure that the folks understand that difference. But I will say that every week we have a meeting with all the state directors and also the Fisheries Commission to make sure that we're staying in really constant contact. I have a meeting with Dr. Bill Walker after this, as a matter of fact. Just to make sure that whatever we're doing is in sync with what the states are doing because we realize this is, federal or state, the oil doesn't really know which one is which and so we want to make sure that those are harmonized.

CYNTHIA:

Good morning. I have a product that is 100% natural biodegradable. It's approved by the EPA and I can't seem to get this product at anybody's hand. I have a jump drive with the videos of what it can do. It will encapsulate that oil that is out there in that water. It would take the all out of the sand and dirt that is on our beaches, but I can't seem to get past the first person at every stop to get the information into the right hands. Whose hands do I need to put this information into? And when can I talk to that person?

DICKEY:

The Coast Guard National Incident Command Center in Fort McNair, Maryland has a program for just these sorts of ideas. They area assimilating and collecting ideas from the public on ways to counter the oil spill. I would recommend that you get and go on to the Coast Guard website. They're bound to have a link there that says that is soliciting this

type of information. It's an active program. They've got a committee doing just this. Taking ideas from the public on ways that they can counteract the oil spill.

CYNTHIA: It's just like the BP office that gives you a number to call and file and every other office that I have been to. It is a product, and it does work. If everybody keep telling you this number and post your information on this, and nobody actually see the information and what it can do, then I'm just spinning my wheels here. You have water out there that has oil in it. You have aquatic life that is suffering because of the oil, and I have a product that actually works. Just going from person to person...

DICKEY: I know but we don't have a Coast Guard representative here but they do have a program. I was at the National Incident Command Center in DC. And, I know for a fact that they got this program. I'm not exactly sure where you signed up or you can e-mail them or you can send. They do get these videos. I know that they're looking at these. They've got a subcommittee to look at these things. That's all I can tell you so get in touch with the Coast Guard and ask about the committee that they have to gather to deal with this or assimilate this kind of information.

CYNTHIA: Any person in particular?

DICKEY: No, I don't have a name. Fill one of those and direct it to the Coast Guard. They can probably respond.

CYNTHIA: Thank you.

(0:18:44.3)

LOGAN: Yes, he had to leave early. If we can get you really to fill that out? Cut the information on one side and you question again on the other. We'll see that that gets answered to the best of our ability. Next up, Dave.

BILL: That's me. My question has to do with basically the non-pelagic species that we have use. Speckled trout, flounder crabs, things like that. If this is the catastrophe that it appears, it's going to end up being...are there any steps being taken or any plans being made to provide restocking abilities for the non-pelagic species that won't simply move back in once the water is cleaned up so that we can replenish our supplies of seafood and crabs and shrimp and whatnot rather than waiting for nature to take its course over a long period of time.

(0:19:43.8)

LOGAN: Anybody want to handle that one? State restocking efforts?

JIM: Dave may have a comment on this. I don't know of any plan to restock as a result of spill. Of course there are restocking efforts under way at this

point for trout and perhaps few other species down the road that are in place already. Some of that work's being done on our laboratory. I haven't heard any discussion though that would tie that into the impacts from the spill. It's an interesting thought, interesting idea because, yes, that would be of some concern. Obviously a major concern if that happens and how to address it perhaps some of that could be address through some restocking efforts. None of that is being conducted. It's time with the spill being mind because it has been under way for a number of years already. That's for the fish and I heard it may have some words on crabs.

HARRIET: Most of you know, we've been able to successfully culture blue crabs from egg to adult. Not with the idea of restocking the Gulf, but with the idea of fishery development with soft crabs and bait crabs. I agree with Jim, we've had no federal information or directive or state that has asked, considers stock enhancement or restocking following the clean-up efforts. We certainly have the potential to produce post-larvae and early juveniles of blue crabs and fish species. So, we do have the ability; we just have not been pushed in that direction.

BUCK: From a federal perspective, same thing. I think while we're out there take biological samples so we're monitoring what the impacts are as time goes on. Before the spill, during the spill. I think I don't have a specific answer to that exact question. I suspect that there won't be anything that's off the table when it comes to dealing with the impacts of what happens. Right now, it'd be a little preliminary, but I'm sure that that's an interesting perspective I haven't really thought of.

PANELIST: I don't have a whole to add except that I would say that there's been a lot of capacity added to these types of programs in the last few years. We have acquired the Lyman Fish Hatchery and it's now part of the Department of Marine Resources and we partner with GCRL and they've got some new capabilities out at Cedar Point. If those types of programs are needed, there's a lot more capacity than there was just a few years back. That's a good point. Thank you for your question.

(0:23:03.4)

LOGAN: Thank you. Can you state your name and who you're with please?

TOM: My name is Tom Brosnin. I'm with NOAA the Office of Response and Restoration. For perspective under the Oil Pollution Act, the responsible party, in this case BP, is responsible not only to clean up what was spilled but also to restore what's been injured. That restoration includes natural resources like shrimp. Also the lost use of those resources by people. A natural resource damage assessment is being conducted currently to determine exactly what has being injured and how much of it is being injured and what restoration will be required to restore those resources. That is being led by trustee agencies including NOAA and the Department

of Interior as well as state agencies in Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana and Florida currently. If you want any information about that process, I'll be happy to talk to you about it after. My name is Tom Brosnin and I'm with NOAA. Thank you.

You had to come up here, okay?

PANELIST: Also I want you to know that Auburn University Marine in Mobile has a laboratory that does raise oysters also. That's another; the technology is there for that.

(0:24:24.3)

LOGAN: We got one more coming on this last question.

HARRIET: I just say that we really are poised in terms of aquaculture facilities to be able to address some of those issues. We're expanding the blue crab hatchery, and I know that the Lyman Fish Hatchery has the capability to do expand. I'm not sure how many acres they have, but we're in good shape in terms of aquaculture.

JIM: Just as a follow-up to that, of course, at the Gulf Coast Research Lab and at the Cedar Point facility. We are in the process, as I mentioned earlier, of spawning and rearing speckled trout. A red snapper program is now under way. Soon, we'll begin a tripletail aquaculture program, as well as cobia. We're expanding those programs and learning to spawn and rear fish that are important to all of us. And, so as Harriet says, we do to have that capability. We're expanding that capability to address this issue if necessary.

(0:25:32.6)

LOGAN: Come on up.

DON: My name is Don Abrams. I'm from Ocean Springs. My background is in engineering data acquisition and testing. Looking at the sampling and testing process that I'm seeing in this oil spill, a number of red flags keep raising. I was up at 3:00 this morning reading the health and safety information on the Corexit 9500. My bottom line question is how can I have more confidence that the testing and sampling are being done in an objective scientific way without BP bias in them. I'll mention a few things that cause particular concern. I understand the majority of the samples are being tested by B&B labs in College Station, Texas, which has very close ties to the petroleum industry who counts BP as one of their clients. There is no way that those tests are going to be done in a completely scientific and unbiased manner if they're being done by a petroleum industry dominated lab. Couple of other things I've heard an EPA rep say on two occasions that they had requested BP to take water samples for them. This morning the EPA representative in the big session said that they had

directed BP to make a long-term assessment of the effects of the Corexit dispersant in the Gulf. Based on what Exxon did after the Valdez incident and based on common sense we cannot expect an objective, realistic answer from a company whose CEO this morning is still denying the fact that these undersea plumes exist. I'm hearing that FDA's trigger for testing is based on the visible evidence of oil. Well, in the state's response program, the oil snuck up on us on Petit Bois; I've not heard anything about dispersant testing. I've not heard anything about dispersants and the necropsies of the sea turtles, marine mammals. And I didn't hear anything from DMR about dispersant testing for food safety. These chemicals have not been used on these spaces before, and I'm concerned about whether a reasonable testing protocol exists and whether we can expect to get those results properly.

(0:28:03.9)

LOGAN:

Thank you. Anybody?

BUCK:

I can't answer at least all the questions but let me just at least address the ones that I'm somewhat familiar with. The NOAA vessels have been out collecting both water samples and tissues from fish, as well as from the necropsies from sea turtles and the bottlenose dolphin have been stranded. The Pascagoula lab is to set up a system for testing not only for the oil but as well as some of the dispersants. We have samples of the dispersant that they've been using to determine what are the markers that they can use to determine if the tissues have been tainted with the dispersant as well as with the oil. Also we have a very strong expertise and chemical analysis of tissue in our Northwest Science Center, which is located in Seattle, Washington. They have been involved right from the first day when we're starting the sampling the day after the day of the spill when we went out and collected both fish and invertebrate samples and to set basically a baseline of what the chemical composition was like in the water as well as in the fish tissues. None of our samples have gone, as far as I know, to the best of my knowledge, from the NOAA standpoint, have gone through the BP process. All the samples have been analyzed by our own scientists both locally and in Seattle. Looking at both the oil and the dispersant. The gentleman talking about the FDA and the smell test is of the, best you can probably address that one. That part of the question.

BOB:

There are a number of federal laboratories involved. The FDA has three regional laboratories in Atlanta, Jefferson, Arkansas, and Kansas City that are prepared to test seafood samples using the NOAA PAH methodology before seafood areas that have been closed to harvest have reopened. It's all in coordination with NOAA and their opening and closing process. Those sample laboratories will be doing the chemical analysis. The sensory analysis is going to be done here pretty much on site. NOAA and FDA sent their expert sensory assessors up to Gloucester, Massachusetts, laboratory about two weeks ago to begin training on this particular oil

spiked into seafood matrices so that they can familiarize themselves with the taint, with the odor of this oil in seafood products. They've done that. They're coming down. They're going to be testing state personnel to become trainee sensory assessors so that we can spread this ability to eliminate product that is obviously tainted and will be kept off the market and out of harvest. To prevent harvest from most tainted waters. There's a definite plan in place with NOAA and FDA bringing and training sensory assessors for the initial analysis, and we've got our regulatory laboratory set up to run the chemical analysis. We're not contracting this out. We're there to help primarily with the federal waters but we're also offering these services to the states as well. In regards to your concerns over the Corexit dispersants, the FDA position on the dispersants is that we do not believe at this time that they are a seafood safety concern. I'm not talking environmental; I'm only talking as far as seafood safety. The reason they are not a seafood safety concern is that these dispersants are composed of four chemical components. Two of those chemical components or one of the chemical components is propylene glycol. It's a generally recognized as safe food additive. The other one, 2-Butoxyethanol, is also found in a good number of consumer products from lip gloss all the way to insecticides is to help disperse it. But it's in cosmetic products as well. A third component is petroleum distillates. The light hydrolyze fraction. These are like mineral spirits. They're also used in a variety of consumer products from cosmetics to the things that we use for furniture polishes and so forth but in very trace quantities. The fourth component is a proprietary compound. They have divulged the identity of that proprietary chemical to CDC and FDA and we've examined it. All four of these compounds also have very, very low what we call bioconcentration factors. BCFs. The BCF number gives you an indication of the ability of a particular chemical compound to partition across gills of a fish into their bodies and thereby be accumulated. The scale runs from zero to upwards to 10,000. Two of these compounds have a BCF of three. A third one has a BCF of 10, that would be the proprietary compound, and the petroleum distillates have a BCF of about 80-90. They're all under 100 and is generally accepted across the scientific community that if you have a BCF below 100, it's not much of a public health concern. Having said that, a lot of these are calculated values. Some of them are experimentally derived. FDA and NOAA do have plans to conduct sensory assessments for these things for the dispersants because they do have an odor in concentrated form. I will back up just a second. All of these components like propylene glycol, 2-Butoxyethanol in concentrated form, yes, they are a contact, inhalation and ingestion hazard. In concentrated form. But when you diluted out, as it's being done in the Gulf of Mexico massively. One square mile, one foot deep is 210 million gallons of water alone. These are massively diluted to begin with. We understand the concern and we're looking at that. We've incorporated that into our reopening protocol. It will be tested for both at the sensory level and as Buck indicated, the NOAA,

the National Marine Fisheries Northwest Laboratory, they are currently conducting studies on the ability of these dispersants to get into fish. By chemical analyzed considering the chemical characteristics alone, we don't expect that to be the case because of the one the dilution effects is going to be in parts per million range, and they chemically are not conducive to partitioning across membranes.

DON: I do feel somewhat better. I'd like to understand a little bit more where the information came that all these samples are being handled by B&B Labs. I'm still concerned that you seemed to be focusing on the petroleum side of the food safety issue. You said you're going to do sensory testing for the Corexit compounds.

BOB: At the same time, we're doing because right now the Corexit is comingled with the petroleum. When you sprayed it on. The reason they've put those things on there is to break down the oil into small droplets that bacteria, more surface area, the marine bacteria that eat the petroleum products, which are natural fossilized remains of plants and animals, remember. The bacteria consume that and break it down. Corexit just makes it more easier for the bacteria to have more surface area to attach to it. It's a detergent. That's what these things are. They're basically detergents and mild solvents that help break down the surface and put into the water column. Again, our EPA representative indicated it's a choice between the lesser two evils and you have to balance the risk benefit. They're constantly doing that by testing not only what's happening at depth and at the surface with the ecology with the phytoplankton and the zooplankton and so forth but also determining how effective it is in eliminating the oil from the water column as well as from the surface in breaking it down.

DON: Just one quick final thing. I do feel better characterizing these things as mild detergents or...

BOB: I didn't say they're mild. In concentrated form, they are those hazards I spoke of but in dilute form...

DON: The home country of BP has judged them to be unacceptable for using coastal waters in dilute form and we got a million gallons of them that have been dumped into the Gulf and I understand it was a choice as the primary way to deal with it. Now we have a choice of whether to eat seafood, and I'm still concerned.

BOB: In response to that, I understand that completely and we're not negating this. We are going to be looking into it. We do have plans to address it in the event that it does get in to our seafood. Remember that dispersants are being used; I don't think the Coast Guard is allowed it into coastal waters yet within the three-mile limit. It's out in 5,000 feet of water at the present time. Again. I'm sure that they're calculating all this in the dilution factors

involved. We're talking billions of gallons of seawater that this is being dispersed into. We're talking a little bit less than 1 million gallons of dispersant at present. You can Google for example a previous historical spills that have happened in the past for example, the Ixtoc in 1979 off of Veracruz, Mexico. It was a much bigger spill than this. It was 150 million gallons of spill over nine months, and they used quite a bit more dispersant from what I've read than what we've used up to this point. This is the biggest spill in U.S. history but bigger spills have occurred and they used similar products in trying to deal with it. I'm not negating this at all. This is a huge event all at once. My point being is that the dilution factors are huge, and it's the lesser of two evils having to make that choice. Again, to reassure that NOAA, EPA and FDA are aware of it. We're looking into it thoroughly. We are doing the necessary due diligence to make sure that this dispersants nor the oil are become a safety issue in seafoods.

BARBARA: Hi, it's Day 44. There are a lot of good people doing a lot of great work on this horrendous disaster. We're getting a lot of information on testing and monitoring and the plumes that are being found and the heartbreaking numbers of dead animals and sea life and the heartbreaking numbers of fishermen and fisherwomen who are out of work. What we're not getting are specific details of how much oil is being recovered and how it is being recovered and that's the key to the solution is to get it up and out and take it where? We don't even know where it's being taken. How many gallons of oil were recovered yesterday?

(0:40:19.7)

LOGAN: Okay, so this goes to the point of oil recovery. Anybody?

BOB: The Coast Guard keeps track of those statistics. Every day they put out a brief that I believe that they post on their website. This information is available. It may not be getting being widely disseminated, but I can't tell you why. I'm in seafood safety myself. I have been to the National Incident Command Center in Washington, and I see the reports every day and they give specific numbers every day. How much skimming has recovered? How much has been recovered since day one. All of those statistics are available. This is supposed to be transparently available on the U.S. Coast Guard website. I think you can find the information. It may not be reported and allowed to...

BARBARA: It's very difficult to find. The last information I got if from a BP official who told me five days ago, he proudly said, and we have a recording of it, 3,463 gallons the day before, which is nothing.

BOB: That wouldn't be much but again, the Coast Guard is the best source of information that you could earth. The best place to go to find that kind of information. If you can't find it on the website then perhaps you can call in and ask for that type of information.

BARBARA: All right. My follow-up if I might?

(0:41:39.6)

LOGAN: Yes, go ahead.

BARBARA: There are about 200 vacuum trucks staged on Canal Road in Gulfport. They've been moved around. They were at one location in Woolmarket then they were moved to another location in Woolmarket then to Debuys Road. Now they're staged over at Canal Road. It's a form of recovery vacuum trucks, vacuum units, rolls-off and skids. These are sitting in staging areas. Many, for more than three weeks now, and they would help the recovery effort. We've been told over and over again, everything is being done. We're doing everything possible. Is anyone on this panel happy with the amount of oil that's being recovered on a daily basis and that all the tools that can possibly be used are being used? Is there anyone here happy with that?

LOGAN: I don't think anybody would (Chuckle) agree with that. I don't think anybody is happy with that. What I am going to have you do because we don't have a representative from Coast Guard here. I want to have you fill out one of those question cards and she'll help you with that. We'll get that...

BARBARA: Thank you for the work you're doing.

(0:42:47.7)

LOGAN: Next up, Dave.

LEO: Hi everyone. Thank you for joining us this morning. My name is Leo Skamato. I used to be a business counselor for the Gulf Fishermen around Biloxi, New Orleans. You talked about the sensory analysis, the extensive testing that's going to be with the seafood safety issue. My question is for the front end of that process, I've heard from a lot of fishermen. From two fishermen who have gone out there and caught some shrimp, and they've seen oil and then they have to dump the shrimp out. What is the official protocol for a shrimper or any harvester out there who visibly sees oil in their catch?

(0:43:37.7)

LOGAN: Okay. Seafood safety?

BOB: Again, the sequence of actions to be taken. NOAA is out there. EPA is out there. Coast Guard is out there. FDA, unfortunately we don't have people on the water on the same boots on the ground, so to speak, or on the water. Anywhere there is a visible sheen, that area supposed to be closed. That's what NOAA does. That's what EPA does. In concern with the EPA. I

think the states follow suit on that. As far as submerged oil is concerned. It's very difficult to detect but I know that NOAA and EPA to a certain extent and the states are out there taking water samples. Trying to identify where the submerged plumes are because you have a surface slick but then you have subsurface currents that are blowing or moving the dispersed oil away from that surface slick. That's why they're doing that sampling in the buffer zone. That's what they're calling. It's a five-mile zone around the surface leak that they're probing to identify where the submerged oil might be going. If the fishermen encounter oil on the water or if they encounter oil on seafood that they're harvesting from the water, they it would be great if they would report it to NOAA and their state departments of environmental protection so that they can get their people out there to extend the closure as necessary to prevent harvest from those areas where contamination occurs. That's the process, and I believe the states follow something very similar.

BUCK: I just want to add to that point. No area in the federal waters is reopened until the water samples and tissue samples from animals that are caught in that area have proven to be clear of any contaminants. As far as if I could ask a question do you know where these folks were or were they in state waters or federal waters or...

LEO: I think it was an issue where they were in the federal waters and they didn't know it was closed. I think that would be between Chandeleur and Brenton.

BUCK: That is the initial that I've heard up there. There has been some confusion of over the coordinates and such and so. NOAA is working with the Marine Weather that forecast and putting up the closures on the marine weather system. We are looking at trying to make sure that we're getting as much broadcast as to where the changes are. Unfortunately, when they think they're changing sometimes on a daily basis, we try not to make changes unless actually have to. Obviously we want to keep as much as right now I think 31% of the EEZ is closed is closed to because of the oil spill. But that said, we're not going to, we're going to err on the side of being cautious. Cautious and not the well, this kind of looks like okay. Just like the gentleman said there is a safety boundary that we incorporate into those closure projections every day. As far as finding oil in an area that is open then the protocol would be we need to contact the Coast Guard and we would or the state fisheries and we would of course immediately put that into our formulation of where we need to close it. Because there situation, again I understand that were situation a couple of weeks ago where there's some oil found in a shrimp catch that it went from a sample of that oil turned out that it wasn't part of the BP, this particular spill. Those are all part of it. Certainly though, we want to err on the precautionary side of things.

LEO: I get perception that they visibly see it and then if they are concerned they would just go ahead report the to the state DMR.

BUCK: The state or and Coast Guard.

PANELIST: Just going to give you a phone number, Leo, that you could call.

LEO: Okay, great.

PANELIST: I actually don't know if I got it my phone or not but if you hang around after this I'll get Marine Patrol's dispatch number. I'll give that to you so you can pass it on to the fishermen. They're somebody manning on that 24-hours a day. If it's during the work week, they could call 374-5000 and we got somebody on the phone during the work week but I'll get you a number right after this.

LEO: Okay, thank you.

(0:48:25.5)

LOGAN: Leo, I want you to go ahead and fill out that card because that's going to be interesting information for a larger group than this. Dave, who's next?

JOHN: Yes. John Slater, Pascagoula. I guess my question would be is let's say we're a month from now and I've got an idea what we're going to be looking at. What areas are you planning on protecting and some of the methodologies of how are you going to do that? Your river mouths, you got your estuaries. I know that's what is going to come down to this, what areas can we save?

PANELIST: I'll try to start on that. Somebody else might want to jump in also. Early on in this process, days after this incident occur. We started making plans on how are we going to structure doing protection systems in the Mississippi sound. Decision was made as we're going to try to protect the nursery habitat areas. The marshy areas, the mouth of the bays, the bayous and the places where we would expect a juvenile shrimp, fish, crabs and oysters. It's the most important for them in their young life stages. That's what focused on is trying to protect those habitats, and if you've noticed that's where we'd work most of the booming activity has occurred. We're also trying to protect areas like on the points of the islands that are key nesting habitats for a lot of the birds that are on the islands. That's the approach we took from the beginning. That's where we're folks in our efforts. I hope that answers your question.

JOHN: I guess if you could just maybe dwell on some of the methodologies here. You're going to be using as far as the cleanup proper. Maybe your beaches. Any areas that are going to get in to that you didn't want to get in to.

PANELIST: I do know that if it gets in they are contractors on standby to immediately come in and start working on that. For instance, earlier I said, I told you that, we had some oil get on the South side of Petit Bois and we had a strip of it yet around the west tip and proceeded to the Northeast for about two and half miles. There were skimming boats out there yesterday. Skimming the stuff that was in the water. There were people lined up to be on the beaches getting the oil off of the beaches this morning. That was what I was told yesterday. There are teams in place who are standing by. They're ready to go and handle whatever situations that comes up. So there are contingency plans.

Thank you.

H.W.: My name is H. W. Slater. I'm going to be a lot, going into greater detail than my brothers did. We've got approximately 80 miles from Alabama all the way to Lake Borne. We've got 42 miles of open water between that is not barrier islands. Why don't we have something in between those islands to stop the oil from ever getting to shore? It's too late once it gets ashore. I don't care what anybody says. The seas build up. They come from the wrong direction. They go over the booms. That's just the way it works. Everybody knows it works that way. Why did we not try to protect. Alabama did it. They don't have as much area to do, but it's the same concept. I don't understand why we didn't do that. We're 44 days into this. We had all the time in the world to do it. I'm trying to keep calm. I'm very unhappy (Chuckle) with what's happened. I'm talking about the state of Mississippi what they have done. They are our basis. Period.

(0:52:20.5)

LOGAN: Two questions response. First part is the oil spill. We have anybody? This is kind of a two-pronged, different federal and state. Can you handle that?

PANELIST: I understand the emotional part of it because this has been, I think that's one of the hardest things is there's so much uncertainty dealing with this event for all of us. Folks like yourself and us up here in the panel and our coworkers. And all that's frustrating and it gets you emotional and it's hard to contain. I felt that so many times so I'm right with you. In my job I have not been directly involved in the booming activity so much because I'm the office director of Marine Fisheries. I'm going to try to answer your question, but I may have to get back with you and get you a better answer.

H.W.: Okay, Sir.

PANELIST: I do understand that in this island passes if we try to boom those areas off, that's a high energy area and booms are only effective to certain degree depending on the wave and the current that goes through there. I believe

that is one of the concerns is that there's such a high energy area. I don't know if they would be effective.

H.W.: Alabama's done it.

PANELIST: Boom in between the passes of their Barrier islands?

H.W.: Yes. Dauphin Island, they boomed all of that. I do understand what you're talking about, high energy. Wave action going bye bye. If the currents are quicken enough it's still going bye bye. We're not even protecting that.

PANELIST: We have a person that's over at the Incident Command. Actually there's a person from the EQ and person from the MR. Several of them rotate through. They're working on this booming activity and I would be glad to ask that question to them. I don't know that I can give a better answer than I have so far but I'd be glad to answer to answer that question.

H.W.: Thank you very much for trying to answer. That's a bad question.
(Chuckle)

(0:54:20.8)

LOGAN: Can we get you to fill out one of these cards here. That is going to be beneficial to other folk as well. Next up, Dave?

AUDIENCE: Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you all answering all of our questions. First I had a remark about the testing and how you said that you all want to err on caution. You said that you all test something and you don't get the results until seven days later. It would seem like the product's already out at market, and it's seven days too late. No one getting the results. The next thing that I wanted to say was seems like we're getting a lot of optimistic remarks from our governor and BP and all these other politicians trying to sugarcoat what's going on. Realistically, what are going to be the long-term effects as far as you all know? We're 20 years after Exxon Valdez and they still have issues up there with the sea life. What do you all foresee here; worst case scenario, best case scenario without sugarcoating it.

(0:55:36.2)

LOGAN: If you're looking for a long term impacts, which obviously is a difficult question. Anybody here?

BUCK: I don't know if anybody really knows to answer that question to be honest with you. I think the point is NOAA, EPA, FDA as far as seafood safety. The first part of your question. The seven day action I think was how long it takes to get the test to reopen something not to close something. I think it actually maybe more quicker for some of the federal tests that we're doing, but we'll close area as soon as oil is projected to be in an area. We

won't open an area back until the oil is gone and the tissue samples taken from that area that no longer has oil have shown to be clean then we'll reopen federal waters. The whole idea of taking that precautionary approach is to make sure that we don't have any tainted seafood get into the market. I just want to make sure clear on that. In regards to the long-term impact, I don't think we have any real clear idea of what; of course it depends on how soon that they can get this thing closed. Where the oil goes. Right now it would be a kind of a shot in the dark. I don't think anybody really could even begin to address other than to say that the sampling to determine what is happening will go on and will continue to go on even after the oil has been stopped. As long as there is oil out floating around, there's going to be sampling by NOAA vessels, by university vessels, by the states and to make sure that the seafood, not only the seafood by the whole ecosystem. Because we're looking at an ecosystem impact here. That the ecosystem itself and how it responds. We have a pretty good idea of where things were before the spill. We're taking all kinds of different biological samples, chemical samples; fish and oceanography samples do throughout this whole period and will continue to do it long afterwards so that we can at least track what's going on. I know that is probably not a very satisfactory answer but the fact is that we do have the best scientists that are out there in our respective agencies in all state, federal and private universities state universities.

HARRIET:

Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana are very lucky in that in the late 1960s we did a study called the Gulf of Mexico Estuarine Inventory and Study where we all sampled with multiple gears using the same techniques and the same analytical protocols. We know what we had in the 60s. From that program we developed a long-term assessment monitoring program in each of those three states. We have a 37-year database on what's in our estuaries and nearshore waters. We just completed an analysis of that 37 years worth of data from Mississippi and Alabama, and we are currently finishing a Louisiana. We have short term concerns. I do, I work primarily with the vertebrate fisheries. We could have short-term impacts and the fishery could recover. We could have very long-term impacts. We've been in about a 10-year-period in all of the Northern Gulf states looking at decreased number of juveniles in our fishery independent samples. Primarily due to whether we've been in a drought situation. We've looked at our 37-year database and global climate features. We think it's climate related.

We think it is climate related to how climate influences habitat in river discharge. We are in a time period where we have depressed populations of juveniles. The oil is certainly going to exacerbate that because it is certainly going to affect the habitat for these species. With blue crabs, the spring recruitment is offshore. Most estuarine-dependent species have an offshore larval stage. They move in to the estuary and the estuary forms the nursery ground for these species. Even though if we had never seen oil

in Mississippi waters, there is a great concern that the larvae of fish, shrimp, and crabs would be impacted by the spill because there is a large offshore larval pool. That is one concern. The shrimp luckily were already here before the oil spill so they were on the nursery grounds. For blue crabs, the late summer, early fall is our peak spawning period. We would see larvae out over the shelf during that period, and it may not look good for them. Whether or not... of course estuarine animals are very resilient. They can recover, but it is just the length of time that these animals have decreased spawning. We have some information that the dispersant may cause reproductive problems, hormonal problems in fish over time. A decreased reproductive capacity combined with low recruitment and damaged habitat. That is the worst case, but again, I agree with Buck. We really do not know. This has never happened to us. It is a learning curve. We are monitoring and we have the information that we can really assess damage.

(1:02:21.1)

JIM:

No, I cannot add to that.

HARRIET:

I am sorry. I was so long winded.

(1:02:35.7)

LOGAN:

Yes. Okay.

BOB:

With regard to your concern about tainted fish being on the market or unable to be on the market. We do not think that is the case. The waters and fisheries that have been affected by the spill including the buffer zone have been closed, and FDA does not have any reason to suspect that we have tainted product on the market. Regardless, however. There is a surveillance sampling plan in place that is going to be starting up very soon. FDA is going to be running these analyses on market samples at the dock so that we can trace it back to wherever it was captured should we find anything tainted. We do not have any reason to suspect that there is tainted product on the market at this time. In terms of long-term effects, I would encourage you to look into the history of oil spills from Exxon Valdez forward to the North Cape spill in Rhode Island. The Julian in Maine. The Carissa in California or Oregon. There have a number of spills. Follow-up studies have been on those spills. That should give you a good indication of how resilient nature can be or how vulnerable she can be in certain respects. There have been fisheries effects, but studies like this will give you a much better idea of what we might be able to expect. Given that this is the largest one in U.S. history, about four times what Exxon Valdez was. These other ones are smaller as well, but it should give you some indication of what we might expect. There are a lot of lessons learned from those previous spills and a lot of those lessons learned are being applied today. NOAA has a number of excellent scientists that put

out reviews. Dr. Yender being one them on management of oil spills, of food seafood safety following an oil spill, but they talk about then give charts and graphs about what happened to the fisheries. How long they were out of commission. How soon they came back. What they analyze for and so forth. These things are available on the internet. All you have to do is Google them. You'll learn quite a bit. In terms of time for analysis, I concur with Buck. Seven days is at the far end of the extreme. Sensory assessment is going to be a matter. As soon as it hits the laboratory, it is going to be assessed within a day or two, but the chemical analysis, that's the hard one. That is the longer one. Most of the sample is going to be accepted or rejected at the sensory end of the equation. We are trying to streamline that entire process and at the same time, we have other methods with promising technologies that would speed it up even faster. That we are assessing as we speak.

MATTHEW: I am Matthew Cuevas. I'm with Gulf Coast Prestress out of Pass Christian, Mississippi. The question we have, if the oil reaches ICW, Bayou Portage, Bay St. Louis, will it be closed off and will you have something set up similar to New Orleans as far as cleaning our boats and barges and other boats and barges coming in.

(1:06:00.2)

LOGAN: That it goes to waterway traffic in and out. Everybody can do that but the Coast Guard is not here. This can be a Coast Guard question. I will let you fill out a card because that is a good one. We need to know that information.

DONNA: Okay I am back. I live on the bayou off of Back Bay Biloxi. This is my question, we are coming in to hurricane speeds. What is our game plan to protect our bayous, our marshes and our private homes when the hurricane brings in the flood waters. During Katrina we had 25 feet of water in my neighborhood personally. The oil is going to come in my home. Who is going to be responsible for my clean up of my home, of my bayou that I live on, and our Back Bay of Biloxi?

(1:06:55.6)

LOGAN: Questions regarding hurricane effects and oil.

DONNA: How are we going to protect it before hand?

(1:07:03.8)

LOGAN: I will let you fill out a card on that as well. Sorry about that. There is a lot of speculation about that.

AUDIENEC3: Hi, here is another question I have. The Corexit, the dispersant that EPA asked them not to use and then to use moderately. They were breathing it

and inhaling it, and touching it is a no-no. It is being sprayed in our waters and if I understand this correctly. I am up here right now because my gut feeling when I walk out of here that I thought was going to go home today feeling somewhat better. Not at this point and maybe everybody else isn't either. Public health I thought would be the first and foremost. Yes, we got a disaster. Yes, we got to clean it up. Yes, there are thousands of things to do. I am concerned still about public health. When I hear that it is a dispersant. It is a detergent. At this point, the dispersant is not a safety factor to food consumption. Am I hearing that correctly? It is true, it's not a factor for safety.

(1:08:33.8)

LOGAN: Somebody give me the microphone so that it can be recorded as well.

AUDIENCE3: And yet the fish, turtles, crabs are being found dead and washed up.

(1:08:46.8)

BOB: If I can respond to you, it is a good question. In 1995, the National Research Council addressed dispersants in oil spills. Their final conclusion with regard to dispersants was that the toxicity of an oil spill does not lie with the dispersant. It lies with the oil that is being dispersed by the dispersant. There was very little evidence that was presented that would indicate that the dispersants were a cause for concern. It was the oil.

AUDIENCE3: On Corexit? On that particular one?

(1:09:22.7)

BOB: Yes, on that particular one, 1995. Now, EPA actually has a list of approved dispersants. EPA actually approved to use...they have to and the coast guard. The EPA and Coast Guard have to approve the use of dispersant. If EPA administrator can correct me if I am wrong.

AUDIENCE3: It is approved, but yet they did not back up by saying please do not use it.

(1:09:47.3)

BOB: First of all, it had never been used at depth. That was new. And also they were concerned about the volume, massive volumes. Nearly one million gallons that are being used and our EPA colleagues can address that. I am only speaking in terms of seafood safety. I am not speaking in terms of environmental ecological harm that might occur.

AUDIENCE3: When you live on the coast that is a big factor. We all love and eat seafood.

(1:10:11.8)

BOB: I lived on Dauphin Island for 25 years now and I am on the water all the time. I am also the director of the Dauphin Island FDA lab. The Food and Drug Administration division of seafood science and technology. That is what we do. The FDA does not believe that the Corexit dispersants, from the studies that we have done and that we have examined, you can see these things on the web as well. You can pull them up and you can take a look at what they call the Material Safety Data Sheet. They will tell a lot about these chemicals and exactly what is in there. You can look up and see what they are actually used for elsewhere as well.

LAUREEN: Hi my name is Laureen D'Lieu. Thank you all for being here. What plans are in place to rescue oiled wildlife as it appears or if and probably when it appears in great numbers here on the Mississippi Gulf Coast?

(1:11:21.0)

LOGAN: We are looking for wildlife rehabilitation efforts. Do we have anybody here that can speak to that?

RESPONDENT1: I can make a more personal comment. I am a volunteer at the Bon Secour Wildlife Refuge in that area. I and others would plan to be out there helping with that effort. That is in Alabama.

LAUREEN: You are already helping in the effort?

RESPONDENT1: I would plan to be if those animals...

LAUREEN: I have a follow up question or comment. Given the fact that it seems like...if you look on the website through conservation organizations that want to help. The bigger stumbling block seems to be the lack of HAZWOPER training. Why is it not being offered on a wide scale and free of cost to the thousands of people that have signed up to volunteer to rescue the wildlife because when it happens, it is going to be too late. If there's nobody out there in great numbers to help. Thanks.

(1:12:41.0)

LOGAN: I think we can get that answer for as well. I do know that they are doing some...

RESPONDENT1: Yes...sure.

(1:12:46.3)

LADON: I am no expert, but through cooperative extension and Sea Grant extension. There is a lot of training going on for various things, for positions with BP. Through extension, we felt like there was an opportunity to provide additional training and there has been a cadre of 33 people who has been trained to provide the module for the training. While

we were going through that, we realized that if you are a waterfront home owner, you're gonna want to take care of your own property. Not as a paid volunteer, but as a home owner. Obvious answer, if you see the oil washed on your beaches, call the BP hotline. Some people may do that. Some people may want to do it on their own. I cannot speak on anyone's personal choice on what they do. What we proposed to BP was to provide a basic homeowner safety training course so they know how to deal with the oil that is washed up on their beach. That has been a couple of weeks ago. We have not really heard back. It would be a broader training program. It really does not fall under the 1-, 2-, 6-, 24- or 40-hour Hazmat training. If you are a waterfront home owner and if it all comes up ashore on your property, then that is something you are going to have to deal with either by calling BP and asking them to come out or...that's really the only alternative that you have right now.

AUDIENCE4:

Two things. One, I can offer some more information and somebody may already be aware of this. In addition to the Audubon Society, there is at least two more organizations on the coast that are dealing with wildlife and the recovery and rescue of them. One of one IMMS, Institute for Marine Mammals Studies. They are set up. They have staging areas already in place. They are ready to deal with... they already have all their personnel including their volunteers which I am one of. I have already had the training, HAZWOPER training, which is available online through BP for the employee. Basically, in answer to your question, I hope may be that helps you all out in answering it. There is also on organization, I cannot remember the name of it. That deal is with the birds. The rescue and recovery of the birds and oil clean up with them as well. Those organizations are in place. They are staged. They are ready to go. And they have been some of the birds and many turtles. They have logs that all of the animals are kept in for research. They have freezer trucks in place. They have oil containment units to properly dispose of the oil and all those kind of things. In question to that question, yes there has been a huge response to deal with the animals as they come in. My question, kinda of a tag on to all of that, and also in addition to all of the work that you fine people have been doing, obviously, there has been an enormous cost that goes along with doing what you are doing. Obviously, this was probably not built in your original job description. I am sure you are working many more hours than what you initially would dealing with this catastrophe and so are the people that are working for these nonprofit agencies, the bird recovery, the IMMS, the Audubon Society. I know they are tracking their hours in special logs. I also know that reimbursement for those activities is very slow or nonexistent in coming so far. There is the aspect of all of our taxpayer dollars is going to support your activities, which are being admirably done, but how quickly and who is pushing to get that money to these nonprofit agencies that are doing all of this work because you got people working 60-80 hour work weeks right now doing stuff that is in

addition to their normal... these organizations are set up to do the research and the recovery, and the strandings on a normal basis.

(1:14:28.9)

LOGAN: It sounds like the question is...

AUDIENCE4: Cost recovery...

(1:17:14.3)

LOGAN: Both for governmental and non-profits. Does anybody know how the paperwork trail goes here sitting at the table.

AUDIENCE4: *[1:17:28.0 inaudible]*

(1:17:28.0)

LOGAN: That is a good question. I need to know that too. (Laughter)

PANELIST:

I did just want to mention that for the Department of Marine Resources, all of our employees are instructed if they are working on oil-related activity. They will log that and all of that is being tracked. It is our intention to get BP to fund those activities which are over and above our normal activities. We do have a method in place to try to recapture those costs. Our business office is handling all the details of it, but our fisheries...there are specific contact people and each bureau that is tracking those hours. Thank you.

(1:18:13.9)

LOGAN: Yes, Sir, go ahead.

AUDIENCE4:

I just want to follow up on so it's recorded. I understand what you are saying and I know the non-profit agencies are doing that as well. I guess the question is a lot of them are working...the government can borrow against itself and pay...obviously it is not ideal, but your non-profit agencies a lot of them are working off of grants and different things like that. They are offered limited funding to do all this additional work. Timing is of the essence.

(1:18:39.7)

LOGAN: Make that notification there and we will get that answered. Yes sir, go ahead.

STUART:

My name is Stuart Weir. I am just a retired citizen. Will the weathered old blobs or films or whatever that washes on the marshes, will it burn, and if so, why don't we just burn the marshes as the farmers, ranchers and all used to do for 200 years. They recovered until this day, but will they recover from oil spills. Thank you.

(1:19:13.1)

LOGAN: The question is once the oil gets into the marshes is it flammable? Can anybody speak to that? It is a little outside of the scope. We will get you a card to fill that out, Sir.

HARRY: Harry Johnson. I grew up on the waters. I am a commercial fisherman. My dad always taught me...I know how to smell fish. I know everything about the marsh. We trap, hunted, fished just like the gentleman said about burning the marshes.

END OF AUDIO.

END OF PART 1

START OF PART 2

(0:00:07.9) (AUDIO STARTS ABRUPTLY)

HARRY: I wouldn't burn them all [*0:00:08.4 audio unclear*]. But my concern is I was in *Bayou Caddy* Saturday. Okay, when the tide stopped, the tide stopped and I had my grandsons. My grandsons dumped the traps and all that. When the tide stopped, I showed them look the tide stopped, where they had this clear gelatin come up. I never did see it in the waters all my life. Born and raised in the waters, was in them waters everyday and see me, I could spot... if I'm running that boat, I could spot a prairie chicken, a turtle or anything on that side of the bank or in that water, an alligator, because I was born and raised and when you're in the water every day and you're taught even when I lived in Bucktown as Metairie grew, my dad always had me looking out at the window for turtles and everything. This clear gelatin come up, and I showed my grandsons. I said that's got to be the disbursement, whatever they're breaking this oil up with. Saturday when you ride through the Marshalls, we actually had to put our shirts all over our face like this just to breathe and I've been having symptoms like when I get home that night, the room would be spinning and so I ended up picking up the crab traps. One of the crab traps when we pulled it up, it had little slick come up right about by the... that gel.

