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DEEPWATER HORIZON  
NATURAL RESOURCES DAMAGE TRUSTEE COUNCIL

Annual Meeting  
July 19, 2018 - 6:30 p.m.

University of Southern Mississippi  
Gulf Park Campus  
Fleming Education Center Auditorium  
730 East Beach Boulevard  
Long Beach, Mississippi 39560

1 MR. FRANKLIN: I think we'll go ahead and  
2 get started. Good evening. I think that  
3 was one person. Good evening. All right.  
4 Thank you. My name is Perry Franklin and I  
5 will serve as your facilitator for the  
6 Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage  
7 Assessment Trustee Council's Second Annual  
8 Meeting.

9 This meeting also serves as the  
10 annual meeting of the Region-Wide Trustee  
11 Implementation Group or sometimes commonly  
12 referred as a TIG.

13 I would like to ask each of you to go  
14 ahead and make yourselves comfortable, and  
15 please silence your phones, as it  
16 interferes with the audiovisual. If you  
17 have any personal conversations, we would  
18 also ask you to take those into the rear  
19 hall or outside, as the noise level, we'd  
20 like to keep it down and to respect our  
21 fellow participants.

22 So thank you again for braving the  
23 elements and coming out tonight. A special  
24 thanks to all of our elected officials who  
25 have come out tonight and are in

1 attendance, including a representative from  
2 Congressman Palazzo's office.

3 We are here tonight for the third  
4 public meeting of the Deepwater Horizon  
5 Trustee Council since the settlement with  
6 BP was finalized. The trustees and their  
7 staff will present lots of useful  
8 information to you this evening, and then  
9 you will have an opportunity to give the  
10 trustees some feedback. We have a court  
11 reporter here with us tonight who will  
12 record the entire meeting, including your  
13 comments. The PowerPoint presentation and  
14 the transcript will be posted on the  
15 trustee's website. Maybe you picked this  
16 card up at the registration desk. It gives  
17 you that website,  
18 [www.Gulfspillrestoration.NOAA.gov](http://www.Gulfspillrestoration.NOAA.gov).

19 We also have with us tonight two  
20 American sign language interpreters. They  
21 will interpret the entire meeting.

22 The trustees want me to point out,  
23 just in case you missed it, that there are  
24 many fact sheets, and they appear like  
25 this, and they are also translated into

1 Vietnamese. These fact sheets are  
2 available for you to take home with you and  
3 to spread this information. They were  
4 available at the open house and will be  
5 available when you exit. We invite you to  
6 pick some of that helpful information up.

7 I'd also like to acknowledge a  
8 special guest with us tonight, Ms. Keala  
9 Hughes. Ms. Hughes, if you will stand.  
10 She is with the Restore Council and she's  
11 the director of external affairs and tribal  
12 relations. Ms. Hughes had a table at the  
13 open house and is here to explain the ins  
14 and outs of the Restore Council. If you  
15 have not had a chance to interact with her  
16 prior to, she will remain behind to answer  
17 any questions that you may have about the  
18 Restore Council.

19 As you came in, you were asked to  
20 fill in a blue card. That helps us to keep  
21 track of attendance at these meetings. If  
22 you knew at the time that you intended to  
23 make a public comment, there was a box, and  
24 you would have said yes. That is the only  
25 way that I know to call you forward at the

1 end of tonight's meeting.

2 If you filled out this card and you  
3 said no, but something moves you in the  
4 presentations and you would like to come  
5 forward to make a public comment at the end  
6 of the meeting, simply raise your hand at  
7 any time tonight and someone will bring you  
8 a blue card so they can properly annotate  
9 it, and they'll bring it up to my  
10 attention. So don't worry, if you filled  
11 out a blue card and you said that I do not  
12 want to make a public comment, but you  
13 change your mind, not a problem. Simply  
14 raise your hand, and the nearest staff will  
15 bring you those so you can go forward.

16 So at this time, let's go ahead and  
17 get started, as we have a lot of  
18 information to go through tonight. To get  
19 us started, I would like to introduce you  
20 to Mr. Gary Rikard, executive director of  
21 the Mississippi Department of Environmental  
22 Quality.

23 MR. RIKARD: Thank you, Perry. As Perry  
24 said, I'm Gary Rikard. I'm the executive  
25 director of MDEQ, but tonight, I'm here as

1 the Mississippi Natural Resource Damages  
2 Trustee, and also, I'm the state cochair on  
3 the Trustee Council.

4 Thank you all for coming out tonight  
5 on a rainy Thursday night. I appreciate  
6 you. The Trustee Council certainly  
7 appreciates your participation in this  
8 process.

9 To begin with, what we'd like to do  
10 is give you an overview of basically what  
11 tonight's agenda is. And in a minute, I'm  
12 going to introduce the trustees. We're  
13 going to give you a Trustee Council update,  
14 and then we're going to go into giving an  
15 update in the individual trustee  
16 implementation groups, and that will come  
17 after I finish speaking here. And then  
18 after the trustee implementation groups  
19 give you an overview of what's been going  
20 on there, what's been happening in the  
21 individual states, we're going to be here  
22 to take your comments. So that's, roughly,  
23 what we're here to do tonight.

24 So the Trustee Council  
25 representatives are five states and four

1 federal entities. The Florida trustee is  
2 Phil Coram. The Alabama trustee is Chris  
3 Blakenship. I'm the Mississippi trustee.  
4 Louisiana is Alyson Graugnard. Texas is  
5 Robin Riechers. The Department of Interior  
6 is Mary Josie Blanchard. The EPA is Mary  
7 Kay Lynch. NOAA is Chris Doley, and the  
8 USDA is Homer Wilkes. And all the  
9 trustees, again, are here tonight to  
10 receive your comments.

11 So just as a quick review of what  
12 exactly does the Trustee Council do and  
13 what are we. And I know it gets confusing.  
14 There's a lot of different funding sources  
15 that are put out there to talk about in  
16 regard to restoration activities. There's  
17 the Restore Council and the Restore Act.  
18 And there's some information, and we have a  
19 representative from the Restore Council  
20 here tonight. There's the NFWF monies,  
21 which are the criminal penalties, and then  
22 there's the NRDA damages. And tonight,  
23 that's what we're here to talk about  
24 tonight, is the NRDA funding.

25 So, a quick review of what our

1 responsibilities are in regard to NRDA, as  
2 the trustees. So we're responsible for  
3 restoring the environment and compensating  
4 you, the public, for the natural resource  
5 injuries resulting from the Deepwater  
6 Horizon oil spill. And in order to do  
7 that, to figure out what the damages are,  
8 we used a Natural Resource Damage  
9 Assessment to determine the extent of the  
10 injuries caused by the spill and to seek  
11 restoration or compensation from the  
12 parties responsible.

13 The goal is to restore injured  
14 natural resources, wetlands, fish and  
15 birds, basically to put us back in the same  
16 position that we would have been in but for  
17 the spill. So that's what NRDA is. The  
18 primary goal of NRDA is to do that.

19 In addition to ecological  
20 restorations, there's also the opportunity  
21 to address recreational loss uses, such as  
22 boating and swimming, that were also  
23 affected by the spill.

24 So before I get into the recent  
25 activities that the council has been

1     undertaking this past year, I want to give  
2     you a little timeline of the key  
3     restoration events. This timeline shows  
4     the oil spill began in April of 2010. And  
5     we began the injury assessment right away.

6             In April of 2011, BP agreed to make  
7     up to \$1 billion available for restoration,  
8     even before we finished our injury  
9     assessment, and commonly, that's referred  
10    to as the early restoration dollars, and  
11    that \$1 billion was spread out across the  
12    five Gulf states.

13            So with that \$1 billion for early  
14    restoration, we were able to get an early  
15    jump start on trying to restore the damages  
16    that were caused by the spill. From 2011  
17    to 2016, a total of five early restoration  
18    plans were approved, with 65 projects  
19    across the Gulf states, for a combined  
20    total cost of about \$866 million.

21            Then on April the 4th, 2016, the  
22    federal government and the five Gulf states  
23    reached a settlement with BP that totalled  
24    approximately \$20.8 billion. Out of that  
25    \$20.8 billion, a total of \$8.8 billion was

1 set aside for natural resource damages.

2 And so if you break it down, that  
3 8.8, we were given \$1 billion in early  
4 restoration, \$7.1 billion goes to long-term  
5 restoration, and then \$700,000 goes to,  
6 basically adaptive management center --  
7 \$700 million goes to adaptive management  
8 for unknown conditions, for a total of  
9 \$8.8 billion.

10 Part of what we did, along with the  
11 settlement, was that the trustees finalized  
12 a programmatic restoration plan. So that  
13 plan doesn't include, did not include  
14 individual projects. Instead, it was  
15 programmatic, which means that it included  
16 overarching restoration goals for the  
17 entire Gulf ecosystem, and broad  
18 restoration types that guide the Gulf in  
19 the selection of restoration projects.

20 And then what the settlement did, in  
21 addition to totalling the amount of natural  
22 resource money that BP would have to pay,  
23 it broke the NRDA damages down into funds  
24 that were assigned to geographic  
25 restoration areas. So each of the

1 individual -- each of the states were  
2 considered restoration areas, along with  
3 open ocean, that was a separate area, and  
4 region wide. So there were -- those were  
5 the groups where the funding was broken  
6 down.

7           And then within each restoration  
8 area, the funds were assigned to the  
9 restoration types that were injured in  
10 those areas. And I know this slide is hard  
11 to see, probably, but there are some  
12 handouts that were available right outside  
13 of the auditorium that you can pick up that  
14 -- where you can see it a little bit better  
15 and study it.

16           So to accomplish the restoration  
17 efforts, to figure out what projects were  
18 going to move forward, the Trustee Council  
19 decided that we needed to establish what  
20 we've called the TIGs, the Trustee  
21 Implementation Groups, and that's what I  
22 referenced a few minutes ago. There's one  
23 for each state and then there's open ocean  
24 region wide.

25           So these Trustee Implementation

1 Groups provide flexibility and  
2 accountability that allow for the  
3 differences between the various areas to  
4 play out.

5 The Trustee Council serves to ensure  
6 that there's coordination among the Trustee  
7 Implementation Groups. And, specifically,  
8 what we do is provide coordination and  
9 ensure transparency, both from a monetary  
10 standpoint and from a scientific  
11 standpoint, so that the programmatic plan  
12 is implemented across the board, across the  
13 Gulf.

14 So now to get into some of the  
15 background information. What have we been  
16 doing as a group, as the Trustee Council  
17 since the settlement? Well, we've released  
18 two annual reports. The content of those  
19 reports is in the Diver system, which you  
20 can access from our website, and that's  
21 [Gulfspillrestoration@NOAA.gov](mailto:Gulfspillrestoration@NOAA.gov),  
22 [Gulfspillrestoration@NOAA.gov](mailto:Gulfspillrestoration@NOAA.gov), where you  
23 can find those reports.

24 We received two of the 15 annual  
25 payments from the settlement with BP, and

1 that total is somewhere around  
2 \$670 million.

3 And we've released revised standard  
4 operating procedures for the council, which  
5 you can find that particular -- the SOP  
6 document by searching -- going to the  
7 search function on the website, and then  
8 putting in updated SOP. And once you do  
9 that, if you scroll down, it's about the  
10 fifth item that pops up, and you will see  
11 that.

12 So in addition to those activities,  
13 we've also worked with what we call the  
14 Cross TIG Work Group, and that work group  
15 has been working hard with the individual  
16 Trustee Implementation Groups to address  
17 our monitoring and adaptive management  
18 matters. (Inaudible) of the Trustee  
19 Council's Monitoring and Adaptive  
20 Management Procedure and Guidelines Manual.  
21 That manual includes project renewal  
22 guidance, and it's posted on our website,  
23 also. And they're also in the process of  
24 developing a data management system in  
25 DIVER and mechanisms for coordinating with

1 other Gulf restoration programs regarding  
2 monitoring and data management, such as  
3 NFWF and MSOL.

4 So now it's time to turn to the  
5 individual TIGs to give you an update on  
6 the restoration areas that they're  
7 responsible for. First off, we're going to  
8 hear from Chris Blakenship. Chris is  
9 Commissioner for the Alabama Department of  
10 Conservation and Natural Resources, and  
11 he's trustee for the State of Alabama and a  
12 member of the Alabama TIG.

13 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Thank you. I am Chris  
14 Blakenship, the Commissioner for the  
15 Department of Conservation and Natural  
16 Resources in Alabama and the lead trustee  
17 for the State of Alabama. Our other  
18 trustee, another trustee for Alabama is  
19 Dr. Nick Tew, the Geological Survey of  
20 Alabama. Dr. Tew was not able to join us  
21 tonight, but I did want to mention that he  
22 is also one of the trustees.

23 I'm excited to be here tonight with  
24 you to share our activities in Alabama  
25 since the last annual meeting that we had

1 in Alabama last year.

2 The Alabama Trustee Implementation  
3 Group, the Alabama TIG, is made up of  
4 people from many of the federal agencies  
5 and then some of our state people that work  
6 in the restoration efforts in Alabama. As  
7 I mention your name, if you are here  
8 tonight, if you will just raise your hand  
9 or stand up.

10 I would like to introduce Amy Hunter  
11 with the Department of Conservation Natural  
12 Resources, Seth Newton with the Geological  
13 Survey of Alabama, Dan Van Nostrand with  
14 NOAA. I don't see Dan. Brian Spears, with  
15 the Department of Interior. I don't think  
16 Brian's here. Chris Parker, with EPA, and  
17 Ron Howard, with the U.S. Department of  
18 Agriculture. Ron is right there. So if  
19 you have any questions for the Alabama TIG  
20 after the meeting, those would be the best  
21 people to speak with.

22 Alabama, through the Natural Resource  
23 Damage Assessment process, is set to  
24 receive about \$296 million in funding. To  
25 date, we have committed approximately

1     \$126 million worth of that funding towards  
2     projects that are being implemented or that  
3     are in the restoration plan, soon to come  
4     out. So about 43 percent of our funding  
5     that we will receive over the next 15 years  
6     has been committed.

7             And it's probably going to be a  
8     little hard to see from back there. We  
9     have some handouts out on the table. Last  
10    year, we used a circle graph. I think  
11    we've had some of the big posters out there  
12    that had the circle graph, or the doughnut  
13    graph, or for people that are sweet  
14    averse, the bagel graph to show all the  
15    different sources of funding, the  
16    restoration types, and how much money was  
17    spent. I think, from some of the comments  
18    we received last year, after the public  
19    meeting, most people are real happy with  
20    the bar graph. That's how we are used to  
21    consuming information. So this year, you  
22    will see, all the trustees, as they come  
23    up, will present the funding in a bar graph  
24    format.

25             So I will just take a couple of

1 minutes, if you all don't mind, and just  
2 kind of set the stage for how the  
3 information will be presented. Hopefully,  
4 that will save everybody a little bit of  
5 time.

6 So the graphs are set up along the  
7 X-axis at the bottom that has all of the  
8 different restoration types. So you will  
9 see restore and conserve habitat, restore  
10 water quality, all of the living coastal  
11 and marine resources, including marine  
12 mammals, birds, oysters, sea turtles. And  
13 then it has to provide and enhance  
14 recreational opportunities, the monitoring  
15 and adaptive management, and then the  
16 administrative oversight.

17 So each of these slides, you see that  
18 all of the states or trustee groups, at the  
19 top of each one of those bar graphs, you  
20 will see how much money that those entities  
21 are set to receive in NRDA funds for that  
22 restoration type over the course of the 15  
23 years.

24 In the solid sections, that is  
25 funding that has already been approved, and

1 those projects are being implemented, if it  
2 has the solid color. And the ones that  
3 have the shaded color or the lines, those  
4 are projects that are in a current  
5 restoration plan that is in the process of  
6 being approved.

7 In Alabama, as you can see from this  
8 chart, in the first and early restoration,  
9 Restoration Plan 1, most of the work that  
10 we did was in enhancing recreational  
11 opportunities. The Restoration Plan 1 was  
12 all enhancing recreational opportunities.

13 Restoration Plan 2, which is the plan  
14 that's in the process now of being approved  
15 and then out for public comment, it  
16 includes all of the other restoration types  
17 except recreational opportunities. We  
18 covered that in the first plan, and Plan 2  
19 will cover all of the other restoration  
20 types.

21 I know it's difficult to go through  
22 this whole slide. I don't want you to try  
23 and see it all from there, so I'll just go  
24 over a few of the projects and highlight a  
25 few of the projects that are included in

1 Restoration Plan 2 and talk a little bit  
2 about some of the projects from Restoration  
3 Plan 1.

4 So we're currently implementing those  
5 projects from Restoration Plan 1, and some  
6 of the projects have been completed, the  
7 construction has been completed and we're  
8 in the monitoring phase. Those include  
9 some oyster restoration projects that was  
10 done in Alabama, as well as the living  
11 shoreline project in Mobile Bay.

12 Projects that have been completed  
13 since our last meeting for restoration  
14 plans include an Osprey restoration project  
15 that has been done in Alabama. And then we  
16 have other early restoration projects that  
17 are underway, including a dune restoration  
18 project and a living shoreline project at  
19 Point aux Pines.

20 From Restoration Plan 1, which I  
21 said, was all of recreational  
22 opportunities, we have the Gulf State Park  
23 Lodge Conference Center and other public  
24 access amenities projects underway. The  
25 Lodging Conference Center is scheduled to

1 open later this year. The Interpretive  
2 Center will open later this month. And  
3 then the learning campus, as far as the  
4 project, will be completed and open by the  
5 end of December of this year.

6 We also have a project to  
7 rehabilitate the pier at Fort Morgan to put  
8 in -- to do some restoration work and  
9 recreational opportunities on building  
10 lagoons and our lagoon project, and do some  
11 engineering and design for some  
12 improvements at Bay Front Park.

13 And Restoration Plan 2 is the plan  
14 that we have out now that is in the process  
15 of working its way through the NRDA  
16 approval process, public comment period.  
17 And we'll respond to the comments, and then  
18 finally working its way towards final  
19 approval and implementation of those  
20 projects. That plan includes 26 projects  
21 -- it had 26 project alternatives. 22 of  
22 those projects were recommended for funding  
23 by the Alabama TIG for a total of about  
24 \$35 million in project spending. The  
25 proposed projects are from all those other

1 restoration types. We anticipate releasing  
2 the final plan later this year. Any of the  
3 projects that are listed in that plan, like  
4 I say, our people will be out at the table  
5 afterwards, and will be glad to discuss any  
6 of those with you, if you haven't had a  
7 chance to see those or comment on those.

8 We are looking forward, in Alabama,  
9 to having our inaugural Alabama Governor's  
10 Restoration Conference this October where  
11 we'll have an opportunity to have a meeting  
12 somewhat like this, but where we'll talk  
13 about the funding from all of the different  
14 funding streams, all of the projects from  
15 the funding streams, from NRDA, from NFWF,  
16 and from the Alabama Restore Council and  
17 Federal Restore Council. So for you people  
18 here from Alabama, put October 11th on our  
19 calendars for the Alabama Restoration  
20 Summit.