(0:02:05.8)

LOGAN: I guess your question is if you come across something like that who do you report it to? Is that what you're...? Okay.

HARRY: Yes, what I'm concerned too because like I said...

(0:02:13.0)

LOGAN: Right, obviously your concern, but do you want to be able to contact with one of these folks?

HARRY: By the way, got headaches because the smell was so strong.

(0:02:20.1)
LOGAN: Okay.

RESPONDENT: But I found the smell was over the marshes is more in the...
(0:02:26.6)
LOGAN: Okay.

HARRY: Where the gel comes up, I was way back up and one of the little
[0:02:30.7 audio unclear].

(0:02:30.7)
LOGAN: Okay. So this is reporting for folks that are actually out on the field?

PANELIST: Mr. Johnson if you want to get with me right after this meeting...

HARRY: Yes, Sir.

(0:02:38.5)
PANELIST: You give me the location. That's exactly why we have these state emergencies response teams.

RESPONDENT: Yes, sir.

(0:02:43.6)
PANELIST: I'll send them out there. Try to get them out there today and look at the area that you're talking about.

HARRY: Okay. Yes, sir.

(0:02:48.2)
PANELIST: And check the marshes and take samples.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

(0:02:51.0)
PANELIST: So I'll be glad to do that and anybody that got some reports like that, we want to hear from you all in...while you're out doing your activities. You all rise for us to tell us about things that you see, so I'll be glad to get them sent today.

HARRY: I noticed too right... okay, right there by the pier, the fishing pier, you know how they build these sewer systems, open ponds and how the water turns green. You can tell it's a polluted green. Right there by the pier along the shore there by the fishing pier, the water was that color.

(0:03:25.9)

LOGAN: You all need to get together after this because you all are the eyes and ears that are out there in the field fishing the other day.

HARRY: Okay.

(0:03:30.2)

PANELIST: And you are the ones who are going to pick up all this stuff.

HARRY: Okay.

(0:03:33.0)

LOGAN: I appreciate that.

HARRY: All right. Thank you.

(0:03:34.8)

LOGAN: Next up, Dave.

KAY: Good morning. My name is Kay and this maybe a trivial question in light of this unprecedented devastating ecological and financial disaster that's confronting us, but recognizing that I believe there are opportunistic parties out there. My question is and maybe among this group of people you might be able to answer this, is the Richton Dome plans dead in the water or can we expect, as we saw five years previous to this, somebody out there doing something when everyone else is interests were preoccupied with an issue called Katrina, so is Richton Dome project dead in the water?

(0:04:35.7)

LOGAN: Okay. I'm unfamiliar with that project, so I'm going to... (Laughter)

HARRIET:

All I can say and wish Don Abrams was still in the room because I know that he's been very active with the Gulf Coalition is that it was removed from the Department of Energy's budget. There was some concern that it would be put back into the budget, but I believe the Gulf Restoration Network is following that closely and I do not believe that those funds had been put back into the DOE budget. But it does bear watching.

(0:05:17.8)

LOGAN: Thank you. Next, Dave. Okay. One last question.

RESPONDENT: Harriet, I don't have anything to add to that. It does say our two senators and Gene Taylor are leaning toward favoring it, so I wouldn't write it off as that issue yet. This is the strategic petroleum reserve expansion that's been proposed for the Richton salt domes. Follow-up question regarding EPA information, I think the EPA director announced the other day in 10,000 locations were samples had been done or 10,000 samples that had been taken. There was nothing out of the ordinary with respect to air-borne threats to human health, and I'm remembering some readings that came up in Venice about two weeks ago where I think it was some sulfur compound was detected at very high levels in Venice and some of the VOCs were up to about a thousand times the OSHA levels. Can you explain that discrepancy that there seems to have been some serious sort problems reported in Venice but Miss Lubchenco is that correct reported that...

(0:06:39.6)

LOGAN: Yes, it's actually... more of an EPA's air quality question, is that correct? So are you comfortable... okay.

BOB: I know that EPA is doing a lot of water sampling and air sampling, and NOAA is doing a lot of water sampling, but I have not seen their data. All I have heard of, I've read that they haven't seen anything out of the ordinary except I did read in Venice where the water has hit the marshes that they were reporting something, but I don't know what the status of that is. I'm sorry.

All right. Thanks.

(0:07:12.1)

LOGAN: Could you fill out the card on that.

LOGAN: And lastly... you're going to wrap up Don. I do want to make one mention that if you feel like comfortable coming to the microphone and get your question answered, we do have these cards that you can flag her down and go ahead and fill it out. We will get those questions answered and back to you. At this time having no further questions, I want to thank you all for coming out this morning. We can give our panel here a big hand for coming out and braving the questions and it looks like you have the rest of the wonderful day.

END OF AUDIO.

Fisheries, Wildlife, Data and Monitoring Mobile, Ala., June 3, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:05:23.0)

RESPESS: I'm going to start here on the far end and let our speakers up here introduce themselves and tell us who they're with.

GRAHAM: Thanks Logan. I'm Ken Graham. I'm the Chief Meteorologist with the National Weather Service, New Orleans. I'll be here to answer questions about how the weather impacts the response, and also how hurricanes do. If you have questions about the hurricane season and influencing with the oil, I'm your guy. Ever since the onset, our office there has been responsible for basically keeping all the weather flowing to the responders out there. Our mission is protection of life and property. We're trying to keep the responders safe. As we speak, if you see me on this, we have a squall line going through; it's pretty close to Lafayette right now. We're keeping an eye on that as it's going through the response area. We're actually issuing products keeping those folks safe, and today is the milestone that we hit number 1,000 for a specific latitude and longitude forecast for the response. Anything weather, I'm going to be your guy today.

DENSON: Chris Denson with the Alabama Marine Resources Division.

BECKER: I'm Bob Becker with the Auburn Marine Sea Grant Program.

MCGREW: Amelia McGrew with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

DICKEY: Bob Dickey with the US Food and Drug Administration.

BUCK: Buck Sutter from NOAA.

BEARD: Ross Beard from NOAA.

PERRY: I'm Harriet Perry with the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory. We are housed in Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Jim and I are here. We're with the fisheries group. One of the things that we do, we're responsible for monitoring and assessment of Mississippi's marine resources. We house the data that will be used to assess change. If you have any questions concerning fisheries, they're very similar in Mississippi and Alabama. We work very closely with Alabama and Louisiana. We have similar sampling programs and protocols. I guess we're the critter people.

FRANKS: I'm Jim Franks. I'm a fisheries biologist with the Gulf Coast Research Lab in Mississippi. I can't add much more to what Harriet just said except that

I do have particular interest in this time, particularly this species of fish that are off shore beyond the islands that we referred to as a pelagic species, that are perhaps undergoing impact as we speak. Thank you.

(0:07:55.9)

RESPESS:

All right, thank you. Before we call our first speaker, if you're feeling comfortable walking to the microphone and speaking, we do have the question cards. Just raise your hand and we'll get one to you. We'll start at the top of the batting order today, who you got for us?

ASSISTANT:

Carol Adams-Davis.

ADAMS-DAVIS:

I am concerned about the hierarchy of decision-making process. I understand that most of you are with federal agencies and that the state of Alabama actually will be making a lot of the decisions as far as the coastal disaster. I would like to know who the three people in each agency, including Coast Guard, ADM, and any other Alabama agency, who those three top people are who we can actually contact and be heard. Who is on the ground here to take care of us on a daily basis? These are concerns that all of us have. We still have huge question marks. If it's not federal agencies who are on the ground making daily decisions, I know Coast Guard would be and I need to know the three top people that are here to make those decisions. The ADEM people, I know Lance, but I know people who are on the ground Mobile or Baldwin County who are making decisions and action plans on a daily basis.

(0:09:20.3)

RESPESS:

Okay, thank you. It's actually a two-point question you had. Hope people here on the ground, we don't have anybody that's decision makers in the room. Do we have people here because we have, we just handed over; who would like to speak?

PERRY:

The Mobile Houses, one of the incident command centers, and I could speak for Mississippi, and that our leadership from the Department of Marine Resources and our Department of Environmental Quality, all of those folks that are making those decisions would be a part of that incident command center. I'm not sure how you would go about getting a list of those people. They are the troops that are working daily.

ADAMS-DAVIS:

Right. That's who we want to be talking to today and every day. We want to understand who the individuals are that are in charge. Is that possible today?

DICKEY:

At least for the Coast Guard perspective, I could volunteer Captain Ed Stanton. I know that he's heading up the response for the Coast Guard in Louisiana and Mississippi and I believe Alabama as well. Ed Stanton.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Who would be on the ground here? I think...

DICKEY: He can answer that.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Okay, all right. His office, it's his office in Louisiana?

DICKEY: Mississippi.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Mississippi? Okay, that's a start.

(0:10:46.9)
RESPESS: Do you have anything for the State response?

ADAMS-DAVIS: Once again, we want to know who is here on the ground watching the oil come in. That's what we need to know because that's how we keep it from coming in; it's having people here on the ground.

DENSON: Scott Brown is the ADM Coastal Chief.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Where does he live?

DENSON: Where does he live?

ADAMS-DAVIS: Yeah.

DENTON: I don't know where he lives. I imagine...

ADAMS-DAVIS: Where does he go home at night? What county?

DENTON: He's stationed in Mobile.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Okay.

DENTON: He is the Mobile Section Chief.

ADAMS-DAVIS: All right. That's ADM. What about EPA? Is there anybody here or is it out of Atlanta?

FRANKS: The response of federal agencies is coordinated through the Coast Guard. Coast Guard, by law, has the lead and they coordinate all federal agencies. They have the first job. Coast Guard has at their headquarters, the National Incident Command Center just outside of Washington DC, and at the command centers here, located here in Mobile and in New Orleans, they have representatives from each of our federal agencies, each of your federal agencies. Those types of questions would go through the Coast Guard command centers. They would contact the appropriate federal agency representative that would be responsible for that part of it.

ADAMS-DAVIS: I have emailed and faxed Coast Guard in Washington. I haven't heard that from them. I've been doing that for a long time.

FRANKS: I can imagine that would have gotten quite a response. Try the local commands. Try them as well.

ADAMS-DAVIS: The local command is Ed Stanton. Is that correct? Is there another local, okay.

DICKEY: He's the eighth district.

(0:12:30.6)

RESPESS: Yes, if you'd fill that out specific to the hierarchy of the joint incident command and state incident commands. Next up, Dave?

ASSISTANT: Perry Berens.

BERENS: Yes, my name is Perry Berens. My concerns today are, it's good that they were, that you're all here first of all. It's also good to hear that man out there is saying that we're trying to the best of the ability of all of you people to be transparent in this. And yet, from the onset, I've noticed that as the dolphins came in, and the turtles came in, and the dead fish piled up on the beaches, the news media says that no one can lay claim that this is [due to] the oil. My question is, with transparency, when are you going to release either conclusive support that this wildlife is dying due to oil or it's not dying due to oil, that it is caught in a TED (Turtle Exclusion Device) or something such as that nature? Also, do you have independent labs that are going to bring their supporting or different autopsy results on what's happening to wildlife so we can get some, rather than all government control which is possibly skewed data? The independent labs that are going to be able to tell us. When are you going to do that?

(0:13:52.1)

RESPESS: Okay, it sounds like lab results for wildlife.

SUTTER: The stranding information on both bottlenose dolphins that have died, as well as the sea turtles that are stranded which, these procedural stranding is many, many times the normal rate for this time of year. The necropsies that have been done, well, to answer your question, the parts that I can remember. The University of Florida has a veterinarian, who's looking at all the tissue samples or that the ones that have been necropsied. I believe the information is all being posted online. I have it with me. It's being posted on the NOAA website, the number of turtles dead, number of porpoises and the reason why they were, a general description of where they're found, what was the cause of death. As far as the connection between the oil spill and the turtle deaths, and there have been several, I

think even yesterday, there were four that were recovered not only working along the beach, but also out looking around in some of the Sargassum drifts because some of the turtles are being caught up in that. There is [pause] I'm trying to think of the best way to get that information, I think, let me check and get a card for him. That way, I can give you the specific email or the specific website that has all that information because it is being published, I know. I have to go look in my computer. That's what I have to do. I'm sorry I can't remember the exact address. It's one of the NOAA websites that, I don't remember which one specifically, whether it's one for the regional office that has the fish closures on it or if it's the one that's on the main one that's out of headquarters.

RESPESS: The second part was the question about independent lab tests...

SUTTER: Yes, thank you for that. I forgot about that part. The independent part of that, who's looking at it... the University of Florida is looking at those. We also have our scientists out of Miami and out of Pascagoula, Mississippi that are also looking at those tissue samples. The first one's back in late April and early May. I know both of those were drowned. That was what the cause of death was. I'm not really sure what the reason for them to die was, but there's a lot of activity out offshore. There's a lot of the boom activity that they're putting around turtles who live near the surface. They could've been hit in the heads. So even if they didn't die specifically from oil poisoning or from any other thing, they could have been hit by vessels that are out there because there are an unusually large number of vessels that are in the area. I have not seen any result of death due to oil other than being found in oiled area that's been cleaned up and released alive. Some have expired, but as far as ingesting oil and dying over long term, I haven't seen any evidence of that. Again, that's all posted online. I'll get you that website.

BARONS: Yes, just a follow-up question is one with the transparency issue as well as there's a lot of people that don't have computers that don't have access to NOAA. They can't get around on a computer or to check their email. Therefore, my question would have been, are you going to give this information directly to the media so they could publish it to those of us that may not have a computer to get this? Is there a media link to this to where we can...

SUTTER: I'll have to look into that but that's a great suggestion. I asked that question last night, also. What is the best way to communicate because I realize that not everybody has access to computers especially if you're, you know, my age, and computers aren't instinctive like they are for kids. I'm going to ask that question of our NOAA media people to find out what the best way is to translate that information so that people can get it whether it needs to be published in newspapers or in some way that we can get that information to people who are not plugged into the Internet. I think we just

assumed too much that people are plugged in that way. If you have some ideas along how we could, what are your ways that you look for information?

BARONS: Basically, the Lagniappe is really good because they're pretty unbiased. The Press Register...

SUTTER: So, newspaper.

BARONS: ...sometimes gets it out there, you know but...

SUTTER: Okay.

BARONS: ...depends on whose side they're working on.

SUTTER: I understand.

BARONS: I think any of the local medias that are either subscription based, or Lagniappe in particular where they just get out through just people that follow them. Those... any media.

SUTTER: A local, okay. I'll take that. As a matter of fact, I'll make that suggestion today when I talk to them.

BARONS: Thank you.

(0:19:04.2)

RESPESS: Next Dave?

ASSISTANT: **Martha Crosby.**

CROSBY: My name is Martha Crosby. I'm an oyster gardener, so I know a lot of people from the Sea Grant Program. I'm an oyster gardener because when I was a child swimming in Mobile Bay I was always cutting my feet on all the shells and that doesn't happen anymore. I also remember really clearly as a child sitting on the pier and my Dad talking about how, when he was a little boy, Mobile Bay was full of brown pelicans. From my childhood, there weren't any brown pelicans in Mobile Bay and I see the future, my daughter having that conversation with my granddaughter. I came here this morning expecting Mobile Bay to be full of oil for my lifetime, and was really delighted to hear two of the people on the panel, one of them you Mr. Dickey, say as soon as the evidence comes in that there isn't any more oil in the water, we'll reopen the fisheries as fast as we can or BP is going to support you. We will all be here until this is finished. We're coming from two different worlds. I'm thinking my grandchildren maybe will have a world with no oil in the water, and y'all are sounding like it's not so far off. I'm not asking anybody to give me a deadline, but clearly

I'm into a 30-year time frame. Would any of you all volunteer the kind of time frame you think this project is going on? Am I asking too much?

(0:21:02.3)

RESPESS:

The question is to hazard a guess... what kind of time frame we're looking at for a recovery.

SUTTER:

I don't think anybody can really begin to even answer that question other than the fact that there have been other oil spills. One even in the Gulf of Mexico back in 1979 of even 150 million gallons and went on for nine months. I believe the well was at 200 feet. We can look at some of the impacts and what was the downstream, how long it's been before things started to recover in that particular area of Mexico. I think that would be some of the best things I think that Bob is the one who suggested last night, and maybe it will be best for you to answer on what the name of that one because I can't remember on the top of my head. Ixtoc spill. NOAA, which is one of the agency I work for, we have been working and gathering data in the Gulf of Mexico since the inception of the agency 30-some-odd years ago. Unless some unforeseen thing happens, we'll be part of the, in part of the community here, for years and years, well, for years to come. That's our responsibility, the stewardship of the ocean resource, whether you talk about fish, and endangered. Question about the openings, as soon as we do that, we'd look at those maps everyday and as soon as an area has been cleared of oil, we send our research vessels out to collect water samples and fish tissue samples. They come back and then they go through a series of agreed-upon test with FDA so that we can reopen that area as quickly as humanly possible. Right now, with the oil still spilling out, it seems the oil is kind of sloshing back and forth around the mouth of the Mississippi River. It's off Louisiana off here. Based on which way the wind blows, what way the currents are, but once we get... so really, really once it stops, we will be working diligently to make sure we can open those areas as soon as it's safe. Seafood safety is a huge factor not only just for, we obviously want safe seafood for people for consumption but also for the perception that people who don't live here, the sense is that everything that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico, there's oil on it. We want to make sure that is not the case. We want to make sure we're extraordinarily clear that the seafood that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico is the best that there is. It's safe to eat and that so the fishermen can get back to work as soon as humanly possible.

BEARD:

If you'd like to, there were a lot of studies done after Ixtoc by Texas A&M University. The Heart Institute at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has that historical record. They analyze five, 10 and 15 years after that, the effects on the ecosystem. If you would contact Larry McKenny would be a good point of contact there at the Heart Institute. He could direct you at some of the studies that were done by UT, Texas A&M, and other Texas universities because it was primarily the Texas coastline that was affected.

(0:24:22.2)

RESPESS: Thank you. Do you have a re-direct?

CROSBY: No.

(0:24:26.5)

RESPESS: Okay, thank you. Next up Dave?

ASSISTANT: Daniel Johnson.

JOHNSON: How you all doing? I'm a 6th generation fisherman down in Heron Bay, Three Men in a Boat. We just contacted the Vessels of Opportunity phone number. They're not accepting no more... no more boats. Question is, and then also where is BP at this meeting, you know, why don't they hire commercial fishermen to do this? We've been in the water, like I said, for six generations. I think that would be about it. You know, just... Why don't they hire commercial fishermen to do this?

(0:25:17.1)

RESPESS: Okay. Thank you for that comment. We've heard this over and over again. BP was invited and I'm not exactly sure why they're not here today. I do need you to fill out one of those cards, those comment cards, so that we can pass that on to other folks because we've heard that repeatedly about Vessel of Opportunity.

JOHNSON: We just called it a few minutes ago.

(0:25:36.1)

RESPESS: Okay. These comment cards are actually going directly to folks. We're not sending an email. Does anybody want to comment on any of this Vessel of Opportunity? [muttering] Probably not. Okay. Did you have anything else, sir?

JOHNSON: I don't think so, that was it.

(0:25:51.5)

RESPESS: Okay. I appreciate it. Can we get him a card please? Next up Dave?

ASSISTANT: Linda Barnes.

BARNES: Good morning and thank you for being here. I'm following up on Mr. Johnson's question, too, a little bit. I just... You watch the news, you watch the Channel 5 news, and they tell us that there is, they've run into oil coming ashore 20 miles off Dauphin Island. One of the reporters goes out in a little boat and gets her hand in it. I don't understand why NOAA or someone doesn't know where this oil is if you're flying over it every

day. Why don't you know where these spills are, and why aren't the Vessels of Opportunity out there? Why wasn't somebody out there that night following Channel 5 in a shrimp boat, in a boat that has skimmers on it, to get that oil? You know what I mean, skimmed up and taken care of so that it didn't hit the shores? It's just, what I don't understand... I just don't understand that.

(0:27:01.7)

RESPESS:

Okay. Two-point question; one is about modeling and where you came up with that, and then the second is the response type of question.

SUTTER:

As far as knowing where the oil is, we have maybe... I think probably Russ will probably be the best person to answer how all the modeling part works. Those are based on satellite data, over-flight data. I think we have a pretty good idea where the oil is and where it's projected to go. We also put an area, a 5-mile area of safety, or error buffer zone around that. As far as speaking to the question if we see these little, see areas where there is oil that are offshore and why the Vessels of Opportunity aren't used. That would really have to be a question that we could get the Coast Guard to address as to why that's not happening.

BEARD:

I can tell you that just over this last weekend, we've taken the first four survey cruises for the Brooks McCall, which is funded by BP, and starting to integrate, visualize the data specifically to find the spatial and temporal distribution of the sub-surface oil. Also, to determine the approximate min, median and maximum value of oils detected in the water column. Is the oil itself correlated with any kind of bathymetric features. If you can think about winds through the mountains and the same with the currents through the bottom topography. Also, to get a better understanding of the vertical structure of the water, both historically, what was there before the oil, and how the oil in the water column may be affecting where the oil goes changing the physical characteristics of the ocean itself. What we're trying to do, and we actually produced a series of products that are being distributed today. At LSU, there's a major science conference that many of the folks that were here last night are now going to, that's bringing together the best and the brightest of the researchers and the scientists, to truly identify where these plumes go. I think there's a misconception. People think this plume is one long continuous river flowing through the Gulf. It's really aggregations of oil and oil has been dispersed. I can show you what some of the results that we got just last night, that some of these samples, they have been able to show that beneath the surface there is the presence of hydrocarbons. There is the Thomas Jefferson and the Gunter, two NOAA ships will be. Gunter is already deployed. Thomas Jefferson will be going out and using sonar to help map these plumes. There's an excellent source for the New York Times today, if you can go online or get a New York Times, while the independent research is being done by universities that are identifying these aggregates of sub-surface oil. It's a

situation where you don't know what we don't know because we've never had a disaster of this impact before. I do promise you that we're working night and day on trying to identify where the sub-surface oil is and what's the fate and transport; where is it going to go? **(0:30:13.6)**

RESPESS:

I would like to you to fill up one of the cards because it sounded like you also needed a number to call in or report oil if people going out on boat, etcetera, could come across so that they could report it. We will get you a card there as well. Next up, Dave.

(0:30:28.8)

ASSISTANT:

David Cohen.

COHEN:

Hi, how are you doing? I am David Cohen. I am the city clerk for Mobile, Alabama. I represent the city and I also represent a lot of the fishermen I fish with.. I am also a member of CCA. Watching the, I guess the federal level fishery closure, also the state level fishery closure, there seems to be a lack of direction or quick communication. It comes up on NOAA's website, very familiar with it, I pulled it up this morning but it strictly says, the federal area. Three miles off out of Alabama, 9 miles off from Florida. There is a break between Florida and Alabama 6 miles. Is it okay to fish in the 9-mile area of Florida and not okay to fish in the 9-mile area of Alabama? It says a closure, and I will get to that, what exactly does closure mean? Is it means catch on release? Does it mean, simply, do not go into the area? It states that you can cross the area but it does not really get into a very defined, "You don't need to be here, period, and the fines are..." On the Internet right now, it is rampant, wild, rumors, whatever. There is not really a clear and concise. Alright? If you go in there, you are going to catch these fish. NOAA will bring resources, they are going to out there and say, "You are under arrest," whatever. You are not really defining what that means. People are out there right now fishing. I have friends, there in the Gulf as of this minute or catching snapper. Are they in Florida water? Are they in Alabama water? Are they in federal water? These things are happening right now. It's kind of like a Wild Wild West right now for a lot people, trying to catch fish before they die or they are contaminated or whatever. Mr. Franks, I want to ask you a few questions about that. Those are some very, I guess, rampant things going on in the fishing community. These are recreational fishermen, these are not commercial, these are not charter boat captains, these are just guys with boats, like myself, they are going out and trying to catch some fish before it closes or the fish are contaminated.

(0:32:56.8)

RESPESS:

Let us get those two questions answered first. Okay, the first one was interaction between closures for the state and the feds. Second one was the actual definition of closure and what specifically that means to boat owners.

SUTTER: Okay. In terms of the closures of the 9 miles off Florida, the 3 miles off of Alabama, I can understand the confusion there because basically it kinda goes like that. Those are statutory from the states and as far as the territorial waters, and then, the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act is the one that goes into effect once they get into their find on exclusive economic zone. The closures of, and I understand that it is difficult because it is changing virtually everyday...

COHEN: Hourly.

SUTTER: Say that again, I am sorry.

COHEN: Virtually hourly. If you go out and you leave at 1 o'clock, and then, 6 o'clock, you have full closure. That is what is happening right now. Literally, I know friends that went out yesterday and it was legal to go out past Pensacola and all of the sudden, 6 o'clock yesterday, it closed out to Navarre.

SUTTER: We understand that that's a difficult situation, especially, for vessels that are, maybe, out fishing for a long period of time, and that's why we announced the closures in partnership with NOAA weather service and the NOAA marine weather review...

COHEN: On the radio?

SUTTER: Yeah, so they're announced on there. It is not a perfect situation. We talked about with some of the different choices that we have but the main thing, that reason that we are following that protocol, is to try to make sure that the fish that are landed, whether commercially or recreationally, have a minimum chance of being tainted in any way, shape or form. It is really a human safety issue as far as catching and keeping those fish. I have to check on the catch and release aspect of that. I know there's a definitive answer to that, I just don't recall it off the top of my head, I have to check with you back on that. When the closures are, in fact, closures to keeping fish for sure, because I know that June 1st was the red snapper, the beginning of red snapper season. Unfortunately, that was about the same time that a lot of the areas were closed, especially off Alabama, were unfortunately closed at that time, it was a bad timing for sure. Go ahead, I am sorry.

RESPESS: Ya'll's jurisdiction is federal waters.

SUTTER: It is only that the 3 miles off in Alabama and then 9 miles, just like you pointed out. As far as the closure of the state I can say the state gentlemen, that is a separate...

RESPESS: Ya'll provide projections to the state.

SUTTER: Right. Yes.

PANELIST: As far as catch-and-release, the bulletins say all types of fishing including the catch-and-release.

DENTON: In Alabama, we are working with our health department as well as *ADEM* to verify whether the area is needed to be closed or let remain open. The closures are based on the presence of oil. Right now, like Buck said, our waters go out to 3 miles, those are our territorial seas. The only waters that we have that are closed at this time start at around the eastern end of Dauphin Island and extend west to the Mississippi line. That area is closed for recreational and commercial fishing; that includes the catch-and-release. Generally, if an area is closed, press release is done, we are trying to get something up on our Outdoor Alabama website to detail the areas that are closed and the ones that are currently open.

COHEN: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Franks, since you're the fisheries expert and I appreciate you coming to the CCA consortium a couple of weeks ago in Fairhope. As these fish are tainted or come in contact with oil, preferably, I guess you mentioned earlier the pelagics; cobias, kings, wahoo, whatever. What will the effect of this oil be? I know that you cannot say, they'll have so parts per million in their flesh, but what is the effect in the past oil spills to fish, how long is this oil in them or do they have to, literally, die and get out of the food chain before it is gone. What are the impacts there as far as fish goes?

FRANKS: As far as the toxicology aspect of that, Bob may be the person to address some of this, not only from the seafood safety factor but from the actual accumulation of the toxins in the flesh and in the bodies of the fish themselves. We do not have a lot of information about those impacts on the species of fish that we have here, particularly, this type of oil. There is some general work that has been done, particularly, the spilling in Mexico and other places, but not really on the species that characterized our estuaries and our off shore environment here. That is sort of new territory. The impact, still, that I think from an ecological point of view would be the direct exposure of some of our prime species of fish, all species in fact, even the predators and prey, the forward species to the direct contact of the oil and that have many different sorts of physical, negative impacts on those animals, from suffocation to, perhaps, diseases, lesions that could lead to all sort of things if it was a prolonged impact. The other thing, of course, would be the stress to the young fish and the impacts on the larvae and the fish eggs of those fish that are actually spawning because this is a peak spawning period for many of our species right now. This is our

concern for how those young-life stages would respond to a prolonged exposure to the toxins in the oil. It is a complicated process. It could impact some species more than others. It could lead to reproductive issues down the road for the adults and adequate spawning activities that could lead to losses of a particular year class depending on the impact on the young fish. There are so many things involved in this. We do not really understand but I think we can say that the long term exposure of young fish and, perhaps, even some of the adults in our estuaries to spilled oil is certainly not a good mix. Bob may want to say a few things about the accumulation of the toxins in the flesh and how that might affect the animals themselves but ecologically speaking, it could be quite a problem if it does move in to our estuaries.

(0:40:56.5)

PANELIST:

Thank you, I'm gonna let you follow up.

DICKEY:

The fin fish, in particular, have the ability to metabolize anything that is taken in their bodies. They have very well-developed metabolic systems. As you move to crustaceans, shrimp, crabs, and shellfish, their metabolic capability has become less and less and less, are less capable in terms of their ability to metabolize and excrete the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons primarily. That is what we are most concerned about in terms of seafood safety, are the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Crude petroleum has many, many hundreds of compounds, a lot of compounds. Among those are the PAHs, the polycyclics. They also have aliphatics and other highly volatile compounds. That is what is what gives it the pungent smell. Most of those evaporate off as it is in the water or on the water that is evaporating off. The PAHs are slightly heavier, they persist in the environment a little bit more. As the oil is diluted in the water column or on the surface, or its partitions into the water column, fish that are in the area, generally avoid it. If there are any fish, even shrimp and crabs will try to get away from polluted environment. Shellfish, unfortunately, cannot move, they are very highly susceptible and they are the ones we are most concerned about. That's the sentinel species in terms of us determining exactly what the seafood safety impact is. Fin fish, generally, move away. There will probably be some impact on the younger years or recurring generations of fishes as they get into the environmental nursery areas *and Buck* and NOAA are the experts and the USM folks are the experts on that issue. All I can tell you is that, if PAHs are picked by shellfish, as they move through the water in light concentrations, they metabolize and excrete it fairly rapidly. It would be just a matter of days to weeks actually, once they reach clean water, before they would be okay. That has been the experience in previous oil spills where this has been studied quite extensively. A reference, NOAA has a superb scientist by the name of Yender, she published a 2003 paper, that is available on the web. It is a free PDF download that describes the impact of oil spills on seafood

safety and it describes of the metabolism of the PAHs in marine organisms. It gives you some idea of the impacts that you might expect on the fisheries, all the way down to the shellfish, they talk about that as well. Y-E-N-D-E-R, 2003, and I think the title of the paper is, Management of Seafood Safety Following An Oil Spill Event. It's very informative.

(0:44:00.8)

COHEN: Thank you.

PANELIST: Is that on the website , LaDon?

SWANN: I have a copy in my car. We'll make sure we link that on the Gulf Oil Spill site.

(0:44:08.6)

RESPESS: Thank you sir.

FRANKS: Thanks Bob. That was really good. One other concern of course, is he was talking about the fish that are able to swim away from perceived spill or perceived inhospitable water conditions. The other concern I would have, of course, would be those fish that may be able to do that, but those also are the spawning adults now. The young, their eggs and the young larvae, these little guys are in the water for a few days, they are not going to be able to swim away from that. That is what I was getting to, that is the next generational concern that I would have. Some fish may escape, their young may not.

PERRY: I think we would have the same concerns for the invertebrate fishery, particularly, shrimps and crabs. Their larvae are off shore, for crabs, it is from April through October. They are being impacted now. Most of the brown shrimp are on the marsh prior to the spill, those larvae are fine. Unfortunately, white shrimp larvae are off shore now, and then, pinks will follow them. Even if the oil does not hit in shore, we still have concerns because they do have off shore larvae.

FRANKS: Just as a follow comment. We just returned from sea where we were examining the presence, the abundance and distribution of the larvae, of say, the tunas. We were also interested in billfishes—sailfish, blue marlin, white marlin, wahoo, cobia, those guys—those fish are offshore. The oil and some of the associated sheens are in areas historically observed as the spawning ground for many of those species of fish. It is occurring on those areas right now. As Harriet says, we do have concern about the young fish that are being swept along in currents. Even though the adults may have spawned in areas far removed from where the oil is, the current flow may sweep them into those areas, so they cannot avoid that. Certainly, we

express concerns many times over the past few weeks about the plight of some of the young fish off shore.

(0:46:39.2)

RESPESS:

Thank you. Okay. Two things I want to draw your attention to. We got some answers to some questions that were asked earlier. I'm going to post this on the wall, but just to give you some reference, this is Coast Guard Sector Mobile Report oiled shorelines, if you are out fishing or boating, that is the number to call We will post that on the board. Their sector Joint Information Center, the JIC, as they call it, this is the contact information. We were talking about local people on the ground that needed information. If you can put those on the wall for me, I would appreciate it. Next up Dave?

ASSISTANT:

Steve Mitchell.

MITCHELL:

I just saw these guys yesterday but I have a different problem or hypothetical situation. I have been asked with my new technology, my new alternative technology, and with Green Life Technology, we literally obliterate the crude oil and the contaminants, also. As we obliterate it with a completely non-toxic product, unlike what is being used for a lot of years, we dilute the oil to a water soluble product. Now, I have got some people, locally, doing some test to know how fast that this will bioremediate. I know it is fast but I do not know how many thousands of times faster with sunlight and temperature varying and so on. I guess my point is that it is all about dilution. Because it is all in our marshes, getting it out with paper towels and absorbent rags is idiotic, it is ridiculous. I cannot stand to sit back and watch that being done when there are technology products available to make a difference, to save what is going away as we sit here and answer questions. They are going away. Okay, now as they are going away, I would like to help. My hypothetical is this, is about dilution. There are 643 quadrillion gallons of water in the Gulf of Mexico and that water is being turned over and turned over, there are 3.3 million gallons of water coming out of the Mississippi every second.

RESPESS:

Thirty Seconds.

MITCHELL:

Thirty Seconds? Okay. We need to dilute it so that it can go away. We need to do something today. Okay. I have something to help. I cannot get a Coast Guard test, on-shore/off-shore test, that is my problem. I do not have enough product to do the whole Gulf of Mexico but we need to get started today using every alternative technology available. This is what I do to it. It is water based. You stick your hand in, it does not stick to it. This is what we got out there now, it's toxic. It's still got the same toxins in it but it can biodegrade fast.

RESPESS: What you're needing is to be able to contact those folks, that could be able to test that stuff for you.

MITCHELL: Since day one, I have struck out getting on site, on-shore tests to prove it.

(0:49:54.3)

RESPESS: Okay. Anybody want to speak to that? We do not really have anybody here from EPA. We do need you to fill out a card for us sir, if you would.

DICKEY: I know that the National Incident Command Center at Fort McNair, they have started a program just for ideas to be... they've got over 5000 of them they have accumulated so far. The only thing I can suggest is going to the US Coast Guard website, they have got a link there for folks that have ideas on remediation as well as for clean up. I know that they are assimilating it, they have established a committee to review all of these ideas. You can imagine there are quite a few ideas that have been floated and sent in to the National Incident Command Center and they are taking it seriously. They have developed a review committee and they are taking them seriously and picking them out. I was there about two weeks ago, at the inception of that committee. I would recommend you go to that website, that's all I can recommend at this point.

MITCHELL: That's the Deepwater Horizon website?

DICKEY: No. it's the US Coast Guard National Incident Command Center. That would be the one in Washington DC. That's where that committee is and I'm sure that the Coast Guard down here have links to that as well if you would call them and ask them for that... where ideas for clean up and remediation are being collected and reviewed. They are trying to work through them as quickly as possible.

MITCHELL: I've been on since day one.

(0:51:28.9)

RESPESS: Appreciate you coming out today. Next up, Dave?

ASSISTANT: Theresa White.

WHITE: Can you fix this for me please?

(0:51:39.1)

RESPESS: I certainly can. I reckon I could try.

WHITE: I want to thank you guys for holding this meeting and also for showing up. Everybody is very... well, everybody is past upset, and you guys get to be the ones that get their concerns voiced too, because you all were here and

they are not. As I looked at Alaska and the Exxon Valdez accident, I realized that the Gulf's not ever going to be the same. This was 20 years later and Alaska is not the same. So that tells me pretty much that this is something that we are going to be dealing with for a long time. Hopefully maybe my children and my grandchildren will be able to go fishing and go to the beach and stuff again. It's pretty much over for us. The problem that we are having is getting information out there. First of all, everything came together way too late and you all are wonderful and I am glad you all are here, but see you all are sugar coating everything. I want to know what I am working with. Now at this point I know that I can't go fishing in the Gulf because A) either I'll probably get cancer because everything is poisoned, or B) right off you can look at the fish probably the one's that... probably the one's that had two heads and about multiple sets of fins, those would not be good to eat, those are the ones that are going to be a result of all the chemicals and everything in the Gulf.

(0:53:22.7)

RESPESS:

Thirty seconds.

WHITE:

Okay. There is a lot of people that want to help clean up, however there are a lot of respiratory problems associated with that. We need all kinds of things put on websites and out in the newspapers.

(0:53:38.7)

RESPESS:

Okay. Seems like a two part question. One was better information and getting you sources of better information, is that correct?

WHITE:

Correct.

(0:53:45.4)

RESPESS:

The second one may be speaking about seafood safety again and reopening, and what the procedures for that as well.

WHITE:

Right.

(0:53:52.8)

RESPESS:

I am not sure if we have anybody here that can speak of long, long term situation, but here we go.

DICKEY:

For your seafood safety question, the FDA, NOAA and EPA have been working very carefully over the last month to develop a protocol; a specific procedure to assure the safety of seafood once oil does clear the area, and it will clear, to put it through Sensory Analysis testing, followed by Instrumental Chemical Analysis testing, to make sure that there are no residues or PAHs above levels of concern. The experts, sensory assessors are on site in Pascagoula, Mississippi, that's where we are locating the

team. They are going to be training additional staff and personal from the states across the five Gulf states to increase our sample throughput, so that we can reopen these fisheries as quickly as we possibly can once we're sure that there are no petroleum-based residues left in any of the tissues. This has been worked out in great detail, we are working very closely with all of the five Gulf states, their health commissioners, to make sure that this plan is satisfactory to them for their state waters. Because they have their state water, state rights for their three water, three mile limit waters. NOAA and FDA have agreed on the federal water criteria. We are pretty much set and ready to go... to assure the seafood safety. We do not have any reason to believe that tainted product has been, has reached the open markets. Because NOAA has done a superb job closing down fisheries in areas where they know oil has occurred, either on the surface or sub-surface. We have been very careful in circumspect about this.

WHITE: That's part of the problem, you may eat a bunch of seafood today and you may take 15 years down the road before you come down with...

DICKEY: No ma'am. I think if you look at the history, respectfully, if you look at the history of oil spills dating back to Exxon Valdez, through the Rhode Island, North Cape spill through the Ixtoc that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico which, by the way, was five times as large as the present spill. That was back in 1979. Read the literature and read the record since that time, I think you will find that first, remember that petroleum is a natural product. This is not a man-made material. It occurs in the Gulf naturally. Every year...

WHITE: There's quantities?

DICKEY: Yes ma'am. Actually, 40 million to 50 million gallons are naturally seeped into in the Gulf every year, but it's spread out over space and time. It is not all at once. The tragedy here is that it's all in one place at one time. It is going to be taxing to Mother Nature and to the recovery responders to take care of it. That is what NOAA is here to do. That's what EPA is here to do and FDA as well, and that, and we meant what we said out in the general session that we're here for the duration. We're going to be doing everything we possibly can to account for the ecological impacts and monitor that to see when we get back to normal, when we get back to where it was before, and to assure the safety the seafood that reaches the market.

WHITE: What we need to do is... Somebody needs to refuse to let BP drill anymore.

(0:57:20.8)

RESPESS: Did you get one of these cards ma'am? I want to give you one of these. This is the Gulf Sea Grant Program. It's got links to all the websites, there's a lot of good information on there about seafood safety, etc.. It also has got some links to some of the historic spills that have occurred in the Gulf of Mexico as well. Dave, next up?

ASSISTANT: I have Ms. Adams-Davis on this, but I don't see her in the room.

(0:57:47.3)

RESPESS: Okay. She may have left; gone to another room, gone to another session.

ASSISTANT: Okay, so then I have Daria Dean.

DEAN: Thank you all for being here. I'm going to get to this because I know my time is limited. I have some suggestions. First of all, I'm a local resident. I'm here on behalf of all the fisherman, all of the people that are going to suffer, or aren't getting the claims made, some unpaid and so on and so forth. The Gulf will never be the same. There could have been many other methodologies used that are tried and true. The established protocols were not used. Number one, tankers. Tankers have been used in the Arabian gulf in the 90's oil spill, thicker than this, 85% picked up. Tankers are available from all the oil companies en mass. There should be armadas of oil tankers coming, scooping up the surfacing oil, taking it to refineries and separating it. Other countries do this, other countries would be doing this from Day One. Number two, the 13 countries have offered their help to us, we have refused all but three. The Dutch are now sending six ships which were offered from the beginning. These have special arms and they scoop up the oil the same way that the tankers vacuum up the oil. We do not need toxic dispersants, we do not need the burns. I'll go into that in just a minute. Federal government should have been called into play immediately and not just the Coast Guard, they're doing a magnificent job but they can't do it all. Navy, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, NASA, you name it. They've got robotics, they got technology, they've got massive ships. I've talked to the Navy, I've talked to all of these people for the most part. All of the documentation I've been doing for the past four weeks is documented in either Washington Post, New York Times... I've read the Nalco fact sheets, I know what I'm talking about. I'm not an expert but all these other people are. We need tankers, massive armadas of them, sucking up the oil. We do not need to be burying the evidence. We need the federal government and we need to accept the help of 13 countries. Okay. BPs track record, 760 violations in three years. We're talking egregious. This is where loss of life occurred, or serious danger to human life occurred.

RESPESS: Excuse me, Miss Dean. Thirty seconds.

DEAN: How many?

RESPESS: Thirty seconds.

DEAN: I know, this is... whatever. The other countries, excuse me, the other companies with similar size oil companies had single digit violations. What does that tell you? Why have you been believing BP from the start? Toxic, Nalco. Thirteen out of the thirteen dispersants they could be using, it is the most toxic. Some of it is proprietary, you don't even know what's in some of it. Okay? Burns, toxic to the environment, it buries the evidence. BP is fined per barrel, for what they're releasing into the ocean. We are burying the evidence. Also, April 27th, check it out, everyone in this room. May One Mobile press register, article, secret meeting between NOAA and between BP, where on the chalkboard it said, 64,000.

RESPESS: Miss Dean, do you have a question today?

DEAN: Now wait, This is the end. 64,000 to 110,000 estimated barrels. There's the evidence. I don't have a question, because all the questions are answered by people that are very nice to be here, but you don't have the answers. This is the evidence, the established protocols are not being used. We're talking about not only lawsuits from people, we're talking about lawsuits from countries.

(1:01:28.2)

RESPESS: Right. I thank you for coming out this morning. I do want you to fill out one of the cards because the specific question I picked up was response techniques and why things are being done the way they are. We have had that raised in every meeting that we've had. I do need you, ma'am, to fill out one of those green cards for us, if you would, about questions about response techniques. The other question that I picked up for that was concern about the dispersants, we have a gentleman here from FDA that can speak to dispersants.

DICKEY: Thank you for your question. The FDA's position on dispersants, and I'm not talking about environmental impact, I'm talking about in terms of seafood safety, is that the dispersants are not a concern for FDA in terms the safety of the seafood that would be harvested once waters are reopened. The dispersants are composed of four different chemicals, we know all four of them.

DEAN: You know the proprietary?

DICKEY: Yes, we know the proprietary one. We have taken a look at each of those particular chemicals, we've done all the appropriate calculations, we've looked at all the appropriate studies. We happen to know that they have a

low likelihood of being absorbed in across the lipid membranes of living organisms because of their chemical nature. I'll tell you exactly what they are, they're called propylene glycol. Propylene glycol is a very common product, it's present in a lot of consumer products. For example, it's a moisturizer in some of the medicines that we take. It's used in lip gloss in cosmetics. Two, butoxyethanol is another component that's also present in a lot of consumer products in trace quantities. The third component is petroleum distillates, light fraction, mineral spirits, kerosene. They're actually a petroleum product. They're putting petroleum that were purified petroleum products back into the crude to help disperse it, so that the bacteria that occur naturally could break it down naturally. That's the purpose of the dispersants. The fourth proprietary compound is what we call an organic sulfonic acid, it has been, we know the structure, we've taken and looked at all the toxicity data, looking all of the information that we have available on that. They have what we would call a low bioconcentration factor. They're on the order of less than 100 on a scale of zero to upwards of 10,000. In the concentrations that they are found, that the dispersants has being used in the Gulf, which has a huge dilution effect, especially at the time when fisheries are going to be reopened, it was determined that it does not represent a seafood safety concern. Now, in concentrated form, CDC has on their website, detailed information on the hazards of working with this material as it arrives in drums, as they dilute it into water, spray it on the water to break up the oil. It is a contact/inhalation/ingestion hazard in concentrated form as people are dealing with it. There's a specific protocol on how these products are supposed to be used. They are not supposed to be used without appropriate protective gear. In term... I can only speak to seafood safety. This is the analysis that we've done by our lead toxicologist who was on site at the *Exxon Valdez*, this guy has a vast experience and he's a board-certified toxicologist. We've looked at all of the angles on dispersants; I guess that was really the only thing you needed me to comment on. Is there anything that I can explain further?

DEAN: Well, we still have never addressed why super tankers were not used,..

DICKEY: Thank you, ma'am.

DEAN: But, what I'm saying is, we don't need to be using dispersants at all. Why are you putting more toxins in the water? And you have underwater plumes and you have no idea where they are? You know, you've got it. Okay. That's my point.

DICKEY: That would be for the engineers in the... I guess the Coast Guard and BP to answer that type of question.

DEAN: Well, they don't answer my questions.

DICKEY: Yes, well I'm sorry.

UNKNOWN: They don't come to the meetings, either.

(1:05:47.7)

PERRY: I would like to thank Logan who's standing up here for, approximately like, nine hours, and I'm going to give him a little bit of a relief. Dave, who's next?

ASSISTANT: Desilee Wallace.

WALLACE: Good morning, I just want to thank each and every one of you for coming, to listen to everyone, to answer questions with the best of your ability. I have two specific questions. The first is, I'm interested in what agencies are monitoring the levels of the PH's in the waters where folks are swimming, what types of tests are being done, I guess what type of monitoring... Actually I guess I do have more than two questions. I'm wondering where the public can access the data that's being gathered. Finally, I'm wondering if there are any prior studies that have looked at this in the scientific literature, where other oils spills and impacts have occurred in the past. If there are, where can we access that information? Thank you.

END AUDIO CD 1.

BEGIN AUDIO CD 2.

(0:00:07.9)

MODERATOR: The question is, who could be in charge and start a grassroots?

(0:00:14.4)

MODERATOR: Not just grassroots. I want somebody over everything.

(0:00:18.0)

MODERATOR: Okay.

(0:00:19.8)

MODERATOR: I want leading.

RESPONDENT: I'm sorry. We mentioned this a little bit earlier that by law, the Coast Guard is the lead responding agency. Underneath the Coast Guard, at their National Incident Command Center in Washington and at each of their Unified Command Centers across the Gulf of Mexico, there are representatives from each of your public health and environmental agencies there. There are representatives from Minerals Management Services, FDA, NOAA, EPA, CDC, all agencies sent their liaisons to each of these command centers. So, they have input into... You're talking about

a coordinated response and this is exactly why they are there, is to help us assure that there is a coordinated response. Those liaisons transmit information from Admiral Thaddeus Allen, who is the overall commander in the response. He's the chief of the response, and he helps coordinate all of the other agencies to make sure they're doing what their individual roles are with minimal overlap so that we can respond to this.

(0:01:32.2)

MODERATOR:

Okay. I can make myself. I want to know who's going to be in charge of solving the problem. All of these agencies are wonderful. We need somebody who's going to coordinate this and say, solve the problem, get the job done, do it. We got Apollo 13 back, and let me tell you, that was a miracle in itself. I just want somebody who says, okay, I want the President to appoint somebody who says, we're going to take all these people in, get the job done. That's all I'm asking. Who's going to get the job done?

RESPONDENT:

As far as Bob said, after the Exxon Valdez, Congress passed the law of the Oil Pollution Act, which set up exactly to answer those kind of questions that you just posed, ultimately it's the President that is the one who directed. We are now mobilizing as part of the administration to increase the administration or the different agencies' input by three times, I believe. That's what he indicated last week, and so we are in the process of doing that. Each agency has different responsibilities. For instance, NOAA is mainly on the oceanographic science. Each part is doing their and all gets fed in through this joint and through National Incident Command. Beyond an answer like that, I certainly understood your frustration. Believe me, I hear it loud and clear and getting that frustration translated up to where people can. That's well understood, but it's also frustrating from this level to try to figure out how we can really get your level of frustration on their radar to understand that people are scared, people are frustrated, people are losing sleep, a lot of sleep. It's not a matter of people don't care, they certainly do. We're going through the process.

(0:03:46.8)

MODERATOR:

That's right, they do care, everyone cares. Now, solve the problem.

(0:04:04.2)

MODERATOR:

This is how you gain the system, you just keep rotating. (Chuckle) Now, I know how to gain the system. Okay. We're talking about the Oil Pollution act of 1990. I've read the entire act and in the second paragraph, it says the federal government shall direct all public and private responses to an oil spill. It further states that there is one billion dollars in the Trust Fund, the Oil Pollution Act Trust Fund per spill. Okay? I'm wondering, where the hell is that money, number one, and why has the federal government in mass not taken control? I've been really, really addressing the White

House and all the powers there'd be because I know that you are not individually responsible for this. The White House and the various agencies that are involved, EPA et al, they should have taken control of this from the beginning, because as of the April 27th closed door meeting which was reported in the Mobile Press Register, they all knew -- NOAA and the BP folks there -- all knew that this was potentially gigantic and they'd never dealt with anything like this before. Why on earth would they not call in all the Department of Defense and so on, the supertankers. To me, Gates would be the best one to head this up because the Coast Guard is doing the best they can, but they are one agency. I would like to know why the federal government is disobeying their own Oil Pollution Act which is US Law? The last time I checked, the citizens have a right for the federal government to obey the law that is on the books. (MARY KING)

RESPONDENT: Mary, this is your comment about DOD and Navy. I can tell you, I'm situated at Stennis Space Center and work for Navy [0:06:06.2 *inaudible*] office for many years. NASA is working on using their satellite imagery but I can tell that Navy is producing the Navy Coastal Ocean Model which is used by all of the modelers to understand the current structure and the physical dynamics of the ocean. Navy is also deploying gliders that will actually go through these plumes to be able to identify characteristics. Navy is taking a very active role. I just want you to know that there are elements within DOD that are working hard on this.

(0:06:35.3)

MODERATOR: I appreciate that a lot of them are in an advisory capacity or in a testing capacity as you indicated, and that's super, but I've talked to retired naval officers that said we have submarines. We have container ships. We have skimming boats. We have the blotters, we have all the equipment. Air Force could be dropping specialized...

RESPONDENT: Having come from DOD, I understand completely.

(0:06:57.2)

MODERATOR: You know what I'm talking about?

RESPONDENT: I know exactly. Mm-hmm (Affirmative).

(0:06:58.8)

MODERATOR: There are minuscule efforts being contributed by all of those agencies and they're great advisory as well, but where are all the ships? Where is all the aircraft? Where is the Merchant Marine? They could be out there in force, and they're not.

RESPONDENT: All we can do at this table is go back to our leaders and bosses and make sure your voice is heard.

(0:07:19.7)

MODERATOR: Thank you.

RESPONDENT: I promise you, it will be.

(0:07:22.1)

MODERATOR: The other thing about the tankers, because they can order BP, you get tankers from Exxon, you get them from Shell, you get them from all these private companies and you have our models of tankers picking up this oil, because then it won't affect all these people's lives forever and ever.

RESPONDENT: We'll make sure that message comes back.

(0:07:39.0)

MODERATOR3: And poison your Gulf.

(0:07:40.6)

MODERATOR4: Who wrote the Press-Register article?

(0:07:42.8)

MODERATOR3: I have no idea. It might have been Achenbach. I'm not sure.

(0:07:42.8)

MODERATOR4: That was May 27.

(0:07:47.4)

MODERATOR3: No. The meeting, this is key. The meeting was held. The closed door meeting was held April 27th. There was a chalkboard in the room at that meeting and they took a video of it, and it's a still video. It said 64,000K to 110,000K barrels per day. They were looking at their worst-case scenario and of course, later, the scientist confirmed this, renowned scientists when they saw the plumes. By the way, the Coast Guard and BP refused to release video. We all know that. To answer your question, May 1, Mobile Press Register video and I'll be glad to send it to you if you want.

(0:08:32.4)

MODERATOR: Remember that all of these questions are going to be on the transcript so we will be sharing those. These public meetings are one of the first large series of public meetings that have been held to get you information. So, they're being watched and a lot of people will be getting those transcripts. Those questions are going to be raised.

RESPONDENT: Thank you.

I just have one quick question here to possibly Mr. Dickey and even to Sea Grant, and it has to do with the Alaska Oil Spill. With today's technology,

is there any way that a Skype or anything could be set up with the panel of people that have already dealt with this up in Alaska? Where we could get first-hand knowledge from this on how this affected their life, or how this affected their health, or how this affected their seafood and mutations or whatever? Is there any way that we as the public could ever have a forum where we would be able to ask them questions and how they dealt with it?

(0:09:40.4)

MODERATOR:

Could you get LaDon to answer that for us, please? There was the Alaskan, we had a forum about a month ago, and I'll let LaDon address that with people from Alaska. He didn't hear the question? Would you mind posing it again for LaDon because he can answer your question. Okay.

LADON:

I have 14 saved voice mails and three of them are from my colleagues in Alaska. We can do that. We weren't trying to be exclusive. When they were down, we were very concerned that people would start comparing it directly with what happened with the Valdez spill and this one. We learned a lot and if we can get them down again, we'd like to share that. What we did learn, the oil may be a lot different, the impacts on the society, you already seen it come true. Things are written in the paper this morning, the classic symptoms and some of the worst things that happened in Alaska. We will do what we can do to get them back down here, if you're willing for us to do that. Okay? They have a lot of information on the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. They prepared a lot of things for us in the gulf as a result. They feel our pain right now, they've felt it, and I'm sure we could do that, but not in a week.

(0:11:23.7)

MODERATOR:

Thank you. Dave? Who's next? All right.

(0:11:36.5)

AUDIENCE:

We're not done. Okay. This is about the Exxon Valdez. Yesterday, I was in an Orange Beach meeting. We had about 700 people there and a very different format, very interesting because all questions were allowed to be asked from the floor. We signed up, of course. Everyone was very polite. Everybody heard everyone else's question. They did not split up into groups. I find this a little odd. The big group sometimes is better. Concerning the Exxon Valdez, there was a very informative speaker there and if I had been in a small group, I might not have heard her. She was there at the Exxon Valdez, lived there for years, and was some sort of special official. I can't recall her name, I should have gotten that. Anyway, she spoke to the health effects of the Exxon Valdez disaster and they were significant. We're talking about long-term carcinogenic effects, we're talking about respiratory effects, on and on and on. With the use of dispersants with the oil hitting the beaches, with the air quality not really

known, we have other countries involved. This is pretty frightening stuff and I would think that we would learn from the Exxon Valdez and all the health effects, not just for fish, but I'm talking about people. When we have, as I mentioned before, methodologies to safely take care of this in other ways, there's really no wonderful way to take care of it, but there are safer ways. This speaker was absolutely dramatic, because she also talked about the way Exxon Valdez did not pay the claims either. That was going on at the meeting yesterday. That's another whole issue and I won't even bother you with that which is critical and of course, the loss of life is critical.

(0:13:31.2)

MODERATOR: Do you have a question?

(0:13:32.6)

AUDIENCE: The question is...I thought comments were also allowed by the way?

(0:13:37.4)

MODERATOR: Questions.

(0:13:37.6)

AUDIENCE: Okay. This is the question, why has the federal government not learned from Exxon Valdez and all the health effects that are known? Okay? We're talking about fish toxicology here. I'm talking about human toxicology here. Why has this not been addressed big time?

(00:14:01.1)

MODERATOR: Okay. Thanks. Let's stay here.

RESPONDENT:

I've mentioned in our previous forums that there is quite a bit of history on oil spills dating back to Exxon Valdez. There is a lot of literature on lessons learned and the Federal agencies have reviewed that. The toxicologist, for example, that's been working with the FDA on seafood safety. He was there. He actually went back and he was in front of the native of populations. He wrote the book, he wrote the methodology for determining levels for subsistence populations. There was a wide variety of socioeconomic effects from that as well as public health effects from the Exxon Valdez that you're referring to. I really like to know who the person was so I can look up the information too.

(0:15:02.1)

AUDIENCE: I tell you, I don't know her name, but it was a lady, and the mayor, Mr. Kennon of Orange Beach, will know her name.

RESPONDENT:

Okay. All right.

(0:15:13.2)

AUDIENCE: She apparently was considered an expert. She made quite a presentation and she was giving a lot of facts and figures which were not disputed. Who is she? She's a marine toxicologist.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

(0:15:33.2)

AUDIENCE: She's not a peon here. She knows what she's talking about.

RESPONDENT: Okay.

(0:15:37.6)

AUDIENCE: She was also talking about human exposure. For instance, my grandchildren are coming, supposedly, Monday. I'm not staying here with them if it's in the air. I'm going to have to leave and probably relocate because of this. I'm just a peon here. A lot of these people are losing their entire livelihood, fishermen, hotel owners, whatever.

RESPONDENT: To continue the response to your concerns, and I understand it completely, I know that there is a lot of social work done up in Alaska. The Department of Health and Human Services, they have teams down across the Gulf of Mexico for the same purpose, for both economic and stress-type responses.

(0:16:21.9)

AUDIENCE: This is not stress. This is called health. This is called breathing, swimming...

RESPONDENT: CDC is also on the scene, and they have set out teams to do precisely this.

(0:16:33.9)

AUDIENCE: Precisely what?

RESPONDENT: To monitor the population for any incidents or any suspicion of illness. You can check out the cdc.gov website and they'll tell you what are the...

(0:16:45.9)

AUDIENCE: I'm talking about physical illness.

RESPONDENT: I'm talking about physical illness, also.

(0:16:50.9)

AUDIENCE: You're talking about stress as well?

RESPONDENT: I'm talking about stress as well. HHS has teams down for that and CDC has teams down for...these are doctors, the physicians. They've got a program going quite extensive, also.

(0:17:05.0)
AUDIENCE: That's good but you don't pat someone on the head when their house is burning down. You put the fire out.

RESPONDENT: I don't understand that.

(0:17:11.6)
AUDIENCE: You don't understand that?

RESPONDENT: I don't understand what you're trying to tell me.

(0:17:13.6)
AUDIENCE: Okay. What I'm saying is, you're talking about stress and it's...

RESPONDENT: No. I was going to give you the full spectrum from economic and socioeconomic all the way to physical illness.

(0:17:26.7)
AUDIENCE: You were talking about social workers.

RESPONDENT: Social to MDs, to doctors, to physicians.

(0:17:32.5)
AUDIENCE: Okay. Good. That's marvelous to have the entire spectrum. When you're talking about social workers, I used to be a social worker and guess what, we didn't deal with health at mass.

RESPONDENT: I'm a seafood safety guy. I'm just telling you what I've seen and what I've talked to my CDC colleagues about and my HHS colleagues about. We know that these things are ongoing.

(0:17:53.8)
AUDIENCE: It's air.

RESPONDENT: That's EPA.

(0:17:56.5)
AUDIENCE: It's metabolic.

RESPONDENT: They've talked about the EPA. The deputy administrator talked about all of that of course.

(0:18:01.0)

AUDIENCE: Good. I'm glad to hear that.

(0:18:01.0)

MODERATOR: We have one more question and we're going to wrap it up with this one last question.

(0:18:09.7)

SALLY: My name is Sally, once again. My question for you is logistics, I guess. Everyone in this room knows how bad it's going to be once it hits the beaches. My question is, are we really working as hard as we can to stop the oil from reaching the beaches? I understand a little bit about the tar balls and the difference between that and the other one. Anyway, my question is, where is the people who have the skimmers that are out there? It looks like they're ready now. Where are they putting this oil? Where is this oil going to be put? If somebody has oil, just me, if it comes in to the beach and I have this little thing of oil, where do I bring it?

MODERATOR: You don't touch it.

(0:19:11.9)

SALLY: I understand I'm not supposed to touch it, but I feel like people aren't getting the big picture here, I understand that all of you are doing what you are supposed to.

MODERATOR: We have a phone number posted up here on the wall. If you should have any tar balls or anything on the beach, these are the numbers you should call.

(0:19:33.8)

SALLY: Which one?

MODERATOR: Right there. That 866 it's a toll-free number.

(0:19:39.6)

SALLY: I've already been to a meeting. I have that number posted on my refrigerator. My thing is, I don't want it on my beach and I plan on putting something out to collect that oil before it gets to my beach. Now, I don't have the smarts that the people here have. I don't have the background that the people here have.

(0:20:00.0)

SALLY: I don't have the background that the people here have. I do understand that you can't stop me from trying to do something. Once I get that oil, I want to know where do I bring it? That's my question. I also want to know can

people salvage that oil? Can people go out there salvage that oil? That oil may belong to BP but they haven't done their job in containing it. Can it not be salvaged now? Sorry, two questions.

RESPONDENT: It's got bad stuff in it.

(0:20:43.9)

MODERATOR: Could you fill out a card for us because that's a coast guard question and an EPA question. We don't have the right experts here. That concludes our session for today. We would like to thank you very much for coming.

RESPONDENT: Why are you trying to run us off? *[0:20:59.5 inaudible]*

HARRIET: We had a question yesterday, and maybe LaDon can help with this. There seems to be a sense of frustration for people who want the necessary kind of training to go out and handle this in a safe manner. It seems to be awfully expensive. I don't believe that she's here now. But someone, I think, really needs to address some sort of training for those individuals that's not going to cost 4 of \$500, but would give them some realistic way of dealing with something if it was on their property. Maybe that's something that Sea Grant could look into, which is perhaps better information for the average person.

(0:22:01.2)

MODERATOR: Can anybody answer that? We are not trying to run you off. We didn't have any more people on the list to ask any questions, so we were going to wrap up, but we can sit here if there are more questions.

RESPONDENT: *[0:22:12.5 inaudible]*

(0:22:16.6)

MODERATOR: I apologize.

RESPONDENT: He could have talked. He was still talking and you go and try to get the mic from me.

(0:22:24.0)

MODERATOR: We are happy to stay until 12.

RESPONDENT: *[0:22:27.7 inaudible]*

LADON: Can I borrow... I've asked these folks to take two days out of their life when they've got other things that are very important as well. The reason we're having these meetings is, and the reason they've agreed, because I think we all recognize that transparency and public outreach is essential to us dealing with this issue. With that said, if any of these folks are willing

to stay and answer more questions, that's their decision. I'm not asking them to do that. Harriet I heard I was volunteered, we've approached BP through the Alabama Cooperative Extension System in the city states extension system about home owner training. We all, now if you are a waterfront home owner, there's a number over there to call for you to report an oil spill. But I live in on Fowl River. I know the waterfront home owners over there and they're not going to call anybody. They're going to be out there and if you're lucky, they'll put on a pair of those latex gloves that you buy to wash your hand and be out there cleaning up. There is a need for that for waterfront home owners. With that said, we suggest that we had a meeting with unified command two weeks ago and we have not heard anything back from them.

RESPONDENT: They're studying it (Laughs).

LADON: I'm going to pass it back on and the same applies for the facilitators, they too have been very faithful to dealing with transparency issues and if any of those folks, I'll stick around as long, I'll stay till the cows come home.

RESPONDENT: You have other panel members *[0:24:16.4 inaudible]* questions you might have had. I don't know if any other *[0:24:28.6 inaudible]*.

(0:24:35.0)

MODERATOR: You mentioned earlier that you could give a brief overview of things they should be doing if they, before it's too late for legal perspectives, do you want to give a brief...

RESPONDENT: Yes, I mean, I understand. I don't know if that's what they *[0:24:49.3 inaudible]*.

RESPONDENT: They're not in their heads (Laughs).

RESPONDENT: *[0:24:56.3 inaudible]*

(0:24:59.0)

STEPHANIE: It's not me and LaDon, it's 11:30. My name is Stephanie Showwalter. I'm the director with the Mississippi Alabama Sea Grant Legal Program. We're based at the University of Mississippi School of Law. We are academic lawyers. We do not participate in litigation. Our role is to provide neutral legal information to Sea Grant constituents to the general public. We have produced some fact sheets out there. Our role today, I know that there was much more pressing matters in this room than in our room. Our goal today was to try help people navigate the uncertainty that comes with being at the center of a disaster like this when law firms descend on you. One thing that we've been trying to tell people, just remember that our ethical roles

of lawyers say that you should not solicit clients. It is improper for a lawyer to contact you if you haven't had previous contact with their firm. If you go to a town hall meeting, or something, an event that a law firm is hosting, then you have provided their contact information and they can contact you. It's improper for them to come to your door to call you or to come to the boat docks and talk to you about that. Be cautious if an attorney or an attorney's representative contacts you. The other thing to keep in mind is that in Alabama you have two years to file a state law suits in state court for something like negligence for those state claims. You do have some time to consider your options with respect to your damages. You may wish to pursue a claim against BP to see what they have to say. You should still have time to pursue conversations with attorneys and class action lawsuits or individual lawsuits. That's what we've been trying to get out there. But there is time that you need to make sure that you consider all your options and that if you're in the claims process with BP and you start to receive documents from BP, it would be advisable to find an attorney that you're comfortable with to review those documents and make sure that you are not waiving any future rights that you might be interested in. I did not mean to hijack the panel, but I thought there might be more questions out there and so I thought I'd speak up.

AUDIENCE:

I read an editorial a while back. No dates can't remember about filling in Katrina Cut. I went to a meeting after that and I asked the question to one of the people representing Baldwin County there. How likely is that to happen? It made sense to me. Dauphin Island is a barrier island, it protects the mainland. She told me that there was actually a study by the Sea Lab that computerized study, that said that there was going to be a bunch of oil coming in through Katrina Cut. Well it was the same thing, couldn't sleep. I called John Hodar, I've talked to my priest,.. I've talked to politicians. The next morning, I get up and the governor has been down there. There's an article about filling in Katrina Cut. The lady who explained it to me at the meeting I was before said it's very expensive. Well, you know what? Let's do a lot of money up front to make a big stop rather than to just filter out all this money to these booms that are being moved around everywhere. My question is, is it likely that Katrina Cut is going to be filled in? I understand it's big, it's deep and there's a lot of sand that has to be moved.

RESPONDENT:

Louisiana is dealing with that same question. There was a meeting and I apologize if I'm repeating myself, but there was a meeting yesterday or the day before yesterday in New Orleans at the New Orleans Army Corps to talk about the six booms or six burms that were being made. I think, again, the contact for that and the Mobile district would be the ones to call in and I don't have that number off hand. But that's the Army Corps of Engineers. They are the ones handling the berm question. I know that Allen was over there for that meeting on Tuesday afternoon at the district

over there. I finally understand that all six of those berms have been approved which clears way for BP to have to pay for those.

(0:29:57.2)

AUDIENCE:

Well and good and I thank you for that and for giving me another place to go to. My concern is Mobile Bay and all the estuaries and all the little fingers of water and wetlands that make this such a thriving place. My thing is I want to solve the problem here. I want to write in bold letters, solved the problem. Because I appreciate each one of you guys coming up. I don't want you to feel like we're shooting the messenger, because I don't want to shoot the messenger. I want to get to the person, or I want people to starting to think how are we going to create a problem-solving force? You guys, you're doing more and above than anybody would expect you to. I don't want you to think that I'm not appreciative of what you're doing. I just want embolden across everybody's forehead: solve the problem. How are we going to solve the problem? Who is the most likely person that can solve the problem? I can tell you we can talk about the fish kills, I mean we're preaching to the choir here. We got people who make their livelihood off the... what's breathing in the estuaries right now? What's in the wetlands right now? They understand it. I don't think the people making decisions understand it. The people with the power to make the decisions understand it. Therefore I want to solve the problem. Let's see who we need to talk to. Who do we need to go to next? Thank you. Thank you truly for coming here and putting this on.

BUCK:

Well, thank you. I think the best way to answer that question is, and that is I can only speak for myself so I volunteered to come down here, a lot of it because I have a high level of trust in LaDon and we partner with Sea Grant on a lot of activities. I know the biggest question a lot of people have, is what the heck is going on and how do I get any answer for that? At least in my position within NOAA I have the capability to talk to the director of NOAA the conference call with them every morning at 7 o'clock in the morning, and talking about what's going on. It's only been recently that they have been now reaching out to people who are working in this region. So they can get it and put, so they want to know. I wanted to come here, and where I'm going to Grand Island later on tonight to do the same thing, is to get that, where are the questions? I mean sometimes they get in Washington, and it'll lose a sense of what's happening on the ground. My purpose of at least of my being here and I'm sure I'm speaking for the other folks too, so that we can take that back top our senior leadership which we do have access to and to tell them these are the things people are not hearing the solutions to. How could we be clear about it. Not everybody has Internet or even is that... so we need to find some way to communicate in a way that people understand. Not in some kind of scientific mumbo jumbo, but actually speaking in plain English, so people would understand what's going on. Like LaDon said, this is not going to be the only time we have one of these things. This is going to be an

ongoing process that may last for years and years. I don't really know from environmental and looking at the whole ecosystem, but our responsibility as public servants, is take the questions that you have and not just pass them off and go on to the next meeting, but to take them and get those patterns so we can start thinking ahead as things change. We are in a dynamic situation. As we get those answers, we know this are the kind of things people want to find out and get that answer to them as quickly as humanly possible. Because I understand that this is a very frustrating thing that none of us have quite frankly, none of us has ever had to do. Unlike the Exxon Valdez that was a one-time stall that was right there. They knew how much there was there. This one, your hopes are up, your hopes are down. It's not a healthy situation. From just a trying to live day to day stand point. One of the things we can do is if the federal government is to give you all the information we know, and if we don't know we'll tell you. We just don't know, but we're trying to find that out. That's why I'm here.

HARRIET:

I think too, Jim and I have spent 42 years of our life in the marsh in Mississippi and we know how tied we are to it and to the organisms that we work with. But I think what people don't understand at levels above us, particularly for the fishing communities and Louisiana and *[0:35:36.9 inaudible]* is how intertwined people's lives are and how dependent they are. It's everything. It's their livelihood, it's their life, it's their socialization. It's everything to them. It's hard to convey that. But at the local level, we do care and we do try to take your worries and concerns to those who can help, maybe perhaps help with those fears and the anxiety and the unknown. We feel it, too. It's hard to think I've driven the same road for 42 years, and it's beautiful. I go down Davis Bayou to the laboratory and Jim and I can't bear the thought of seeing that covered in oil.

JIM:

We were all very concerned, of course. You know we spent our lives studying this, our environment here. Our local marine environment here. This has been our life as well, and we feel how you feel. We're doing everything we possibly can. I think we can assure you that everyone in this table is doing everything they possibly can. It's not only our jobs but it's our lives, too.

AUDIENCE:

You hit it on the head. It's not you all. You all live here, this is your life. If I was to ask you all, who are your bosses that you answer to? I'd get about six different answers in some different bosses. You ask them, they have about six different bosses. It trickles up. They don't know this. They don't understand. I worked for FEMA during Katrina. They sent these people from up North down here to run this thing. They didn't understand a fit about our culture. They couldn't communicate with the people down here, is why we have so much of a problem in Katrina. We are having the same problem now. They don't understand. That's it, thank you. (Applause).

KEN:

I think being a meteorologist, first and foremost, we said this at the governor's press conference yesterday. It was a lot of talk about all and that was the big concentration here. You can tell I was kind of last to speak here, but we better for hurricane seasons as well. Because you saw our forecast. It's going to be busy guys. I'm not kidding. I mean, all the parameters say it's going to be one of the busiest that we've had for a long time... The key take-away is, let's be ready for hurricane season. The bottom line is, don't expect the size of the oil to impact the hurricanes. We saw Katrina, I was in

[0:38:59.6 inaudible] for Katrina. We didn't have a TV actually. We didn't even know that was going on in New Orleans it was pretty interesting. We had to get a little radio outside. It was no power and no signal. It was interesting... the bottom line is there could be some oil in the storm surge. That's our most vulnerable part we have to go off what will be in there?... That's the key point is the track. The key point of this is the track. If you have a hurricane that hits Western Louisiana, we are going to have an onshore flow. You are going to have onshore flow with that oil. That's going to impact those. That oil will be blown in... You could have oil in the storm surge and that's salt water absolutely. The other factor is if you have a hurricane hit further to the East over the pan of Florida. You could have offshore flow that could actually blow all the oil out. It's going to depend on the track where the oil's going to go... Yes, that's a key takeaway, too. There's a lot of unknowns with this. But I can tell you, where ever the surge goes you could have oil in that surge absolutely. We got to look at it. Because we do not expect, like I said no track difference, probably no intensity difference because there's oil. It's going to be turned up pretty big...

RESPONDENT:

Time is running out and nobody knows except us right here... I mean we're circled up by people who feel better *[0:40:32.0 inaudible]* nobody else is feeling that urgency. People who make the decisions without the power. Tom, you are exactly right and I'm going to tell you , you nailed it. You nailed exactly... and I guess right now, we have *[0:40:48.4 inaudible]* in America should have a sense of emergency.

(0:40:53.0)

MODERATOR:

Is there anyone else who has a question? If no one else has a question, I would like to thank everyone for attending. If you have questions, write them down. If you have solutions write those down, too. You have my email address and send them to me.

END OF AUDIO.

General Session

Biloxi, Miss., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

PRAYER IS NOT ON THE TRANSCRIPTS

(0:01:34.3)

LADON:

My name is LaDon Swann, along with you I would like to offer deepest condolences to the family of 11 workers who died on the Deepwater Horizon. I'm the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. Sea Grant has worked in Coastal Alabama for 36 years. We're here to help coastal communities for applied research, education, extension and outreach. Two weeks ago we hosted a small team of Alaskans who shared their first hand experiences with the Valdez spill with groups of coastal constituents in Mississippi and Alabama. Today's forum builds off those meetings. It drives in the knowledge and experiences of professionals from over 20 federal state agencies, research universities, private sector and nonprofit organizations. Plans are all ready underway for the next phase of public outreach programs and we welcome your input. Before hearing from a few federal agencies that are on the frontline of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill I would like to share a few of my concerns that many of you may also have. I worry that our coastal heritage we've enjoyed for so long will be changed forever. I worry that the damage to our coastal and marine environment with which our lives are intertwined may not be repaired in our lifetime. A response to this technological disaster as individuals and organizations will be the true test of our character. Today's forum is certainly calm in the deep, visceral emotions that we all feel. What we do promise is compassion, honesty and respect. We know each of you; we treat the professionals here today the same way. Before moving to the five stations prepared for you, I want to thank everyone involved in organizing these forums. The experts will try to do their best to answer your questions. The facilitators are responsible for ensuring this meeting is conducted in a professional manner and my Sea Grant who have never refused to whatever it takes to serve. With that said, I would like to introduce Buck Sutter with NOAA who is going to introduce Dr. Larry Robinson of the Department of Commerce.

BUCK:

Thank you, LaDon, I appreciate that very much. Sea Grant and NOAA are in a very close partnership. This will be the second of a series of meetings that we've had following on from the meetings. We're dealing folks from Alaska. The oil spill still isn't capped yet. I was in Ocean Springs almost a month ago it seems like. Probably a lot of you folk were at that same meeting. We we're hopeful by this time it would be capped. Obviously we're still here. It is important to note that the federal agencies with the coast and EPA and NOAA and certainly the state agencies that we work so

closely with are going to be here until the last drop of oil is cleaned up off the beach. However long that takes, we're going to do what it takes. To show how important this is, Dr. Larry Robison who now is the new instant undersecretary for NOAA, he's the number two person to Dr. Lubchenco; he has been onboard for the whole three weeks. Out of those three weeks he and I have spent a lot of time together. I got to know him pretty well. I have a tremendous amount of respect for him, his wisdom, his calm demeanor. We're really fortunate to have someone who's leading NOAA in a time like this. Both he and Dr. Lubchenco are professional scientist. Right now we have hundreds of assets here, scientist, oceanographers; we have several vessels out there that I'm sure Dr. Robinson will mention. Please help me welcome Dr. Robinson here this morning. Thank you, Sir.

LARRY:

Good morning everyone. Thanks, Buck for that introduction and everyone who have come in. My colleagues at Sea Grant for organizing these series of meetings to keep the public informed about the things that we are doing. I'm not new to Sea Grant. I served as a campus Sea Grant coordinator at Florida A&M University since 1997. My tenure was only disrupted when I was sworn in as the assistant secretary a few weeks ago. I really understand Sea Grant and I really understand the importance of the extension and outreach work that it does primarily based upon my personal experiences in Florida over the past 13 years or so. The Sea Grant is one of those prime examples of a State Federal partnership that soon will be emanated by others in federal sector. It really sends home a point and that is we don't have and we can't get to all of the answers without the involvement of the broader scientific community and in fact the general public as well. That's why we are here. That's I'm here to listen and hear from the citizens who have been impacted by this unprecedented event in the history of this nation with regard to environmental catastrophes. I also would like to let the families of the loving persons who lost their lives in the explosion. Know that we think of them every day. The 12,800 employees of NOAA working in the Gulf of Mexico and those around the country, we all send our deepest condolences. NOAA is the scientific resource of the unified command and is responsible for coordinated and scientific weather and biological responses. NOAA's experts have been assisting with the response from the very beginning of the spill. Within two and a half hours we issued our first forecast of the trajectory of the oil. We've been involved from the beginning. Offices throughout the agency have mobilized and hundreds of NOAA personnel are dedicating themselves to assist. Over the past few weeks NOAA has provided twenty four seven scientific support to the United States Coastguard in its role as the federal on-scene coordinator. Both on-scene and throughout our Seattle operation center. The NOAA-wide effort include daily trajectories of spilled oil, information management, over flight observation and mapping weather and river flow forecast, shoreline and risk assessment and oceanographic modeling support. I'm not entirely new to this region and

some of you might know, I have spent the last 10 years directing NOAA's Environmental Cooperative Science Center that has looked at science ecological issues in Northwest Florida as well as right here in this region, the Mississippi at the Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve. I have a special sensitivity to the types of systems you have here and the vulnerability to the threats of the oil and the byproducts thereof. I want to give you a few updates of some items that NOAA is doing that give us a broader view of what we do at the agency. Some of these I'm pretty sure you talk about more in these breakout sessions. As I said we are primarily the sore for the oil spill trajectories showing the predicted trajectory of the oil slick. Where it is now, we're trying to anticipate where it's going. You all heard a lot about part of the oil slick being entrained in loop current. We still continue to track oil that may have been there. Some of you know that Northern has broken off but we're still monitoring that situation in the event that it re-establishes itself. One of the major concerns about this oil slick is the flow rate, how much oil has been released since the beginning of this incident. One of our scientist lead, he commands one of the two groups of the National Incident Command Flow Rate Technical Group to try to get a more realistic number of how much oil has been released in the Gulf. Those numbers as you heard were revised up last week primarily due to the work of that group. On May the 24th, Secretary of Commerce, Gary Locke declared a fishery disaster in the Gulf of Mexico due to the economic impact on commercial and recreational fishing from the ongoing Deepwater Horizon spill. The affected areas include the State of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama. Determination was made under the provision of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. In particular with regard to requests from Louisiana and Mississippi based upon the loss of access of many commercial fishermen to their normal livelihood. We also are responsible or the fisheries closure and seafood safety in particular seafood safety in conjunction with our partners at EPA. We are constantly monitoring visual signs of the slick as well as trajectories of where the slick will go. We have just recently updated the fishery closure are. Right now it comprises about 24% of the Gulf of Mexico's exclusive economic zone. One of the major things that we do is the coordination of a natural resource damage assessment. That is a major element of what we do, what the Department of Interior as a federal co-trustee as well as co-trustees in five states and representative from the responsible part of BP. The focus apparently is to assemble existing data on resources in that habitat and collect baseline and pre-spill impact data. Data on all resource and habitat are also being collected. This effort as Buck talked about to clean up these impacted areas is going to be a critical part of this damage assessment. I want to point out as many of you here, many of you all ready know, this is a legal process and there are some claims we have to pay pretty close attention to. One of the most important things is having these baseline data, knowing what the system look like prior to impact. Last but not the least, that's one of the reason we are here is the socioeconomic and

environmental impact. The impact on the ecosystem is certainly tremendous but the impact on the lives of people is just as significant. NOAA is working aggressively with other agencies and nonfederal scientist to understand where oil is on the surface and below the surface and to evaluate the environmental impact of both the spill and on any mitigation efforts that might be implemented. To close as Buck said I want to ensure you that we not relent in our efforts to protect the livelihoods of Gulf Coast residents and to mitigate the environmental impact of the spill. Thank you for allowing me to give a few words this morning. I'm going to be around for the rest of this workshop and hopefully I have a chance to interact with many of you during that timeframe. Thank you very much.

(0:15:07.4)

LADON:

Next I would like to introduce Commander Bob Brady with the United States Coastguard. Dr. Brady is in Mobile with the Incident Command and would like to give you an opportunity... Commander Brady.