21 At this time, I would like to  
22 introduce Phil Coram, from Florida, to  
23 provide an update for the Florida  
24 restoration area.

25 MR. CORAM: Well, thank you, Chris, and

1     thank you, Gary, and the great state of  
2     Mississippi for hosting us tonight, and all  
3     the beautiful weather we've had over the  
4     last several days.

5             I am Phil Coram, and I work for the  
6     Florida Department of Environmental  
7     Protection, and it's my privilege tonight  
8     to represent the Florida restoration area.

9             Like Chris did, I would like for the  
10    other representatives of the Florida TIG,  
11    when I call your name, to raise your hand.  
12    And I have a particular reason for that.  
13    If you have questions on Florida TIG  
14    activities, please ask these other people,  
15    not me.

16            We have Gareth Leonard, with the  
17    State of Florida, Florida Fish and Wildlife  
18    Conservation Commission. We have Amy  
19    Newbold with the Migrant Protection Agency.  
20    Diane Ingram, with the Department of  
21    Interior. Laurie Rounds, with NOAA. And  
22    my good friend, Ron Howard, with USDA with  
23    us tonight. And Ron serves on every TIG.

24            So similar to Chris's presentation,  
25    Florida has about \$680 million assigned to

1 the Florida restoration area. We've  
2 committed about 22 percent of that, or  
3 \$148 million, almost all those dollars  
4 going to early restoration projects; a  
5 little bit of the funds going to  
6 restoration planning.

7 I think the important thing on this  
8 slide is, the Florida restoration area has  
9 a lot of work to do. We have over  
10 \$500 million left for restoration projects,  
11 and that's where we need your help, and  
12 that is, proposing or soliciting or  
13 advocating for future restoration projects.  
14 And both the State of Florida and NOAA have  
15 website portals in which you can suggest  
16 and recommend future restoration projects  
17 under the various restoration types.

18 I'm so glad that Chris explained this  
19 chart to everybody so I don't need to do  
20 that. I just want to focus on two of the  
21 bars here. One is enhance -- provide and  
22 enhancing recreational opportunities. As  
23 you can see, most of our early restoration  
24 funds were committed to these types of  
25 projects. And Chris mentioned the types of

1 projects that the TIGs do to enhance  
2 recreational opportunities.

3 In Florida, we are acquiring and  
4 constructing local city and county parks.  
5 We're improving state, federal, county and  
6 city parks through renovation and boat  
7 ramps, construction, rehabilitation of  
8 piers, constructing boardwalks, and  
9 overlooks, and dune walkovers, those types  
10 of things to help improve the public's  
11 enjoyment and use of the coastal resources.

12 The other bar I wanted to mention was  
13 the water quality bar, in which the Florida  
14 restoration area has been allocated  
15 \$335 million. And you might ask why. It's  
16 because it is linked to improving  
17 recreational use opportunities in the state  
18 of Florida. If we can reduce nutrients  
19 that fuel algae blooms. If we can reduce  
20 or minimize the discharge of pathogens in  
21 coastal waters, we can reduce the frequency  
22 of beach closures, and therefore, improve  
23 the public's use and enjoyment of our  
24 coastal waters.

25 We have, under early restoration, 32

1 restoration projects, in which seven of  
2 those projects have been completed and  
3 they're in monitoring or long-term  
4 operation and maintenance. That leaves us  
5 with 25 projects. 12 of those projects are  
6 currently under construction. We have nine  
7 more projects that will start construction  
8 later this year, and we have four projects  
9 that we're still working on planning,  
10 design or permitting.

11 In February of this year, the Florida  
12 trustees approved what's called Phase 5.2  
13 of the Florida Coastal Access Project. And  
14 the Florida Coastal Access Project is where  
15 we acquire coastal lands, build park  
16 amenities, such as boardwalks, or  
17 observational platforms, or trails or trail  
18 heads. And we approved an additional  
19 project in February of this year, which is  
20 the acquisition of a parcel of an existing  
21 park, in which we'll construct an elevated  
22 boardwalk that will give a grand view of  
23 St. Joseph's Bay. We'll construct trail  
24 heads associated with an existing trail  
25 there, and other amenities, including a

1 children's playground.

2 I wanted to mention one more thing  
3 about the Florida coastal access projects.  
4 Our first park, we will have a ribbon  
5 cutting or park dedication on October 9th,  
6 and that's the Island View park in Franklin  
7 County. So we're very excited about the  
8 completion of our first Florida Coastal  
9 Access Project.

10 Looking to the future, the Florida  
11 TIG will release its first restoration plan  
12 for public comment in early September.  
13 We're very excited about that, and we hope  
14 you will be excited about it too, the  
15 projects and the plan. We'll have about 25  
16 projects, totalling about \$60 million. And  
17 we'll be focusing on four of the  
18 restoration types, water quality, nutrient  
19 reduction, habitat on federal lands, and,  
20 again, recreational use projects. So we're  
21 very excited about the release of our draft  
22 restoration plan. We hope that you will  
23 like and support the projects in that plan.

24 Looking to the future, further  
25 future, we hope to start work on a second

1 restoration plan later this fall. And this  
2 will be looking at some of the other  
3 restoration types, including living,  
4 coastal and marine resources. So you will  
5 probably see later this fall a notice of  
6 restoration planning. Again, we would like  
7 to engage the public in this restoration  
8 planning efforts.

9           And I think that's about all I have.  
10 And I'll turn it over to the next  
11 restoration area, Louisiana.

12 MS. GRAUGNARD: Good afternoon. Thanks,  
13 everyone, for coming out tonight. My name  
14 is Alyson Graugnard. I'm with the State of  
15 Louisiana, and more specifically, the  
16 Louisiana Coastal Protection and Recreation  
17 Authority or CPRA. I'm happy to be here  
18 tonight to provide an update on what the  
19 Louisiana TIG has been doing since the BP  
20 settlement in 2016.

21           So as the other TIG groups did, I  
22 want to introduce the folks who work very  
23 hard to produce the various restoration  
24 ideas and projects for the public to  
25 consume over the past couple of years,

1 starting off with Michael Ellis, who is the  
2 executive director of CPRA. He is the  
3 representative for the State of Louisiana.  
4 There are actually five state agencies that  
5 he represents. It's the Louisiana  
6 Department of Environmental Quality,  
7 Department of Natural Resources, Department  
8 of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Oil  
9 Spill Coordinator's Office, and, of course,  
10 CPRA.

11 In addition to that, we have four  
12 federal agencies. We have John Tirpak,  
13 from the Department of the Interior, Mel  
14 Landry from NOAA, Doug Jacobson from USEPA,  
15 and Ron Howard from USDA. He is on every  
16 TIG.

17 So the Louisiana TIG has been  
18 allocated \$5 billion, and of that  
19 \$5 billion, we have so far committed  
20 \$455 million of the total \$5 billion.  
21 That's a little over 50 percent of the  
22 total of funds that we've received to date  
23 when you add in what we received through  
24 early restoration, and the first two BP  
25 payments in 2016 and 2017. So we've made

1 really good headway so far.

2 This is the bar chart here that shows  
3 how those funds have been allocated. I'll  
4 quickly walk through the allocation, and  
5 then we'll get into what that means, as far  
6 as restoration projects.

7 So, first, our very large category,  
8 about 80 percent of the total allocation is  
9 restore and conserve habitat. We've spent  
10 right under \$300 million in that category,  
11 and that includes early restoration  
12 funding, as well.

13 Next, we've allocated about  
14 \$10 million of the total \$20 million and  
15 restored water quality. We've allocated  
16 about \$78 million for birds, 15 for  
17 oysters, the full balance for recreational  
18 use. For folks who have been on the  
19 lookout today, we've released two  
20 restoration plans, and that kind of  
21 completes that \$60 million for the  
22 recreational use. \$1.1 million for  
23 monitoring and inductive management, and  
24 \$2.6 million for administrative oversight.

25 So exactly what does that mean for

1 projects? So this shows the four  
2 restoration plans that the TIG has put out  
3 since the settlement. The very first  
4 restoration plan was done last year, about  
5 six months after the settlement came to  
6 fruition, and that plan was for habitat and  
7 bird restoration.

8 The trustees who drafted this plan  
9 decided to move forward with a tiered  
10 approach in this restoration plan, with  
11 this very first phase being for the  
12 selection of engineering and design of six  
13 projects.

14 The first three projects are marsh  
15 creation projects. If actually  
16 constructed, because this is just the  
17 funding of engineering and design, that  
18 would be about 4000 acres of marsh that we  
19 would be looking at in the Pontchartrain  
20 basin, Barataria basin, as well as  
21 Terrebonne basin. So we're excited about  
22 that.

23 We also have two bird projects that  
24 is for the restoration of two bird islands,  
25 one being Queen Bess Island, and the other

1 being Rabbit Island in Calcasieu Parish.

2 And then the last project is on  
3 federal land. It's the implementation of  
4 shoreline protection at Jean Lafitte  
5 National Historic Park.

6 So we funded the engineering and  
7 design of these projects, and currently,  
8 that is underway. We'll get into the  
9 second phase on the next slide when we talk  
10 about what to look out for in the future.