BOB:

Thank you sir. Captain Dreiling couldn't be here today. He has some competing demands so I'm going to take his place. I'm a Mobile resident. I've lived there for 17 years. I'm feeling as bad as you all are. I want to give you an idea of the overview of the command structure. I'll give you an idea of our response objectives and strategies we're employee and the tactics that we're using to reach those objectives. The overall command structure is the National Incident Commander Admiral Thad Allen. You've probably seen him on TV a number of times. He probably wishes he had but on May 25th he was supposed to retire. He is no longer the commandant of the coastguard but he has stayed on as the incident commander. Then new have the area command Admiral Landry. She's the area commander, the overall for this area and then we're broken down into three unified commands. There's Houston, that's where they doing the subsea dispersants and source control. Houma, Louisiana primarily responsible for Louisiana and the offshore skimming response operations. There is unified command in Mobile. The unified commands are made up of federal state and the responsible party, BP. Some of the federal presence there, the Coastguard, Department of Interior, Environmental Protection Agency; the states, we have contingence from Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. We also have a number of nongovernmental organizations, BP and national guards there. The Incident Command post in Mobile has about 1600 people working there roughly 14 hours a day. Of course our response objective is to allow no oil to make it to the shoreline. I shouldn't have said, that's real military. What we have is the area contingency plan. We're following the area contingency plan and putting boom up primarily to protect the inland areas, the beaches, of course the environmentally sensitive areas. The strategy is primarily to fight it off shore with the off shore skimming. You've probably seen the burns of the oil on the surface. As best we can, we're trying to fight it out away from the shoreline. The

next thing we want to do is keep it off the shoreline. We've set up booming operations. After that the boom is setup in a way to protect the most environmentally sensitive areas. The next fallback would be to keep it out of the bays. Once the oil does arrive, is to quickly get in there and clean it up. The tactics we're using, we have roughly a million feet of boom. Probably 990,000 or so is deployed in any one time with probably about 100,000 back for repair. Conducting over flights, there are a number of agencies conducting them. In Mississippi it's the National Guard, Air National Guard, there's the Coastguard, NOAA and the Civil Air Patrol. We're using different tactics. Primarily we're over flying the boom to ensure that there are any rips, tears, any damage to it, anything that is sinking. We're also doing aerial surveillance off the coast to track the oil. Trying to get the skimmers in the best position to fight that. You may have heard about some of the boom being transferred to different areas. It does move around from time to time to try to put it where we need it the most. Right now again, we're trying to fight it off shore as best we can. Once it does arrive, we have what we call the SCAA team, the shore cleanup and assessment team, when the oil does actually arrive on the beaches we deploy the SCAA team and they get out there and clean that up. I hope that gives you an overall idea of what our objectives are and what we're trying to do.

(0:20:49.9)

LADON:

Next Stan Meiburg who is the acting director for region four EPA out of Atlanta. After that I'm going to turn it over a good Ann Weaver with NOAA's Gulf Coast Service Center. She will then explain the process for the rest of the morning. I appreciate your attention.

STAN:

LaDon thank you very much for the chance to be here this morning. Thanks to all of you for being here this morning as well. What I want to do this morning is to talk a little about EPA's role in the response for the BP oil spill together with our federal state and local government partners. To satisfy one element of bureaucratic clarity, EPA is divided up into regions. Region four which I'm the acting regional administrator covers the states of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida in addition to five other states to the north. The states of Louisiana and Texas are covered by EPA region six. We coordinate very closely with EPA region six in having a common one EPA approach to the cleanup in response to the spill. What I want to do today is to provide an overview of EPA's activities here in the affected Gulf Coast region and summarize some of our primary environmental objective. I want to join with the other members of the panels first though in extending our heartfelt and deep condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and those who were injured in the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon. Of all the tragedies that this event occurs those are felt most keenly, we're very aware of that. I also want to extend our concern to all of the citizens of the Gulf Coast whose lives

have been adversely affected by this terrible spill. We recognize that these are effects that may last for a very a long time. They're going to require the best efforts of all of us in the government as well as those in the private sector. I do also want to acknowledge all the work by our fellow federal state and local partners. I want to thank them for their ongoing efforts especially the Coastguard who is the lead federal agency in this response and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, both of whom are strong partners with EPA. I would also note that I want to acknowledge the work of the Gulf of Mexico Program whose director Bryon Griffith is here in the audience today who may be known to many of you who work in these circle. Bryon's group has been very helpful to EPA across the Gulf Coast as well as other agencies in providing information and support. I do think it's fair to say that the BP oil spill is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. More than 24,000 federal responders including hundreds of EPA staff are focused on this crisis. EPA has integrated its staff into the Unified Area Command that Commander Brady talked about as well as the Incident Command post. Terry Stilman and Capt. Larry Cseh from Unified Command Mobile are here today and will be working in one of the breakout sessions to provide additional detailed information on our deployment as well as our air and water sampling. My purpose here this morning is to give a brief overview of our air and water sample activities and to discuss EPA's role and actions on oil disbursements which have been the subject of a lot of discussion. First, on in air quality monitor, we in the states of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida operate a network of fixed air quality monitoring stations in the Gulf Coast region. We've also especially deployed a fair amount of monitoring and sampling equipment in response to this crisis. We also have deployed a twin-engine aircraft we call the ASPECT aircraft which can help to detect in real-time chemical constituents associated with the oil spill as well as to monitor for a particular matter over in situ burns. We've also brought down two mobile vans. We call them the TAGA busses, Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer for those of you who are into acronyms. These buses are capable of doing real-time sampling and analysis and could detect a range of chemical constituents at very low levels. These have been operating across the Gulf. In fact one was operating between Stennis and Perdido Key yesterday. We're also having our responders monitor for particular matter, hydrogen sulfide and total volumes of organic compound associated with oil as well as the in situ burns. We're also monitoring for ozone levels and testing for specific volatile organic compounds including benzene, toluene, ethyl benzene, xylene and naphthalene. The good new that I have to report to you this morning is that to date our onshore air sampling has not identified levels of air pollutants above what we usually see in the Mississippi, Alabama, Florida Gulf Coast for this time of year. That's the good news. We are going to continue to monitor the situation and to investigate reports of odor or other unusual events. Turning down to the waterside, EPA

teams have conducted near shore and estuarine water monitoring activities along the Gulf Coast for some time. About three or four weeks ago, we did baseline monitoring to establish baseline conditions for both the near shore and estuarine water quality and sediment sample. We're continuing to watch the situation especially in light of the reports yesterday for impacts along the Alabama and Mississippi Coast. We are beginning today to do additional sampling and testing in near shore and estuarine waters to more fully assess water quality. We've been doing this in the Louisiana areas that were impacted first as well. We're extending this over the Mississippi and Alabama in light of the impacts reported yesterday. This sampling will enable us to analyze water and sediment samples to detect chemicals that may be found in oil as well as the dispersion that have been used in the oil spill response. Now turning to the dispersion themselves, this has been an interesting event. In responding to this spill, the government has had to make some very tough decisions including the use dispersant chemicals to help breakup the oil and speed its natural degradation. That is the objective. To enable the oil to be broken down and dispersed by bacteria that live in the Gulf. One of the advantages that we have in the Gulf as compared to Alaska is simply the temperature which enables this biological to occur more rapidly. When this crisis occurred, the Federal On-Scene Coordinator granted BP the authorization to use approved dispersants on the oil on the surface of the water in an effort to mitigate against shoreline and marsh impact of the oil spill on fisheries, nurseries, wet lands and other sensitive environment. These dispersants contain a mixture of chemicals that cause the oil to break up and to form an emulsion. I've heard some people compare it to salad dressing; I'm not sure about that. It does give you that same image that helps it break down and be decomposed more readily when it works properly. What this does is to form a cloud or a plume of oil droplets that area suspended in the water that can mix in the water column. Due to the unprecedented nature of this event, BP has used dispersants in ways that we have not seen before both in quantity and technique. One of the things that the government authorized BP to do was to test a new approach involve injecting some of the dispersants at the site of the plume 5000 below the surface. We've been very concerned about this because it is new. We've been analyzing information together with NOAA from each of these subsurface applications to determine whether this application should be continued. Since this began, the information we have is that dissolved oxygen levels in the biological test we've been doing have been within normal ranges which has been encouraging. It is clear that the use dispersants has environmental trade off. This is not like you have good answer or a bad answer, you have a number of solutions that are all not so good and you have to choose among them. We know that the surface use of dispersants in particular decreases the environment by the spill to shorelines but there has been a lot of concern about the volume that has been used in this incident. Normally the dispersions will breakdown over the course of a

couple of weeks but the long term effects on aquatic life are simple unknown which is why we and the coastguard are requiring BP to implement a sample and monitoring plan to detect any adverse environmental effect that may outweigh the benefits. We are still very concerned about the things that we do not know. Because of this EPA and the coastguard have issued an order to BP to eliminate, if at all operationally possible, all surface dispersant applications. As of now our data show that some surface applications have not had an adverse ecological impact and that's good news. We are continuing to direct BP to find alternative, less toxic dispersant. BP has argued to date that one was not available. We have determined that that analysis was inadequate and have asked them to continue to push on that point. In addition EPA is performing its own scientific verification of the data that BP presented. We are conducting a separate independent scientific analysis to determine whether less toxic alternatives are available at the needed volumes. For the moment, EPA and the coastguard will continue to use under sea dispersant especially now during the operation where they're sawing off the vent. To use undersea dispersant at a maximum of 15,000 gallons per day provided that it is accompanied by the rigorous testing that I just described which they will be doing throughout the duration of the cap procedure they have underway today. The administrator of EPA, Lisa Jackson has made it clear that BP needs to continue to abide by this May 26 directive to keep surface spraying of dispersant to an absolute minimum. There was an uptake on this. We have told BP that should not be repeated. EPA continues to demand as well that further analysis be conducted on other options as EPA continues to apply its own science to this issue and EPA and the coastguard have reserved the right and reserve the authority to discontinue the use of underwater dispersants if we have any indication that this is causing adverse environmental effects. One of the areas I would note that EPA is pursuing future research and development on dispersants. Historically EPA has had a pretty modest oil spill research and development program. It's fair to say that events over the past several weeks have suggested that more is needed. The administration has requested supplemental funds for dispersant research associated with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. If they are appropriated we plan to engage other institutions who have knowledge and expertise to assist us in this additional research. Let me close by returning to the overall theme that we recognize that this BP oil spill is a massive and potentially unprecedented environmental disaster. We are also aware that it has all ready affected many lives here in the Gulf Coast region. EPA is going to continue to work alongside the many federal and state agencies to implement emergency oil spill response and to oversee BP's activities. We're now preparing for example for potential support role in shoreline assessment and cleanup operations and we will continue to do sample and analysis to prioritize sensitive resources and determine the needs for cleanup and recommend strategies and provide full support to the coastguard and the unified

command in monitoring potential environmental and public health concerns. The final message I would simply say is to echo that of the other panelist which is we are here for the duration, we are here for the long term. We recognize the seriousness of this activity in this event and our own obligation to meet your need in responding. Thank you very much.

ANN:

Good morning everyone. My name is Ann Weaver. I'm with the Gulf office of the NOAA Coastal Service Center. I also am a resident of this area and as concerned as many of you about the issues. I'm going to be the lead facilitator today for the breakout sessions and I'm going to give you the directions for how this is going to proceed. We are going to record each of the breakout sessions so that we will be able to make transcripts available to you for the questions that were asked and the questions that were answered during this forum. We are going to take a short after I finish. After that break we're going to have five breakout rooms that are around the hall. They're all labeled so you can tell what they are. One is fisheries and wildlife, another monitor data, one business and personal finance, one technological disaster and mental health and the last is legal perspectives. We will have experts in each of those rooms available to answer your questions. We will also have four facilitators in each room. They'll all be dressed in these lovely green vest like me. They will be coordinating the question and answer sessions in each of the rooms. The way that it will work is if you have a question you will let one of the facilitators know. We'll have microphone in the middle of the rooms like this and a panel of experts at the table. The facilitator will let you know when it's your turn to go to the microphone. You can approach the microphone. You will have two minutes to ask your question. The facilitator will warn when you only have 30 seconds left if you have not finished your question quite yet. You will get to ask one question. You can ask it to a specific panel member or you can let everyone at the panel address your answer. You will have the opportunity to ask one follow on question. You will be asked to sit down. If you are interested in asking another question to take your turn in the back of the line. We have several ground rules that we request you follow while in the breakout rooms. You are welcome to wander from any of the breakout rooms; you can come and go as you are interested. The ground rules will be the same in each room. We have a lot of unknown. The panel members will tell you what they can and what they know. If they don't know please accept that as their answer that they don't know. You are welcome to write your question and your contact information on a card that your facilitators will have available and we will get back to you with the appropriate answer. We ask that you please silent all of your telephones when you're in the rooms and you respect your fellow participants and listen to what they have to say so there is only one person talking at a time. Please wait until your facilitators acknowledge you and tell you it's your turn before you shout a question out so only one person is speaking at a time. Those are our ground rules

they are posted in each of the rooms. We're going to take a 15-minute break while all the panel members and facilitators gather in their rooms. You are welcome to go into each and every room or stay for the remaining time in the room that you are most interested in. there are signs outside the rooms to direct you to what the subject matter in each of the rooms are. You should each have a blue sheet that tells you who your facilitators are and who the speakers are in each of the rooms. With that, unless LaDon has anything else... We also have two more meetings that will have a similar format in Mobile. One is from 6:00 to 9:00 tonight at the Mobile Civic Center and another tomorrow morning at the same location from 9:00 to noon in Mobile. If you don't get an opportunity to ask all the questions you want to ask today please feel free to attend one of those meetings as well. With that we're going to take a 15-minute break. We will reconvene at 10:00 in the breakout rooms. Thank you.

END OF AUDIO.

General Session

Mobile, Ala., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:00:00.0)

MODERATOR: *(0:00:00.0 audio unclear)* is Cathy Jordan, with the latest in prayer.

CATHY:

May we pray. Creator God whose spirit moved over the phase of the waters. Who gathered the seas into their places and directed the course of the rivers. Who sent rain upon the earth that it should bring forth life? We praise you for the gift of nature. Father it is through nature that we know you best. The blue, green energy at the shifting ocean waters. Strong wind and penetrating sun. This is your creation. We see and experience this natural world and we are thankful. You brought forth life onto this globe and entrusted us for the care of your creation. You made all things and have woven them together in an intricate tapestry of life. Teach us to respect the fragile balance of life and to care for all of the gifts of your creation. Help us to honor, respect and protect this life giving resource through our lifestyles. Show us how are everyday actions impact the earth and be able to recognize the consequences of our misuse. Deliver us from squandering resources, abusing our companion species and polluting the habitats that we share. Deliver us from the *(0:01:28.2 audio unclear)* of imagining ourselves free from the fade of your whole creation. Give us true reverence for the earth as your creation. Teach, encourage and strengthen us as we might be good examples of the wise stewardship of our marine resources. Today we come together with you in one another with the conviction that you have called us to love and to restore the earth. We are called in to covenant. Your covenant of faithfulness and love extends to the whole of creation. We pray for the scientist and the technicians as they work to resolve the oil lake and the issues surrounding it. With your loving kindness comfort those whose lives are affected by this oil lake. Protect the wildlife, the wetlands and the beaches. We pray for the healing of the earth that protects and presents our future generations with the joys of your creation. We glorify your name and praise you for we make this prayer through your name. Amen.

(0:02:44.2)

LADON: My name is LaDon Swann and I know all of us would like to offer our deepest condolences to the 11 lives that were lost on the Deepwater Horizon and the director of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. Sea Grant has a 30-year history serving coastal communities through applied research, education, outreach and extension. Two weeks ago, we hosted a group of Valdez or Alaskan colleagues who came down and shared their experiences with the Valdez oil spill with a group of

coastal constituents in Mississippi and Alabama. Today's forum builds off that those meetings enrolls on the knowledge and experiences professionals from 21 federal and state agencies, research, universities, private sector and nonprofit organizations. Plans are already under way for the next phase of this essential public outreach and we welcome your input. Before hearing from our federal agencies who are sitting at the table who are on the front lines of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill I would like to share with you a few of my concerns and may be you share you share those as well. I worry that the coastal heritage we have enjoyed for so long will be changed forever. I worry that the damage to our coastal and marine environment with which our lives are intertwined may not be repaired in our lifetimes. A response to this technological disaster as individuals and organizations will be a true test of our character. Today's forum would certainly not calm the extreme visceral emotions that we feel. What we do promise is compassion, honesty and respect. Each of you who will treat professionals here tonight the same way. Before moving to the five stations prepared for you I want to thank everyone involved in organizing these forums. The experts which rather best answer your questions all that the *(0:05:09.6 audio unclear)* dressed in green, who are responsible from ensuring that these stations are conducted in professional manner. I also want to thank my Sea Grant staff who would never refuse to do whatever it takes to serve the public. What we are going to do is we are going to take 10 minutes and allow several federal agents to share where they are and what their role is in responding to the port of *(0:05:46.4 audio unclear)* spill. First person I would like to call on is Commander Bob Brady, United States Coast Guard; he is located here in Mobile.

BOB:

Good Evening. Captain Drieling is actually the incident commander. As you can imagine he is kind of short on time so he sent as his representative. I am a reserve officer. I have lived in Mobile for 17 years. I am a Mobile resident now and I have done various things within the Coast Guard started out in aviation. I went to the strike teams that are also here. It is kind of a Hazmat teams. I am actually over in sector New Orleans, and that is my reserve job over there. I have been activated for this response. I just wanted to take some time to let you know what our command structure is. What are our response objectives are. Our strategies and then the tactics we plan on employing. The National *(0:06:57.5 audio unclear)* commander is Admiral Thad Allen, you have probably seen him on TV and then below him we have an area command which is Admiral Mary Landry she is also been on the TV quite a bit. Then we have three unified commands. There is one in Houston that is responsible for the dispersions and what occurs out on the source of the spill and there is the unified command in Houma, Louisiana, primarily responsible for offshore skimming and the state of Louisiana. There is the unified command in Mobile which is responsible for Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. The

unified command is not just the Coast Guard. On the federal side there is the Coast Guard, the EPA, Department of Interior. The states all have a representative there Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. There is the BP who is the responsible party and a number of nine governmental agencies in the National Guard. All totaled right there is about 7,600 people working roughly fourteen hours a day and it is a 24-hour day operation. Response objectives, we are going to have a little trouble meeting this one but the objective was for no oil to reach the shore. It has been a little bit some as come on shore on Petit Bois some has come on shore at Dauphin Island but not in large quantities and so far they have been able to clean it up for a week quickly. Our strategies we have been employing right now we are trying to attack the oil offshore as far offshore as we possibly can with the large sea-going skimmers and then ensure as it approaches the shore we are trying to get them with the smallest skimmers. From there the different states is slightly different tactics on where they want the oil to go, but they are all somewhat similar and they are following their area contingency plans that they designed in the way ahead of the spill. Mississippi's idea is to funnel it to the beaches. I started out in Mississippi, so I know their plan a little bit better, but Alabama I believe is a similar and bring the oil in the barrier islands and then they clean it up from there. The ideal thing is for it to never hit the barrier islands, skimming off before it gets there, but the idea is you get it on the beach and clean the beach fairly easily. The last thing we want to protect the sensitive areas in the marshes above all. Right now we have about 990,000 feet of boom. We are doing daily over flights to try and locate the oil. I was fortunate enough to go on the Mississippi National Guard Flight. The aircraft in about an hour's time they overflew the Mobile area. We overflew all the boom and with forward looking infrared and TV that can magnify it. We could look down in all the boom, identify which boom was broken, which boom may have deflated which boom was in somehow in need of repair. They set that up for repair, and then we get out and take care of that. Several flights a day aerial surveillance 30-50 miles offshore, the next thing we have our shoreline clean up and assessment teams, and when oil does hit the beach these teams go and they begin to clean up the oil. It goes to various sources. Some of it will go be disposed of and that is still a little bit of an issue on where it is actually going to end up, and I do not have that answer right now. Some of it goes to the lab to be analyzed so that they are sure that it is actually coming from the spill. Again, just to kind of review it, the idea is to get it as far offshore as we can but if it does hit the shore we are prepared to combat it. That is about it. Thank you very much.

(0:11:55.1)

LADON:

We are trying to keep this brief. I want you to understand that we are going to have breakouts, and they are scattered around. Ann Weaver our chief *(0:12:02.9 audio unclear)* will discuss where those are in just a

second. Our next speaker is homegrown. Bob Dickey lives on Dauphin Island. I have known him since I have moved here in 2000. I have been here 10 years, Bob, so I call it the FDA shellfish seafood labs, seafood safety lab, he will correct me here in a second. Dr. Dickey is going to talk about FDA's role in responding in oil spill in terms of seafood safety.

BOB DICKEY:

Good evening, everyone. My name is Bob Dickey. I have lived on Dauphin Island for about 24 years. I am currently the director of the FDA seafood science and technology lab down there. For the past 8 months I have been in Washington on temporary duty when the Deepwater Horizon blew on April 20, I was in Washington, and I was enrolled to generate to help the organize the FDA response test .The FDA's role in the response to the Deepwater Horizon tragedy is seafood safety. FDA operates safety programs for all fish and fishery products under the provisions of the Federal Food and Drug Cosmetic Act and in that role we have reached out to our federal colleagues and to our state colleagues. We have been coordinating very tightly with NOAA, with EPA, with CDC in developing a protocol for the assurance of seafood safety when seafood fishery areas are reopened. The process is as fairly straightforward, there is a lot of detail and in between the lines materials that have to be worked out between the different agencies so that we operate seamlessly. However, the general sequence of the actions that will take place in terms of seafood safety are that once the oil is detected over an area of fishery, fisheries are automatically shut down by NOAA. They have the legislative, the statutory authority to do that. When the oil is no longer detected in the water and on top of the water then the agencies will go in and start sampling the seafood and running them through a variety of different in analysis to assure that there are no residues of petroleum left in the seafood tissues. Then they will be considered for reopening by NOAA in consultation with the FDA and EPA to assure seafood safety. The FDA has also implemented a surveillance program to assure that no tainted product is currently on the market and that testing will begin very shortly. There is no reason for us to believe that there is contaminated seafood on the market at this time because we have seen no commercial landing of seafood from areas that have been closed by NOAA. Just to give you quick short picture of the extraordinary coordination effort that is taking place between these different agencies from Washington and into the field. Every one of our agencies have representatives at the National Incident Command Center in Fort McNair, Maryland. This is the Coast Guard's national incident command center where Thad Allen is located. Of course we have our field operation centers. We also have representatives from each of our agencies present in those locations as well so that we coordinate bring in the science, social sciences, the wildlife sciences, the seafood sciences to assist the Coast Guard in their response activities. We can go into this in a little bit more detail if you have any questions on

seafood safety issues that might concern you. I will be in the Wildlife and Fishery session and we will be glad to address them then. Thank you.

(0:16:33.7)

LADON:

Can you hear okay? Mike Shelton. Our next speaker is Stan Meiburg. He is the acting director for region 4 EPA in Atlanta.

STAN:

LaDon, thank you very much for the introduction and for those of you who may not be versed in all the arcane aspects with how government agencies are organized. EPA is divided into 10 regions and Region 4, for which I am the acting regional administrator, covering eight states including the states of Florida, Mississippi and Alabama. On this particular spill we worked very closely with our colleague agency Region 6, which covers Louisiana and Texas. What I want to do tonight is provide you with an overview of EPA's response activities here in the affected Gulf Coast region and to summarize some of our environmental objectives, but I do want to echo what LaDon said at the beginning first of all and to extend our deepest condolences to families who lost loved ones during the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon and to those who were injured in the explosion of the horizon as well as to express our concern for all of the citizens of the Gulf Coast whose lives had been adversely affected by the spill. We realized that the effects of the spill can last for years and that will require the best efforts of all of us in government and in the private sector to make sure that these are addressed. I also want to acknowledge the work of our fellow federal, state and local partners in helping to combat these spills for their ongoing efforts. As Commander Brady noted, the Coast Guard is the lead federal agency that is a formal designation under the Oil Pollution Act. The Coast Guard as the lead federal agency in this response but all of these as federal agencies worked together in a unified command to help bring our different talents to bear and support that. We have also worked closely with the Gulf of Mexico program, which is located over at the Space Center in Mississippi, and the director, Bryon Griffith, is here with us tonight. The Gulf of Mexico Program provided a great overview of activities in the Gulf for many years and something we are proud to support. I also have two staffs who are here from the Unified Command Center here in Mobile who are here with me tonight, Terry Stilman and Larry Cseh, and they will be in the breakout sessions later this evening as well. I do think it is fair to note that this oil spill is one of the great environmental challenges of our time and that tens of thousands of federal responders are at work and tried to focus on this crisis, but what I want to do here tonight is just give a brief overview of EPA's air and water sampling activities and then to talk a little more depth about EPA's role in actions on oil dispersants. First of all, let us talk about air quality monitoring, we in the states of Alabama and Mississippi and Florida are operating a network of fixed air quality monitoring stations here in the Gulf region. As well as some additional specialized, monitoring and sampling equipment, for example we have a twin-engined aircraft called

the ASPECT Aircraft that we have sent on flight pass to the technical chemical constituents associated with the spill as well as to monitor for particulate matter, a pollutant that occurs during burns. We have also brought in two trace gas analyzer vans, or taga vans as we call them in bureaucratese which has special equipment as well to do real-time sampling and analysis and which can detect a wide range of chemical contaminants. These mobile vans have been used at remote locations one was operating yesterday for example between Stennis and Pascagoula, and the results of the air monitoring analysis are available on EPA's website www.epa.gov. In addition, we are also monitoring using portable equipment for particulate matter, hydrogen sulfide and total volatile organic compounds or hydrocarbons, which may be associated with oil or with the in situ burns. We are also monitoring ozone levels and other specific organic compounds, such as Toluene, Benzene and Xylene. Finally, we are coordinating information from state monitors and analyzing and tracking this information daily to note any unusual readings that may have occurred. To date I am pleased to report that all of our on shore sampling has not identified levels of air pollution above what we usually see in the Mississippi, Alabama, Florida area at this time of year. But, we are going to continue to do this monitoring with our state partners and to investigate reports of odors or other unusual air events. On the water quality side, EPA teams have conducted about 3-4 weeks ago nearshore and estuarine monitoring activities in order to establish a baseline information along the Gulf Coast working together with our state partners. Again, I emphasize that this is sort of beach and shoreline and the estuarine things, we do not do deep water kind of monitoring. We do not have the equipment for that. But, we are continuing to watch the situation right here on your shore. We are especially concerned about it because of the reports as the commander indicated that we have oil impacts here in Petit Bois in Dauphin and some other locations I gathered today here. Happily the quantities of this have not been very large, but we are concerned about it, and today we began to do additional sampling and testing in these near shore in estuarine waters to more fully assess water quality. This is occurring just as we have been doing over at Louisiana, where the impacts have been more significant in the last few weeks. The sampling will enable us to analyze the sediment water and sediment samples to detect the chemicals found in oil as well as chemicals found in the dispersants that have been used in the oil spill response. That is in logical transition to my next point to talk some about the dispersants and what that means. I'm sure you read in the newspaper that in responding to the spill, the government just had to make some very difficult decisions especially including the use of dispersant chemicals to help break up the oil and speed up its natural degradation. So when this crisis first occurred the federal on-scene coordinator in the Coast Guard gave BP the authorization to use approved dispersants on oil on the surface of the water and the reason for this was to try to mitigate the impact of oil on shorelines at especially on fisheries, nurseries, wetlands

and other sensitive environments. Dispersants contain a mixture of chemicals that when they are applied directly to spilled oil can break down the oil into smaller drops that can sink below the water surface and be more naturally degraded. This form they plume or a cloud or droplets suspended in the water which can mix vertically and horizontally and be more naturally diluted and degraded but through naturally occurring bacteria. What we have here, really, is an unprecedented event for a couple of reasons. BP has been using dispersants in a way that we have really never seen before. There are two reasons for that: one is the sheer quantity of the dispersants that had been used approximately a million gallons of these have been applied about three-quarters of that on the surface and about a quarter of that underneath the surface again at a very new approach to eject these dispersants directly underwater 5,000 feet down at the site of the spill in the hopes that this would cause the oil to break up more finely as it rose to the water column. Again, this is an unprecedented approach, and we have been requiring BP to collect and to monitor ourselves information from each of these subsurface applications, and we analyze these data each evening jointly by EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, or NOAA, to determine whether this could be continued. Now, the good news we have is that since these subsurface information or application was begun, the information we have is that dissolved oxygen levels and the biological tests we have been applying had been within normal ranges, and this is encouraging. But it is also true that this is not like you have a good solution and a bad solution. What you have is a couple of bad solutions, and you are trying to do risk management and figure out which is the least bad solution because these things do have environmental trade-offs. The surfaces uses I mentioned can increase environmental risks that are posed by spills to shorelines and sensitive areas, but the dispersants when used in this way normally break down over the period of a couple of weeks. However, there is a lot we do not know about the long-term effects of the dispersants on aquatic life and aquatic environment, and that is why the EPA and the Coast Guard are requiring BP to implement a sampling and monitoring plan to detect any adverse environmental effects that may outweigh the anticipated benefits of these dispersants. EPA is very much still deeply concerned about things we do not know. Particularly on the long-term effects, which are very hard to judge on aquatic life. We do want to make sure that the dispersants that are being used are as non-toxic as possible. Because of this, EPA and the Coast Guard have issued an order to BP to eliminate if it is at all operationally possible. All of these surface dispersant applications. Again, as of now, our subsurface (the ones down 5,000 feet) do not seem to appear to have in any adverse or significant ecological impact, but we are still directing BP to find an alternative less toxic dispersant. BP has argued that one was not available but we have determined that BP's analysis on this is insufficient. In addition we are performing our own scientific verification of the data that BP presented, and we are conducting a

separate scientific analysis to determine whether a less toxic alternative is available at a needed volume. Now, EPA for the moment and especially during this current operation when they are trying to shear off the vent pipe above the blowout prevention, EPA and the Coast Guard will continue to allow BP to use undersea dispersant at a maximum of 15,000 gallons per day provided that it is accomplished by rigorous testing. BP has agreed to that limit throughout the duration of that procedure they are now taking on. In addition, EPA administrator Jackson has issued a directive to BP again on May 26th to keep surface spray of dispersant to an absolute minimum, and we expect BP to comply with this directive. In addition, we are also demanding that further analysis be conducted on other options as EPA continues to apply our own science. And finally, EPA and the Coast Guard reserve the authority to discontinue or to require BP to discontinue the use of underwater dispersants. That is a quick summary on the dispersant issue. We are looking ahead a little bit to future research that one of the things this event has told us is that there is a lot, as I mentioned, that we do not know. Our own research program on this is pretty modest. The administration is requesting some supplemental funds for additional dispersant research associated with the spill and if we receive these funds we expect to engage a number of institutions with knowledge and expertise to assist us. We are also going to further our own research efforts to include other innovative approaches to spill remediation. Just to summarize now a little bit of next steps. The BP oil spill is a massive and a potentially unprecedented environmental disaster, but we are also aware that it is already a significant human impact as well to the lives and livelihoods of countless people in the Gulf Coast, including many of the people I am sure who are here this evening. EPA is going to continue working alongside many state federals and state agencies to implement emergency oil spill responses to oversee BP's actions. BP is the responsible party under the Oil Pollution Act but we expect to be overseeing carefully their work. We are also now at EPA preparing for a potential support role shoreline assessment and clean up operations. We are also going to continue to provide full support to the Coast Guard and the unified command and to monitor, identify and respond to potential public health and environmental issues. So as all with the local communities along the Gulf Coast assess the impact of the spill on their economies EPA and partnership with other federal, state and local agencies as well as other community stakeholders, we will do all we can to assist and to response to these terrible events. Thank you very much.

(0:30:01.6)

LADON:

The next speaker has been a friend of mine since I moved down here. Buck Sutter used to be the deputy regional administrator for NMFS in Saint Petersburg. He is the NOAA regional collaboration team coordinator. I have a good pleasure of working with him. He is also taking on additional responsibilities in the Gulf as a response to the oil spill.

BUCK:

Thank you, LaDon, and thank you for coming tonight. The main purpose that we really would like to accomplish tonight more than anything else is to spend time with you in these breakout rooms and answer your specific questions. I just want to give a very brief overview of what NOAA or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's involvement is with the spill. I have been involved in the Gulf of Mexico since 1980 as a Fishery Scientist and for the administration side of things. As soon as we saw what happened with the spill was announced the first phone call that I made was to LaDon, to realize that this is going to have a huge impact on the people who live on the coast. The next call was to Bryon Griffith because we all realized that one federal agency, one state agency, one university is not going to be able to really handle all the diverse things that are going on with this events. It is going to be in partnership. The reason that we wanted to have these meetings tonight more than anything was to let people know what is going on. There is a lot of confusion. There is a lot of sense that the government really does not know what is going on. The only way to help combat some of those is to sit here before you and say this is what we know and ask us questions. If we do not know we will get back to you, and I think that is really the whole point of tonight. So I really appreciate Sea Grant, LaDon and his staff, and a lot of the other NOAA folks that are here tonight helping get people to the right rooms. And what happens if we do not know the answers to your questions? We are going to get your name, your phone number, address and so we can get the answers to you. We do not want people to walk away tonight scratching their heads saying "what in the heck did they waste my time coming to that meeting for". We are all too busy for that. I do think it is important to realize that NOAA is a very diverse agency. There is about 13,000 people and, as a science agency, we have been involved since two and a half hours after the spill happened. Started charting where and the trajectory of the oil spill using satellite and the National Weather Service has been huge in this as far as deterring wind patterns and huge number oceanographers to determine current patterns trying to determine not only where the oil is but where it is going to be 24-48-72 hours out so that we can start looking at potential impacts. On top of that NOAA also includes the National Marine Fisheries Service which is responsible for maintaining the stocks of fish also protective resources including sea turtles, marine mammals protecting those as well. As soon as we saw that the extent of the spill is going to take we implemented fisheries closures about a week and a half after the spill started. As precautionary for seafood safety and Bob did a great job talking about the seafood safety, and I know a lot of people have questions about that. So I encourage you to come to this room, and we will talk as much as you guys want to talk about seafood safety and what we are doing not only the oil itself but also with the dispersants. We have numerous vessels out there right now. First thing we did was there are vessels that go out and collect baseline data, water

samples, bottom samples from the mud, fish samples, shrimp samples so we had an idea this is what it was like before the oil got here. We also have been working with the states for many years of getting historical data, so we have information of what has been going on along the coast here since the 1960s. A very methodical pattern in cooperation with the states of Alabama and Mississippi and Louisiana,, particularly. We mobilize all that information so that when the information does start coming in like it is now about the impacts we have something to compare it to. Right now our vessels are out there looking at these potential plumes that have been talked about in the press quite a bit. What does that mean, what did they look like, how big they are. Those vessels have not come back yet but their preliminary information we are getting from universities, like LUMCON and Louisiana and University of South Florida indicates that there are some plumes of oil which extend with the water in very dilute concentrations that we need to find out what those really mean and how big they are. Those cruises are going on right now as we speak, and that information, as soon as we have it, will become available. We are also studying Loop Current, which is another part of the Gulf of Mexico that is a significant feature of the Gulf of Mexico is what warms a lot of the east coast as it loops through the warm waters of the Gulf and up to the east coast over and over towards Europe. There was a period of time three weeks ago that the Loop Current got very close to where the oil spill was, is now has gone down far down south in Florida but at one point there was a some oil in that, but has gotten pinched off and now is in a cold water jaier or so. But we are still monitoring that. As a matter of fact, the closures again were expanded today for fisheries so now about 37% of the Gulf of Mexico EEZ is now closed to fisheries. But we also have a plan with FDA and EPA on reopening those fisheries so that we know, obviously we want to be able to let people fish, work as soon as it is safe to do so. We will be talking about that more on the other room, but we do have a plan and it is already in place. As far as I know, there have been a lot of concerns in this area especially in Mississippi and Alabama about the sea turtles. We are doing daily aerial surveys and have since two or three days after the spill doing transects off of Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama looking for whales, tortoises, other marine mammals and sea turtles. We have been documenting those numbers ever since that first day. So for 43 days, 44 days now, we have had that data and we are comparing it to what numbers we have seen in the past both for the numbers that are out there alive and the numbers that have been unfortunately have been stranded along the coast. Again, we are not in this alone right now. The cruise that is out there includes scientists from the West Coast, Scripps Institute has a submarine that actually could go to certain depths to take water samples and because of what the plume question is are so prominent on people's minds and that is the way that we are being able to do that. We also have scientists from other countries that are on there. Again, this is a situation we cannot use ourselves and look at

it in a vacuum. EPA and NOAA, FDA, we all have to be talking to each other, and you the people who are impacted by this needs to know what we are doing and what we are talking about so that at least there is some sense of what is going on and that is really the whole purpose of why we are here tonight. Heard enough of us talking, I think now it is time to get into the question-and-answer part, and I think he is going to come how we are going to do that.

(0:38:10.9)

LADON:

Anyone who has ever organized an event realizes that there are two parallel tracks: one, for the program, and I think we have a very good program; second, is the process how the event runs, and I am very fortunate to work with Ann Weaver and all the folks, the Gulf of Mexico Program, the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program, Alabama Cooperative Extension System, our Sea Grant extension folks. I am probably leaving some out. They are here to ensure that the process part of this program runs as smooth as possible. Ann has worked real hard this week and last week. That is how much time that we have had to put this together to make sure that the process runs well and I am just going to share how is that going to take place.

ANN:

Thanks LaDon and thank you all for coming. My name is Ann Weaver. I work for the NOAA Gulf office of the Coastal Service Center, and tonight I am going to give you some instructions about how the process is going to work. I share LaDon's concern about the residents about this area as a resident of Mississippi and want all of you to be able to get as much information as you can in the short time that we have together. We will be providing transcripts of all of tonight's questions in writing after the meetings so we will be recording what is happening in each of the rooms. To do that, we have to organize the way that we ask the questions. In each of the breakout rooms we are going to have several facilitators who will keep track of who raised their hands when and will bring you up to the microphone to ask your question. You all received a yellow sheet when you came in, and it will list which experts will be in which rooms. Again, this is to facilitate our ability to answer as many questions as possible. Each of the rooms is organized by issue type. We have the fish and wildlife room, which is located right here. We also have a monitoring and data room, which is if you leave this room and make a left into the rotunda the monitoring and data room will be on your left. From that rotunda you can also access the business and personal finance; it will be on your right towards the back. Technological disasters and mental health is also off the rotunda towards the front on the right. If you have questions about legal perspectives, directly behind us here straight back through the double doors is the legal perspectives room. There are several facilitators in each of the rooms, and they will organize the Q and A, the question-and-answer sessions. We request that all of the participants will follow the following

ground rules while you are in the breakout rooms. There are still a lot of unknowns. I think each person who spoke earlier said that there are a lot of unknowns. Please respect our experts when they tell you they do not know the answer to a question. We will have forms that you can fill out, where you can put your contact information and write down any questions that were not answered, and we will get back to you with the appropriate information on how to get your answer or with that answer. We ask that you silent your phones. I noticed earlier, I probably should have said that at the very beginning, but if you would not mind putting those on silent that would be very helpful. Please respect the participants who are asking a question and listen while they are asking a question. We would like to have only one conversation in the room at a time. Wait to be acknowledged by the facilitator before you ask the question. When you come up to the microphone you will have two minutes to pose your question. If you are approaching your two minute time limit your facilitator will let you know. You will get to only ask one question while you are at the microphone and then you will have to take another turn but you will be able to ask a follow on question so you will have one question and one follow on question. If you have more questions you will need to get back in line. Each issue room is set up with experts. Go to the ones that most interests you. You can sit in the same room all night long if you like, well until we close down the rooms but you can also rotate between rooms if you have questions for different experts in different rooms. So that is how this is going to function. We are going to take about 5 to 10 minutes for the experts to get to their rooms and the facilitators to get set up. Walk around the rotunda, look for the rooms that you are interested in and again we have Fish and Wildlife here, in the rotunda we have Monitoring and Data, Business and Personal Finance, Technological Disasters and Mental Health and then directly behind me through the double doors we have Legal Perspectives. So find the room that you are interested in going to and the facilitators in the rooms will answer any questions that you might have about how the process is going to work. Go ahead.

RESPONDENT: All of the experts in the rooms are listed under panel members so if you are interested in talking to a specific panel member please look on that list if they are there.

(0:44:40.7)

LADON: Who asked? Thanks for asking that question. Yes. This morning the Coast Guard could not be there the whole time but Commander Brady will be here this evening, I think. Based on the questions that were asked this morning I think Commander Brady will be on the Fisheries session. There is a question back there.

RESPONDENT: *(0:44:59.2 inaudible)*

(0:45:20.3)

LADON: Yes. BP was invited and they were not able to attend.

RESPONDENT: Do you know why?

(0:45:39.4)

LADON: Yes. I think they said that they were overextended right now. Okay, we are going to take our break now, and then we are going to reconvene within about the next 10 minutes.

END OF AUDIO.

General Session

Mobile, Ala., June 3, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:00:00.6)

MODERATOR: I don't think we're going to have as large a crowd as we had last night. Reverend Lawrence Batista, Associate Pastor of the Revelation Baptist Church led us in prayer.

RESPONDENT: With every head bowed, every heart humbled, let us pray, Father God, in the mist of this difficult time, we are hand-made servants, enter to your presence with bowed heads and humbled hearts. We come Father to say thank you, thank you because you're good to us father, thank you Father God because we can trust you, thank you Father God. We come now asking that you will be with us. Be among us, be in us, as we accept, do the challenge that lies before us. Help us oh God that we may go forward in faith not in fear, in fellowship, not in anger, in love in peace. Realizing Father God that in the problems that you allow to come our way, there's always opportunity, the opportunity to us to display the godly quality that you have instill in all of those who are your children. Finally God, we ask, keep us mindful that a God that made the whole world, still holds it in His hands, and most certainly has planned a good outcome for us all. These thanks we ask oh God, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Your Son, Jesus the Christ, Amen.

(0:03:32.7)

MODERATOR: My name is LaDon Swann, I think we all offer our deepest condolences to the family of the 11 people who died on the Deepwater Horizon. I'm the director of Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium; Sea Grant has a 36-year history serving coastal communities in Alabama and Mississippi through applied research, education, outreach and extension. Two weeks ago, we hosted a small team of Alaskans who shared their first hand experiences from the Exxon Valdez oil spill with groups of coastal constituents. Today's forum, builds on those meetings, and draws on the knowledge, experiences of professionals from 21 federal and state agencies, research universities, private sector and non-profit organizations. Plans are already underway for the next phase of public outreach. We welcome your input. Before hearing from the two federal agencies, here in the head table, who are on the front lines of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, I'd like to share a few of my concerns, that probably some of you share as well. I'm worried that the coastal communities we have enjoyed for so long, will be changed forever. I'm worried that the damage to our coastal and marine environment with which our lives are intertwined may not be repaired in our lifetimes. Our response to this technological disaster

as individuals and organizations will be a true test of our character. Today's forum will certainly not calm the extreme visceral emotions that we all feel. What we do promise is compassion, honesty and respect. We know each of you will treat the professionals here today the same way. Before moving to the five stations, prepared for you, actually there'll be four this morning, I thank everyone involved, especially thank those experts who have joined us to provide the best answers possible. The facilitators, those who the folks in the green, who are responsible in ensuring these meetings, are run in a professional manner. I also want to thank my Sea Grant staff. With that said, we like to get going, I know a lot of have questions, first speaker, we have four this morning; first speaker will be Commander Bob Brady with the U.S. Coast Guard.

BOB BRADY:

Good morning. Just a couple of things, there's a lot of questions answered in a different form, if I give you one website, I'll give you deepwaterhorizonresponse.com, all one word. You don't have a lot of the answers to questions about decon, how we plan on setting up the boom for marsh, for the marshes. The area contingency plan is in there, the decon plan is in there, there's a lot of good information in there, that's deepwaterhorizonresponse.com, one word. A little bit of myself, I'm a Coast Guard Reservist, I live in the Mobile area, I have about 26 years in the Coast Guard, about 13 active, about 13 reserves. If you're familiar with the reserves, where the people that get called in when they go into surge operations. Coast Guard has about 39,000 people, we probably another 8,200 reservist, and then, the auxiliary is another big component. The number I got this morning was about 12,000, they're a great group of people, they come in voluntarily, they don't get any compensation, and they do just outstanding work for the Coast Guard. On this response, the Coast Guard has roughly 23,000 people, there's about 5,000 of those are volunteers, the rest are Coast Guard personnel. About a third of our people right now are involved in the response. This morning, I want to give you an idea of what type of command structure we're using, what are our responses objectives are, strategies, tactics we're employing. The system we're working under is the Incident Command System. If you're interested in it there's a FEMA website, just go up on the FEMA website and you can find the information. Basically, it brings together all the players in this system. At any one time, there's a federal, state, the responsible party, non-government organization, we include the National Guard in there. What it does, it gives everyone a seat at the table, allows you to make decisions with everybody's input. The big component for Alabama is the Alabama has a seat at the table; they have a whole group of people that they're in there, so your voice is being heard. The way the unified command, the National Incident Commander for this response is Admiral Thad Allen, the area commander is Admiral Mary Landry. We have it broken up into three unified commands, there's on in New Orleans, I'm sorry, there's on in Houma, Louisiana, that handles all the off-shore skimming in the state of

Louisiana. There's another one in Houston, that's one that handling the dispersant, and the source of the well, where it used to be. There's a unified command in Mobile, we handle Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. Our response objective of course would be to keep all the oil off the beach which that's rather hard to do,. The next thing will be to mitigate the damage that the oil can cause. That's our plan. To do, get as much to the oil as far off shore as we possible can. What we're not able to get off shore through the off-shore skimmers, we'll try to get and close in with the smallest skimmers. If some of it makes landfall, we have the teams prepared to go in a clean up the oil on shore. Some of the other tactics we're using right now, we have approximately a million feet of boom deployed right now. It's just slightly less than that, about 990,000. We're doing aerial surveillance flight each day, I went up on one myself, it was with the Mississippi Air National Guard. They're using sensor equipment, forward looking infrareds, TV's that can zoom in on it. They're examining the boom; any boom that's damaged is getting replaced in a relatively quick time. They can do the comeback from the flight, turn the information around in three hours if they need to. There's also Civil Air Patrols flying, NOAA's flying, Coast Guard's flying. We're doing a number of flights to try and spot the oil and get to it as quickly as we can. We went to a new surveillance, we're going to do a patrol that is a shoreline patrol and out 3 miles, 6 miles, 10 miles to try catch as much oil as we can, before it hits the beach. You may have heard about some boom that left the area that's coming back. I don't know if it arrived today or not, it was scheduled to come up back here. We're pushing the fight as far off shore as we can, trying to make, trying prevent the oil from making a big impact, hopefully everything will come together. There's a, again that website is a really good website if you have any questions, probably worth visiting it to see the information there. That's kind of our plan, how we plan on dealing with the oil, thank you.

(0:12:59.2)

LADON:

Our next speaker is Bob Dickey, he's local, but he runs the National FDA Seafood Safety Lab on Dauphin Island. Bob's been around here, 24, 26 years. He has a lot of firsthand knowledge about seafood safety. FDA is heavily involved in ensuring that the seafood that we consume stays as safe it has been.

BOB DICKEY:

Good morning everyone. My name is Bob Dickey, I'm the Director of the FDA Division of Science and Technology located at Dolphin Island, the facility has been on Dauphin Island since 1963 under various names, our main mission is to do research on Seafood Safety and to develop the knowledge and tools necessary to assure the safety of fisheries, products harvested in our coastal waters. And work in concert with the states on all three coasts to assure, develop the answers that we need to ensure seafood safety. FDA is closely monitoring the situation and has been since the

onset on April 20 when the Deepwater Horizon explosion occurred. The FDA is working very closely with all five, all the coastal states to develop plans along with NOAA, our federal colleagues, NOAA and EPA and CDC to bring fisheries back on line as soon as we possibly can after the oil spill has cleared. I realized that we are obviously not near that point yet, my colleagues in NOAA, EPA are on the front lines providing the response and try to get things under control. FDA is involved with establishing the criteria and the protocols for assuring the safety of seafood after the oil spills has gone. Basically, it's a three-step process in its core. Once the oil has cleared the water, there's no evidence of water on the surface or in the water column, FDA, NOAA and EPA will begin sampling of seafood species in those areas and testing them for residues of hydrocarbon that are present in the crude petroleum. Once that is done, it will, the information, the data, will be sent back to NOAA who has the statutory authority to open and close fisheries, and in concert with FDA and EPA will determine whether fisheries can be reopened. I am here to assure you that your federal agencies are working in very close coordination developing these plans, keeping the states informed. Your health commissioners for each of the states, we hold regular calls on developing the criteria for assuring that the seafood is wholesome, healthy and uncontaminated. These deliberations have been occurring for nearly a month now. We came online with this very early on. There is quite a history of oil spills from this country. We're trying to learn from the previous oil spills. Many of the responses that we have in the past, we've tried different things to both contain, in our post-spill recovery efforts. We're applying those lessons from Exxon Valdez forward to our responses today. You'll hear from my colleagues from EPA and NOAA, also from Coast Guard as you heard here, a lot of what we are doing is being coordinated and taking account of knowledge that has been gained in the past. I'll be in the Fisheries and Wildlife session following this opening session, if you have any additional questions on the protocols that we're trying to establish and work through our state colleagues, our health laboratories, to respond to seafood safety issue or concerns that you might have. Thank you very much. I look forward to your questions.

(0:17:34.8)

MODERATOR:

L.D. can you hear me? My voice has never been a problem. Our next speaker is Stan Meiburg with EPA. Stan is the acting director for Region 4 out of Atlanta. He coordinates closely with other EPA regions. He's going to share some of the monitoring work that EPA is doing.

STAN:

Good morning, and I thank everybody for being here. What I want to do this morning is talk a little bit about EPA's role in this response together with our other federal, local and state and partners. Before I get started, to thank LaDon for the work of consortium in organizing these forums, both

the one here this morning as well as the one yesterday morning in Biloxi and the one last night here in this very room. It think it's been, LaDon, a tremendous opportunity to hear from people, get questions answered. These events do not happen by accident, we're really very grateful for you setting up the forum and providing for this opportunity. I also would be remiss if I didn't do a shout out to Roberta Swann who works on the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program and is a great partner with EPA. We get a team approach here, we're grateful for that support as well. You can't start out talking about this event without first remembering, as LaDon did, that we have 11 families, who've lost loved ones in this event. On behalf of EPA I would like to extend my condolences to the family to those who lost their lives, as well to those injured and their families on the explosion on the Deepwater Horizon. I want on behalf of EPA to express our concern for all the citizens of the Gulf Coast whose lives have been affected by this. This is a spill whose effects may last for many years. They're going to require the best efforts from all of us in the government or private sector to address them. Now, as Commander Brady and Bob Dickey both said, this is a joint approach that you have all the federal agencies working together, and I do want to particularly acknowledge my fellow federal, state and local responders and to thank them for the ongoing efforts. In particular, I want to thank the Coast Guard who is the lead federal agency in this response under the Oil Pollution Act for their work as well as NOAA, and especially Buck for all his work that he is doing to help organize make the work move together in this response. This spill is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. You have thousands of federal responders in one way or another including hundreds of EPA staff who are focused on this. Now, LaDon mentioned that I am with Region 4, for those of you who are not experts in the wonderful ways of bureaucracy, EPA is divided into 10 regional offices of which Region 4, which is based in Atlanta, covers Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, as well as five other States. We work very closely with our colleagues with Region 6, which covers Louisiana and Texas, especially in our response like this, to make sure that we operate as one EPA, and as part of the unified command as one federal government. What I want to do here this morning is just give a brief overview of some of our air and water safety activities, which are some of our primary work in this response, as well as to discuss EPA's roles and actions on oil dispersants, which have raised a lot of questions. On the air quality monitoring side, we in the states of Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, operate a network of fixed air quality monitoring stations across the Gulf Coast region. We also have some specialized monitoring equipment that we have deployed for this particular event. For example, we have twin-engine aircraft called the ASPECT Aircraft, which is able to fly over and do monitoring for particulates and for other kinds of chemical constituents associated with the oil spill, especially during the offshore burning activities. We have two specialized buses which have the wonderful bureaucratic name of the Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzers, or

TAGA buses, which can drive up and down the Gulf Coast looking for evidence of any unusual chemical constituents. We had one that was a couple of days ago that made the run between Stennis Space Center and Perdido Key. They have been making their way in both Louisiana and across the Mississippi-Alabama-Florida area just checking to see if the readings look like we had expected them to be. We also have some other portable equipment that enables us to monitor for pollutant, such as particulate matter, hydrogen sulfide, as well as total Volatile Organic Compounds or VOCs, which might be associated with this oil as well as with the in situ burns. We're monitoring ozone levels. And, we're testing for specific hydrocarbons that may be present with crude oil including Benzene, Toluene and Xylene. We're also coordinating all the data with state monitors. We're analyzing and tracking this information daily. If you look on EPA's website, you'll be able to see daily records of the information where we can get some in real time for ozone and for particular matter. Some are the more speciated hydrocarbons require additional analysis. So, there's a lag time between when you actually collect the sample, when you can put it up on the website. We're trying to make sure that information is up on the website as fast and currently as we can. I do have some good news, to date our onshore sampling of air has not identified levels of air pollutants above what we usually see in the Mississippi, Alabama, Florida Gulf Coast at this time of year. So, we haven't seen any signature spikes or other kind of air pollution impacts from the particular spill, but we are continuing with our state partners to watch the situation and to investigate reports of odors or other unusual events. Now, let me switch gears, and give you a brief summary on water quality monitoring. By water quality it's important or to be careful about what exactly I mean. EPA does not do deep-ocean water monitoring, that mostly goes on under the auspices of NOAA. We have done monitoring in estuarine areas as well as near shore and shoreline water quality monitoring samples. Mostly samples we collected about three, four weeks ago to establish base line data. So, if we saw impacts we know what we compare into, what was a reasonable baseline for comparison. We are continuing obviously to watch the situation as we've now have reports of on shore impacts of oil or tar balls or some of the other kind of material. Starting yesterday we began to do additional estuarine and near shore sampling, testing to more fully assess the water quality. This has been going on for a little longer because the impacts occurs first over the Louisiana, where they saw the oil impact hit first. We're following that protocol here in the Region 4 areas as well. It enables us to analyze both water and sediment samples on shore or near shore to detect chemicals that might be found in oil as well as the dispersants that have been used in the oil spill response. That leaves me to my last big area that is the dispersants themselves. As all of you know, in response to the spill the government's had to make some very tough decision, including the use of dispersant chemical to break up the oil, speed up its natural degradation.

When this crisis occurred, the federal on scene coordinator in the Coast Guard, granted the BP authorization to use approved dispersants on the oil, on the surface of the water in the effort to mitigate the shore line impact of the oils spill on fisheries, nurseries, wetlands, other sensitive environments. It's worth saying a little bit about that. This is not one of those situations where you get to make a choice between a good option and a bad option. What you have is a choice between two options, both of which are bad. You got to make some choices and decisions nevertheless. And the underlying issues is, is it better to use some of these dispersants to help break up the oil and potentially speed up its natural degradation process, or is it better not to the dispersants and have the oil break up with some risk that you may get worse impacts on marshlands and sensitive areas especially. Nobody is very happy about either of these options, but those are the ones that we have. The dispersants themselves contain a mixtures of chemicals that when you apply them to the oil, as I mentioned, do break it down into smaller drops that enable, were bacteria can actual access those things, you can get more mixing to the water column, hopefully, potentially, speed up its degradation and minimize it's on shore impact. These do form a plume or a cloud of oil droplets in the water which mixes in the water column. We do have some unprecedented, at least in the United States, activities going on here, that BP has used dispersants in volumes that we haven't seen before in the United States, although these dispersants has been used elsewhere around the world. We haven't these kind of volume in the United States before. They're also using it in a different way, that one of the ways is being used is to inject some of the dispersants down at the place where the wellhead leak occurs 5,000 feet below the surface of the sea in hopes that it speeds up again the break of the oil as it moves towards the surface. Now we've been looking pretty carefully with NOAA at the information based on this, because a lot frankly we don't know. We've been trying to look at the data from the sub-surface applications each evening, to determine whether this can be continued. The good new is, since the sub-surface application was started, the information that we have at least, suggest that dissolved oxygen levels, the biological tests we have been doing, have been within the normal ranges, and they don't show that there's been an adverse impact from the subsurface injection. But it is an environmental trade off, as I mentioned. We think that the dispersants will breakdown over the course of weeks, but the long-term effects on aquatic ecosystem and aquatic life are not fully understood. We want to proceed with a lot of caution. For this reason, we require BP to implement a sampling and monitoring plan so that we could get an early warning on any adverse environmental effects. We're also, because we are so concern about the things that we don't know, EPA and the Coast Guard issued an order to BP to eliminate, if operationally possible, the surface dispersant applications. Remember, there are two different types, there was actual spread on the surface, trying to break up oil on the surface, as well as the underground injection. We've been

concern again on the volume, about a million gallons of these dispersants has been applied, about 250,000 gallons underneath, about 750,000 gallons on the surface. Back on May 26, EPA Administrator Jackson issued a directive to BP to keep surface spray of dispersants to an absolute minimum and do not use them at all if it all possible, unless there was some very strong operational reason that you needed to do that. We've been continuing to direct BP to search for alternative and less toxic dispersants. We have had some arguments with BP about this; their original reaction was that these things weren't available. We did not feel that their analysis was adequate and have asked them to go back and look more closely. We're doing our own independent review on some of the science on this. One of the things we have learned from this experience already has been that we probably need better information about the way in which dispersants are approved for use. The President is going to ask for a supplemental appropriation for this, one of the aspects of that appropriation would be for additional resource so that we can better refine the test used to approve dispersants in the first place. Let me just close by noting, that we understand that this spill is a massive and potentially unprecedented disaster, we're also very keenly aware, that this spill has already affected many lives here and in the Gulf Coast region and the livelihood of countless people, Let me be clear about this, under the Oil Pollution Act, BP is the responsible party, they're the ones who are responsible for cleaning this thing up, for paying for it. EPA's role to do is to work alongside many other Federal and State Agencies to implement emergency oils spill response, to oversee BP's action. We're now preparing for additional support role in shore line assessment, clean-up operations. We are going to continue to provide full support to the Coast Guard, to the Unified Command, to monitor, identify, respond to potential threats to public health and in the environment. As a local Gulf Coast Community, such as this area assess the impact of the spill in their economies, EPA, in partnership with other State and Federal Agencies, as well as other community stake holders, will do everything we can to assist in the clean-up from this terrible set of events. Thank you very much.

(0:30:53.2)
LADON:

Before we move to our final speaker, last night Senator Shelby's staff were here I was remiss in not acknowledging them this morning, we have several elected officials, both local, state, national (0:31:10.1 inaudible) Senator Van Brooks is here, representing our state, I saw Congressman Bonner's staff come in as well. I appreciate you taking the time to come to hear what's said this morning, if I'd missed anyone else, if you would stand up, I'm glad you're here certainly part, thank you ma'am. Can you tell us where you're from? Thank you very much for coming. I firmly believe that our elected officials, I know; they're just as concerned about this as we are as citizens. They're doing everything that they can to help us as well. Our next speaker is Buck Sutter; Buck is the NOAA regional collaboration

team coordinator. He is also taken known added responsibilities after the oil spill, I work with Buck quite a bit and I have for several years, I know his heart is in the right place, as well as everyone else here at this table and everyone out in the audience. So, Buck.

BUCK:

Good morning, Everyone. I know that there's a lot of questions on the people's mind, we really want to emphasize that that's the main reason we're here. I encourage to please make sure that you go to whatever breakout room that you feel, that addresses the questions that you have, and move around, it's good to get and overview of what each of our agencies are doing. Unless we answer your specific questions, it's just basic knowledge. We may not know all the answers to what your questions are, obviously there are still a lot of unknown because the spill is still ongoing, but we do promise that we will get back to you. We'll say if we don't know, we'll say that. Each person that has a question that we don't know the answer to, we will have an opportunity to write that question down, we'll either go along with your email and contact information, we'll get that answer back to you directly. A lot of people really don't know who NOAA is. They hear about us mainly in the context of the hurricane center, obviously that's an area of huge concern, this particular area here. NOAA consists of several different parts, one is the weather service, which does do the hurricane forecast. And the weather service has been a big part of this particular effort in helping identify the trajectories of where the oil is going. There's also other parts that NOAA is involved in, one is the fisheries part, certainly closures are I'm sure people are mostly aware of. Also the endangered species, marine mammals, sea turtles a big part of what we are doing as far as reacting to the spill. We also have a lot of oceanographers that we work both for NOAA and for the different agencies particularly with the Navy in looking at, trying to determine where the oil's going, not just where it is right now, where using satellite and all the other modeling techniques to see where the oils is going, 24, 48, 72 hours from now. That's the main, one of the main bits information that we're using for the fisheries side to determine what areas are open, what areas are closed. For instance, yesterday the areas that were closed for fisheries were extended to almost 37% of the Gulf. It's my understanding that today, there's not going to be any closure, I may extend other closure, I can't say where it is right now. I think people would want to know once the oil spill ends, how are we going to reopen the fisheries. Bob talked a little bit about that, we'll certainly answer any questions in the fisheries room about that. The main thing is that, we want to make sure we are prepared, we have our research vessels out there right now, taking water samples, tissue samples, we actually have been doing that right since the very first day of this event. As a matter of fact, two and a half hours when this event did happen, we had our first trajectory models that were published to determine where the oil is going. I figure that's an important part to understand is that NOAA's mission is mostly science,

also in managing the fisheries, endangered species, we're here right from the very beginning; we'll be here through the whole process. Again this is like LaDon said, this is just a first of the several meetings that we're holding as the process goes through because of people don't know what's going on, their general assumption is that they'll make up their own information. Because people want to know what's going on. Our job within the government is to be completely transparent. What do we know, what don't we know, that's really the purpose of us being here again this morning. One of the big impacts is going to be obviously, you guys are feeling it right now, where I live also, is the economic impact. That's another big part of where NOAA has a role in determining what the sociological impacts are going to be, as well as the economic and ecosystem impacts. I think the biggest thing that we can have you walk away from, all the different federal agencies, also not the federal agencies, the state agencies, the universities are all part of this program working together, we're not repeating each other's job, wasting a lot of time or money and getting the information as quickly as it possibly can. I think at this point it's probably best to have Ann come up and talk a little bit about the process on how we can address your specific questions. We look forward to trying to answer the best we can. Thank you.

(0:37:34.7)

MODERATOR:

Before Ann shares with you how we're going to run the remainder of the meeting, I want to acknowledge everyone; I can't name everyone because that would take two hours. Everyone in the green vest are facilitators they represent a lot of programs, local programs. People here that live in the communities have been working hard to protect the environment and the economies for a long time. They have, no pun intended, a vested interest in success what we're trying to do here, public outreach is very important to us, we want to communicate with you, we intend on doing that. As I mentioned earlier, this is part of the process we will continue. As I mentioned last night, when you organize an event like this, any event for that matter, you deal with two different tracks, you deal with program track, we have 21 people here who are very well qualified to do the best they can to answer the questions that are answerable. We also have the process side of it, and Ann Weaver with NOAA Coastal Service Center, the Gulf Coast Service Center, has taken home the charge, making sure the process and the meeting runs well in the collaboration with all the facilitators. I'll turn it over to Ann now.

ANN:

Thanks LaDon. Good morning everyone, my name is Ann Weaver; I am with the NOAA Gulf Coast Service Center as LaDon just said. I am also a resident of coastal Mississippi; so I share LaDon's concerns about our heritage and the changes that may be coming about. We want to be able to answer as many questions as possible in the time that we have available this morning; we have staged our 21 experts around the building

coordinated by issue so that you can go to the experts and ask the questions. We will also be providing transcripts of each of the breakout area, if there are questions happening, one that you're interested in but you're in a different one, you'll be able to read those transcripts. You can select where you want to go, you can stay in one room all day long or you can rotate from room to room depending on what your interests are. In each of the rooms, you'll see several people with these yellow vests on, they will be the coordinators in the room of the information flow. They will be keeping track of who has a question and when it's your turn to ask the question. We request that all the participants follow a set of ground rules while you are in the room. There are still a lot of unknowns as we've heard this morning. We'd like for you to respect our experts when they tell you that they don't know the answer to a question. But, what we will do is to provide you a form that you can write your question on with your contact information so that we can get you that information as quickly as possible after this forum. So if an expert in the room tells you they don't know, they really don't know. We will try to get you that information as quickly as possible. We also ask that in the rooms, you have put your phones on silent so that you don't interrupt the people that are speaking or asking questions. Respect your fellow participants and have them the person asking the question will be the only one in the room at that time talking and allow the experts to answer the questions without interrupting them. Please wait to be acknowledged before you start to ask your question. In order for us to make a transcript, we need for you to be at the microphone when you ask the question, so that we can capture that question in the transcript. One person gets to ask a question at a time, and your facilitators will let you know when it's your turn at the microphone. Please limit your question to two minutes. If you haven't posed your questions after a minute and a half your facilitator will let you know that you have 30 seconds longer to post your question. Please ask one question at a time, if you have more than one question, you can get back in the line as many times as you want to. You get to ask one question, when then experts answer it, and the panel will give it to the person they think can best answer your question, or you can direct your question to a panel member specifically. You will also get one follow-on question, and then you can get back in line as many times as you want to. You should have received a yellow, it was yellow last night, today it's pink, a pink sheet or an orange sheet when you first came in. I want to tell you where each of these rooms are. The stations are listed in the far left column, in the center column is the list of experts that we have in each of those sessions. And on the far right is the facilitator's names. Some of the facilitators may have been rotated around the room, around into different rooms, but for the most part; this is who will be in each of the sessions. This morning we have combined the fisheries and wildlife session with the monitoring and data session due to the number of experts that we have available this morning. That room will be right here. That will be fisheries and wildlife

and monitoring and data. Okay. Business and personal finance has several experts available, and that room is located as you go out this hallway, you are going to make a left to the round rotunda that has an escalator in it, the business and personal finance will be on the right, at the far back of that rotunda. There will be signs like this one right outside of that door. The technological disaster and mental health has very interesting experts in there who have dealt with oil spill disasters in the past, the stress and management of those oil spills, that room is also of that round rotunda which is on your left. It is on the right but closer to the front, we'll also have a sign out front. Legal perspectives has two people in there from the Mississippi Sea Grant Law Program, and they will be able to answer questions about filing claims or litigation outreach, that type of thing, and that room is directly behind us. We'll go down this hall, out the glass doors and into the room behind us. Those are our four sessions for today. If you have questions, find one of us in a green vest, we will do our best to answer logistical questions this morning or give you a card for an expert question. We're going to reconvene in about five minutes in our rooms. We'll go for about an hour and a half, if there are questions wind down before that, we'll stop earlier. If you have more questions, we'll give you cards after the hour and a half to fill out. Alright? Any questions from the audience about the logistics?

RESPONDENT: (0:45:59.8 Inaudible)

ANN: You are welcome to go to each of the rooms and ask those questions individually. We're not going to take any questions from the floor as a large group.

RESPONDENT: (0:46:16.1 inaudible)

ANN: Lisa Jackson, who is the administrator of the EPA is in town today, that is taking up the time of a lot of our EPA people. Okay great, thank you so much. We reconvene in our breakout room in about five minutes. Oh, we have another question from the back.

RESPONDENT: (0:46:55.0 inaudible)

(0:46:59.2)

LADON: It's a very good question, we're making tape recordings of all the sessions, that's how many, three, nine, about 12 hours audio from the three meetings, we' will be sending those off, probably early next week to the stenographer to make transcripts, that's why we ask you to put down your email if you have one, we will then send you a link from a website where you can download those. We only have, there's a regional oil spill website that was put together by the four Sea Grant Programs that will be linked

there, it will be a link to multiple places. Yes, Sir, one more quick question.

RESPONDENT: *[0:47:50.9 inaudible]*

(0:47:58.1)

LADON: These are public meetings, and they will be available to everyone.

RESPONDENT: *[0:48:06.1 inaudible]*

(0:48:12.3)

LADON: Yes, Melissa Schneider is coordinating with several others with the media. We can certainly do that. Thank you. We're going to adjourn right now ma'am. I don't know, you can talk to Stan about that. Thank you.

END OF AUDIO.

Legal Perspectives

Biloxi, Miss., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

KAY: Good morning. My name is Kay. I happen to be a waterfront property owner. Not necessarily at the forefront of our coastal area but nonetheless, perhaps even more importantly to me at the end of the line. The waterway I live on, is, it does not go much further than that. Things move. Things end up somewhere, and I anticipate in the future, short of, miraculous changes to be a victim of something I didn't start. I already have some concerns that maybe I have some legal issues and some rights that will be impaired. So, reason for being here this morning, and as others in the room, if you looked at the newspaper or listen to other media sources, lawyers, groups of lawyers are out there offering opportunities to participate in what I guess are class action suits or ultimately class action suits. I feel that somewhere in the realm of things, I'll be among class of people that fit one of those actions. I guess I'm asking now what you believe might be the process that will happen as a result of litigation taken against whomever and maybe even offer some insights from your experiences what I can anticipate wanting to do, what to explore in terms of choosing the right course of action to take and enlisting others, perhaps, that don't realize they have a reason to be among the class of people to bring forth action that may hopefully move this process along even more quickly when you set fire to the right seats. I look forward to your response.

(0:04:22.5)

NIKI: When you have property damage or I'm going to speak in a hypothetical sense that yours hasn't happened yet but may happen. So, when it does happen, you have basically three avenues. You can file a claim with BP for damages. You can, um, if BP does not resolve the claim in a way that you are happy with or denies your claim, you can then pursue a claim with the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund or you can also choose to become part of litigation. Those are your basic three different avenues. Which avenue you choose is certainly up to you. I would be hesitant to say that getting involved in litigation would speed the process along just based on what we had seen from the Exxon litigation and that it took about 20 years for that to be resolved. I'm not, in any way, dissuading you from getting involved in litigation. I'm just saying that that could be a very lengthy process. So, you might choose to pursue a different avenue before you choose that. It's entirely up to you. In Mississippi, you have three-year statute of limitations. So, you've got three years before you are precluded from bringing a claim by law. Does that help? Did I answer what you're asking? You're looking like I didn't quite address what you are looking for.

KAY: No. I don't know that anybody has answers to questions that any of us may pose, but the Oil Spill Trust Fund, tell me what that is and who enters into that and what's it out there doing or not doing or supposed to do?

(0:06:10.5)

STEPHANIE: The Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund was established following the Exxon Valdez spill. It was the Oil Pollution Act and it is funded by a tax off of barrels of oil sold. It is managed by the U.S. Coast Guard. The role of the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund is almost a backstop. It is setup for situations where the responsible party does not pay maybe because they are bankrupt or they are refusing to pay for some situation. What the process is supposed to be under the law is a person who is injured as the result of the spill files with the responsible party, here BP. BP has 90 days under the law to respond to your claim. You submit your application, wait 90 days, and see what BP has to say. If you are unsatisfied with what BP is saying, maybe if you think you had \$5,000 worth of damage and they've offered you \$2,500. That doesn't go with what you wanted. Then you have the option of filing the same claim with the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund through the Coast Guard. Then, I think, under the procedures that the Coast Guard has setup, their time line is much longer because they just have a lot more going on with the trust fund. But, if they do not respond within six months, then your claim is deemed to be denied. You would be free to then sue the Coast Guard under the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund for not paying that claim, or go back to BP in litigation to get that claim rectified in that situation. So, one thing to think about in the process and what I am talking about time lines, these are statutory time lines. These are deadlines that are set by the statute. There's no way to guarantee that all of those deadlines would be followed. From start to finish, this Oil Pollution Act creates about a 15-month time line from the time that you would file a claim with BP 'til you would go to the Oil Spill Liability Trust Fund. Say, the Coast Guard took the entire six months to address your claim, then there's an appeals process within the U.S. Coast Guard, which would take a couple more months. At the end, it would be 15 months. If you started today, you'd still be within that statute of limitations for Mississippi. The one thing to think about is just when you're making these types of decisions is to look at the time line for both options and whether the claims process would be fast enough for what you're looking for or whether litigation would be the option. One thing to keep in mind with litigation is it's rarely quick. It's very slow, tends to be, unless something is settled out of court. That is the concern with class action lawsuits, that can take a while as well.

AUDIENCE1: This is in regard to the current needs for some of the clients and the people, the immediate affected by which is the fishermen. My question is that, is there a legal monitors that oversees the BP claims process that can

help them? Because, I have family members, friends, clients and stuff like that, some received and some haven't, some are still in the loop of the BP process. They claim that they haven't received their claims where they have the file numbers or they claim that it is in the process and stuff like that. We are looking at 46 days into this disasters already and these people are normally out there, already make their earning coming in already. If they're daily shrimpers or fishermen, or if their freezers, they would already make an abundance amount of money for a \$2,000 to \$5,000 check. That's nothing to them. What is the prices that can help? I know that there is no such thing as guarantee, but at least help them to ease their stress, you know, for the daily expenses. I myself as a real estate broker I have a lot of my clients that's coming in and say, listen, I am into two months of not paying my monthly payments already, and I am getting nasty letter from Bank of Americas from Chase Mortgage and stuff threaten to foreclose my house. I do not want to lose my house. What is there, what is there, that we can do?

(0:11:29.2)

STEPHANIE:

I think I heard two questions there so I was going to answer the first. Yes, I'll answer the first. I don't know how this process is working because I just saw the press release but BP has hired an independent mediator for their claims process. One thing, maybe one option if somebody is having trouble getting their claim, moving their claim through BP. Supposedly, this independent mediator is going to be there so you can elevate the claim from BP to the independent mediator who is then going to take a separate look at the issue. There is a press release on BP's website about that with a phone number. That might be one option. But then there was a separate question about kind of what you do now.

NIKI:

Unfortunately, there's nothing we can do. There's nothing under the law the way it is written right now to speed the 90-day process. BP does have 90 days. Other than them offering interim payments which you mentioned, I do not know of any other avenue to speed up the 90-day process. Regarding the financial assistance, we may not necessarily be the best people to speak about that. It might be a better topic for another room, but there is information like the Small Business Association is providing loans right now. I know that is not ideal but it might be one avenue to pursue. There may be some other loan assistance to the Oil Pollution Act that will be set forward. We do have some fact sheets out front. One of which is on the oil, I can't spit it out, the trust fund. On the back of that trust fund, if you flip to the last page. This is not it, there's a list of resources.

STEPHANIE:

It's the two, the bigger one and on the back, it has...

(0:13:15.7)

MODERATOR2: It has some information about the Small Business Association, like where to go for more information about the loans process on there.

AUDIENCE1: We have direct contacts with small business because there's a lot of language barriers for some of our clients too. They were kind enough to send a Vietnamese representative for a lot of the shrimpers that are not getting the representative. The problems that they're wanting, that they are afraid of and this is just an ethnical traditions that what they're worried about is that they don't want to get a loan to try to get themselves out of their holes. Another question is there is a lot of attorneys that are out there or lawyers, that do want them to get in into litigations, the MDLs, multiple districts litigations. What they want us to do, their main concern is that, if I can get into these class actions cases I signed on with these people, of course it is better to have representative than not, but would then would I be a target for BP delaying my interims payments? That is the main concerns in their mind. If I do not get on to the MDL's litigations in the long run, if I'm getting interim check for \$2,000, \$5,000 in four or five months down the line, they say that's it, I'm not paying you anymore. What then? The livelihood is affected not just currently but possibly...

(0:15:08.1)

NIKI: You can certainly in four to five months still choose to become part of it. What you are talking about is that there is a move right now to consolidate all the class actions into a multidistrict litigation. BP has proposed that all of those cases be moved to Houston. The last time I checked, and I have been out of the office a lot lately, they have not actually created the MDL yet but that seems to be where this is going. And, that is how a lot of large litigation gets handled just to kinda streamline the process. You are potentially looking at it being 20 years before you get a settlement out of that. It could really be a long time. So, it might be in your best interest to see what you can get out of BP. It might not be everything you want. It might not be what you feel you deserve, but you might could see what they are willing to do, and then what they are not willing to do, you sue them over that part they are not willing to do. Do you know what I am saying?

AUDIENCE1: Yes.

(0:16:04.2)

NIKI: You are certainly not going to be precluded from later joining a lawsuit unless you are signing releases with BP and you are releasing them from liability. So, you have to be very careful what documents they want you to sign when you accept that money.

AUDIENCE1: That come to another problems. I have a lot of clients that came in during this first week or two weeks. They signed a lot of documents with BP

trying to get the interims payments. They don't have a copies, or nothing at all, except the claim numbers and a phone number to call. A lot of them would call constantly and wouldn't get an answers. Again, it's due to the language barriers also that they are having problems too. And they'd be on the phone for hours. They're so confused and so frustrated and stuff like that. Their question is that I don't even know what I am signing. I don't even have the copy of what I am signing. Everybody was going to the claim center and sign some stuff, and you know, it was a madhouse at that time. They did not even get a copy so they did not know what they were signing also. What should they do?

(0:17:21.3)

STEPHANIE:

Yes, that is really a hard one when those type of things. First thing, it may be that now if things have slowed down a little bit that maybe they could go back to the claim center and try to get copies of what it was. One thing now, moving forward, everybody needs to be very careful about what they are signing. Make sure that you read it. If there are language barriers, you should have the time to take those documents back to a family member or somebody else that can look them over. Also, there is no reason why you can't take the documents to a lawyer that you know. Find your own individual representation. The other thing to think about with class actions and why you have more time is that you are not precluded from bringing individual lawsuits on your own behalf. You can opt-out of class actions and have your lawyer of your choosing file a lawsuit on your behalf. I think that the most caution is that a lot of times it feels like you might not have time. But, you actually do have time and try to take that time for yourself to get copies of things, thoroughly review them before you sign them and make sure that everyone knows what's going on.

KAY:

I'm going to guess that you're much more well-informed of what happened in Prince Edward Sound and the Valdez. I personally see it as considerably different. That was a ship that went off course for whatever reasons and a different company. Nonetheless, I believe big corporations use stalling tactics to slow the pace of restitution to those individuals up there in Alaska. Just like maybe if you will elaborate on what you know from your readings and experience of what happened as a result of the Valdez and the course of action with the development of this trust fund, for instance. And just kinda maybe offer some of your own thoughts.

(0:19:55.7)

STEPHANIE:

A couple of big things happened after the Exxon Valdez. One thing was at the time when the Valdez grounded, there was no mechanism for the federal and state governments to get paid back or get reimbursed for all of these clean-up costs that they were laying out. So at the time, that the federal government and the state of Alaska had to file a civil lawsuit against Exxon, that went through the normal process. That wrapped up

fairly quickly. Exxon settled for \$900 million to pay back the clean-up costs and they setup a fund up in Alaska that was then used to cover some of the clean-up cost. What you heard about and saw in the news was a separate civil tort action by the residents and Prince William Sound. The class up there had 32,000 members in it, and it was fishermen, it was property owners, it was business owners. That's the one that took so long to come to the process. What happened was, I think, the typical course of action in litigation that involves a lot of money. Originally, the jury in that case found that there was about \$500 million owed to the class members in compensatory damages. That was their loss of income, property damage, those types of claims. But, they also wanted to send a message to Exxon that this was egregious behavior and they awarded \$2.1 billion in punitive damages. That was one of the highest punitive damage awards in environmental damages case. And, Exxon, as expected, appealed that \$2.1 billion punitive damage award. If I understand things correctly, I think that the class member, I think Exxon paid the compensatory damages. They did not challenge what they owed the class members that money, but they fought the punitive damages. That went up back and forth through the courts for years. It went to the California courts. It went through the federal courts. Last year, it ended up in the front of the U.S. Supreme Court. It was one of the biggest decisions of the Supreme Court last year. What happened in that case, I think, could have significant ramifications for any litigation moving forward here in the Gulf under the Oil Pollution Act because the U.S. Supreme Court said that in maritime cases or cases that are happening out at sea, the punitive damages cannot be more than compensatory damages. What that meant in the Exxon Valdez litigation was that since the class had only suffered \$500 million in compensatory damages, punitive damages could only be \$500 million. They significantly reduced that award. By now, since it had been 20 years, many of the class members had died, you had a lot of changes up there. When I checked a few weeks ago, there is a big range in the damages or the percentage of those punitive damages that class members got. Some class members got \$15, \$20,000. There were a few that got \$85 because of what maybe they were not able to prove their income at that time, but maybe they were individual fishermen versus seafood processors. So, that is the way that punitive damages often work in class actions. You have got two things, most likely changing the litigation that is going to happen in the Gulf. You now have the Oil Pollution Act that says BP is responsible for these things. And, you have a ruling in the U.S. Supreme Court limiting punitive damages in maritime cases. This is really going to affect what jury's and what judges can do in this situation.

MATT:

My name is Matt. In light of that, how are you compiling economic data or how are they compiling economic data to substantiate the real economic cost of the disaster, whereas all about that, because there's environmental, there's scientific, there's loss of marine life, there's effects on people,

restaurants, fisheries and all. All these different sources of data. How are they going about compiling all of that economic data into what is the compensatory cost that BP is actually going to be? And then, and then, based on that, then they can come up with a punitive number.

(0:24:54.3)

NIKI:

One question. Who are they? I'm sorry; you were saying how are they. I was just wondering who you were...

MATT:

(0:25:04.1)

NIKI:

I kind of walked in late so I am not sure where we started as for as who's...

Are you just talking about like individual attorneys that have lawsuits or something...

MATT:

Yes exactly. Attorneys are going to be looking for data.

(0:25:11.4)

NIKI:

The data is going to come from an economist and certainly we are not economists and can't speak to that. Generally in litigation, the attorneys are going to hire their own economist experts, and BP is going to hire their own economy experts. They are both going to present information that would then go to a jury and then jury will decide which is one is right. So, it will be an issue that is litigated during the trial. It will certainly come down to basically who the jury believes more and what data they bring forth in court. Both sides will have their own set of economists I would imagine.

(0:25:52.2)

STEPHANIE:

The other piece that is going on as well is that NOAA, they mentioned it in the larger session, there's a natural resource damage assessment process that is going forward. This is to help the federal and state governments recoup the cost of the clean-up but also the damages to natural resources. As part of that assessment, NOAA economists and federal economists will be compiling data on the lawsuits that will then feed into the federal and state processes. There's actually multiple data collection analysis that will be going on as we move forward. And, there may be competing numbers along the way that will only be straightened out in litigation.