11 Next is our second restoration plan,  
12 which is the reallocation of \$22 million in  
13 early restoration funds. So we received  
14 \$22 million for recreation funds in early  
15 restoration, and we weren't able to move  
16 forward with the initial project and we've  
17 reallocated that to four projects in this  
18 second restoration plan. Those projects  
19 include enhancement to Elmer's Island for  
20 recreational use; enhancement to 11  
21 artificial reefs in the state. The  
22 construction of five fishing piers, and  
23 each of those piers will be flanked by  
24 parking lots at the Pointe-aux-Chenes WMA.  
25 And then the last is the construction of an

1 education and science center in Lake  
2 Charles. So those projects total about  
3 \$22 million, and they're all recreational  
4 use projects.

5           The third plan was a little bit  
6 different than your traditional restoration  
7 plan. This is a strategic restoration  
8 plan. In this particular plan, the  
9 trustees decided to focus on habitat  
10 restoration for the Barataria basin. And  
11 we looked at not specific restoration  
12 plans, which you traditionally would do,  
13 but looked at restoration approaches that  
14 would best be used to restore for the great  
15 injury in the Barataria basin.

16           In that plan, the trustees selected  
17 restoration approaches that would consist  
18 of a large scale marsh creation project, as  
19 well as marsh and ridge projects in order  
20 to achieve an ecosystem level restoration  
21 for that area.

22           The trustees also looked at projects,  
23 examples that fit within those restoration  
24 categories, and said that we think that the  
25 new Barataria sediment diversion, as well as

1 an additional large scale marsh creation  
2 project in Barataria basin would be good  
3 for the trustees to look at further, and we  
4 would continue and move forward with  
5 restoration planning for those projects.

6 We also funded the engineering design  
7 of that large scale marsh creation project  
8 through the NURA funding. And just as a  
9 side note, the mid Barataria version  
10 engineering design is also being funded  
11 through NFWF, so the trustees did not have  
12 to worry about funding that effort. We  
13 will move forward with restoration planning  
14 and take a look at those projects to see if  
15 that is something that we can move to  
16 restore for this type of Barataria basin.

17 The very last restoration plan that  
18 we just released is for both nutrient  
19 reduction, as well as recreational use.  
20 This plan totals 23 projects. There are a  
21 total of 19 rec use projects, and those  
22 projects consist of an education science  
23 center in Lafitte, improvements and  
24 developments to both state and federal  
25 parks, improvements and developments to a

1 couple of the WMAs along the coast, as well  
2 as enhanced opportunities for fishing along  
3 the coast. So we're excited about those  
4 projects.

5 We also have four nutrient reduction  
6 projects, and those projects are to restore  
7 and enhance water quality in the state's  
8 crystal watershed by reducing nutrients and  
9 non-point source pollution runoff. So we  
10 are very excited. We just released that  
11 final plan today, and we can start moving  
12 on the implementation of those projects.

13 The last effort that the TIG has been  
14 working on this year is an endeavor into  
15 adaptive management. So the TIG has funded  
16 the development of an adaptive management  
17 framework that the TIG can utilize. And  
18 through that effort, the TIG, just last  
19 month, hosted a small workshop and invited  
20 folks from several other adaptive  
21 management ecological programs, namely the  
22 Everglades, Chesapeake Bay and Columbia  
23 River to come in and speak with the folks  
24 on Louisiana TIG so that we can understand  
25 the experiences that they've had with

1 adaptive management, as well as to learn  
2 some of the lessons that they've learned  
3 through those programs.

4 In addition to meeting with those  
5 experts, the TIG met with folks from the  
6 Restore Council, as well as from NFWF to  
7 understand how this adaptive management  
8 framework could be used in those programs  
9 to meet the requirements that they have for  
10 adaptive management. So it's a really good  
11 effort, and it's a good example of showing  
12 how all of the Deepwater Horizon funding  
13 sources are working together in order to  
14 have a cohesive restoration outlook from  
15 the various funding sources.

16 So what's next up for the Louisiana  
17 TIG? We have a couple of plans on the  
18 horizon that folks can look out for.

19 Going back to what we saw on the last  
20 slide, for that very first restoration  
21 plan, we talked about the phased approach  
22 that the TIG is working through. We have  
23 the engineering and design underway. So  
24 the next step is for us to look at the  
25 various design alternatives that come out

1 of that engineering and design, and work on  
2 a next phase of restoration planning to  
3 potentially fund the construction of some  
4 of these projects, if not all of these  
5 projects. So there may be multiple Phase 2  
6 plans. We have not yet decided. But be on  
7 the lookout for those restoration plans.

8 Also, through the strategic  
9 restoration plan, we have a couple of other  
10 plans that will come out of that. The  
11 first being the large scale marsh creation  
12 project. E&D is underway for that. As of  
13 now, the mid Barataria sediment diversion,  
14 NFWF is paying for the engineering and  
15 design, but we'll be moving forward with  
16 restoration planning of that project.

17 And then, also, something that we've  
18 talked about very recently is yet another  
19 marsh creation project. Hopefully, we will  
20 be using the outcome-based performance  
21 contracting. For those who are not  
22 familiar with that contracting, that is a  
23 fairly new Louisiana statutory provision  
24 that allows for this sort of contracting.

25 And what it is, it allows CPRA to let

1 a single contract for full delivery of a  
2 project, so it will get you from  
3 permitting, all the way through  
4 construction and monitoring with one  
5 contract. And this is something that we're  
6 looking at for potentially implementing a  
7 marsh creation project.

8 And then last, but not least, is the  
9 living coastal and marine resources  
10 restoration plans. We put out a notice for  
11 the project for the five resources that  
12 fall in this category. That's oysters,  
13 birds, marine mammals and turtles. We're  
14 looking at those projects that came in from  
15 the public. We're evaluating those now,  
16 and hope to have a restoration plan out for  
17 those resources in the next six months to a  
18 year.

19 So that's what the Louisiana TIG has  
20 been working on. We appreciate everyone  
21 that's here to hear about our updates and  
22 actually went (inaudible) presentation. We  
23 have Chris Wells, from Mississippi, who is  
24 coming up next.

25 MR. WELLS: Thank you and good evening. I

1 am Chris Wells. I'm with the Mississippi  
2 Department of Environmental Quality and  
3 director of the Office of Restoration  
4 there, and I will try to update you tonight  
5 on where we are with the Mississippi TIG.

6 So you've seen a pattern here. I  
7 think everybody on here, listed here, other  
8 than Troy Pierce, has been introduced, and  
9 I don't remember seeing Troy here tonight.  
10 I would mention that these are the  
11 representatives of the various agencies  
12 that serve on the TIG, but this is -- the  
13 Mississippi TIG, like all of the other  
14 TIGs, is -- there's a much bigger village  
15 that is raising this child than is  
16 represented here on this list. These are  
17 the representatives.

18 As you see, the Mississippi TIG was  
19 allocated \$295 million through NRDA, and  
20 we've thus far allocated 137.7, about 47  
21 percent of our allocation. This being our  
22 breakdown, the majority of that 47 percent  
23 has been on recreational use and habitat  
24 conservation projects.

25 And since our last update, what we've

1     been doing is continuing the implementation  
2     of those projects, largely early  
3     restoration projects. We recently had the  
4     ribbon cutting on the Infiniti Science  
5     Center, which was one of our rec use  
6     projects. We anticipate the completion of  
7     the Popp's Ferry Causeway Park project in  
8     Biloxi, and the Pascagoula Promenade in the  
9     next couple months, certainly by the end of  
10    this calendar year. We continue to work on  
11    our Hancock County Living Shoreline  
12    Project. We're moving into Phases 3 and 4  
13    and hope to finish Phase 5 and complete  
14    that project by next spring.

15           We've also been implementing the  
16    project from our Restoration Plan Number 1,  
17    which was approved last year. That  
18    consists of three projects, one being with  
19    -- the Department of Ag being the other  
20    implementing trustee. It's a nutrient  
21    reduction project in the upper Pascagoula  
22    watershed, and two land acquisition and  
23    management projects, one in Graveline Bay  
24    area and one to add acreage to the Grand  
25    Bay near. And we are in the process of

1 implementing those projects, particularly  
2 the acquisition of property through the  
3 Graveline and Grand Bay projects.

4 We recently issued notice to -- in  
5 regard to our -- we are beginning our  
6 planning process for Restoration Plan 2,  
7 and those went out in June, and we'll be  
8 accepting new ideas through August 10th.  
9 Of course, our restoration -- or our  
10 project portal is always open, 24/7, at  
11 Restore.ms.

12 We will be, over the next 18 months,  
13 drafting and completing our Restoration  
14 Plan 2. Obviously, we'll continue  
15 implementing the projects that are  
16 underway. And we will be holding our third  
17 annual restoration summit on November 13th,  
18 at the convention center in Biloxi, and  
19 hope to see everyone there, where we will  
20 -- that's similar to what Chris described  
21 from Alabama. We will provide project  
22 updates and take input on projects for all  
23 of the funding streams at the summit.

24 And I will turn it over to Robin  
25 Riechers from Texas.

1 MR. RIECHERS: Thank you, Chris. And,  
2 again, thanks to all of you for coming out  
3 and allowing us to share with you kind of  
4 what's been going on in the various states  
5 in the Trustee Implementation Groups. We  
6 really appreciate the opportunity to do  
7 that.

8 Again, as Chris said, my name is  
9 Robin Riechers and I'm with the Texas Parks  
10 and Wildlife Department. I've helped --  
11 set on the Texas -- the Trustee Council for  
12 Texas, and certainly am glad to be here to  
13 present to you tonight.

14 In the audience tonight from the  
15 Texas Trustee Group, or the TIG, is Richard  
16 Seiler, Jamie Schubert. And, of course,  
17 you've heard Ron several times. Like Chris  
18 did from Mississippi, I can't really stress  
19 the amount of other folks here. We have  
20 Scottie Aplin, our Texas trustees,  
21 and there are certainly other federal  
22 trustees who have sat in on various calls  
23 and helped us through this process. So it  
24 really does take more than the six,  
25 depending on what TIG you are on, seven

1 that may be mentioned on these slides.

2 So the Texas TIG has committed  
3 approximately \$104.5 million or 44 percent  
4 of the \$238 million that we received in  
5 funding, both in early restoration and as  
6 the settlement moved forward. That leaves  
7 us about 133.5, if everyone is doing the  
8 math correctly, yet to spend in future  
9 projects or in future restoration plans.

10 I, like everyone else, appreciate  
11 that this slide has already been discussed,  
12 but the real take-home messages from this  
13 slide are really that in the most recent  
14 draft restoration plan or final restoration  
15 plan that we passed in 2017, that's when we  
16 really started to work on and restore and  
17 conserve the habitat category there of  
18 which we had about approximately half of  
19 that money spent now.

20 From the human use category or the  
21 enhanced recreation category that was  
22 predominantly in early restoration for us,  
23 or completely used up in early restoration  
24 for us, doing some artificial reefs as well  
25 as enhancing some state park properties

1 that needed to be enhanced after hurricane  
2 damages.

3 In addition, we also, in that  
4 particular early restoration timeframe, did  
5 sea turtle work, as well as some island  
6 work in those birds and living marine  
7 resources category.

8 You will also notice there that you  
9 probably can't see where the line is, but  
10 you will see a percentage, a small  
11 percentage in restoring water quality, and  
12 also in oysters. And those are both  
13 engineering and design projects that were  
14 also included in our most recent  
15 restoration plan.

16 So, really, when we look at where  
17 we're going from here, obviously, we are  
18 going to continue the implementation and  
19 monitoring of our seven restoration  
20 projects, which I just highlighted a moment  
21 ago.

22 And then, as indicated in our most  
23 recent restoration plan, we basically are  
24 looking to two areas for engineering water  
25 quality and oysters, and so that's going to

1 set the stage for further discussion about  
2 those down the road.

3 And then, lastly, as we really are in  
4 our current stages, that plan was -- our  
5 most recent restoration plan was passed --  
6 really, our first one after early  
7 restoration was passed in 2017. There's 13  
8 projects, in total, in that plan, and so  
9 we're in basically the stage of getting  
10 those implemented and getting those  
11 projects moving forward.

12 Two projects that are probably worth  
13 highlighting there, and they really are  
14 complimenting many projects, but our two  
15 really bookend projects on the upper Texas  
16 coast and the lower Texas coast, both of  
17 them are hydrologic restoration projects,  
18 funding from NRDA, along with other  
19 Deepwater sources and other grant sources  
20 are really allowing us to tackle two  
21 landscape scale projects. One of them is  
22 what we're calling the McFaddin Beach Ridge  
23 Project, and it's really a restoration  
24 project from the Chenier Plains, which  
25 basically stretch at least from Galveston

1 Bay over into Louisiana, and then when we  
2 go to deep south Texas, near Brownsville,  
3 the Bahia Grande restoration, and another  
4 large hydrologic restoration landscape  
5 scale projects that are really worth noting  
6 in those projects. And, again, they're  
7 just part of the projects that help to do  
8 it, but that's how those building blocks  
9 occur, where you piece projects together  
10 and you do these landscape scale  
11 activities.

12 As we move forward, obviously, what  
13 we want to do is continue implementing and  
14 monitoring the current projects we have,  
15 and then we are going to be informed by  
16 those that we have engineering and design  
17 on. And, certainly, as we move forward  
18 with those, as well as other thoughts about  
19 where we want to spend our next money, we  
20 will be coming out to the public and trying  
21 to solicit feedback and input into which  
22 projects we would select and which project  
23 types we would be looking towards.

24 So with that, I want to thank you all  
25 for the time in allowing me to come and

1 present to you kind of what's going on with  
2 the Texas TIG right now. And next, I will  
3 introduce Laurie Rounds from the Open Ocean  
4 TIG.

5 MS. ROUNDS: Good evening. My name is  
6 Laurie Rounds, and I'm going to provide the  
7 update for the Open Ocean Restoration Area.  
8 So I am Laurie Rounds, with NOAA, and I  
9 represent NOAA on the Trustee  
10 Implementation Group. We also have Ashley  
11 Mills, who represents the Department of the  
12 Interior. We have Ron Howard, who  
13 represents the U.S. Department of  
14 Agriculture. And we also have Gale  
15 Bonanno, who represents the U.S.  
16 Environmental Protection Agency.

17 So the Open Ocean Implementation  
18 Group is responsible for planning and  
19 implementing restoration for the open ocean  
20 area. We are represented by the federal  
21 trustees. The federal trustees work  
22 together to implement restoration for the  
23 wide ranging and migratory species that  
24 were injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil  
25 spill. And we are conducting restoration

1 for those species, which include fish, sea  
2 turtles, marine mammals, mesophotic and  
3 deep benthic communities or those deep  
4 sea corals, for birds, and for Gulf  
5 sturgeons. And we're going to be  
6 implementing restoration for those  
7 resources across their life stages, across  
8 their geographic ranges. So that might be  
9 inland, coastal and offshore habitats.

10 And because many of these species are also  
11 highly migratory, we may be implementing  
12 some of our restoration outside of the Gulf  
13 of Mexico, as well.

14 So as the Trustee Implementation  
15 Group, we will be coordinating closely with  
16 the state trustees, especially when we're  
17 implementing restoration that might overlap  
18 the jurisdictions in those states.

19 So our funding update for the Open  
20 Ocean Trustee Implementation Group, is  
21 we've committed about \$70 million to date.  
22 This is about six percent of the  
23 \$1.2 billion allocation. And this has gone  
24 to implementing our early restoration  
25 projects, which we'll talk a little bit

1 more about. It's also gone to conduct  
2 restoration planning, outreach to  
3 stakeholders, developing restoration plans,  
4 and also to support the federal trustees in  
5 providing comprehensive planning and  
6 oversight as they participate across all of  
7 the Trustee Implementation Groups.

8 So looking a little bit more at the  
9 funding in our bar chart, we have the Open  
10 Ocean Restoration Area allocated about  
11 \$868 million to replenish and protect  
12 living coastal resources, and that's  
13 divided across those restoration types that  
14 you see shown in green.

15 So for each of those restoration  
16 types, we've committed a small amount of  
17 funding, a small percentage of that funding  
18 to develop restoration projects for each of  
19 those restoration types which will be  
20 coming out soon in restoration plans that  
21 we'll be talking about in just a minute.

22 In addition, we've also committed  
23 \$20 million in what you might call  
24 invertebrates allocation, which implement  
25 early restoration projects called the

1 Oceanic Fish Restoration Project. And  
2 approximately \$22 million, it's about the  
3 full hundred percent of our allocation, but  
4 that amount of funding has been committed  
5 to implement four of our early restoration  
6 projects to provide enhanced recreation.

7 And in looking at the management side  
8 of the allocation, about 16 percent of the  
9 funding set aside again to provide that  
10 comprehensive planning and administrative  
11 oversight for the federal trustees across  
12 the TIGs has been committed, and a small  
13 amount of funding has been committed from  
14 our monitoring adaptive management  
15 allocation to begin to identify the  
16 priorities for data and monitoring to  
17 implement restoration.

18 So let's talk a little bit about our  
19 current activities and what we see coming  
20 up. So as I mentioned, we've been  
21 conducting our -- and implementing our  
22 early restoration projects. We have five  
23 early restoration projects, so this  
24 includes implementing our oceanic fish  
25 restoration project and completing our

1 first full year of repose period. So for  
2 that project, fishermen have been  
3 participating in a voluntary repose period  
4 in which they refrain from fishing and help  
5 us test a cure to reduce bycatch of blue  
6 fin tuna and other oceanic fish series.

7 We also, through our early  
8 restoration projects, have been able to  
9 provide and enhance recreation at the Gulf  
10 Islands National Seashore in Florida, we've  
11 been able to enhance recreation by building  
12 two new passenger ferries, which are up and  
13 running in Pensacola, and also by enhancing  
14 beach habitat. We've been able to increase  
15 bike and pedestrian recreation at the Gulf  
16 Islands National Seashore in Mississippi,  
17 and we've also restored the Jeff Friend  
18 Trail at the Bon Secour National Wildlife  
19 Refuge in Alabama. So we're going to  
20 continue implementing these early  
21 restoration projects over the coming year.

22 And then I'm also very excited to say  
23 that the Open Ocean Implementation Group  
24 has been developing two restoration plans  
25 to propose restoration projects for all of

1       our restoration types.

2               And so what we're planning is that  
3       the first draft restoration plan will be  
4       proposing restoration for birds and  
5       sturgeon, and we anticipate that this plan  
6       will be coming out later this summer for  
7       public comment.

8               And then our second restoration plan  
9       will be developed to propose restoration  
10       for fish, sea turtles, marine mammals and  
11       for mesophotic and deep-sea communities.  
12       So we anticipate that the second plan is  
13       coming out in late 2018 or early 2019.

14               So when both of these plans are  
15       released, we are going to be conducting  
16       more public outreach to ask for your  
17       comments on those restoration plans and the  
18       projects that are being proposed. So we  
19       look forward to getting everyone's comments  
20       on those. And then what we'll do is just  
21       take those public comments and consider  
22       those and finalize those restoration plans  
23       over the coming year.