BOB:

Bob Bretner. I live in North Gautier, kind of in the same boat as this lady right here. I own waterfront. I don't think I'll ever get hurt by the oil unless we have storm surge, which we have had, in the five years I lived here, twice. I also got an investment property. According to this thing here, it says that you got three years. You got to prove what your stuff is worth before and after, whatever, after damages. I'm not looking at any damages but except for monetary. What is this property going to be worth in three

years? Should I get an assessment now and say here is what his property is worth today or 46 days ago and then say what the property is going to be worth three years from now and go for litigation for the difference? We can't even get visitors down here. How are we going to get people to move here? I also got a \$150,000 fishing boat that is sitting in the driveway because you cannot go past the port out here. I am losing a lot of money, which I think was a direct result from a, if not criminal, I can say criminal because they cut corners from what I read and this disaster is a sole result from trying to make more money at the end, cutting corners, in which I was a safety personnel for a public utility for 20 years. You don't cut corners in safety. First thing is safety, getting the job done and then how much money we're going to make at the end. OK. He says I'm done. What can I do as a property owner?

(0:29:02.4)

STEPHANIE:

One thing to start at the beginning of the question that I don't admit anybody could, that if you're worried that damage might be headed your way. It certainly is appropriate to start to document what your property is worth now, I would say you can go out you can take pictures, you can start to create a file that will be useful in the future. That is something you might want to have for insurance purposes anyway. I think that having property assessed that this is its current value, so that you will have all of that information that if the oil does head your way and does affect your property, then you are not in the position of having to go back and say will this is what I think it was. You will actually have an appraisal that says this is what it is worth. Moving, looking into the future, that's a lot harder to be like what my future damages might be in three years because it all depends on the currents and the tides and how much oil is floating around there, what happens with hurricanes and things like that. That was the first thought I had.

(0:30:21.0)

NIKI:

One thing I wanted to be clear about is the three years we're talking about is the three years you have to file the suit. The loss, the harm that would happen to you would not be the value now and the value in three years per se. It would be the value of your property before the harm happened, before the spill. So, you would be looking at that value versus the value afterwards as far as calculating how the value of your property had been diminished. The three years is just a legal statute of limitations for how long you have to file that in court, but it doesn't affect when they assess the value of the property.

BOB:

I'm sorry. Like I said, I bought one property for investment, and I was figuring on putting it for sale this year. Like I said, we can't even get visitors down, you know vacationers, anymore according to the paper, according to the casinos and according to everybody else. Restaurants and seafood industry is crap and everything else. To me, the property is not a

total loss right now, but I'm paying out of my pocket because it's no longer a sellable value. The one guy that started the thing this morning says this thing isn't going to be resolved in his lifetime. I'm older than he is. What should I do, set it on fire or what?

(0:32:12.6)

NIKI:

No. No. No, definitely not. I'm very sympathetic to this situation you're from. I grew up in Vancleave, fishing down here and I have a lot of family members with fish camps on the coast and stuff like that. I completely understand where you're coming from. I was just talking about from the technical standpoint of the valuation of the property. That would be the difference and all these other factors that go in would go into play, like how long you couldn't sell the practice, the economy affecting the lack of interest in living down here and things like that. There would be externalities that an attorney would argue in your case as to why your damages were more or should be higher or such things like that. That would probably be more of a legal strategy for arguing the value of your damages and why they're higher as opposed to what perhaps you were being offered.

(0:33:06.9)

AUDIENCE1:

In his case, he doesn't even know what the loss of his value's going to be. If you work from 9:00 to 5:00, you make X number of dollars amount of money, then you can calculate, okay, in five years, I'd be losing this much money, but he bought it with intentions that the property is going to appreciate. So, therefore, if the property is going to appreciate, now, it's not going to appreciate. What is his recuperation? I have a client of mine, you know, that's gone through hurricane Katrina that's right here in Highway 90. It took him five years to finally be able to get his financial situations in order and he just rebuilt the frontage of his hotel right here, Bayfront Hotel. He lost little convenient store and little office and stuff like that. He put in a little over two million dollars now. His occupancy rate went from, at this time, it would be 80-90 percent down to 40 percent because he's getting about 50 percent of his occupancy calling to cancel that they're not coming because they're from out-of-state customers that say they're afraid that they're getting harm from the oil coming into the Gulf Coast because they don't know that it hadn't reach quite yet but it will be. He just put in two million dollars, he doesn't even know what the compensations is, what's he's going to come out of his income. In his case...

(0:34:49.5)

STEPHANIE:

There's so much uncertainty with respect to real estate and the one thing that's hard in situations with uncertainty is that no one knows right now.

These are questions that nobody has any answers to. The focus so far I think on the BP claim side has been on direct impacts, which are fisheries and that one is easier to tell. BP is also responsible for property damage and that doesn't necessarily mean that that's just property that gets oil on it. There would also be loss of income from investment properties and those type of things. I haven't seen anything only because we don't have claims when we're not with BP, so we don't know how their process is moving forward. But, those type of claims can at least be submitted to BP and you can try to start making those arguments, how you're going to prove that and what BP may accept. Right now, nobody knows the answer to that. Unfortunately, it may take a long time before you really get a handle on what BP is going to accept. It's easier with income. They can ask for tax returns. It's harder with property damage.

AUDIENCE2: I wanted to go to the fisheries. Document?

STEPHANIE: Yes, definitely document.

Document, assess, and document.

If you'd like to ask some questions, I want to get *[0:36:32.6 inaudible]*.

PATRICK: Okay. My name is Patrick. I don't know what's been asked here but I have what I feel is a legal question. The staging area in Gulfport for the response, all response to boats, Vessels of Opportunity is full of out of state boats. There's way more out of state than there are from Mississippi and there are a number of contracts that's been signed here including myself. We're not being activated or called to go to work, but there's out-of-state boats here. Governor Barber has said that the people from the other states could not work here on the beach clean-up. Why would they be allowing the boats in here?

(0:37:18.9)

NIKI: Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of information about the Vessel of Opportunity and it is a program through BP. It appears that there had been efforts. You are not the first person to raise this concern. It's been heard in Louisiana. There's been efforts to alleviate this problem, but we don't have any insight that I'm aware of in that and BP hasn't been very forthcoming with sharing information about that.

STEPHANIE: It's been a concern in Florida as well. Unfortunately, yes, we don't have information about how BP is running that program or what their criteria are or how they're selecting boats. I don't know if that...would that be the attorney general that can file that stuff?

NIKI: It might be something to raise with the state attorney general and on the back of our Liability Trust Fund website, there is a website and I think a

phone number maybe for the state attorney general. Certainly, if you are Internet savvy, the state attorney general has an entire web page devoted to the oil spill and that might be a good resource. It would be certainly something, perhaps, we might need them to weigh in on the behalf of Mississippi boaters.

AUDIENCE2: I agree.

(0:38:34.1)

MODERATOR: Can you fill out one of those forms, the first question with that information.

STEPHANIE: Okay.

The one thing, what is challenging about the Vessel of Opportunity program, is that it's a BP. That's being run by BP. As an individual company, they can set the rules with how they want to do that. Currently, right now, while there have been efforts in all of the states to rework that program, so that it benefits Gulf Coast boaters. Right now, we are not aware of any state of federal oversight of that program.

AUDIENCE2: Right, but being a loss to recreation from having our recreational boats. If we work and make money with them, then there's no damages, there's no way for us to sue them. You would think they would be activating the local boats and leaving out of states in their states. They have worked there already.

May I go?

(0:39:49.1)

MODERATOR: Yes, you can.

KAY: On a program out of Louisiana and I would imagine the emotions of the people from Louisiana would be a little different in this group today than maybe you're experiencing or seeing. There was mention that litigation could possibly be handled out of New Orleans federal courts or out of Houston federal courts. They were quick to remind listeners that BP's headquarters happens to be Houston, and the state that's most seriously affected right now, perhaps, and who has close connections with the refinery activities of the oil that would have been being taken and collected any way out of the Deepwater Horizon rig is our Louisianans. You had mentioned, Ms. Stephanie, that you thought the litigation would go to Houston. Why would you say that and is there, just as, an opportunity for New Orleans to be the site and center for litigation?

STEPHANIE: Yes. If I made that sound more certain, I misspoke. I'm not sure if it will move to Houston. What we do know is that both Transocean and BP have

filed motions in federal court to move their litigation to Houston. Under different mechanisms, Transocean's operating under some federal admiralty laws. BP has moved to create multi-district litigation in Houston. So, what's happening right now is you're seeing a battle between lawyers about where they want the litigation to proceed. Plaintiffs' attorneys would like it to be in Louisiana. They want it to be where the injuries happened, where their clients live, and where they have most of the damages. The oil companies, maybe because of ease of access in where their headquarters are, which is in Texas, would like to litigate in Texas because it's more convenient for their lawyers. There's also some, you know, speculation as there always is with regard to litigation about the courts, what the courts are used to handling. The Texas courts you often see a lot of cases involving oil companies. That may be another that you have more experience in Texas with regards to oil litigation but that's not usually the issue. It's usually just where is the best place to hear the litigation, what's the best venue for the litigation. I think there's a hearing near the end of the month on BP's motion to create a multi-district litigation, so we'll see what happens with that. Some litigation has been put on hold until that hearing is done. There was some litigation in Alabama that the judge put a stay on to see whether or not it would be moved to Texas. Right now, it's completely wide open about where that litigation would happen. It's going to be a battle of the lawyers.

(0:43:40.0)

MODERATOR:

Do you have a question?

AUDIENCE3:

I don't have, really. (Chuckle) It is a quick question. I'm a retired Army engineer. I have a degree in industrial engineering. I believe that the federal government is negligent or not doing what they should be doing to stop this oil leak. I believe they've just been allowing BP to try one attempt after another, all failures, when our federal government has the capability to stop the oil leak. I could go into a long explanation of how that could be done. My question from a legal standpoint is, when all is said and done, if it takes three or four months for this leak to be stopped, would it be possible for someone who has suffered a loss because of how long it was drawn out to sue the federal government for their negligence and not taking the lead in doing what can be done militarily to stop this leak?

NIKI:

Generally speaking, the federal government has sovereign immunity and only in instances where they have waved immunity can you sue them. There might be procedural avenue that is not coming to mind right now, for instance, the Administrative Procedures Act allows ways for you to sue the government for not following certain procedural requirements that are written into other laws. So, it might be something that if you were seriously interested in pursuing, you might want to consult with an

attorney that would have more knowledge of that. Nothing is coming to mind though right away like a particular avenue to pursue that.

STEPHANIE: The one that you may have heard of which is moving forward after Katrina is there's the Federal Tort Claims Act and what Niki said, normally, the federal government has sovereign immunity. They have waived it for certain torts. Originally, it was enacted for things like a postal worker hit somebody on the road and you can sue them for those damages. They have been trying that in New Orleans with respect to Hurricane Katrina. The challenge with trying to bring something out of the Federal Tort Claims Act is that sovereign immunity is waived except for things that are considered discretionary functions, which are things that government can do at their discretion. That's a very high bar to get over, because, in responses like this, there isn't a lot that's mandated by the law. All of what the federal government is doing is at their discretion for what they want to do. Those are probably the two laws that might provide an avenue. Those cases are just really hard to bring.

AUDIENCE3: Okay. A follow-up. I'm also a home owner. I came in at the end of that gentleman's question about recovering his loss and the value of his properties when this is all over. I moved down here about four years ago. I was up in the northeast, retired, and bought a home worth about a quarter of a million dollars here. I'm concerned about what the value of that home is now and what it will be a few months from now or even a few years from now because of this disaster. I'm wondering, what is the extent of BP's liability. Is there a limitation? I heard something about a limitation on their civil liability. I don't know whether it's concerning the cost of the cleanup or what.

STEPHANIE: There's no limitation on cleanup cost. BP is completely responsible for all cleanup cost. Under the Oil Pollution Act, there is a \$75 million cap per incident on other type of damages. Now, there are some movements in DC within Congress to try to change those but that would be looking forward. BP has publicly stated that they will pay all legitimate claims even if that goes above the cap. How that's going to work in the future, I don't know, but right now, they're publicly saying that they're not going to enforce that \$75 million cap. At least publicly, they should pay all legitimate claims for property damage.

AUDIENCE3: Mm-hmm (Affirmative). Am I allowed to follow up to my follow-up? (Chuckle)

(0:48:44.1)

MODERATOR: That's okay. (Chuckle)

AUDIENCE3: It's okay. That limitation, \$75 million, that's for civil liability. What if they are found criminally liable? I understand that the federal government is now suing or getting ready to sue BP.

(0:49:11.1)

STEPHANIE: That will be over and above. The \$75 million is just on certain damages that are outlined in the Oil Pollution Act that they're responsible for. The criminal investigation that the government announced yesterday is under a whole range of environmental laws that all have their own civil and criminal penalty assessment. For instance, BP might be found to be criminally liable under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Endangered Species Act and assess civil penalties by the federal government. But now, that money will go back to the federal government for use however they see fit.

AUDIENCE3: Mm-hmm (Affirmative). That's all I have. Thank you.

KAY: No. I'll just end with my remarks. I think that for me, the learning curve is extreme, and I hope that there are people on the other end of the learning curve who already know what needs to be done. I just want to thank you for your insights. The fact that we don't know what we need to know is a problem, but the more information perhaps that each and every person can garner, the better off we will be. It's not going to go away. This is not Katrina; this is well beyond what anyone around the world has probably experienced. It's a tragedy that we can only hope maybe will help the next rig that's in trouble keep from exploding or whatever actually happened and limit what problem will be in the future.

STEPHANIE: One thing I wanted to say to you two is you're not alone. We're all learning what is going to happen. One thing to keep in mind is that this is the first spill of any significance since we've passed the Oil Pollution Act. And so, environmental law scholars, federal attorneys and state attorneys and private practice attorneys, none of us know how this is going to play out. There are very few court cases interpreting provisions of the Oil Pollution Act. We've never had a claims process of this size. And so, I think that we're all going to be learning this together.

NIKI: One thing that came to mind, something that you had mentioned the first question you had asked is about what you could tell other people and homeowners and stuff is that I don't have any official information for them but I know that there are non-profit groups that are working on the ground to help the people with oil pollution claims, nonprofit attorneys. I know that the Mississippi Center for Justice that was involved in Katrina is also trying to help with this, and as we get more official word about those groups and their permission to share more information, we'll certainly distribute their contact information in the future.

(0:52:58.1)

MODERATOR: There are only so many commissioner's questions you can ask.

VANESSA: Hi. I'm Vanessa Gibson. I heard on PBS yesterday, NPR actually, that the insurance companies are already saying you're not covered if something happens. That just concerns me and I don't know if the oil comes ashore and gets on my property. I'm pretty close to the water. Have you heard that at all yet that they are already saying this claim is not in your policy and it's not going to be covered?

I haven't heard anything about that. Of course, insurance always depends on what your policy says. I honestly don't know. That's a question that we would have to follow up.

I'm just putting that out there because that was the first time I've heard it and then someone brought the question up again in the other room. I went, wow, that's just great, we just rebuilt and...

I would say that a lot of insurance policies do have exclusions for environmental pollution. If they are trying to classify this as environmental pollution on your property, then they would probably argue that it falls within that disclaimer. You would certainly still have a claim against BP for property damage.

(0:55:21.9)

MODERATOR: Right. Okay. Thank you.

(0:57:07.5)

MODERATOR: Attendance is going down.

AUDIENCE4: Is that obligatory too? (Chuckle) Again, I was wondering if you can maybe talk a little bit about if only something like this or during something like this, what's the most common kinds of either lawsuits or legal problems and kind of cases you see arising short term and long term?

STEPHANIE: Probably the most common ones, this one, one thing that maybe gets lost a little bit in the litigation following the BP spill is going to be that because 11 people did lose their lives in the explosion. You're going to see a wrongful death action; you may see criminal action based on that against Transocean and some of the other companies. That has been moving ahead. Some of the reports that have been out there right now talking about litigation are actually involving those litigations by those family members and you also see some emotional distress claims for workers that were on the rig. That's one piece of it and that is actually going to go ahead separately. Transocean has been arguing under some other maritime laws that they have limited liability with respect to the oil rig workers. Then, the other big group of claims is most likely going to be negligence

and those type of tort actions because BP and Transocean and Halliburton operated with negligence and that resulted in the spill and has given rise to all of these injuries that you will have civil tort action because of that depending on how the investigation proceeds on the federal. In state government levels, you may also see civil and criminal enforcement actions by the federal and state government. In my mind, there's three big groups or classes of litigations: you'll have the wrongful death litigation and the claims of the oil workers who are out on the rig that the day of the explosion, you'll have the negligence and civil tort claims from the property and economic damage from the spill and then you'll have the action by the federal and state governments.

[1:01:42.3 inaudible].

STEPHANIE:

Oh, true. That the other group is environmental lawsuits based on the federal government and BP's either compliance or non-compliance or enforcement with existing law. For instance, there are several environmental groups that have already filed lawsuits based on, what the technical term is, categorical exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act. Under the Environmental Impact Statements, BP was allowed to not fully disclose, not disclose, analyze certain impacts under the regulations. Lawsuits have been filed challenging the federal regulations with respect to Environmental Impact Statements of oil development. We'll see more of those as environmental groups find out what the federal government was doing and what BP had been doing. Yes, that's probably the fourth class.

AUDIENCE4:

I actually respect that. (Chuckle) I was just going to say that I've spent basically the last month and a half, two months up around Meridian area and it's actually, this is before the oil spill happened. I was working on a project. It was an oral history project on offshore oil work and offshore oil industries. It was ironic that I came in when I did because it was a week after I got here, that oil spill actually happened. What you mentioned as far as the different kinds of lawsuits, that thing you hear about all the time up there is actually is actually the deaths of the 11 people because a couple of them came from around that area but you don't really hear too much as far as the environmental stuff goes because people up there don't live anywhere close to it. I just thought that was strange about there.

(1:03:45.2)

MODERATOR:

Yes and the laws are different under which they're seeing them and there are times those are different laws that protect oil workers. From the lawyer's perspective, it's much more specialized litigations. Do you really put that in an organization? Then, you could see, for instance, *[1:04:16.0 inaudible]* as this happened offshore. There's another layer of federal laws in specialized areas got involved.

END OF AUDIO.

Legal Perspectives

Mobile, Ala., June 3, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:00:03.8)

AUDIENCE1:

I'm glad there's not many people in here. Because my question maybe a little trivial. I moved to Mobile 17 years ago. Always fished, everywhere I've lived I fished. Brought a bass boat here and over the 17 year period of time, I've evolved into a Gulf fisherman. And, uh, went from a 17-foot bass boat to a 26-foot Gulf boat. Looking at how long this could be, I mean snapper season is over with probably this year now. Looking at how long it maybe before I could use my boat again. My question is there any kind of provisions that anybody's making to either buy these people's boats? Like the shrimp people that's out of business, probably. Mine is just a little small deal. Just a 26-foot boat. Is there any kind of provisions made legally for people who not only professionally but recreationally will lose their fishing ability?

(0:01:18.7)

NIKI:

I don't know any provisions about people buying your boats per se.

AUDIENCE1:

Like BP?

(0:01:25.2)

NIKI:

Yes, I haven't heard anything about that. There are ways to be compensated for losses and stuff although a lot of the recreational fishery and stuff may fall to this state as a natural resource and the state will be pursuing damages for that. It may be that you have a claim that you could pursue through litigation. If that was something you chose to do. I don't know of any flat out programs to buy peoples boats.

AUDIENCE1:

Because of the oil leak or what's happened, people, the recreational fisherman alone would the people who would do it professionally, there out and there's nothing they can do about that?

(0:02:10.7)

STEPHANIE:

The way that provisions are set up right now. They are focusing on the law covers like loss of income and loss of revenue. I think the challenge for people in your situation is that there's nothing in the oil pollution act that is set up to compensate for the use of the Gulf in Mexico which is...

AUDIENCE1:

The \$20,000 that I paid for my boat is just gone because of the oil?

(0:02:41.3)

STEPHANIE: Well I mean you could sell it to somebody else or...

AUDIENCE1: No, nobody is going to buy anything like that here.

(0:02:47.0)

STEPHANIE: I mean the one thing that where those things are to be compensated is by the state federal government when they go after natural resource damages and how the state is going to that. The state of Alabama is participating in that process. They're seeking compensation from BP for the loss of the natural resources and the use of those natural resources, and BP may be asked to pay some damages due to that loss how the state then use that money? There's no way to know what they are going to do with that. There were some provisions. I think after Exxon that money went to a trust fund that was then used to enhance recreational fisheries and that kind of stuff but I don't know.

AUDIENCE2: I work for a not-for-profit organization. For the last 17 years, we have an annual fishing rodeo as a source of our major income for the year. Like \$50,000 a year that we make off this one fishing rodeo that pays our rent, the salaries, overhead, everything, and I need to know how to make a claim for that, because it is a loss of revenue for our organization.

(0:04:15.2)

STEPHANIE: Well yes that falls right within the loss of revenue. The way you start the process is to call BP. They have a 1-800 number or they have an on-line claims form and so at the back of our, that has that. It's my understanding that how the process works is that if you're calling, the person in the phone will just give you a claims number. Then, in seven to 14 days, a BP claims adjuster will contact you and ask for documentation about your losses so you will last year's revenue and receipts and all that kind of stuff. You will submit all of that. Then within 90 days, BP should provide you with an answer on what they've assessed your claim to be. But, you start the process by making the phone call.

AUDIENCE2: Can I ask a second question?

(0:05:01.8)

STEPHANIE: Yes absolutely.

AUDIENCE2: I'm the only one here (Laughter). This looks like it may have long term effects and I have not heard of any kind of timeline of when our waters going to recover from this. When we'll be able to do this rodeo again. It

may be five years from now. Do you make a claim for five years worth of revenue that we're going to lose on?

(0:05:35.3)

NIKI:

I would say you would start with making the claim for this year and see where that goes but I think everyone acknowledges the fact that we don't know how long this is going to last and that you may have claims that extend into the future and there is no finite end to that right now. I would caution you that if you do receive compensation from BP to make sure that you're not signing away your right to seek compensation for future claims. Because we don't know that right now.

STEPHANIE:

We haven't seen any, I don't think anybody's gotten through the process far enough, but we anticipate that when you'll probably get a letter from BP saying this is what we've adjudged your claim to be. Then paperwork with that, that also says things this is a final settlement about the disputed claims. Though when you get that type of documentation, you want to be careful that you're not waiving any future right to come back. Okay our rodeos been canceled for the second year and you can have those same damages and you want to be able to make a claim against BP for that.

AUDIENCE1:

Do you advise going through an attorney or to do it yourself?

(0:06:41.4)

NIKI:

I would recommend that you have an... especially as of like a business or a nonprofit group? Yes, I would recommend having an attorney look after it.

STPEHANIE:

Because you'll have you business document then, it would be better to have an attorney help you.

AUDIENCE1:

Thank you very much I appreciate your help. (Laughter)

RESPONDENT:

I don't know what to tell about recreational fisherman. I felt very unhappy with that answer but.

RESPONDENT:

I did too. I think that's a bad answer. I think it doesn't matter. They're not going to buy it but because you...

(0:07:26.5)

CAROL:

Could you just tell me where you all live?

STEPHANIE:

We're based at the University Mississippi School of Law. We're in Oxford but we are a part of the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium.

(0:07:57.2)

MODERATOR: Are you ready?

CAROL: I'm Carol Adams-Davis and my question of concern is after Exxon spent 2 billion dollars in Alaska on their cleanup and not even 8 percent of the oil was actually cleaned up, I think the main thing to understand is that oil, there is no clean up, really for oil. There is a lifetime life. There's a long life of the disastrous effects of this spill. How do we go about trying to put action plans in place here as far decision making on Baldwin County, Mobile shores? No one here today at this forum is in a decision-making role. The Coast Guard is not present. No Alabama agencies are actually present. As far as most effective way to be heard by people on the ground here, to affect that 3 miles offshore for state of Alabama. What would you say, as lawyers, would be the hierarchy to go through, as far as being heard and getting plans of action on the ground here? Everybody that's here today is basically from somewhere else and is listening to orders from somewhere else. All of the commands I have been told about are not here. It's hard for anybody to be making command decisions and disaster control decisions that aren't here. So, I'm just trying to understand. It's very frustrating for all of the citizens here. What would you suggest as far as legal, of the legalities, of being heard and could you just speak to this please?

(0:10:00.4)

NIKI: I'm not really sure that I understand what exactly what the legal aspect of it is, other than certainly for our public hearings and things like that. Like through the administrative process. Then you would want to go...

CAROL: That's an "if" that we know is not happening. So don't give me the ifs when we know they're not going to happen. I'm so concerned that no one is on the ground here. How can I legally make sure that people are on the ground? There have to be ways. Can we sue ADEM? Can we sue the Coast Guard?

(0:10:32.7)

STEPHANIE: I think one of the frustrations is maybe that this process is a federal process. The federal government is the one responsible for this. So you won't see...

CAROL: The state of Alabama's plan is what the federal, the federal decisions are in depth in the state of Alabama's court. Actually the federal government is not making the decisions. The Coast Guard is. As far as Alabama state waters.

(0:11:02.5)

STEPHANIE: The Alabama state agencies are active in the process and...

CAROL: I'm very aware of that. That's what in want to know. If they aren't doing anything right now on the ground, can we sue them? Right today? Can we start a law suit that encourages them? That will encourage them to be more active?

(0:11:23.4)

NIKI: We can't give you legal advice that is on our role here. You may want to consult with an attorney that could give you legal advice that maybe does represent non-profits or you know community organizers or something like that and speak to them about what potential legal avenues you might have.

CAROL: Okay. Thank you.

(0:11:57.2)

AUDIENCE1: Okay. I'm going to make this brief because there's smoke coming from that room, as well which I find very strange to have a meeting right next to smoke. When we're supposed to be about the environment. I'm a Gulf Coast resident and I've been following this oil gusher. This is not a spill, this is a gusher from the very beginning. There was a closed door meeting, April 27th between the feds and BP. This was documented in the Mobile Press Register, May 1, front page article. I believe it was front page. In that transcript, which was available on the internet, it shows a chalkboard with estimates from both sides apparently. 64,000 barrels to 110,000 barrels per day. That was April 27th. However, BP and the Coast Guard continue to tell us 1,000 then 5,000, then finally, when the scientists got hold of the video, we were shown what the true magnitude of it was. What I'm concerned about is that now BP is under criminal investigation. Guess what? When this oil being dispersed and going beneath the surface we don't know where. They should have never used dispersants. We may end up getting sued by Mexico, Cuba, South America. Who knows where this oil is going to go? We don't know where it is because it's been dispersed by the most toxic dispersion that's out there. It happens to be made by Nalco, I've read the non-proprietary information, the fact sheets. It's the most toxic, we don't even know what all is in it. What should have happened from the very beginning was the use of super tankers, vast armadas of supertankers. I'm wondering why the federal government did not insist on supertankers. The oil companies have these, they could have asked for help from all the other oil companies. There are companies that have these supertankers, this was used in the Arabian spill that was 85 percent contained, that was bigger than this one. That is the established protocol. Burns and dispersants are not the established protocol. I know they have been used, because they're cheap, they bury the evidence and BP is fined per barrel of oil released into the ocean. So, if you burn it and you disperse it, no one ever knows, and it's cheap. I'm wondering what the federal government is thinking to allow BP to do that and what BP is

thinking. It's not rocket science to figure this out. Especially when the two chief executives are contradicting themselves. Mr. Dudley says we can't collect it with supertankers because it's dispersed and below the surface.

(0:14:59.3)

STEPHANIE:

We're not from the federal government. We are from the University of Mississippi and we're here to provide information on legal questions that people have, and this is not a legal question.

AUDIENCE1:

This is legal because laws are being broken. Laws are being broken by the EPA, by BP.

(0:15:17.0)

STEPHANIE:

And lawsuits are being filed by groups challenging EPA's actions.

AUDIENCE1:

It could take years. In the meantime, what I'm saying is, where's the legal defense fund? Where are groups of lawyers working...?

(0:15:30.0)

NIKI:

We are not with those groups. We are not with them and we do not get involved in any litigation. We're not profile.

AUDIENCE1:

What are you, are you lawyers?

(0:15:35.8)

NIKI:

Yes, we are lawyers but our role is not to be involved in litigation. Regarding the oil spill, regarding any litigation ever. We do not weigh in on litigation.

STEPHANIE:

If you're interested in that, there's groups like Conservation for Biological Diversity that must have at least 20 lawsuits in the last two weeks.

AUDIENCE1:

So, what is your role in this group?

(0:15:51.7)

STEPHANIE:

Our role is we work for Sea Grant and we've been trying to provide neutral information about what your legal rights are following the spills so that you can evaluate the claims of law firms that are looking to sign people up for class actions so you know what your rights are with respect to BP. That you know what your rights are as to respect to a property owner.

AUDIENCE1:

Okay. What are my rights as a property owner because my property is probably toast?

(0:16:19.7)

STEPHANIE: You need to be documenting what the value of your property is right now.

AUDIENCE1: How do you do that?

(0:16:26.4)

STEPHANIE: Pictures and assessment, appraise. If depending where the oil goes, you can have an appraisal done later. The documents, the lost of the value and you can file a claim with BP. If you're not satisfied with that, you go to Coast Guard trust fund or you can file a lawsuit.

AUDIENCE1: I know that the oil pollution act has one billion dollars per spill. Where is that?

(0:16:52.3)

STEPHANIE: That's in the oil spill liability trust fund.

AUDIENCE1:: Is there a billion dollars in that fund as there should be?

(0:16:57.5)

NIKI: There's 1.6 actually.

AUDIENCE1: It's one billion dollars per spill. I have a copy of that.

(0:17:02.0)

STEPHANIE: Do you have a copy? One billion dollar expenditures per spill but there's currently 1.6 billion in the fund.

MODERATOR: Excuse me, I'm sorry to interrupt you but we like you to go on with longer than two minutes.

AUDIENCE1: I'm sorry. I know there are so many people waiting.

(0:17:21.8)

MODERATOR: We're so limited the questions and I answered.

NIKI: This one is on the trust fund.

AUDIENCE1: Just on the subject that we were just talking about as far as the quantity of oil that's been so disputed. There was a major cover up originally, and there's a reason that it was covered up, I think. Because I understand that it actually the fine would be based on the number of barrels that are spilled. That is very important for us to document the quantity.

AUDIENCE1: That was my point. 1,000 per barrel and it's being buried with dispersants in earth.

AUDIENCE2: No, not really. I have a voice problem to start with. I am with Fannie Mae, and I handle Fannie Mae's business in Alabama and Mississippi. Our interest at this point is beginning to assess what the foreclosure potential may be. We're the lead federal agency in dealing with foreclosure prevention issues. Our team along the coast here is very much involved in it, and we're trying to assess that now. I've spend some time with Dr. Appley at USA, and we're trying to figure out some kind modeling for see when the spiking might start taking place or where it's coming from. That's my whole interest, that's my legal side of that.

0:19:26.6)

NIKI: I don't think they understood our role (Chuckle).

AUDIENCE3: We have a couple of questions. One, I have a seafood business. My two sons crab shop *[0:19:46.1 inaudible]*. We have workers in there, they are more like peace workers because it's contract labor, they just come and go as they please but workman's comp., I mean, unemployment, I'm having to pay that on them anyway. The rate went up three times since January, you know, it tripled. Right now I have them all laid off, they're collecting unemployment because of this oil spill. Whenever we do get to go back to work, my rate is going to go up ridiculous because they've been collecting. Should BP have to be the one to take up the slack on all this unemployment even in the future, because my rate's going to go up so high when I do get back to work?

(0:20:38.7)

NIKI: I would certainly brief that in a business cost when you're making a claim to them. That would be a cost of doing business. That would affect your revenue. I would certainly document it and present it. I can't tell you what BP would do with that. But, I would certainly document it and submit it.

AUDIENCE3: Okay.

(0:21:12.6)

NIKI: We do have some general information if you're interested about the oil spill, liability trust fund in case BP denies your claim and you want to make a claim to them.

AUDIENCE3: Most of this stuff, the content, it's old, it's useless. I think if they have...

(0:21:29.8)

NIKI: We would be happy to give you the information that they're requiring people. They are not sharing that information with us.

AUDIENCE3: I called their Vessel of Opportunity program. They just handed out a new number down in the room. I called it. Walked right out of the room. Oh, that's canceled.

(0:21:45.0)

NIKI: This is not actually not BP information, this is more...there's a lot of other stuff on here for legal issues that might come up if you want to take it.

RESPONDENT: This is legal?

(0:21:55.9)

NIKI: Yes, we're the legal.

AUDIENCE3: Question, we were at a protest down in Bayou La Batre yesterday, we were blockading. I'd like to know, how do I go about legally protesting? Because the cops came and told us to leave. I'd like to know how can they not.

(0:22:16.6)

NIKI: I don't know the specifics for local laws here in Alabama. We're up at Ole Miss School of Law, but I think you may need a permit, sometimes they require permits ahead of time for local gatherings and things like that. I did understand that there was a blocking of the vessels. That might get you arrested if you're blocking transportation flowing in the water. Usually you just need a permit from the local government to have a protest or gathering.

AUDIENCE3: Even after, one of the boats was just tied in the dock. The cops come and told us we were either going to have to leave or be arrested. I think BP called them on some of us. I mean, why else did they just show up and do this, who were we bothering? I mean, this is the kind of stuff...

AUDIENCE4: You bring a boat into a dock, you tie it up. You have 24 hours to remain there, you don't have to just leave right then.

(0:23:14.3)

NIKI: My only thought would be that they required a permit or something. That would be their justification for coming there. I know that these things happen. Usually, if you went to the proper channels and you can say no, we were organized. We have a right to be here. We have this permit to be here. That would help deter police interference.

AUDIENCE3: Basically you would think permit and you just tell them no, I'm not leaving.

(0:23:37.7)

NIKI: When you have the permit, obviously the people that have given you the permit would know about it. They would know that you have a permit, that you would be gathering there at that time, at that day. They would be more organized.

AUDIENCE3: I mean 'cause it's hard to say no to a cop. It's true. That's what I'm trying to find out the logistics of it.

(0:23:56.4)

NIKI: Were you in the county or the city?

AUDIENCE3: We were in the city of Bayou La Batre.

(0:24:00.9)

NIKI: Then I would go to the city for a permit, if you are in the city limits. Ask them if what you need to have a gathering. Usually it's about a \$25 fee to get a permit for a public gathering. It just makes you official, and it gives you the right to be there.

AUDIENCE4: Okay, thanks for that information.

NIKI: That was interesting. That was a good question. I enjoyed that.

(0:24:49.9)

NIKI: There is reasons to have those laws.

STEPHANIE: They have speech zones. They created...

(0:24:55.7)

NIKI: That sounds insane.

STEPHANIE: It's because of the KKK stuff.

NIKI: I know.

STEPHANIE: It's by the Lyceum.

(0:25:10.1)

STEPHANIE: Right, because it keeps it off, like for football games, it keeps it away from where everybody is.

RESPONDENT: *[0:25:24.4 Inaudible].*

(0:25:24.4)

NIKI: ...Those people were motivated, they could rally some people. They could go start your own group.

RESPONDENT: They have a Sierra Club.

(0:25:46.0)

NIKI: There's a Sierra Club?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

(0:25:47.6)

NIKI: It didn't surprise me.

RESPONDENT: *[0:25:50.1 Inaudible].*

(0:25:56.0)

NIKI: My boyfriend works for the Sierra Club.

STEPHANIE: He's much calmer.

MODERATOR: Do you have a question?

LINDA: I do. My name is Linda Vaughn, I use to run an insurance company up in New York, I understand insurance. When this whole thing started and of course BP came up with this. Oh, we'll hand everybody \$5,000. I couldn't understand that, where's the loss? What are they basing that on, what's happening. I didn't file a claim with BP until I actually had a loss. Until they closed our shrimp season and our boat was unable to go out any longer. I've been told that the claim was now going to a large loss section. I'm not quite sure I've been told the truth with regards to that. I don't know if they set up a large loss section yet or what's going on. I guess my major question is, why can't I get to a BP adjuster? Why can't I talk to an adjuster that can adjudicate a claim with me, come to a conclusion and move this along?

(0:27:27.2)

NIKI: That's a good question, we don't have the answer to that. We're not with BP, and they're running the process the way they are choosing to run the process.

STEPHANIE: We've been trying to get information about how this has been forward, you call the number, got a claim to them right now. They've said that they referred it, but you still haven't actually got to an adjuster, they are just trying to shuffle.

LINDA: Yes. I have received my \$5,000. Again, that's not what I was looking for. I wasn't looking for a handout, I have a loss. I want to talk to some adjuster about it. I want to prove that I have a loss. You know what I mean? And

then I would like to just talk to an adjuster about it. So, do you see down the road...I know Troy King was in the area talking about there might be a round two that they're going to or something like that. Other than going to an attorney, is there anywhere you can send where I can try to get to a BP adjuster that's further up the road than just a claims rep that they have at these local, do you know what I mean, facilities.

(0:28:38.2)

STEPHANIE:

I don't know anybody through BP, and I don't know that this is the best option. I'm wondering if the Alabama attorney general might be able to help. Because they will be tracking these type of things, and they probably had communication with BP about their claims process, and they may even know something about whether or not they set up a large loss section. They have set up an oil spill page on their website with numbers that you can call. That might be a good place just to call and talk and see if other people have been having similar problems and they may have a contact for that. That might be one way.

LINDA:

Okay.

RESPONDENT:

Also, if you want to *[0:29:19.5 inaudible]*.

(0:29:31.9)

NIKI:

There's 90 days, they're supposed to resolve the claim within 90 days. Hopefully would have...

STEPHANIE:

Unfortunately they could take 89. That would be from when you filed your claim.

LINDA:

Right. The law in Alabama is 90 days.

(0:29:48.5)

NIKI:

This is under the oil pollution act, that's a federal law and that's what your claim under with BP. They have 90 days under that law.

LINDA:

Do you think that they already met it because they gave us \$5,000?

(0:30:02.5)

NIKI:

No. Those are interim payments, and that's also a provision of that law. That's actually a part of that law that they should provide these advance payments, that's why they're doing that.

LINDA:

Do you know that 90 days should be *[0:30:14.2 inaudible]*?

(0:30:14.8)

STEPHANIE: Yes, definitely. Actually within 90 days you should have some document from BP offering their final. This is what we value your claim at... This is what we're offering. You might not like what they're saying but within 90 days you should have that. You should definitely be in contact with a claims adjuster before that because you need to be able to provide them with documentation and those kind of things.

LINDA: Alright. I think this is enough, I don't think I have any other questions. Did 90 days are the day that I brought the *[0:30:45.1 inaudible]*?

(0:30:52.3)

NIKI: One thing I would caution you about though because I understand that you're anxious to resolve your claim is to be careful when you're filing those releases. If you are a shrimper or something. You may have damages next year. Make sure you don't give away the right to...

STEPHANIE: The other thing is that if you don't hear anything within 90 days, if it's just silence, you can go to the Coast Guard.

NIKI: This has some information about the next step, and it also has resources on the back.

RESPONDENT: *[0:31:30.7 Inaudible]*.

(0:31:40.2)

STEPHANIE: The attorney general will be able to help with things. They could say that they could say we've been hearing the same things or here's the contact number. I would do that right now. If you are still having trouble and you don't hear a thing from 90 days, then you can take it in the next phase of the process.

RESPONDENT: Okay. You answered my question. One success rate today.

(0:32:06.4)

NIKI: It's actually easier for us to handle their questions when they're one on one. We're the legal perspectives for the oil spill forum.

RESPONDENT: It is, yeah.

(0:32:32.2)

MODERATOR: We were from nine to noon, so the big group discussion from nine to 10. That's already over, now we kind of broke it into separate groups. We're in here to talk about legal issues. There's different people in different rooms.

RESPONDENT: Because I think, *(0:32:47.4 inaudible)*.

(0:32:47.4)

MODERATOR: Oh, you're for something else.

RESPONDENT: *[0:32:53.7 Inaudible].*

(0:32:57.9)

MODERATOR: That's the problem with when you say we're *[0:33:00.1 inaudible].*

(AUDIO ENDS ABRUPTLY)

Technological Disasters and Mental Health

Biloxi, Miss., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(AUDIO STARTS ABRUPTLY.)

(0:00:47.9)

MODERATOR: Unfolds and as we see what's going to happen, how it's going to impact Gulf Coast.

RESPONDENT: In extension, we have a little bit of different approach, but after Katrina, we went through a training called Triumph over Tragedy that came out of the University of Florida. Through that, we can talk to groups of people, for instance, in your office. That might help them to understand to recognize symptoms and people, coworkers for instance, that may not be at a stage where they're ready to reach out to a mental health facility. They may just need you to talk to. It helps you to recognize what you see in other people and vice versa because sometimes, they recognize you having stress that you may not recognize. It takes you through steps of just being able to talk to them and give them a chance to open up.

JOHN: I have been handed here a resource that's available that has Dr. Picou's information on it, his website and other information. If you like that, they'll be up here after the session or before you leave. I will say that another big resource that our state has is this State VOAD, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster and the South Mississippi VOAD. The South Mississippi VOAD is active in trying to prepare and get information for something that a lot of us really don't understand. The technological disaster, the first you heard that, you probably have to go Google it or something to find out what it was. It's a different disaster than a hurricane. We're used to hurricanes in a sense they come ashore, they do their damage, and people get busy and they start recovery. With this, there's no end in sight, really for a lot of people in. It has been said already that the anxiety levels and the stress, a lot of that is also compounded with Katrina not being so long ago. You have a double whammy or a re-traumatization dealing with, hey I just got my house back. It's not like the oil's going to take your house away again, but it could take the economy to such a level that you're not able to survive. I don't know if there's any other questions out here, this broad vast audience we have.