24               In addition, the Open Ocean Trustee  
25       Implementation Group is working on

1 identifying our priority to address  
2 critical information gaps and monitor needs  
3 into the open restoration and the open  
4 ocean restoration area.

5 So thank you very much for your time  
6 and attention. And I'd like to now  
7 introduce Tim Landers, who can provide the  
8 Regional Trustee Restoration Group update.

9 MR. LANDERS: Good evening. I'm Tim  
10 Landers, and I'm the U.S. Environmental  
11 Protection Agency's representative on the  
12 Regional Trustee Implementation Group.  
13 Garrett Leonard, with the Florida Fish and  
14 Wildlife Conservation Commission and I are  
15 the alternate and primary points of  
16 contact, respectively, for that TIG, and  
17 we appreciate this opportunity to update  
18 you on the TIG's activities.

19 So the Region-wide TIG consists of  
20 representatives from all state and federal  
21 trustees. Most of these -- most all of the  
22 representatives you see listed here this  
23 evening are here. Hopefully, you had an  
24 opportunity to visit and meet some of them,  
25 either at the Region-wide TIG booth or at

1 one of the other restoration area TIG  
2 booths. It is a very experienced,  
3 hard-working and committed group of folks,  
4 a real privilege to work with.

5 So the Region-wide TIG is responsible  
6 for planning and implementing restoration  
7 activities for resources that range  
8 throughout the Gulf. This includes birds,  
9 oysters, marine mammals and sea turtles.  
10 Approximately \$245 million of the  
11 Region-wide TIG's \$349 million in total  
12 funding will go towards these restoration  
13 activities. The other portion of the  
14 Region-wide TIG's allocation provides  
15 funding for Gulf-wide needs, including  
16 administrative oversight and planning, and  
17 monitoring adaptive management-related  
18 activities.

19 Today, the Region-wide TIG has  
20 committed approximately \$27 million of its  
21 \$349 million in total funding. On the next  
22 slide, I'll provide you additional details  
23 on this Region-wide TIG funding activities.

24 So the Region-wide TIG has committed  
25 funding for activities in all resource

1 types and restoration categories for which  
2 the TIG has responsibilities. I'll begin  
3 with column number 1 for sea turtles. For  
4 sea turtles, the Region-wide TIG has  
5 committed approximately one-third of its  
6 available funding. This includes funding  
7 for two early restoration projects. The  
8 first is the sea turtle early restoration  
9 project. It's a multifaceted project,  
10 which includes components that cross five  
11 Gulf states and address threats to sea  
12 turtles on their nesting beaches, as well  
13 as in the coastal environment. This  
14 project is a ten-year project and it's in  
15 its third year of implementation.

16 The second sea turtle-related early  
17 restoration project is called Restoring the  
18 Night Sky, which it retrofits existing  
19 lighting to make it more sea turtle  
20 friendly at locations in both Florida and  
21 Alabama.

22 From the sea turtle allocation, the  
23 Region-wide TIG also funded development of  
24 the Sea Turtles Strategic Framework, one of  
25 four frameworks released by the Region-wide

1 TIG in June of last year. These documents  
2 were developed to assist with restoration  
3 planning for all four resource types, sea  
4 turtles, marine mammals, birds and oysters.

5 Next, I'll actually skip over the  
6 second column for a second and speak to  
7 column number 3. This is for birds. So  
8 for birds, the Region-wide TIG has  
9 committed approximately three percent of  
10 its available funding. This includes  
11 funding for the bird -- the bird strategic  
12 framework, as well as for one early  
13 restoration project. That project is the  
14 Enhanced Management of Aiding and Breeding  
15 Habitat Early Restoration Project. It's  
16 located across three Gulf states, Florida,  
17 Alabama and Mississippi, and includes  
18 placing markers at sensitive bird nesting  
19 sites. This five-year project has reached  
20 the monitoring phase of implementation.

21 So next, I'll cover columns 2 and 4.  
22 On this slide, it's marine mammals and  
23 oysters. And although it's hard to see,  
24 we've spent just less than one percent of  
25 funding for both of those with resource

1 types, and that funding was used for  
2 development of strategic frameworks for  
3 each of those resource types. These will  
4 assist in future restoration planning  
5 efforts for marine mammals and oysters.

6 I'll next speak to the fifth column  
7 there, Monitoring and Adaptive Management.  
8 Under monitoring and adaptive management,  
9 the Region-wide TIG supports the trustee  
10 council and TIGs by providing annual  
11 funding for the MAM work group.

12 This funding supports activities to develop  
13 and maintain MAM procedures and guidelines  
14 and facilitate coordination across the  
15 TIGs. To date, the Region-wide TIG has  
16 committed approximately two percent of its  
17 available MAM funding to support these  
18 kinds of efforts.

19 And then last, but not least, in  
20 column number 5, Administrative Oversight  
21 and Planning. The Region-wide TIG also  
22 assists the Trustee Council and TIGs by  
23 providing annual funding for administrative  
24 support and services, maintenance of the  
25 administrative record, Trustee Council

1 website, and restoration project portal,  
2 and support for conducting the Trustee  
3 Council public meetings and other outreach.  
4 To date, the Region-wide TIG has committed  
5 approximately 12 percent of its available  
6 administrative oversight and planning funds  
7 to support these types of efforts.

8           So with respect to the Region-wide  
9 TIG's current activities, trustees continue  
10 to oversee implementation and monitoring of  
11 the three early restoration projects  
12 described previously.

13           Also this year, the Region-wide TIG  
14 will continue to provide funding for  
15 continued administrative support for the  
16 Trustee Council and TIGs, as well as for  
17 activities in the cross-TIG work group.

18           With respect to our future  
19 activities, the Region-wide TIG has been  
20 watching closely ongoing restoration  
21 efforts related to birds, oysters, marine  
22 mammals and sea turtles to determine if  
23 there are any restoration needs or  
24 information gaps that the Region-wide TIG  
25 can help address.

1           Earlier this spring, after consulting  
2           with each of the other restoration area  
3           TIGs and considering the information  
4           presented in each of the strategic  
5           frameworks, the Region-wide TIG agreed it  
6           would be appropriate to begin conducting  
7           preplanning activities. These include  
8           developing the scope and scheduling of  
9           upcoming restoration plan efforts,  
10          including Restoration Plan Number 1.

11          The Region-wide TIG anticipates  
12          conducting initial restoration planning  
13          steps for birds, oysters, marine mammals  
14          and sea turtles beginning later this year,  
15          and continuing into 2019. We look forward  
16          to the public's participation in this  
17          process. Thank you.

18          I think with this, I will turn it  
19          back to Perry.

20          MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Tim. Why don't  
21          we stand in our seats for about ten seconds  
22          and give ourselves a stretch. That was a  
23          lot. That was a lot of information. Okay.

24          This is the portion of the program  
25          that we want to transition to public

1        comments.  Again, I want to remind you that  
2        everyone should have signed in on a blue  
3        card, and this is the proper way in which  
4        to allow me to call you forward.

5                So if you signed up and you said you  
6        wanted to make a public comment, you would  
7        have said yes, and I would have been given  
8        those cards.  Are there any individuals who  
9        did not say yes and who would like to now  
10       get on that list to make a public comment?  
11       If you would just raise your hand and we'll  
12       get a blue card to you.  And if at any time  
13       -- okay.  I have two hands up over here to  
14       my right.  So, ma'am, we'll get a card to  
15       you and they'll get those to me.  What I  
16       will do is, I will call individuals  
17       forward, two at a time, and if the second  
18       person can simply stand behind the first  
19       person who is speaking, that will help to  
20       expedite the process.

21                Because we have a number of speakers,  
22        we are going to limit the speakers to three  
23        minutes.  Some people have driven many  
24        miles to be here tonight, as you can see,  
25        from Texas to Florida, and so we want to be

1 as respectful as possible. And this  
2 monitor here, when you begin to speak, if  
3 you will state your name, and if you are  
4 representing an organization, if you will  
5 state the name of the organization. If you  
6 are simply here for yourself, you won't  
7 need to state your organization. At that  
8 time, this little monitor will turn green.  
9 For two-and-a-half minutes, it will be  
10 green. Then at two-and-a-half minutes, it  
11 will turn yellow. When you see it turn  
12 yellow, I would appreciate if you would go  
13 ahead and conclude your comments. When it  
14 turns red, you have completed your three  
15 minutes, and I am going to ask you to go  
16 ahead and take your seat to allow the next  
17 individual to come forward.

18 So at this time, from my right, your  
19 left, we have Mr. Phil Coram, State of  
20 Florida; Next to Phil, we have Mary Josie  
21 Blanchard, Department of the Interior; then  
22 we have Christopher Blakenship, State of  
23 Alabama; Mary Kay Lynch, U.S. Environmental  
24 Protection Agency; Gary Rikard, State of  
25 Mississippi; Chris Doley, from NOAA; Alyson

1 Graugnard, State of Louisiana; Homer  
2 Wilkes, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and  
3 finally Robin Riechers, from the State of  
4 Texas.

5 At this time, I would like to start  
6 with the first individual, Mr. Ron Bradley.  
7 Again, because this is being captured by a  
8 court reporter, if you would state your  
9 name, and if you are representing an  
10 organization, the name of the organization  
11 so that we can properly annotate in the  
12 public record. Mr. Bradley.

13 MR. BRADLEY: I'm Ryan Bradley. I'm the  
14 Executive Director at the Mississippi  
15 Commercial Fisheries United. We're a  
16 nonprofit business alliance representing  
17 the commercial fishing and seafood  
18 industry. We're based right here in Long  
19 Beach, Mississippi, so we're glad to have  
20 you right here in our backyard.

21 I've witnessed the devastation of  
22 this oil spill firsthand. I worked during  
23 the oil spill. I was a commercial  
24 fisherman before.

25 And the seafood industry is not

1 getting any better here in Mississippi.  
2 We're having lots of problems all across  
3 the Gulf. The time is now to focus on our  
4 seafood industry. We've put enough into  
5 the recreational opportunities. It's time  
6 to focus on the seafood.

7 We appreciate the education and  
8 outreach workshop last night. I would like  
9 to thank you all for having that. When we  
10 think of industry engagement, we think of  
11 actually reaching out to these specific  
12 communities that may be impacted by these  
13 projects. We'd like to see that done  
14 before these projects are considered and  
15 implemented. I think there's some funds  
16 that maybe we could use to help engage a  
17 little bit better with the stakeholders and  
18 stakeholder groups.

19 I would like to ask the trustees to  
20 ask yourselves, how much do you value the  
21 commercial fishing industry and the seafood  
22 industry?

23 These folks are really struggling. I  
24 can't reiterate it enough. It's time to  
25 start putting some of these funds to

1 restoring these resources, restoring the  
2 habitat. There's all kinds of stuff about  
3 birds and marine mammals, nothing about  
4 shrimp. That's what we're known for here  
5 on the -- that's the biggest commercial  
6 industry. What are we doing to help the  
7 shrimp industry? We've got to start doing  
8 that.

9 We're asking that you consider future  
10 projects that would give these fishing  
11 industry stakeholders key roles in  
12 participating in the restoration process.  
13 We're referring to that as participatory  
14 restoration. And it's the idea that we can  
15 tap into a traditional ecological and  
16 fishing knowledge that these  
17 multi-generation water men possess. These  
18 stakeholders have the most at stake, and  
19 the most to gain in these restoration  
20 projects. It only makes sense that we're  
21 utilizing them every step of the way.

22 Allowing these stakeholders to  
23 contribute meaningfully in these  
24 restoration activities will ease the  
25 burdens that they're feeling right now and

1 it can ease the pressure on these resources  
2 that are at critical levels.

3 Examples of participatory restoration  
4 include anything from oyster reef  
5 monitoring, oyster relays, oyster shell  
6 recycling and planting, voluntary  
7 electronic monitoring and data collection,  
8 water quality monitoring, bottom mapping  
9 and surveying, and consulting with  
10 restoration activities.

11 So thank you for the time to speak  
12 tonight, and we hope that you all will take  
13 the seafood industry seriously. It's time  
14 to put this money towards making our  
15 seafood industry what it used to be. So  
16 thank you.

17 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Bradley.  
18 The next individual to make public  
19 comments, Mr. Robert Bendick, followed by  
20 Howard Page.

21 MR. BENDICK: Good evening. My name is Bob  
22 Bendick. I'm the Gulf of Mexico director  
23 for the Nature Conservancy. I'm here  
24 representing the conservancy and our five  
25 Gulf state chapters. Thanks for the

1 opportunity to be here. It's really  
2 exciting to see the progress that is being  
3 made (inaudible).

4 TNC continues to believe that several  
5 overall principles are important for the  
6 successful restoration of natural resource  
7 damages. One, investment of NRD funds  
8 should be integrated and coordinated with  
9 other Deepwater Horizon funding to support  
10 large ecosystem restoration projects that  
11 have multiple impacts on the health of the  
12 Gulf.

13 Two, estuaries and their watersheds  
14 are effective units for accomplishing such  
15 coordination; estuary restoration projects  
16 can be building blocks for overall Gulf  
17 restoration. Existing estuary-based  
18 organizations, such as the National  
19 Estuarine Programs, National Estuarine  
20 Research Reserves, CPRA in Louisiana and  
21 the like are useful in implementing NRD  
22 projects. In this context, offshore waters  
23 should be considered a separate unit for  
24 analysis, integration and investment.

25 While NRD evaluations may be more

1 technical than are some other aspects of  
2 Deepwater Horizon funded restoration,  
3 public communication and engagement are  
4 still essential for effective project  
5 selection.

6 Fifth, natural resource damage fund  
7 investments may not be sufficient to  
8 completely restore a habitat or species,  
9 but they should take the long view and  
10 establish the foundation for ongoing and  
11 lasting restoration.

12 And six, investment decisions should  
13 take into account the projected impacts of  
14 climate change and sea level rise,  
15 including the ability of habitats and  
16 species to adapt to a changing climate.

17 As you continue your deliberations,  
18 we hope you will take into account the  
19 following specific concerns:

20 Oysters and oyster reefs are in  
21 trouble across the Gulf. Oysters were  
22 basic building blocks of the Gulf  
23 ecosystem. The Deepwater Horizon funding,  
24 from multiple sources, is a  
25 once-and-forever opportunity to restore

1 oysters in the Gulf; however, this funding  
2 should be deployed without delay to avoid  
3 reaching a tipping point that prevents  
4 long-term recovery.

5           The region-wide TIG, state TIGs and  
6 other sources of Deepwater Horizon funding  
7 should be used in concert to restore  
8 oysters for both their ecosystem and market  
9 values by supporting sustained oyster  
10 stocks. The region-wide oyster restoration  
11 framework is a sound step in this  
12 direction.

13           Second, species migrations of various  
14 kinds are another important element of the  
15 Gulf ecosystem. NRD's decisions should  
16 take into account protecting the multiple  
17 habitats and restoring the connectivity  
18 that allow migratory species to complete  
19 their life cycles.

20           Third, bird nesting on barrier  
21 islands and in floodplain forests of rivers  
22 tributary to the Gulf are important in  
23 themselves, and their protection and  
24 restoration can contribute to the  
25 resilience of coastal areas from storms.

1 MR. FRANKLIN: If you can begin to wrap  
2 up, Mr. Bendick.

3 MR. BENDICK: I'm almost there. Land  
4 conservation and fee in easement is an  
5 important tool for addressing natural  
6 resource damages.

7 And, finally, GulfCorps, the Gulf  
8 conservation corps, has proven to be  
9 successful in employing young adults to  
10 accomplish meaningful Gulf restoration  
11 projects. There are likely natural  
12 resource damage activities that can extend  
13 and take advantage of this program, and  
14 employ more young people from the Gulf in  
15 Gulf restoration. Thank you.

16 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Bendick.  
17 The next person to make a comment, Howard  
18 Page, followed by Julia Weaver.

19 MR. PAGE: I'm Howard Page. I'm speaking  
20 for the North Gulfport Community Land  
21 Trust, and I would like to ask -- it makes  
22 a lot of sense that we have people from the  
23 state agencies on this group and people  
24 from the federal agencies because you had  
25 core missions before this disaster happened

1 on water quality, a lot of other things,  
2 that gives you the expertise and the  
3 understanding to help make this a good  
4 effort and to achieve this.

5 You did things like keeping plastics  
6 out of the ocean, which leads to the  
7 mortality of turtles. You did stormwater  
8 point and nonpoint runoff. You protected  
9 wetlands. You do failing sewer systems.  
10 You have the expertise, and I truly believe  
11 you have the desire. Every time I've  
12 worked with anyone from state or federal  
13 agencies, they have exactly that. I truly  
14 believe there's expertise in the agencies,  
15 and I truly believe that there's a sincere  
16 desire from everyone I've ever talked to,  
17 to achieve these goals that we all have.  
18 We have the existing law. We have the  
19 existing rules.

20 But I do see a point of failure, and  
21 I would like to speak to some other folks  
22 that I heard in the room. I heard there's  
23 some Mississippi state legislatures in the  
24 room. I'm from Mississippi. I heard that  
25 Congressman Palazzo has some staff here.

1           The failure is not from your agencies  
2           for the essential synergy that is going to  
3           have to come from you meeting those core  
4           missions you already had of clean water and  
5           protecting the environment for this to be  
6           successful. It comes from the fact that  
7           the Congress and the state legislature  
8           provide you adequate resources, that they  
9           fund these essential missions. That is the  
10          failure point here. It's clear and  
11          obvious. There's one point of failure, and  
12          that's the failure of the Mississippi  
13          Legislature. When you have failing sewer  
14          systems in Mississippi and all the other  
15          Gulf states have it too, it's because the  
16          state legislatures don't fund those  
17          missions. When you have turtles dying from  
18          plastics in the oceans, it's because  
19          Congressman Palazzo and his colleagues do  
20          not fund that critical mission adequately.

21          And, again, I truly believe, you  
22          folks that I see at the table, you all have  
23          the expertise, you all have the desire, you  
24          all have outstanding staffs. You all have  
25          the existing law.

1           What you need is a Congress that gets  
2           away from the magical thinking that cutting  
3           taxes and reducing government solves all  
4           problems. That is magical thinking. It  
5           has no logic to it. That needs to change.  
6           The Congresses and the legislature need to  
7           fund you all so that you can do the  
8           existing core missions that you already  
9           had, and let this overall, very complicated  
10          project be a success and let your existing  
11          missions be a success. Thank you.

12         MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Page. The  
13          next individual, Ms. Julia Weaver, followed  
14          by Jesse Ritter.

15         MS. WEAVER: Thank you. My name is Julia  
16          Weaver. Thank you for the opportunity to  
17          comment tonight on behalf of the  
18          Partnership For Gulf Coast Land  
19          Conservation, a network of more than two  
20          dozen nonprofit land conservation  
21          organizations across the Gulf. Our mission  
22          is to increase the pace, quality and  
23          permanence of voluntary land and water  
24          conservation of the Gulf Coast region.  
25          Thank you for your investments to date in

1 land conservation, land acquisition.