(0:03:36.4)

AUDIENCE: We keep hearing about Dr. Picou, is he going to present in the Mobile session tonight? Is there a way we can find that out this morning?

RESPONDENT: Yes, he's going to...

(0:03:44.6)

MODERATOR2: Because we thought he was going to be here this morning.

JOHN:

Yes. I talked to him this weekend. I know he said he couldn't be here today, but he would be in Mobile. He will be there and he's spoken. We had the community wellness conference last week. He's been speaking at our conferences over the year, because he also has stats from the peer-to-peer listening that he's used in Jackson County in Mississippi and Harrison County with groups. It doesn't replace mental health services, and I don't want to come across as saying that people should not, if they need help, shouldn't pursue mental health professionals because mental professionals are necessary part of people's recovery in many instances. Like we heard here, the group from Florida and there's many different ways, even non-traditional ways that people seek help for emotional and spiritual pain. It's a good thing to stay open about those things and to realize there's a lot of options. That no one option is the option for people. It depends basically on that person, individual and what care and what kind of need they have.

(0:05:00.8)

AUDIENCE:

I'll ask a quick question. You already mentioned this, but I was wondering if all of you could maybe clarify in terms of the differences between what you experience after Katrina in terms of helping people and what you expect as far as this goes with the oil spill and in terms of differences and similarities, and how you'd respond and what people might be going through in the next couple of years.

JOHN:

I know that Kaye and I have worked on several different grants, together resiliency grants and stuff. Like I said earlier, this disaster is not a disaster that comes ashore that people know in 72 hours, we're going to have an impact. People are not even sure on Mississippi Gulf Coast that if it's going to impact us directly or not at any time soon. We don't have any reason to believe that it won't, but when? If you're like me, you looked at the maps the first several days and you said, oh it's coming, it's coming, where's it at? It just hasn't come yet, which is a good thing. I'm not complaining. (Chuckle) The differences between Katrina, which Katrina gave large scale of challenges for the health community, mental health community because many of the people who were living here that were professionals were displaced. You're not going to have that large displacement here of professionals, I don't think. You may have some because of the economy that have to move to find a job perhaps. It's not like you have to get back into your home and you have to put up sheetrock again and have to do all this. It's more of the drain on the economy. My sister works in tourism, many of you know people that work as shrimpers or fishers, they work in the fisheries on some capacity or they make their

living on the Gulf Coast in some way that will be impacted. All of those people that work are going to have to be trained perhaps to work in a different field or move away. There's a lot of uncertainties. I wish we had all the answers to it, but we really don't know. We don't know what to expect and what recovery really looks like as far as mental health issues go, okay?

KAY:

Elizabeth talked about this some more, but long term is probably going to be a word that we hear more often. With Katrina, there are still people who are suffering from that. Right now, it's probably more anxiety of, like John said, the unknown and worry wondering what's going to happen. Once people's lives start becoming impacted financially, those things start to drain on your mental health. Definitely I think an idea that we need to remember is that, just because it's not affecting you directly, does not mean that the person that you're talking to or your family or friend is not being affected in some way and that what they're feeling is real. It's real for them. It's going to be in so many different levels and capacities depending on what your situation is here on the Coast. If you're directly working in an industry that's impacted by the waters or we're already hearing things that people don't want to come to the Coast because they think that are beaches are covered in oil already. Those things are obviously going to impact the tourism and hospitality industry, which trickles down to so many different levels. It's going to be very real, the mental health issues for so many people. If we can recognize that and try to help people and encourage someone if you feel that they're in that situation to seek help. It's okay to seek help; it doesn't mean that you're not strong or less of a person. Everybody needs some help sometimes. If we can encourage each other and empower each other to look for those things that can help us, that will be great.

LIZ:

I don't know what else there is to say other than what they've already said. It's going to be a long term. It's still just so unpredictable that we have to be able to be ready to respond in whatever ways that we can and what the people down here, for what they need to meet their needs as we can.

(0:10:14.6)

AUDIENCE:

I apologize if you all have already addressed this before I came in the session. With LaDon's this whole gathering is so well organized and it's hitting on such important topic. I'm interested in every group. I was curious to know if there are different approaches we take to responding to those that are reacting to natural forces like hurricanes versus these man-made problems. We have some we can point at and blame and really bring our anger together against certain entities, BPs catching it, the government's catching it. If that has a different approach to mental healthcare.

LIZ: That's a good point that anger is anger. (Chuckle) From a treatment standpoint, I would pretty much handle it the same way. That's a really good point, that they have a place to put their anger and someone to blame. Every person, every individual has their own way of dealing with their anger and working through it. That's what's important, is figuring out for that person, how do I help you through this? They have positive ways to deal with coping with that anger and the stress and anxiety. That's my opinion.

AUDIENCE: Can I do a follow up? I would say, I don't know that you had anger at Mother Nature.

AUDIENCE: You had anger at Mother Nature did you?

LIZ: Yes. At Katrina, I certainly do. Yes.

Oh, okay. I was angry at Alstag, but I wasn't necessarily angry at the forces. (Chuckle)

(0:12:23.7)

LADON: You may have answered this. The folks from Alaska, honestly I didn't know Steve had worked in Alaska. I should have known Steve a long time. They also use the term that, I hate to say I coined, but it's a real possibility with something like an oil spill. The term corrosive communities versus what we're used to, resilient communities where people come together after a natural hazard like a storm versus a corrosive community where some people fair better than others. There's a protest going on in Bayou La Batre over the vessels of opportunity program. Those sorts of events, I understand how you could get this corrosiveness within the communities. My question is what can we do differently, how do we need to treat a natural event, the resilience that's developed versus what we may see with a corrosive community? Is that something you all have experience with? Is my question clear? Probably it's not.

JOHN: Yes. One of the points you're talking about is that, the Exxon situation, what happened was many of the fishermen were paid to work the oil spill. Some of them were paid even if they didn't work because they lost their industry. What happened, whether you had a large number of people who were getting incomes by not working. A lot of the employers of the businesses in town couldn't find people to work for them. Some of the businesses closed because they didn't have anyone, like McDonald's couldn't find anyone to work there. It was a rippling effect, what they created when people were out of work for so long, and they didn't have to work. They filled their time with alcohol and with drugs. The corrosive impact, there was nothing there. The resilient community is one that puts itself, invests itself back into the community. As a part of the process of

healing, a part of their process of recovery. The Gulf Coast is very resilient because the people here, by nature, love helping out. Their volunteers and they work for recovery. After Katrina, everybody grabbed their chainsaws and everybody worked together regardless of who you were or what color you were, it didn't really matter. Sometimes the anger that's going to be created out of some people getting money from BP and others not getting money from BP is definitely going to cause some hostilities. To what degree that will affect overall community resilience, I'm not sure. I think that it's something to look at as opposed to just giving someone money, you give them something to do is always a better way to go about it. In my conversations with Steven or Dr. Picou, that's what we have discussed. The differences in the communities of Alaska and of South Mississippi or South Alabama. There are some stark differences in how we would deal with that. As far as the previous question about anger, I think that's why they name storms and so we give the storm a personality. I like to think that because I was very angry at Katrina, too. (Chuckle) Katrina damaged my tool shed or whatever and caused so much havoc and pain. I think that there is a sense that we identify with the storm as a person. I don't know how many people have been named Katrina after Katrina and that kind of thing. The big difference in technological disaster from what I'm not learning and the natural disaster is most natural disaster occurs quickly. There's a set protocol for recovery. For technological disaster, that's not the case because recovery could mean a lot of different things. If it was a nuclear situation, in other words a nuclear power plant, it would definitely even be different than the oil spill that we're experiencing. There's a lot of factors that change things. I think that's why there's such uncertainty right now anyway.

(0:17:14.7)

AUDIENCE:

I'm not sure this is really direct question, but just one thing I wanted to mention was, I think I was talking to you both about this just a little while ago. For about the last two months, I've been working on a project actually around Meridian in South Central Mississippi, and it was actually an oral history project on offshore oil work there. Doing interviews with those people before the oil spill ever happened. The question I had was, geographically, when you talk about mental health and it impacts mental health. Speaking with these people definitely the last couple weeks, you feel like a lot of them have lots of anxiety and tension too about what's going to happen to their work given what's happening on the Gulf now, but in communities three hours away from the Gulf. Geographically, do you see forming any partnerships with people in the other parts of the state that aren't directly on the Gulf versus; are you really focusing directly on this area? What do you see the geographic extent of this being?

JOHN:

Just real quickly and I'll pass the mic because I know that others are working in partnerships with people. The South Mississippi VOAD is

working in partnership with the USM, University of Southern Mississippi and Tulane. I'm sure other agencies and organizations are going to join. What we're trying to do is to bring together, like we did in Katrina, Kay what you were talking about earlier, the collaboratives that we built the networks that were developed, is to reactivate some of those but to build new networks that are regional. South Alabama, University of Southern Alabama, Tulane University and University of Southern Mississippi are three universities, but also a lot of non-government agencies or organizations like the Red Cross, Salvation Army, those are well known organizations. There's many, many more that are working together and that will work together as partners to collaborate together to make sure that everybody's needs are addressed. Not just the people that we think that need help, but to hear from people from the communities about what they need as opposed to us trying to design something and forcing it on them. It's a regional issue, so I think it'll be a regional collaborative that's going to be built.

KAY:

We're already working with Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi together as a group to put together some ideas and programs that might help people. As far as reaching farther than the Coast, there will be people who will experience anxiety, a loss of income are the results of that because the Gulf oil drilling will affected not just the oil spill. Then an anticipation that they may no longer have those jobs offshore. Typically, they're very well paying jobs and they cannot find other work that pays them with the same qualifications in other parts of the state.

PANELIST:

The group that's formed this today is a great opportunity because it's so far reaching and there's already so many people that are involved with that. Maybe if that can be a forum along with some of these other things. Open communication is going to be key, figuring out what do we need to do. Let's try to keep people involved. Also one thing that as you guys were speaking, I thought of was sometimes too the different organizations maybe are collaborating. Sometimes we forget that it's the people from the community that really need to be the ones that are speaking. This room may not be that full today because some of the other issues are more prevalent at this moment. As things develop and as it becomes closer here and starts to affect more people, then a couple of weeks or a couple of months or however long this room may be full. If we can keep in mind and stay focused on the fact that people will need help. When you say mental health, that usually scares people. They don't want to talk about it, there's stigma attached to it. The message that we always try to convey to people is that mental health is part of your overall health. Get help in some way. As things develop, if we can keep that in the forefront so that folks aren't afraid to ask for help or look for some educational things or different support groups that are out there. That's going to be more and more prevalent as things go along. Maybe this'll happen again in the near future

and we'll have a jam-packed room. We'll have more people here and some more discussion. Thank you all for being here. We appreciate that we're not the only ones here. (Chuckle)

(0:23:51.5) (AUDIO STOPS ABRUPTLY.)

(0:23:51.5) (AUDIO STARTS ABRUPTLY.)

With my neighbor.

LIZ: You're trying to keep everybody together.

AUDIENCE: Yes.

LIZ: Even though you have those kinds of pressures, it's okay to take time for yourself because if you're the glue that's holding all that together, you have to stay strong for them as well and for yourself. I would encourage you to at least go one time and see. Take that initial step and see. If you don't like it, you don't have to go back. It sounds to me like you're under an amazing amount of stress to the point where you're using the word frozen. That's a lot.

AUDIENCE: Getting here was hard, but I feel better that I did get here and I am going to try a couple of things. I'm not optimistic, but I'm going to try them.

LIZ: As long as you have the energy to try, I think that's a good first step.

AUDIENCE: Thank you.

LIZ: Okay.

AUDIENCE: Okay, yes. Please do because I'll forget. I can't hold a thought.

LIZ: Anxiety and stress will do that to your memory.

KAY: What I did was I wrote down the names of other organizations that we talked about, but we're with Mental Health Association of Mississippi. I have our phone number here. We can give you all sorts of different pieces of information for referral. Then of course, we have the senior program that I talked about. Maybe some of your tenants and things, we can help them as well.

AUDIENCE: Thank you for doing that. I appreciate all of you being here.

KAY: You have a lot on your plate.

END OF AUDIO.

Technological Disasters and Mental Health

Mobile, Ala., June 2, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

STEVEN: Good evening, my name is Steve Picou. I'm an environmental sociologist who studies disasters. I've been studying disasters for 30 years. I'm a professor at South Alabama. For the last 21 years, I have been studying the community impacts of the Exxon Valdez oil spill up in Alaska. I've actually lived over two years in Prince William Sound from 1991 to about 2002. I returned in 2004, 2006, 2008. I currently have a grant; all my research is independent funded by the National Science Foundation in the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. We're still studying the community impacts. My next survey will be in 2012. 2009, we found very significant problems for, what I would say, a significant minority of the people in Prince William Sound. Then I can elaborate on the empirical findings later. This is a real challenge to the integrity, the maintenance of heritage and the preservation of our coastal communities.

JOHN: My name John Hosey. I'm with the Mississippi Coast Interfaith Disaster Task Force. Our organization, first of all, has been around since '79 when Frederick came ashore. Our responses through the years have been to go to recovery mode, help recovery happen and then, usually within three years, go back into hibernation and go about our business and find another job. Katrina, as you well know, and the impacts from Mobile, Alabama, all the way through Louisiana and all points in between created significant mental health issues, mental health shortages for one thing. There were not enough clinicians. There were not enough professional psychologists. There were not enough medical doctors. Many of these were displaced, so we began to put together a collaborative or primary mental health collaborative for the Mississippi Gulf Coast to identify people on the Coast, professionals and other people in the industry of primary health and mental health to develop a plan, so that if there was another Katrina or another major disaster, that we would have community-based mental health services, crisis intervention through trained professionals, and then the reason that we got involved is because we realized that a lot of people during a crisis are doing a disaster after following a disaster. One of the first places that they turn is the church. Through surveys and research that we did, we found that a lot of pastors felt overwhelmed and especially in some of the underserved or vulnerable communities. The pastors did not have the resources or the education to deal with this. Over the last several years and with the help of people like Steven, Dr. Picou, and other people on the Coast, we host conferences annually to deal with this issue. We do trainings on a regular basis and crisis intervention. I have myself about 21 years in crisis intervention, both working on the community level but in the fire department and other areas. I will say that one of the best things

that can happen to a community following a crisis or a disaster is to have trained professionals or trained lay people or trained individuals that are able to do some of the things like Steven is talking about, develop a peer-listening group or to develop a service to a community to offer mental health services because we have found that if you don't do that, the longer-term impacts and the more possibilities of post traumatic stress and other things happening, they will happen if you don't intervene. When the oil spill situation came about, we began to look at ways that we could prepare, so that's primarily why I'm here tonight. We're also working on another summit for June 30th on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and hopefully expand that to a regional conference sometime in September to deal with, not just mental health, but the economy and ecology issues as well.

SUSAN:

Hi, I'm Susan Wingard with the Baldwin County Extension Office. I'm a county extension coordinator, and I do educational programs throughout Baldwin County. One of my areas is Family and Child Development. Some of the issues that we have dealt with in the past have been some of the training for childcare providers, caregivers that work with children related to effects of stress on children.

(0:05:48.7)

SANDRA:

Dr. Picou, I'm Sandra Price from Presbyterian Disaster Systems. My special interest is more certainly community-wide, do you have experience and research about what the faith communities can do, not just for their congregations, but for the larger communities? We really honor the mental health profession for sure, but what can the faith communities do in disaster particularly like this?

STEVEN:

Thank you for your question. What we found in Alaska, which is probably the template that I'll discuss from tonight, was that initially just like what's going on right now, we had angry fishermen in *[0:06:40.1 inaudible]*, you had Exxon telling everyone, "We'll make you whole again." The same words. You had fishermen who were being interviewed, the anger would turn into sobbing, choked-up tears. Right now, we're in what I would call the hyper-anger phase. People are uncertain, they're worried that they don't know what's going on, but they're going 90 miles an hour moving everywhere. Right now is a time where there can be very little done on a community level, the family level or the individual level except for the possibility, Sunday services for the pastor or priest to have the congregation pray and think about being resilient for what's coming on in the future. It's one spot that will probably be well attended initially. However over time in Alaska, we found that every community has what I would call a social capital. That reflects trust, that reflects all the social networks, the family networks. That also reflects people's own self confidence and then most important, agency. People want to participate. They want to go to the fair. They want to run for the school boards,

etcetera. I'm sad to say that in Alaska, starting about the third year, the social capital and the communities just dissipated. People were facing severe economic hardships. They self-isolated as a coping mechanism, which is the worst thing you can do if you're depressed or you have PTSD symptoms. We had our first suicide in 1993. The mayor of the community, one of the communities we were studying, committed suicide and left a note blaming the spill. Immediately after that, we had three more over the next two years. Two were fishermen, one was an Alaskan native -- he two high-risk groups in Alaska. But these little communities, 2,500 people, no roads, native villages of 80 to 100 people, right? You can get them under the microscope and look. We did an intervention program in 1996. In that intervention program, we did outreach to clergy, and we did outreach to the local law enforcement, we did outreach to teachers because the teachers, the clergy and the law enforcement were point people that saw the problems boiling through their congregations or in the classroom in terms of domestic violence calls and public intoxication, DUIs and things like that. The clergy, and John is a real expert at this, is really important. In my survey of 2,548 people along the Mississippi Gulf Coast and in Louisiana following Katrina, we looked at this loss of social capital. This is obviously an important thing. I got the percentage right here, 72% of the people had extreme or strong trust in faith-based organizations. In fact, faith-based organizations were the only variable that we found where people said, faith-based organizations have helped my community recover. Everyone else, local government, FEMA, state government, insurance companies, Road Home program, no. Only about 15% to 20% trust in them. There's a critical role. However, just as John noted, the clergy, the teachers and the police, law enforcement are going to be overwhelmed. Now, of course, in Cordova, they have about 14 students and their senior class, they have 14 to 18. We were dealing with 20 teachers. A lot of churches in that little town. There were 10 churches and they range from Russian Orthodox to Southern Baptist to Catholic, etcetera. The law enforcement, we have one dispatcher, a chief and three police officers, but you could work with those. Now, the problem that we're dealing with here is the increase population density that we're going to have to deal with. The greater variety of occupations because in Alaska, commercial fishermen and Alaska natives, the fishermen were economically linked just as our shrimpers are. The Alaska natives were spiritually linked to Prince William Sound, and they were devastated. "The day the water died" is the way they expressed the spill. They had no trust in the quality of their subsistence harvest. They were scared to death. This one told me two years after the spill, he said, I wake up in the morning, they live right there collecting razor clams right in their front yard. It's their front yard, the south. He says, when I look out and I see these people in moon suits collecting samples. He said, and they expect me to eat them? (Chuckle) This is not the first time the white man has lied to us. (Chuckle) I don't trust them. That's the important thing, the lack and loss of trust. You can

hear it in these other sessions. You probably heard it the general session. Who trusts the EPA? Five days after 9/11, they said everything was clear. Come on down, go back to work. We have almost 750,000 people right now who are on a medical list for respiratory problems, etcetera.

JOHN:

Many of you were here during Katrina, you realized that the recovery didn't happen without faith-based organizations. It would never had happened, not just the resources that were developed but with the on-the-grounds people that are already here, citizens that live here, church members that care, churches that open their doors and pantries and clothes closets. Many congregations now, I serve for many years in intercity church in Phoenix, Arizona, as a crisis counselor. I stayed busy every day, 10 to 12 hours a day, doing counseling, helping people find resources. That were going through the normal hazards and hardships of life. With this situation, one of things that's a little bit different, Steven, you can correct me if I'm wrong, is with the hurricane, we have 72 hours warning typically when we know where it's going to make landfall. Maybe a little bit more and a little less. It comes ashore, we hunker down or we evacuate. We come back and hunker down is a Southern term by the way. We come back, and we cut the trees, we pull out our chainsaws, get to know neighbors again and things. The resiliency there is strong and recovery happens. Katrina has tested resiliency quite a bit because of such a long-term recovery that's not complete by the way. We still have 5,000 plus and just in Mississippi alone, we're still struggling to get out of grandma's house, to find their own home again or older people that lost everything they have and couldn't afford to rebuild. They found themselves living in an economy apartment somewhere. There's a lot of things that are still on people's minds from Katrina and this is a secondary trauma to them. This trauma is so different because who knows when it's going to come, who knows what the extent of the disaster will be. You can sense the anxiety. If you heard some of the comments in the general session, people agitated. Like Steven said, this is the beginning, but a lot of the impact that we're going to deal with, if you're a mental health professional or if you have an interest in crisis intervention and that thing, a lot of these things are going to occur much later down the line, when jobs become more difficult, if they do. I'm praying that the best thing happens, and the oil evaporates, but we have to be realistic and we have to plan for the worst. When we think of the worst, we're thinking of 30 years, perhaps longer. We don't even know that answer yet because we don't know when the oil is going to stop flowing and what the impacts are going to be on the fisheries and the estuaries and all the other places on the Coast. I grew up on the Gulf Coast. I fished there most of my life. A lump comes in my throat now even as I tell you about it because I love now taking my grandchildren down to the beach to feed the seagulls, the fishes and to do the things.. well, the way I feel, just multiply that by thousands of other people. Loss of jobs, my sister works in tourism. I've got brothers

that work, have businesses on the Coast. The impacts are not just 72 hours. In seven years, it may be much worse than that. We have a long-term thing. The people that will follow behind us, I don't think 30 years for me, I hope that I'm retired by then... We have to prepare people now. If you're in the mental health profession or if you're a clergy member or if you're in a community, you're the person they turn to for help or whatever it may be, now is the time to really work on building those networks, building the collaborative in your own communities, finding out who the professionals... We have a representative here from Mobile that can give you resources. Right now, as you can tell by the size of this room and the attendance here, people aren't interested about mental health, because they don't realize it yet. They're worried about their jobs and their fisheries and those things and that's normal. Seven years, come back, this room is going to be full. People are going to be seeking solutions for broken marriages, suicides, drug addiction on the increase. When people are getting paid \$5,000 a month to stay home or maybe \$5,000 a month to take their boat out once a day, they lose that sense of who they are and the pride that they have. It's important for us to keep in mind the role of faith-based groups, not just faith-based groups, but community, non-government organizations, faith-based like United Way other people, Salvation Army, Red Cross, these are the long-term partners in this long-term battle.

(0:18:52.4)

MODERATOR:

Another question, do you have a question? No go ahead, yes.

(0:19:03.9)

DAVID:

Good evening, my name is David Sam. I work for Boat People SOS. It's a non-profit organization. We have 16 national branches, and we have one in Bayou La Batre and Biloxi. I just wanted to ask the panel, we work with a very vulnerable community. Most of them have been through five, six traumas throughout their lifetimes. They were in the Vietnam War, they lost their homes, livelihoods. They were raided and had traumas on the boats coming over to the U.S. Once they came to the U.S., they were put in refugee camps and went through more traumas. Now, they're finally getting by, and then Katrina hits. Now, they're feeling vulnerable again because first, they don't speak English and they feel they're being left out of the loop. They lost all their livelihoods, and they don't know what to do. Now, we have this oil spill where they have no control over when they can go back to work. After Katrina, a month later, you can go back shucking oysters and going back to catching shrimp. Now with the oil spill, when they go back to work, in the Asian communities, the men are the head of the household, those men have lost their identity now. They feel weak, they feel vulnerable. A lot of them turn to violence, rage problems. What would you think would be the best way for an organization like mine to help break into community, break down the walls where they don't want the outside world to know what's going on

inside their homes and maybe try stem some of violence or anything that can happen from this oil spill?

STEVEN:

There's a direct parallel with the Alaska Native Communities. Alaska natives suffered in boarding schools. They were stripped of their language, stripped of their culture. They have past experiences of trauma. When the spill hit, it devastated them. There were many similar types of responses, particularly, alcohol abuse. The native village of Tatitlek, four months after the Exxon Valdez oil spill, a colleague of mine got permission to go there and he wanted to just do some interviews. Sociologists, we always conduct interviews. He could not find anyone between the ages of 15 and 80 sober enough to interview. The entire village was maxed-out drunk. There was concern about the children and the Alaska Department of Mental Health was even thinking about doing a lifeline -- going in there and rescuing the children, taking them out. However, Alaska natives are sovereign. It's very hard to go into a village unless they allow you to land your plane or dock your boat. You do have a very vulnerable population. Most important is the language issue. We have materials developed and you can access these materials. It's free to the public. Go to pwsrca.org. This website is the website of the Prince William Sound Regional Citizens' Advisory Council. I've worked closely with them since 1995. They funded a program that was developed that included educational outreach, it included peer listener training and included a talking circle for the Alaska native, Eyak Village in Cordova. One of the things that I would suggest, if there is some traditions that allow people to come together, whether it's eating, whether it's some form of prayer, those kinds of activities should be encouraged because the talking circle really had a very positive effect on Eyak Village, Chignik Bay Village and the village of Tatitlek because people came from all over for that. If you can ground a kind of a building of solidarity and cultural consciousness and pride in some type of traditional activity, that would be the first thing I would recommend. Second, the Vietnamese in Bayou La Batre have been marginalized by this event because now they're not going out to the boats, they're not talking to the non-Vietnamese captain. No one is doing anything, but venting right now. They should be encouraged to participate in any kind of research activity that comes to the community so their voice is heard. I cannot underestimate this. Certainly, there's a language barrier. If they're good researchers, they'll translate the surveys into Vietnamese and have people in that community being the liaisons between the researchers and the community. Let's be candid, this is not the second shoe dropping for your community. It's like the ninth shoe dropping. Those groups, people and families that have had, you know, Katrina destroyed from Bayou La Batre all the way to the city of New Orleans, that was ... and I'll elaborate. I can talk all night. The university professor never gets out of the lecture mode. A natural disaster, people generally quit blaming God in two weeks and come back to build their community. You can't sue

God, but this thing, this man-made or what we call a technological disaster, has a principal responsible party. This is something that, it was preventable, it should have never happened. Hurricanes are part of our landscape. It's a characteristic of the Gulf Coast. This thing is something that you can point a finger at, and then the finger-pointing expands. They want to talk to the Coast Guard. That's another finger pointing. Then they're going to want to talk to EPA. Then they wanna to talk to FDA. Then they wanna to talk to fisheries and wildlife. Then all of a sudden, there are as many principal responsible parties out there to point fingers at and so the anger gets incredibly broad. We call it the corrosive community. Warning, threat, impact, blame and this cycle goes on and on. For a natural disaster, it's warning, threat, impact, rescue, inventory, restoration and recovery. For technological disasters, people get caught in that warning, threat, impact, blame. Warning, threat, impact, blame. I've seen people and Prince William Sound fishermen that stayed maximum hyper- angry for six or seven years. If you want to see a person age, become self-medicating constantly and become physically ill, you can't stay mad forever. You just can't. What I would recommend right now, if at all you could, we need to tell these people, take 30 minutes a day, turn the damn TV off with that thing going gurgling oil. Go sit down with your children and your wife. Eat a bowl of ice cream. Talk about anything but the spill. People need to start doing that right now. Hugs not shrugs. They need to hug one another, they need to stick together. If you can do it, take that downtime at least 30 minutes or longer every day because if you don't, you're going to lose it. It's what happened in Alaska. You can talk to people up there that say, we didn't stick together. We got mad at one another because spillionaires got their boats leased. Some people didn't get their boats leased. I saw sons that hated their fathers because the father got the boat leased and they didn't get their boat leased. Brother against brother, cousin against cousin. In a town this small, everybody's related there. (Chuckle) Everybody. Anyway, that would be my recommendation for a very vulnerable community, and please keep in touch.

JOHN:

It is David, right? David, I know a Tau [*sic*] in who is in Biloxi. She is with Steps Coalition, works at Steps. She has asked me what they can do with the community, and many of the community leaders that are there. In East Biloxi, I can speak about. I cannot speak about Bayou La Batre or Mobile. We are in the process of trying to include them in the conversation, make their input important, because it is important. The next summit that we are going to put together in June, June 30th, at USM Campus in Long Beach, we are going to have that community represented. It is very important what you were saying is to make sure that each community, and not just a bit of each community, African-American community, Hispanic community, that they are all represented there, that they have some kind of value added to that process. What they have to say and do is important. Also, some of the leaders, and I know the Asian

community a little but I am not an expert on it, is that with the men predominantly leading and the role of the Asian-American in the community of being pride, prideful of who they are and stuff, mental health is a bad word and you cannot say “you need mental health work.” I wish that they had not called this session mental health because it really should not be called that. It is community building. It is what it is. It is a process of community building and community resilience, mental health is one of those things but it does not have to be called mental health. (Chuckle) We are not necessarily dealing with mental illnesses right away. I would encourage some of the leaders from that community to become trained in just doing crisis intervention in their own language and being able to understand the cycle of a crisis, understand why people are grieving in the community. Dr. Picou said have these open forums within your own community, whether be it at a church or where it may be, so that people can get together and voice their concerns, but also let go of it there instead of let go of it at home, or let go of it at the bar, or at the casino. We have enough around Biloxi, I know, to get in trouble on a regular basis. If you did not have a lot of time on your hands and a little bit of money in your pocket, probably initially from what I have read in other research, initially the impact is actually going to have a positive effect on the economy because of the money that is poured into the economy. Once that money is gone, and once those opportunities are gone, people are going to be left empty handed. Preparing people now is the key issue. However that preparedness looks for community, you would know better than I would. I know Tau is working with me and other people. We really want you to represent your community and tell us what you need, as opposed to coming to you and say, hey you need this new program and that. It may not be what you need at all. It maybe that you can create something yourself to help deal with that crisis as it comes about.

FEMALE:

Certainly, there are a number of resources and agencies that are ready and willing I believe, to assist, but many times services and other things that Megan will maybe want to mention that may be available. It is important for you to be aware of some of those resources that may be available, so if there are needs where other agencies can become involved or other educational programs will gladly, collaboratively work with you when they are identified.

MEGAN:

Hi. I am Megan Griggs with AltaPointe Health Systems. We formerly used to be called Mobile Mental Health. We have a wide variety of outpatient services, psychiatric services, as well as substance abuse programs. We do have in-patient psychiatric services. We recently, because of Katrina, did open up an office down in Bayou La Batre, which is actually *[0:34:08.4 inaudible]*, I am sorry, by *[0:34:10.0 inaudible]*, yes and it's a stigma. One of the reasons we changed our name was to get out of the mental health statement. Again, like I said, it is AltaPointe Health Systems, but we are

providing services from age four all the way up to 100. Like I said, typically, psychiatric services, counseling. Again, as he has mentioned, any service that you find that you are needing from us, we are more than willing to provide. And because there is a stigma with mental health, if you may not want to go to the Bayou La Batre office, we do have several other locations throughout Mobile. I will be glad to give you my information if you have a need for that

LEE: My name is Lee Yokel, and I am the environmental education coordinator for five-state Alliance, called the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. We have been putting together a list of online resources, and we circulate it regularly. In the early days, there was the vacuum of knowledge of what is going on and what is happening, so we begin to compile that for the five Gulf states, where we could find it. What I am asking from you all are those online resources that seems to be where people are going today to find information for educational sort of things for teachers, coping, teaching children, how to address children, because they are going to be coming back to school in a couple of months and it would be nice to provide that, as well as the coping resources and where can people go online to learn things. I have your website already that you mentioned, but other things like that would be really useful that we could continue to build on that and provide it to Sea Grant for their ongoing website.

JOHN: I will speak to that real quickly. Our organization, actually, is working on that mini-grant with Sea Grant. Tracie is our administrator for the grant and we are actually supposed to be dealing with coastal hazards. We all predicted that it would be dealing with hurricanes, or perhaps flooding or tornadoes. Now, we know that there are very few pamphlets out there on preparing for the oil spill or cleaning up oil off your back porch or something like that. I am also with VOAD, which is Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters. South Mississippi has a VOAD, and we also have state VOAD and Alabama has VOAD. Most states do as a national organization, as voluntary organizations active in disaster. What we have started doing in South Mississippi VOAD, we saw the need to develop a communication tool to help people who are not only partners with VOAD, but community leaders and universities that we work with another people. We developed these resources. I was doing the update and prepare it once every day. I got to work Steven, what you were saying about turning the TV off. I had literally started wanting to self-medicate after pulling that information off. Looking at it constantly, I am trying to put it in a digest so that it could be shared, but it is a resource and that it is not all of our information, its links, pictures, opportunities for services, opportunities for volunteering, SBA information. Anyway, if you go to smvoad.com, that is our website, but we have links there to the other agencies. We are working on permission for Alabama and Louisiana. We are working, trying to, on the VOAD work as partnerships across Florida

through Louisiana, at this point, to develop a policy statement based on VOAD. When you say VOAD, you tell them about organizations like Red Cross and many others, faith-based groups and other organizations. Universities are sometimes involved. We are hoping that some of the unanswered questions that we have ourselves about teaching preparedness and teaching about operating within communities, multi-cultural approaches to helping people. Even a lot of counselors, that are licensed counselors, are very lacked in their skills in multi-cultural. It is important. There is a lot of things to do. What we are trying to do is to get ahead of the game. I do not know if we are going to be able to or not, but we are going to try. I had blond hair two weeks ago, I promise you and weighed 160 pounds (Chuckle). There is a lot of things that need to be done on self-care, as well, because you get wrapped up in helping people and before you know it, you are the one that is needing the life preserver. There is a lot of things to handle and a lot of resources as you develop resources, I will put your link on the websites as well. Steven is on there, I believe, already. We continue to compile these documents, but it is great service to have.

STEVEN:

There is the stevenpicou.com, which has articles, book chapters, and published works for 20 years of research and left along with the Katrina research, if people want to read about the empirical work that we did. I feel very proud of that 20 years of research despite the fact that Exxon chased me all over the place. I beat them in federal court down here. Judge Cassidy was the presiding magistrate. They wanted all my data. They wanted names and address and phone numbers of everybody I interviewed. That was obviously going to be used to harass people I've promised confidentiality, too. They got beaten. They did not get it. That was another principle. On rcac.org. On that website, you will find a user-friendly guide to recovery from technological disasters. This is a very simple, straightforward guide that people can use in all communities that gives you information on the program we developed, what you have to do, developing an incident command system in your own community, processing information, providing accurate information to the members of the community, etcetera. If you really want to get into, the appendix, which is about 600 pages, is also there with all the materials that we develop. You can also email and request a peer-listener training program DVD, which I made. We did the first perilous program in 1996. That was two days. We did a 4- to 6-hour version in 2000 and now, I went back up there in 2008. We got a shorter 2-½ hour version. The thing is, is that this is a marathon. This is not a 100-meter dash. I live in Orange Beach. I have studied the stuff up in the last up to 21 years, then I looked out my front door, and 300 yards away is Gulf of Mexico, and I go, oh my God, that monster's comin' here. Maybe, it won't be as bad. It is hard for me to look you in the eye and say it won't. I think it is going to be heck of a lot worse. What is the challenge? The challenge is to maintain the community,

social capital, maintain your community integrity. I have gone up to Cordova in 1994. I had six new mental health directors. The new mental health director rolled in every year and they only had three staff, but over that six-year period, like 12 staff rotated through. When I landed at Wilburs Mud Hole Airport, took the cab into the reluctant Fisherman Inn, got my room. There was a note there from the new mental health director saying, I would like to have you over for breakfast tomorrow morning. I really need to talk to you. I have heard about your research. I was sure I went over to his cabin at 7:30 the next morning and there he was, cookin' up the eggs. There with reindeer sausage and that kitchen smelled so good. "Come on in." We met one another for the first time. He put my plate on the table. He looked me right in the eye and said, "What in the hell is wrong with the people in this community? What is going on? You got to tell me. I have never seen a community so divided, so hostile, and so fragmented and as many people with serious problems that do not want to be treated." Well, Five hours later, I left the cabin, and we had talked. But, this was only six years after the spill. We'd only had three to four suicides in town at that point. Anyway, it's a tough road, but you got to preserve the community. You got to preserve yourself. You got to take time out. For those people who are working, mental health people, they need to take care of themselves, but for people who volunteer, who are hugging, who are listening to people vent, who are doing this, you got to take care of yourselves, too. You really do. All of the volunteer groups, the faith-based groups, people who have participated in that, you've got to take that hour a day. Go play with the kids, go talk to your wife. I do not know, maybe buy her a box of candy or something. Just get away from it, because it just eats you up. Like I said, it is a marathon. It is not a 100-meter dash, and we haven't even gone 10 meters as of today.

MODERATOR: Do you have a comment?

SUSAN: I have a comment, Lee. The extension offices in the southern region are identifying some resources. They have put together task force. I will gladly send that to you and to Sea Grant once those who have been identified, that would be better.

JOHN: Dr. Picou (Laughter). I was going to talk a little bit. I do not want to sound critical of anybody because I do not want you all to take it this way, but I heard we were quoted in a newspaper in Biloxi, not long ago.. We did a conference. Basically, our community wellness conference, but it deals with a lot of mental health issues. There was someone that made the comment, why do we need mental health services? People, get over it. People just need to get on with their lives and get over it. I want to speak to that for just a moment because resilient people take trauma and disaster differently. Some people do just get over it, move on and they are strong, but because you are able to do that, that does not mean everybody else

does. Sometimes, that attitude of “just pray more” or “just have more faith” or “just read the Bible more” or even “just get over it,” sends a message to the community that what you are feeling is often legitimate, but also there is shame involved in feeling frustrated or angry. You are going to have people potentially, and I am not trying to scare anybody, but long-term potentially, you could have people who have been in the shrimping industry, fishing industry, and tourism industry their entire life and the generations as far back as they know, and were are looking forward to passing that along to their children's children. That may or may not be a possibility anymore. A man that has a shrimp boat, and I could imagine how much one of those would cost, or a charter boat or he earns his living, taking people on tours. I have been on a few myself. They must make a good living because it is pretty expensive to do that, but that income is going to be gone. That pickup truck and that house that they were able to pay for, all of a sudden, is a burden. I do not care how strong a man you are, if you cannot take care of your family, or lady, when you have children at home and you used to bring home a lot of money from your job, and you are no longer doing that, that weighs heavy on people. People react differently to it. Some people react violently to it. Some people self-medicate. Some people go to the casino. Some people get involved. Some people become a part of the solution and find things to do with their energy in their lives. I think it is up to professionals and community to help point people in the direction of positive ways to deal with the stress. Not that we're not going to get mad. I just got married last week. I have not gotten mad at my wife yet, and I hope I don't because she could hurt me, I think, probably. It is normal to get angry. It is normal to be upset. It is normal to express yourself, to even to have tears. I have cried over this oil spill thing. It is normal to feel that way. As much as we can communicate to society, to the communities, that all these feelings are normal, but you must do something about it. If you do not, some people that were already traumatized severely by it would develop post-traumatic stress disorder or at least symptomatic post-traumatic stress. They will not feel like it is okay to seek help. It is important to keep communicating in their circles that it is okay to feel the way you are feeling and that there is help if you need help. Please do not write in newspapers or tell your people or your church or whatever, “Oh, just get over it.” Be strong. Have faith. People with great faith have great problems that sometimes cause great distress. We need to normalize that as much as possible and to make it okay to come see a counselor.

STEVEN:

What you have to remember that after a natural disaster, like Katrina, everyone agrees that (a) the disaster happened, (b) you are a victim and (c) you need help. People from all over the countries, through Red Cross, everybody agrees. Now, what is going to happen with this technological disaster? It is going to become contested. Think about that, contested. You are going to be called a whiner. You are going to be called someone who

committed fraud against BP. You are going to be told, essentially, that your claim is not legitimate. You are going to be treated like a person who is trying to get something out of nothing. You're standing in line to get your money from the litigation. By the way, in the lives of the people, the fishermen and the Alaskan natives, 20 years before they got a dime. 6,000 plaintiffs died, 7,500 plaintiffs went bankrupt, and the divorces were astronomical. Just about every fisherman that I knew in the town of Cordova got a divorce. I would ask them. I come back every year, oh my God. You got a divorce? You were married for 32 years. Hey Ross, do you think it is because of the spill? Nah, No. In denial. This thing is so big. It sucks you up. It sucks your community up. It invades the social fabric. It becomes hideous. It is the first thing you think about when you wake up in the morning. It's gonna be the last thing you think about when you go to sleep at night. It is not going to be like Katrina, where you come back from five to six months at most and you can start rebuilding. This thing is going to go on and on and on. My point is, if you understand that, and we are not the only people, locally, in Bayou La Batre, in Louisiana, along the Mississippi Gulf Coast, we are not the only people that have been impacted by these kinds of things. Before, Exxon Valdez, there was the Amoco Cadiz off the coast of Spain. It took 16 years to get that one straightened out. Remember Love Canal? Hooker Chemical? It took 16 years before those people got their value of their homes and got that mess cleaned up. Three Mile Island? Research shows that 10 years after Three Mile Island, people were having very serious problems. Very serious problems. So, look at your neighbor. Hug your neighbor. Be careful as to what you say. Another thing you don't want to say, is do not tell them I know how you feel. No, you do not know how they feel. You never will, and they do not know how you feel either. Those kind of cliché responses. Get together, take that time out, understand that you are facing a long, hard road. Understand that only you, and John made a real, good point, try to move yourself from the role of I'm-a-victim to the role of I-am-going-to-help. I am going to be a helper in this community. There are two different roles. Victims generally find themselves locked up in a room. In Cordova, when we first went to that town, the bars, and this is a little town 2,500 people, no roads to it. You get there by flying in, if the weather allows you or you take eight-hour ferry ride to it. When we first went there in '89 and '90, right after the spill, the bars are like pubs. People are in the bars at nine in the morning, drinking coffee, playing checkers. It is just a place where everybody goes. In 1993, four years after the spill, there is not one person in the bar except the bartender. Whoops! Four new liquor stores popped up in the town. One even had a drive-through window. Then, the Cordova Family Resource Center was created. Why? To provide shelter for battered women. Whether they are going to the bars and talking to your buddies and your relatives, and talking about all the salmon you caught. When the herring fishery went in 93, it has never come back. All of the other ecological damages that came over time. What did people do?

I do not want to go to a bar because everybody is going to be griping and mumbling and talking about the spill. I am just going to pick my gallon of rum, I am going to go home, and I am going to get smushed. There is your context for domestic violence. We know that whole pattern. See, this is a corrosive pattern. The whole pattern changed. Rather than having that social capital where people come together and share their community, their shrimp festival, people come out there. The Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo, we may not have it this year. See, that is the time for people to come together and share. Then, people start isolating. The worst thing you can do if you are depressed, is to stay in your room. It only makes it worse. The more you consume the booze, the more you start thinking about doing things to harm yourself. Okay. So, you got to get out. You got to get around. In our peer listening training, which help people, if you think -- peer listeners are not therapists. But we say -- if you think you got somebody who is having a problem, oh, go by the house and help him cut the grass, help her wash her clothes, or go to movies, go rent a movie, do something that gets people out and connected.

(0:57:14.2)

SANDRA:

Back to my concern about what churches can do. Oh, this is so very helpful, but I remember hearing you say that the one thing that can help right now is what happens in churches Sunday morning. Do you know of resources that help preachers preach in this kind of a crisis?

STEVEN:

In Orange Beach I go to St. Thomas by the Sea. Do you know that Father Jim, five weeks ago, directed his whole sermon about the spill after it had been out for two weeks? I could see people kinda squirming a little bit because he touched a chord. He asked everyone to pray, and he told everyone that, if you need to talk to me, call me any time. The simplest thing would be to reach out as a pastor and maybe tell people that were all concerned. There are certain people who are more vulnerable than others.

(0:58:16.2)

SANDRA:

Of course.

STEVEN:

If you work at a post office in Orange Beach or Port *[0:58:22.9 inaudible]*, you do not have a problem. You will get your check. But if you are fisherman, you work in tourism, etcetera, etcetera, and this thing starts squeezing you, you are going to have a problem. So, it's important for those people who have kind of a, how do you call it, independent income from the beach and from the Gulf. These are people that could really be enlisted to help because they are not going to be feeling it. In Cordova, our teachers, they saw their kids were banging off the walls and were trying to... it usually never happened in this little town. When we talked to them, even the same for the law enforcement, we said, when you go into that house for domestic violence, you got your

procedures. We are not telling you to change your procedures. You go through your procedures as you have been trained, but remember, these are not two drunk, broke fishermen beating one another up. These are two victims of the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

JOHN:

Also, Sandra, I would say that sometimes, the role of the churches, as you all know, is so much broader than just what happens on Sunday morning and what is spoken from the pulpit or lectern, or whichever denomination you might be from. It is important. I am thinking almost every denomination or every faith group, there is leadership in the church that reacts to the crisis or reacts to the disaster.

(0:59:53.3)

STEVEN:

I would say that churches, and I can help you with some of those resources later. I do not have the answer as far as sermons go, but faith groups can activate what they would normally activate for hurricane and tweak it little bit to deal with some of the community issues that may be needed. One of the things...somebody brought this up not too long ago. They were talking about the number of new children that may come into the daycare situation. Why? Because mothers who were able to stay at home or mothers who had a different sort income lost that income and they had to find another job and they needed daycare services. To be creative and to be careful to listen to the community about what the needs are in that community whether it be Vietnamese community in the local church there and what can they do to respond. I think as far as the clergy members go, those who actually speak to the people, is constantly being encouragingly realistic. In other words, to admit that there is a problem but to continue hope and working towards the solution. As positive as you can be about the situation. Yes, it is a bad situation. Yes, it may be 50 years long, but we are going to work now to determine the future for our grandchildren and our children's children whatever it may be. All hope is not lost. For some people they feel that way and I can understand that. We need to constantly not get false hope, but to promote that there are avenues that can lead people to deal with the emotional issues and the spiritual issues. Actually, you have given me the idea to develop sermon outlines perhaps for people to use on a Sunday morning to help address fears and anxiety as it relates to a technological disaster.

(1:02:19.3)

AUDIENCE:

On our website, PCUSA.org, we have prayers and liturgy and sermon helps and that kind of thing. I was just wondering if there might be additional ones. Anybody can use those.

(1:02:38.0)

JOHN:

One thing I think this whole situation is that we are learning about technological disasters as it is happening as opposed to being prepared for

something like this, which the hurricane is here now and we preach and we preach and we preach or we teach or we promote hurricane preparedness. Have a plan, that kind of thing, and most people do not do that. I do not know exactly how to prepare people for this kind of disaster outside of what we have discussing and trying to use the community grass roots type-people, SOS boat people, the steps coalitions, the faith-based groups. The people that do the teaching to the community that are key gatekeepers for their community. They need to be the ones to create solutions and to help find solutions for that community. I would preach that over and over again. Sometimes we become so bent on finding a solution that we package something and we offer it to every community the same way. It does not work for every community the same way. The economic hardships and stuff are gonna to come, maybe out of this new industry will come. Maybe out of these new things will happen, but we have to deal with it. We do not have no choice. You can either stick your head in the mud or you can be a part of the solution. The solution for your community whatever it may be, I know that you do great work in Mississippi. The PDA does great work there. Tornadoes just wiped out a large portion of Central Mississippi several hundred miles of damage and then the floods in Nashville. There is never a shortage of disaster. There is always a shortage of people to respond to it in such a way that everybody, every community is addressed and all their needs are hopefully met. So, I don't know, there may be some other questions or comments that you have. Steven might have something else to say or Susan.

(1:04:45.5)

STEVEN:

I would just second your insight that there is no silver bullet. Now, the materials that you can go access are flexible enough where can modify them according to your own unique characteristics of your community. Your unique needs, , etcetera, etcetera. They are kinda open and flexible. When I was doing work up in Alaska, one of the things we kept telling people when we went back up there we report to them what we were finding and it was kinda like, well, I had one fisherman tell me. "Well, you know, when you quit coming up here, I will know that this thing is over." (Laughter). The thing was that we reported back to them and then finally we had the opportunity to work with them on an equal status basis just like...you got to do this and you will do well. No, that does not work. We work with community leaders on an equal status basis. They participated in developing all these project materials. When you look at those project materials, it is not Dr. Picou's stuff. Not even close. It was Dr. Picou working with, and listening to and responding to and listening to the people in that community. What they knew would work to help them out because they knew the social problems that they had better than anyone. We got a heads=up on this with those materials. We told them that...if this happens again, all this we are doing will help other people. They have been down here. There have been people down here from Alaska that I

worked with over the last four weeks. They have been to New Orleans. They have been to Port Fourchon[1:06:57.1 *inaudible*]. They have been to Mississippi Gulf Coast. They have been all over, I think they are healthy and, they have recovered because they are ready to come help you, and they are here.

(1:07:14.7)

JOHN:

If you have not got the chance to look at Dr. Picou's materials. You really need to look at it. It is great stuff and it is born out of community listening. It is not just peer-to-peer listening, but it is actually out of and created from them listening to the community, and it is something that you could adapt. You could take it to the Vietnamese community. You could take to the white community. Whatever it may be. Different socio-economic groups that respond differently...it is adaptable. It is very adaptable. Any other questions? We can leave early. I have not had dinner yet. (Laughter)

END OF AUDIO.

Technological Disasters and Mental Health

Mobile, Ala., June 3, 2010

Disclaimer: This transcript begins with the first mention of the topic and introductions.

(0:00:09.2)

MODERATOR: If we could start with each of you introducing yourselves, please.

STEVE:

Good morning. (Laughter) My name is Steve Picou and I'm an environmental sociologist. A person that studies disasters. Been studying these events for 30 years. Actually, the major disaster that I've worked on for 21 years is the Exxon Valdez oil spill. Over a period of time I've probably lived up in Alaska over the last 15, 18, years for about 2 years collecting data in small commercial fishing communities. Very isolated communities with no roads to them, Alaska native villages and looked at the community impacts. In addition to all of that, in 1995, I received funding to try to develop a mitigation program that could be distributed to communities. These events, technological disasters as opposed to natural disasters, are characteristically noted for chronic community impacts. In Alaska, we had the first suicide in a fishing community four years after the spill. That was followed by a rash of suicides as people lost income and as fisheries were experiencing long-term impact. The impacts in Alaska were latent in terms of the significance of fisheries. In other words, you have oil bergs and you have immediate impacts. It took about two or three years before the ecological impacts begin to manifest themselves. So, unlike natural disasters, technological disasters, those that involve contamination, tend to slowly reveal their consequences over time. Human communities are in a chronic manner constantly battling to cope with this. I'll never forget when I went to Cordova in 1989 town of 2,000 people, no roads to it, beautiful little Alaskan community. I walked with my Ph.D. student Dwayne Gill and we walked down Main Street. Never been to Alaska before and I looked at him and I said, this town may not be here in 25 years. Of course, it was like everything going on now: bustling angry people, fisherman in gyms listening to Exxon saying, we'll make you whole again, and BP is using the same words. The scenario, the initial play out, is very similar. Hopefully, for this event, the fisheries will not be seriously impacted, and the tourism will not be seriously impacted and the economic effects will be short term. But, we do know from the Exxon Valdez that this is, this is not what happened. The stage is set and hopefully we can be ahead of the game for community preservation and to help people develop coping skills and to be able to manage their livelihoods and protect the integrity of their communities as well as their traditions.

(0:04:26.5)

JOHN:

Good morning. My name is John Hosey. I'm with the Mississippi Interfaith Disaster Network in Biloxi, Mississippi. We've been around

since 1979. Typically, our response has been to hurricanes, tornadoes, floods and even sometimes community disasters like large house fires or community crisis. We work with a number of partners, about 72 partners, on the Coast who are mental health professionals, clergy, hospitals and other organizations we meet bi-monthly since Katrina so that we could continue to build a collaborative effort. I have about 19 to 20 years experience in crisis intervention and several years experience in direct mental health services. And, since Katrina, we've learned some lessons. Some of the lessons we've learned was, number one, is that during the disaster -- and the differences of these disasters really play this whole thing differently. A hurricane, you got 72-hours usually before landfall to prepare. The hurricane comes aboard, leaves a lot of damage typically, and then you begin to clean up, and you somewhere down the road know, maybe even if it's 10 years like Katrina, you know that you're going to have recovery. With this situation, people don't have to evacuate, but they have to sit and wait for something to occur. What we are trying to do is get ahead of what Dr. Picou was talking about. Things that will happen 18 months, two years, three years, five years down the road. Even with Katrina, we saw PTSD symptoms not really kick-in until 18 months to 36 months after the event. A lot this was due to the crisis, the immediate crisis of losing your home and being in the storm and experiencing that trauma. A lot of the trauma was secondary trauma. What I mean by that is that people who lived in communities came back to the communities and didn't stay during the storm but they begun to see the impact and effects of the storm on the economy and on people without resources. So, what we're trying to do is to bring groups together. We're working with Tulane University in New Orleans, Dr. Picou from South Alabama and also Mississippi State and University of Southern Mississippi and several other organizations trying to get ahead of this. Louisiana has already been impacted and already, we have seen incidents of people seeking crisis intervention trying to determine what they're going to do, very anxious about the threat not knowing what it's going to mean for them. And all the unknowns is really what cause a lot of the anxiety. The anxiety disorders, people that are already suffering from mental health disorders. Even if they're slight anxiety disorders, incidents like this tend to heighten that and make it even a more difficult situation. We have other people here from the Mobile area, also, that are going to share about some of their resources and what they're going to be able to offer.

(0:07:28.0)

SUSAN:

Good morning. I'm Susan Wingard with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and I'm in the Baldwin County office as a coordinator. I do educational programs relating to family, child development and different family issues. Some of the things that I have done is worked with child care providers particularly after Katrina in looking and recognizing symptoms, stress signs and all with children and talk with them about things that they can with the children in their care.

(0:08:03.0)

MEGAN:

I'm Megan Griggs from AltaPointe Health Systems. AltaPointe Health Systems is the local community mental health center. We are the largest community mental health center in the state of Alabama. We do serve Mobile and Washington County. We provide both psychiatric and substance abuse services. We have approximately 650 employees to include psychiatrists, nurse practitioners, licensed counselors, nurses, case management and behavioral staff. We provide a wide variety of services. We do have an in-patient hospital that serves both voluntary and involuntary adults and adolescents. We do have seven outpatient offices throughout our continuum that serves primarily indigent Medicaid and Medicare. Then we do have a private practice office that also serves more insurance-based and EAP consumers. Within the outpatient continuum, we provide a huge variety of services. Some in the office, some out of the office. We have day treatment programs, just regular clinic where you see a nurse and doctor, individual, group therapy. We also have a large continuum of residential services. We serve probably around 400 consumers in the adult arena for residential. That goes from apartments, support of housing all the way to group homes and foster homes. Then we do have our children's residential program that is located at our Baypointe Hospital. We also have substance abuse programs, we have five of those. It includes a medication-assisted treatment program. We specialize in women's and children's program that serves women who are pregnant or her dependent children that have substance abuse issues. We have intensive outpatient program. An HIV program for testing and counseling and then a dually diagnose program which serve people that have a severe mental illness and substance abuse issues. I'll be here to answer any questions as far as accessing services or any services that we have.

(0:10:10.8)

AUDIENCE:

I'm interested in the mental health of the individuals and the community. When I came down here I didn't know what to expect. I came in here because I saw the word health basically. I was looking more for answers to health issues in general of the community.

(0:10:36.7)

STEVE:

They're intimately related.

AUDIENCE:

I know they are. Right now, my concern is the impact on our health within each of us. We're not directly...

(0:10:49.1)

STEVE:

Smelling the fumes and stuff like that?

AUDIENCE:

Yes.

(0:10:53.8)

STEVE:

Let me comment on that. It starts with the community. I'm not a psychologist. What we observed happening in Alaska was, the communities lost social capital. By social capital I mean, agencies, trust, social networks, family networks, etcetera. So, this is collective trauma. What happened in the communities is that this event caused so much anger and so much heartache that people quit participating in the community. They self-isolated as the primary coping mechanism. They self-medicated. The rates of alcoholism shot up. The domestic violence got so bad that the Cordova Family Resource Center was created. It was created by local people so battered women could have shelter. Never before, this town had been there since 1907, never before had they had that problem. Certainly, as people languished in a community that we call the corrosive community, they quit going to church because everybody would be griping about the Exxon oil spill. The bars in the town were more like pubs in Ireland they were social places. People would be there in the bar at 9:00, 10:00 in the morning drinking coffee, playing checkers etcetera. The bars became empty. Three to four, five new liquor stores opened in the town. People started buying liquor, taking it home and self-medicating because they didn't want to go up to the fisherman union shop because everybody was still angry and upset over Exxon, over the spill, over the lack of any damage payments, because the litigation was dragging on for 16...actually, it was 20 years. 20 years. Physical health in the town rapidly deteriorated. I have no data on this. But if you go to Cordova and you talk to people they'll say, where is all these cancer coming from? People are dying of cancer left and right. I went there one time in 1996, and they called it the Cordova crud. Everybody was sick. It wasn't from the oil because no oil ever came on their shores. It was that the breakdown of the social capital in the community led to the corrosive community which in turn led to serious family problems which led to serious mental health problems which led to serious physical problems. When I say it's all interrelated, we may not be aware of how significantly these things are related particular for small communities that are heavily dependent on commercial fishing.

AUDIENCE:

[0:14:19.2 inaudible].

(0:14:20.0)

STEVE:

Bayou La Batre, you could go right down to, I don't know, Pass Christian and down to South Louisiana, Apalachicola, Karabell. One final comment. The thing that's critical here is that because you have a more complex and diverse occupational structure that's going to be impacted, I would think that long-term economic stress for people who own restaurants, marinas, rent Sea-Doo's and all of that, that it doesn't matter who you are if all of a sudden you're engaged in what we determine to be economic loss spirals over five or six year period due to the consequences of the spill. Then we

would expect the same results for other occupations. That really is what's mind boggling about this situation. You have such an increased population density and increased, a more diverse occupational structure that's going to be impacted. Rather than talking about communities of 2,500, we're talking about communities of 40,000 people etcetera.

(0:15:50.5)

JOHN:

I don't know if you lived here during Katrina or after Katrina. But, you know, some of the physical illnesses that came, after that we had a high increase of staph infections. We had a high increase of respiratory problems. Then we had the formaldehyde issue with some of the FEMA trailers. Every disaster carries with it some danger. Physical, medical dangers with it because of toxins, because of things in the air. The EPA is monitoring this, and so probably around health issues and how those affect you, I know that you can go online and our website has...I'm with the South Mississippi VOAD as well. Our website has links to the EPA but also to other studies that's been done about what the chemicals are in oil and also the chemicals mixed with the dispersants and how that becomes almost, could become a toxic soup. But, nobody really knows to what degree that that will be. To try to answer the physical aspects of the effects or the long-term impacts of the oil spill would be difficult for us to do. It may even be difficult for the EPA or anybody else to do at this point. I fear that it's going to be that long-term thing, and the Exxon situation was 30 years ago, and they're still trying to come back. And, I don't want that here. What Dr. Picou was talking about is very important. We've seen this after Katrina. Initially, there is this large influx, increase in incomes. People were making money doing the rebuilding, and they were cleaning, and they were doing, they were active and they had things to do, and they had to do it. Pretty soon, the work went away and we begun to see an increase in suicide and increase in physical illness and increase in intakes into treatment facilities for alcohol and drug addiction. Methamphetamine got really out of control and it's still out of control. You can almost...if you looked at the spikes of where it's the highest and the levels that are the highest, it's almost all 36 months after Katrina. This room is empty right now but in 36 months, perhaps five years, this will be the primary topic of discussion because people will be struggling with their marriages because they've lost their incomes. Their children will be struggling because of domestic situations at home. What we're trying to do, I know that Steven and others from Mobile, all across the Coast are trying to get ahead of this thing as much as possible with trying to determine what kind of services we can make available. Job retraining, it may be a big thing. But when you get a Vietnamese fishermen who's done that his whole life and his father's done that his whole life and he planned on his son doing that his whole life, that is gone. That language barrier and the culture itself really doesn't allow for job retraining. They've lost their way of life, they've lost their stability, they've lost their place in the community. Inevitably, if those

communities don't get specialized help, that's specific for their culture then you're going to see a lot of physical ramifications. That's going to come further down the road. I've smelled the smoke from the fires burning, and I wonder sometimes what are we breathing. The EPA tells us we're okay but who knows. (Chuckle) I don't know. I don't know if...any other questions or not but...

(0:19:40.7)

AUDIENCE:

I was wondering, I'm assuming that you're trying to get information to people. Is that correct? As far as people needing jobs and financial hardships, do you have any information on where to send them when they're looking for, maybe some of these oil spill jobs or things like that? I've gotten some calls like that, and I don't know what to tell them.

(0:20:03.6)

JOHN:

Sure. I could recommend that you go to the Deep Horizon site itself. They have some information there. South Mississippi AD's, voluntary organizations active in disaster, it's national a organization and it's all typically non-profit organization like the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi, all these different groups, about 90 different groups come together when a disaster happens. We had a good bit of tornadoes that came to the central part of our state. We collaborate and coordinate and communicate to take care of that disaster. Our website, South Mississippi, it's smvoad.com. If you go there, we have information about volunteer opportunities but also job opportunities. The vessels of opportunities for people who own boats, that's going to be limited. What we were told is about 33 percent of fisherman across the Gulf Coast will be utilized. That leaves another 60 something percent or so that may not be used. They may take turns. I don't really know how that's going to go. The links to those situations, usually, your state department of economic development...in Mississippi we have the employment agencies and that kind of thing, they're the ones that are hiring people for BP. BP is the only company that's going, right now at least, is going to do the actual clean up of the oil. They will not allow volunteers to do that. It's toxic, it's bad. They are using volunteers to clean up the beaches, to prepare for the oil to come and that's something that anybody can do. Last night we talked about the importance of using the energy that you have, the anxiety that you have to actually get involved and do something. That in itself can be a big mental health cure for a lot of people. Instead of sitting in front of the TV and watching the oil flow out of the ground constantly, that's not good for you. It's not good for your kids, it's not good for anybody. I do this update. I was doing it every day for the first two weeks, and I had to stop because I was constantly in that. The guys and lady and then all the people that are working the actual spill are coming back, fisherman who aren't used to that are coming back in need of someone to talk to, crisis intervention because they're seeing the

effects. This is going to grow. There are opportunities for other employment as well. Right now, it's all wait and see, and that's what makes it so tough. I don't know about opportunities in Alabama or Mobile as far as that goes. Maybe you can speak on that.

MEGAN: We've been told mostly to contact the Alabama Career Center and there's one in both counties.

(0:23:01.5)

MODERATOR: Is it...?

MEGAN: It used to be called the employment office but it's Alabama Career Center.

AUDIENCE: In Mississippi, it's WIN Job Center.

JOHN: WIN Job Center.

(0:23:15.0)

STEVE: Sociologists look at things in different perspectives. You've touched on something because the first stake that's driven in the heart of the community is the inequitable manner in which some people are hired and some are not hired. In Alaska, they call them spillionaires or Exxon blank. (Chuckle) Exxon prostitutes. That wasn't the way it was said. It was said with anger because some fisherman made a lot of money. They leased their boats for \$2,000 a day. Maybe two boats for \$2,000 a day for 90 days. Hit your calculator. They were spillionaires whereas others couldn't get their boats leased if they got on their knees and begged. This divides the community, seriously divides the community. It's the first step in the corrosive community because you got some people...we documented brother against brother, sister against father. It was not talking, I'm not talking to those people. They got the new truck, they got a new boat, where I'm starving. I've got to sell my husband's hunting guns just so we can eat next month. That's the first thing that happens. Whether it's done purposefully, I don't know. Whether it's done strategically to divide and conquer with the litigation that's coming down the road, I don't know. There's no equitable manner in which some people get employed by the principal responsible party and others don't. It'd be better if they had a lottery. They put every fisherman's name in a big bin and pick names out. Maybe a lottery every month or something like that. Of course, I don't know if they have time for that. That's an important thing, getting employment. What you're going to see is that yes, some people are going to get employed. They may even sign that waivers saying I'm not going to sue or they may even not want to talk about getting sick out there cleaning up because they're BP employees and they know that they'll be cut loose. I had a person in Cordova who is very perceptive, and she told me, we're like a third-world country, and Exxon is throwing money all around, throwing money everywhere. Some people catch it, and some people

don't. We are the worst for it as the community. The corrosive community notion. After natural disasters, you have, as John pointed out, therapeutic community. People quit blaming God after a week or two and they hold hands and they rebuild and they build everything back better. But no one is rescued from a technological disaster. You can't inventory the damage because they'll be inventorying the damage for 20 years. That's the unique characteristics that essentially make the viability and integrity and traditions of communities important to maintain. If you maintain that, then you maintain the families and the mental health of residents.

AUDIENCE: What about the kids?

(0:27:32.1)

STEVE:

Real quick, children of the oil spill. When we did our intervention program in Cordova six, seven years after the spill, we talked to teachers, because they saw it in the classroom. We talked to clergy, because they saw it in their congregations and we talked to law enforcement, because they saw it on the streets and 911 calls to homes. We tried to explain to them that what you're observing is not a bad student, not a bad kid, not a drunk, unemployed fisherman, not people in your congregation who have left the church because they don't (Chuckle) believe in God anymore. You're looking at victims of a technological disaster. You have to understand that because they don't understand that. They don't understand why all of this is happening to me and to my family. The children could be scarred for life. After 21 years of researching Alaska, I can tell you there are people who are still seriously wounded after the 20 years of litigation. It's kind of like two other major events. The Great Depression and my grandparents used to always (Chuckle) talk about the Depression. World War II. My father and my uncle would sit on the back porch when we were children and rocking the rocking chair and tell the same stories over and over and over, but we loved to hear them. The kids love to hear them. We'd sit there real attentive. My father fought in the South Pacific theater and my uncle was in North Africa and they would tell the same story. It was therapy for them. They were suffering from post traumatic stress disorder. And, on the back porch after sunset in South Louisiana rocking after they'd had a couple of beers, these stories would come back again. I know my grandfather used to talk about the Depression all the time. You could buy a steak for five cents. You'd have to work three days to make 10 cents. He was always fearful, always had his money in the house. He did not want to put it in the bank because he lost money in the bank, because he was worried that it's going to happen again. Post traumatic stress disorder. I look back and I see that now. When I say people are still wounded in Alaska, and the whole town is not learning them up. Do not get me wrong. It's a significant minority, 30% to 40% when we did our last study in 2009. One of the strongest predictors of stress and depression was

how long you had lived in that community. People that lived in the community for more than 20 years from the time of the spill were more stressed than people who had come in 10 years ago, 12 years ago, 15 years ago. So, there is recovery almost by displacement. I can tell you there are people in that fishing community, there are fisherman and Alaska natives that will suffer until they die. They'll take that 20 years with them until they pass on.

(0:31:24.4)

JOHN:

With the kids, it's important to remember the community services that are available to kids. The Boys and Girls Clubs, the other events in school. Kessler, who did a study, he's with the Duke University did a study following Katrina in New Orleans and some parts of Mississippi and found that, this is five-year olds, kindergartners. 63% of five-year olds suffered traumatic injury as a result of Katrina. As you read the study some more, and you do some more digging around, you'd find out that most of that trauma was not suffered during the storm but following the storm in their own home. Drug addiction increased, domestic violence and these kind of things. It's important for the children to be educated as much as possible about what this disaster means. But it's even more important when you're talking about children's health and responding to children's need during disaster, you need to start with the people who are on the frontlines who are able to help them when their parents are falling apart. A lot of the times it could be a boys and girls club, it could be a health fair, it could be that somebody in town is offering a special pizza night at a church to bring the kids in and care for them and love them and give them an opportunity to voice that through music, through poems, through coloring, through whatever activities they can. The children are always significant. In every disaster, they look at some survivors of Camille. I was 6 years old when Camille came through. See how messed up I am? (Laughter) They looked at survivors of Camille and the one thing they said that's different from Camille to Katrina was the family structure during Camille in the '60s, even the late '60s was much stronger. You had many more two-parent homes, many more...if you would say the resiliency was stronger or the people themselves, the character, they were some of the World War II people, that generation that we're losing, that strong generation. Whereas when Katrina hit, you had so many families...Katrina did not necessarily cause a lot of problems. It just made a lot of problems that were bad, worse. Problems with facilities, mental health, there was not enough mental health professionals living in certain areas especially Mississippi. I think they graduate in Mississippi and then move to Alabama. There's a need to constantly think of creative ways to have opportunities for children to debrief essentially. To talk about what's going on at home more than anywhere else. You know as well as I do, when the turtles show up, and there are turtles that have died whether it's the oil spill that caused it or not. The porpoises start having problems, the pictures of

the pelicans and all these start happening, that's going to affect the kids. That image is going to be burnt in their mind forever. So, they need a place to talk about it. I don't know, maybe Alabama has some services or some other recommendations for that.

(0:34:41.0)

MEGAN:

I'm over our adult programs, so I know very little about the children programs that we offer. I do know that we do have a huge outpatient office but because of Katrina, we did build an office in Bayou La Batre to serve the consumers that were...because of the hurricane. We also did a lot of programs inside the school because of the stigma in parents not wanting to bring their kids in. We'd also provide summer programs, and we'd go out to the community center and then have the children come to us. We did more of a lot of education going in and talking to the kids about what their feelings were, how they felt about it. I would assume that we probably would do the same type of thing in regards to this at least in that area if not in other areas of Mobile.

(0:35:28.4)

SUSAN:

We also have a 4-H youth development program that has lots of different activities going on throughout the year. Many times, we have community activities going on in different locations. A lot of those are actually volunteer led. Many times it's people within the community that may identify some other types of programs that they may want us to be involved with, and we'll gladly do that. We are involved in a number of community health fairs throughout the year too. Those type things that we're aware of, we'll be glad to provide educational programs in that area.

(0:36:06.9)

JOHN:

One thing I heard on the...this was on the news a couple of weeks ago. This little kid was saying to his mom, I want to go help clean up the oil spill, I want to help clean up the oil spill. She said, I tell you what, clean your room up first and clean the backyard up and then we'll go and clean up the oil spill. (Laughter) Never mind. (Laughter)

(0:36:30.3)

STEVE:

While I'm thinking about it, there are two documentaries I would recommend that you look at on the Exxon Valdez oil spill. One is called The Day the Water Died and it is a Sierra Club production. The Day the Water Died, and I think you could probably go online with the Sierra Club, the documentary and probably watch it on your computer. It's about 32 minutes long. A Sierra Club something. The Day the Water Died. The other and that was made 17 years after the spill. The other is an award-winning documentary that has just come out. It's called Black Wave. It's about an hour and 40 minutes long, and it goes from the beginning all the way to the Supreme Court decision in 2009. So, its starts in 1989 and is carried through. Both of these documentaries, the shorter, The Day the

Water Died, 38 minutes and then the longer will give you many, many insights into what were the consequences of the oil up in Prince William Sound and in particular for people in communities and children.

(0:38:11.4)

MEGAN:

One more note that is important. The Department of Mental Health from Alabama, the mental illness and the substance abuse side is paying a lot of attention to this oil spill. And really, asking questions of how it's going to impact Mobile and Baldwin County. It is important to know that they are on top of it, and I believe that they will assist us in providing any services that are needed in those two areas.

(0:38:40.7)

JOHN:

That brings up another topic real quickly is the Stratford Act. Usually after a hurricane, they release federal dollars to take care of primary mental health care and some other recovery issues and it's case management, maybe, social work type situations. Right now, they're saying they're not going to do that. Talk to your senator, your congressman, your local...I'm working with Ben Springate at Tulane and Grayson Norquest who's at University of Mississippi Medical Center and several other people were putting a policy together and trying to send a delegation to Washington or to those states first and ask for them to release funds, because even the Department of Mental Health is limited in their budget. Many of our state budgets are already limited so much. They're closing schools and there's that and the other. Even though this is BP's responsibility and BP should pay for it, at the same time, we can't sit back and wait when there are going to be people who need immediate services especially in case management and social work to redevelop and reestablish them in another area perhaps or whatever. The Stratford Act is very important. Dr. Picou, I don't know how much you know about that or not. It's something that needs to be done. Right now, Washington, the latest last week or this week is that, well, we don't see the need for that yet. We're not responsible, BP is responsible. The Federal Government is afraid from what I can tell. They're afraid to do anything because when they do, that's them saying they're also at fault, which doesn't make sense. I guess to attorneys and lawyers that makes sense, but to me it doesn't when people need the help. That's just another issue. If you have questions, concerns or know of families that don't have money for mental health services or for counseling, that's going to be a need. After Katrina, we served some 3,800 people in a 10-month period. The way we were able to do that was the Stratford Act, the funds that we got from that and grants we got from Red Cross and other people. We hired counselors to come down to the Coast and to do counseling for a long time. And some of those counseling sessions, believe it or not, are still going on today. People that have got into treatment and realized that they benefited from that are continuing.

(0:41:26.6)

AUDIENCE:

As far as, I don't know if this is specific to natural or technological. Have there been any studies done or do you know anything, the difference, the long-term effect on people who leave as opposed to people who stay in the community?

(0:41:48.2)

STEVEN:

Actually for Katrina, we have an on-going series of studies. There's a group of sociologist including myself, including sociologist from UNO, Louisiana, Lafayette, Yale, UC Santa Barbara, Colorado State, etcetera. We actually have a series of projects that were funded by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. These projects are looking, studying displaced New Orleanians in Colorado, displaced New Orleanians in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston. I have not seen a peer-reviewed publication yet, but we meet regularly once a year, the research team. From what I hear, a lot of people that flew out of New Orleans not knowing where they were going and landed in Denver and then went to Colorado Springs love it. It's wonderful there. (Laughter) You got small pockets. There's about 60 people in Colorado Springs. There are larger numbers of course in Houston, in Atlanta and Chicago. They found good school systems for their children, they got good jobs, and they don't want to come back. Theoretically, these are not necessarily psychological profiles or family profiles, but sounds like that they're doing quite well. Then of course, there's always the latent fear. If you live in New Orleans, it happened once, you always have to have that lingering fear that it could happen again. But, you know, maybe sometimes the best thing to do is you sell your boat, go get another job, if you have other skills. I have one fisherman in Alaska tell me right after the Supreme Court verdict which if you're not familiar with, the original punitive damage was 5.3 billion dollars. The ninth circuit after six, seven, eight years of wrangling lowered it to 2.5 billion. Then Exxon appealed to the United States Supreme Court, went to the Supremes, and the Supremes reduced it to 500 million. They setup a 1:1 ratio between compensatory and punitive damages. In other words, the compensatory damages in the trial were about 500 million so they reduced the punitive to 1:1 ratio. That's the Supreme Court. Like I said, I had one fisherman tell me, if I would have taken a job as a bartender in off-fishing season in the winter here in town, I would have made a lot more money than waiting 20 years for this jury verdict. The actual monies that the fisherman were projected to get. That was projected two, three years in advance. They really thought they had this money because they had people coming down telling them how to invest, how to minimize your taxes and all this stuff. So, they almost had it in their back pocket. If you thought you were going to get a million dollars, that was reduced by 80% so you got \$200,000. If you thought you're going to get 100, you got 20. The average payout for those 30,000 plaintiffs was \$15,000 apiece. So, don't count on the litigation.

(0:46:09.0)

JOHN:

One of the things about displacement is it affects the elderly more than anybody because many of the elderly grew up in that community. They have their sense of community. If they're not able to continue to live in the community, they almost lose the sense of living. That's difficult for them. The thing about unemployment, I don't know what BP is going to do. They already are paying some people \$5,000 a month that had fishing boats and they average it out. Your claim is getting paid. That may last another month, that may last another year, may last another day. I don't know. The people that are going to have to think about 30 years down the road, a lot of them that I've talked to in Biloxi, Pass Christian and Long Beach, Gulfport that are shrimpers are fearful if they sell their boats and try to retrain in a job and move away that they won't get any compensation, they won't get any claim because hey, they moved away. They're almost forced to stay and to endure whatever it is they have to endure in order to stay in line with BP. That's emotionally exhausting in itself. If you've ever dealt with an insurance company even about paying a hospital bill or something, when they say they pay 100% and you get a bill for whatever and then you call and they send you this person. Your blood pressure goes up and you get angry. Imagine that with all of these families. They're afraid to leave even though maybe they should or maybe they could. They're afraid to do that. These are just like a domino effect of issues that once you get one thing started, I wish that it was a hurricane. (Chuckle) Hurricane is bad, and we don't want no one to die. But like I've heard Dr. Picou say, what about now, an oil-i-cane. How is that going to...how do you recover from that? Then people will probably be displaced because of the contamination. I don't know. I'm not an expert in that area. I only listen to other people that I've talked to. Here we are in the storm season where they're predicting Colorado and NOAA and everybody else in national weather hurricane center and all of these are predicting 28 named storms, 26 something like that. Five major hurricanes. You can't stay out there fixing the problem when a hurricane comes, the rig that they had drilling the oil now or drilling the new holes has to stop. Everything stops, who knows? I've been asking where's Superman? Why can't he show up and fly down or (Laughter) go down there and plug it up. That's about the only thing. Men and all of their technology and all of their ability to go to the moon and to destroy the world, we have the ability to destroy the world three times over, and we can't stop an oil spill 5,000 feet under the sea. I know, I realize that. It's disheartening to everybody. Displacement, I hope not. I hope people stick around. I'm wondering if I'm going to be able to five years from now get a shrimp po' boy. (Laughter) Stuff like that, silly stuff. I don't know if there's any more questions. We can probably go ahead and end our session. Is that okay to do that? Thank you ladies for coming.

END OF AUDIO.

Appendix

MASGC Oil Spill Community Forum Questions	
WILDLIFE	
Question	Response
I have a product that is biodegradable, 100% natural organic material, suppresses hazardous fumes, can be used wet or dry. How can I get this product into the proper hands?	The Coast Guard is screening and evaluating oil spill technologies. For more information, refer to this link: http://eponline.com/articles/2010/06/09/coast-guard-panel-to-screen-evaluate-oil-spill-technologies.aspx .
How many Mississippi vessels are Hazmat trained and ready to go to work? It has been reported that 900+ boats are already trained, yet many of my family and friends who have turned in Vessels of Opportunity (VOO) contracts (myself included) have never been contacted to work for BP in any manner.	Currently 2,740 vessels are registered. 800 have been hired in Mississippi. http://blog.gulflive.com/mississippi-news/2010/07/bp-official-says-800-vessels-o.html
Why don't we close the Katrina cut that split the west end of Dauphin Island?	This is being done: http://www.fox10tv.com/dpp/news/gulf_oil_spill/project-to-fill-in-katrina-cut-begins
Can you provide C.O.A.S.T. with websites for meteorological data and "how to" for clarity tests for their volunteer shoreline observers?	Not sure what is meant by "how to" for clarity tests. Meteorological Information can be found at www.weather.gov .
We have a new technology with MSDS (?) and toxicity report that states we pose no threat to human, marine or aquatic life. How do we get this information into the appropriate hands?	The Coast Guard is screening and evaluating oil spill technologies. For more information, refer to this link: http://eponline.com/articles/2010/06/09/coast-guard-panel-to-screen-evaluate-oil-spill-technologies.aspx
MONITORING	
Question	Response
Voluntary organizations usually work with FEMA. How can we work with NOAA?	Volunteer information can be found at on the deepwater horizon website fact sheet: http://www.deepwaterhorizonresponse.com/posted/2931/Fact_Sheet_on_Volunteer_Programs_6_15_10.674403.pdf
If a hurricane hits, will we have been taught how to respond to this unique situation?	Everyone should take on all of the regular preparedness procedures that FEMA and the National Weather Service suggests. Preparedness information can be found at the following two websites: 1) http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/HAW2/english/intro.shtml and 2) http://www.fema.gov/hazard/hurricane/index.shtml
Looking for a website for state water testing of oil spill bayou water; also independent accepted water quality test sites.	<u>There is a website where data is available:</u> www.epa.gov/bpspill ; there is a Google Earth application here that allows viewing of data on water, sediment and air.
Where can I get information about the hazards to the health	The regional Sea Grant website:

<p>of regular offshore workers working out of Fourchon, Venice, Mobile to the other working rigs in the Gulf?</p> <p>Where can I have access to the transcripts for these sessions?</p>	<p>http://gulfseagrant.tamu.edu/oilspill/index.htm</p>
LEGAL	
Question	Response
<p>How will we homeowners near (and on) the beachfront or waterfront, recover from loss of property value due to the damage resulting from the spill (e.g., wildlife, tourist attractions, quality of life and livelihood). My example: In the 900 block of South Beach Blvd. in Bay St. Louis, our properties and some rebuilt homes (post-Katrina) are within 100 yards of the water's edge on the seawall. People within 2 blocks of Beach Blvd. are seriously impacted on future property values as the entirety of the oil spill aftermath are recognized. After Katrina, we lost half our property value. After BP, we may lose half of what's left.</p>	<p>Generally speaking, a homeowner would make a claim for property damage. The amount (or value) of the loss would be calculated by looking at the value before the spill compared to the value now. The difference between the two values would be the amount of damages the homeowner suffered to that property. Regarding damages to wildlife, these are considered natural resource damages which will be pursued by the state (not individuals) on behalf of the public. Loss of livelihood is a loss that should be pursued as a loss of income claim.</p>
WEB	
Question	Response
<p>I write to you in a sort of desperation that I'm sure you are seeing coast-wide. I am watching my home, the waters I have called my backyard since birth, be destroyed by an act of carelessness. There is only so much being angry or being sad will do; I want to be able to HELP my community and most specifically, the animals. They pull a heartstring of mine and have and will always be my "sensitive spot." I took a class (possibly unnecessarily) at the Civic Center which gave me the ability to work on the MS Cannon Project. It was a 4-hour class and at the end, I received a small, yellow card stating my certification. I have since tried countless times to become certified or find out ways to volunteer to clean animals. I know it is not a light undertaking and I have read about the risks and procedures. I STILL want to help and if you have any sort of information on where to go or with whom to speak, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Thank you so very much for your time.</p>	<p>Tristate is the primary contractor responsible for cleaning wildlife including birds. Have you visited their site? There is a link for volunteering. You are probably aware that the training you took does not allow you to clean animals because it is dangerous. I am sure it is a very competitive process to volunteer and become certified, but if this is something you want to do then you will have to be very persistent. http://www.tristatebird.org/</p>
<p>How do I apply for a job down there? I have family down there, and we are out of work here. Who do I contact about potential employment?</p>	<p>See this link: http://www.mdes.ms.gov/Home/index.html</p>

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