2 We have a grant from the National  
3 Fish and Wildlife Foundation to develop a  
4 set of best practices for conducting  
5 landscape scale land conservation on the  
6 Gulf, and I want to run by for you tonight  
7 a few of our preliminary findings. And I  
8 am going to talk fast, so listen fast.

9 The first best practice  
10 recommendation is that everyone who is  
11 involved in land conservation consider  
12 reviewing, adapting and adopting the  
13 standards and practices put out by the Land  
14 Trust Alliance, which is the national  
15 organization that has worked with thousands  
16 of land trusts across the country to  
17 develop these practices beginning in 1989.  
18 They've just been updated. They can be  
19 adapted by public agencies and quasi public  
20 agencies. And as more entities are getting  
21 involved in this work, it's good to have  
22 standard practices. We cover ethics,  
23 mission, community engagement, compliance,  
24 evaluating and selecting conservation  
25 projects, ensuring sound transactions,

1 stewardship, et cetera.

2 Other best practice recommendations,  
3 each Gulf state should have a dedicated  
4 source of land conservation funding for  
5 project development, grant match  
6 requirements and small transactions, such  
7 as Florida Forever and Alabama's Forever  
8 Wild Program. Funders should develop  
9 bridge loans, revolving loan funds and a  
10 mechanism to cover holding costs to avoid  
11 lost opportunities. Focus on leveraging  
12 Deepwater Horizon funds with other  
13 conservation funds.

14 In regard to project selection and  
15 decision support, I have a lot of thoughts  
16 about that. Don't have time. One thing I  
17 would like to mention is to collaborate  
18 closely with the Restore Council's  
19 strategic conservation assessment project.

20 Finally, we encourage NRDA and the  
21 other Deepwater Horizon decision-makers to  
22 adopt a common set of requirements for land  
23 acquisitions, and to hold state level land  
24 conservation planning and coordination  
25 meetings for the land conservation

1 community, including landowners. Although  
2 don't forget (inaudible) land, conservation  
3 easements. Thank you so much, and thank  
4 you for being here.

5 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Weaver. The  
6 next individual, Jesse Ritter, followed by  
7 Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson.

8 MR. RITTER: Good evening. I'm Jesse  
9 Ritter. I'm a senior quality specialist  
10 for Gulf Restoration with the National  
11 Wildlife Federation. It's great to be here  
12 with you all tonight. Thank you being  
13 here, for all of those updates, and for the  
14 opportunity to provide comment.

15 Since the spill, NWF has been working  
16 across the Gulf states to advocate for a  
17 science-based restoration (inaudible) for  
18 Gulf Coast ecosystems. We continue to  
19 encourage the trustee council to restore  
20 nature's resources with a focus, wherever  
21 possible, on addressing underlying  
22 ecosystems and improving overall ecosystem  
23 function. We believe a stressors-focused  
24 approach will help to ensure the  
25 restoration investments are strategic,

1 properly sequenced and sustainable,  
2 ultimately increasing the long-range  
3 resilience of these systems.

4 We support ongoing efforts to advance  
5 large-scale restoration projects and to  
6 work in cross funding streams. There were  
7 multiple examples provided tonight of the  
8 ways you all are doing that, and we are  
9 really happy to see those conversations  
10 happening.

11 In particular, right now, we  
12 encourage you all and your staff to be  
13 collaborating closely with Restore Council  
14 staff and members as they work on the  
15 future of the priorities list.

16 NWF supports the strategic framework  
17 developed by the region-wide TIG, and we  
18 hope they'll be actively used by all  
19 trustees as restoration planning advances  
20 for the (inaudible) categories. We also  
21 note that all TIGs have the option of  
22 developing strategic frameworks or  
23 strategic restoration plans for the  
24 resources in their jurisdictions, and we  
25 encourage each TIG to do so, for actively

1 looking across the restoration type of  
2 geography and laying out that long-term  
3 vision for restoration dollars helps the  
4 public understand where the TIG wants to go  
5 and also will lead to more strategic  
6 investments.

7 We greatly appreciate all of the  
8 efforts to increase transparency and  
9 accessibility of this process, including  
10 through events which you held last night,  
11 and we hope that this momentum will  
12 continue.

13 To that end, I want to emphasize a  
14 few practices that we believe would  
15 increase the public's ability to  
16 effectively engage in the process, and  
17 encourage all states (inaudible).

18 First, when soliciting project ideas  
19 from the public at the initial stages of  
20 development of a plan, we encourage the TIG  
21 to provide as many details as possible  
22 regarding not only the restoration types  
23 under consideration, but also geographies  
24 of particular concern, if applicable, and  
25 the range of dollars likely to be spent on

1 the particular restoration plan. This will  
2 help the public to provide project ideas  
3 that are more appropriately tailored to  
4 that particular funding opportunity.

5 In its restoration plans, we  
6 encourage the TIGs to provide a detailed  
7 explanation of the criteria and the process  
8 used for project selection, including why  
9 other project types were eliminated from  
10 further consideration.

11 And, finally, frequent updates on  
12 progress of program projects are so  
13 important, shared not only in public  
14 forums, like this tonight, but also on the  
15 website for greater access and awareness.  
16 It's critical that we continue to tell the  
17 story of our projects for success, not only  
18 for audiences in this room and down in the  
19 Gulf, but also for a national audience.

20 Thank you again for the opportunity.

21 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Ritter. Ms.  
22 Ferguson, followed by Andrew Whitehurst.

23 MS. FERGUSON: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm  
24 Mrs. Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson isn't  
25 speaking. I wanted to ask you all a

1 question. Eight years ago, we had this  
2 spill, and you all sprayed the dispersant  
3 on the spill. You all didn't, but it got  
4 sprayed.

5 Well, it's eight years later, and we  
6 would like to know where we are at in this  
7 thing. Because we know that the seafood is  
8 not coming back, like the man said.

9 There's no seafood out there. (Inaudible)  
10 But things like my husband's small business  
11 is gone, because he cannot repair the nets  
12 or repair the gear because he coughs,  
13 because it makes him sick.

14 I just want to know where we're at,  
15 because by doing this, we can make it  
16 whole, make it better. If we can figure  
17 out where we are at, maybe we can make  
18 things better in the long run.

19 So I just want to know, it's eight  
20 years later, I just want to know if anybody  
21 has found out anything new about where we  
22 are with the dispersant out there in the  
23 Gulf. That's my only question.

24 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Ferguson.

25 Andrew Whitehurst, followed by Casi

1 Callaway.

2 MR. WHITEHURST: Hello. I'm Andrew

3 Whitehurst. Thank you all for the

4 opportunity to provide comments tonight.

5 I'm the water program director for the Gulf

6 Restoration Network, and I live in Madison,

7 Mississippi, and work on Mississippi water

8 issues.

9 I had a comment about last night's  
10 presentation. I thought last night was  
11 positive. For me, it would have been more  
12 instructive to have some case studies along  
13 with what was presented so we could have  
14 seen how things began, the stakeholders  
15 involved and hear some stories. But maybe  
16 for next time, that would be something that  
17 you all could work into it.

18 I wanted to talk about  
19 problem-solving with the BP settlement  
20 money, because my understanding of it, the  
21 way I'm coming to terms with this, is that  
22 it has to be applied to problems out there.  
23 And people bring problems to me, they call  
24 me with them, and so I hear about them.

25 The first is Red Creek. There's a

1 sediment problem in two counties on Red  
2 Creek in Stone and George Counties. And I  
3 see the upper Pascagoula nutrient work,  
4 funded by NRDA money, and since sediment  
5 problems often involve nutrients, I think  
6 that something like what's going on on  
7 (inaudible) could be applied to Red Creek.  
8 Red Creek is a medium-sized, one of the  
9 nicer tributaries in the Pascagoula system.  
10 So bringing it on down into the lower parts  
11 of Pascagoula would be good, and Red Creek  
12 is a good place to look.

13 I have something that applies to  
14 restore because Restore Act was open, the  
15 floor was open last night for comments  
16 about the Restore Act, and I know there's  
17 some folks here from the Restore Council.  
18 So this spring, at the Mississippi Water  
19 Resources Conference, a presentation by a  
20 USGS scientist from Nashville was very  
21 instructive. It's one of the Gulf-wide  
22 flow studies with the Mississippi  
23 component. And that scientist, Rodney  
24 Knight, talked about the research problem  
25 that he set out for one of the streams in

1 the state, and he set out these three  
2 questions. How far down a river can a  
3 dam's disruption flow be detected? How  
4 sensitive are the freshwater needs of  
5 coastal marshes and bays to upstream  
6 damming? And third, can the coastal waters  
7 be so distant from the dam's influence that  
8 it can't be detected?

9 And the possible streams to apply  
10 this study to were the Pearl and the  
11 Pascagoula Rivers. Now, the Pascagoula  
12 probably has better environmental data, but  
13 the Pearl has a pressing need to answer  
14 these questions because of the project up  
15 in Jackson, the One Lake Project, to dam it  
16 and dredge it. So it would be great to  
17 have that research project Restore Council  
18 expanded or given to both of the rivers in  
19 Mississippi.

20 Thanks. I see the light is red, so  
21 I'll stop.

22 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you for your comment.  
23 The next individual is Casi Callaway,  
24 followed by Chris Rhodes.

25 MS. CALLAWAY: Hi, I'm Casi Callaway. I'm

1 the director of Mobile Bay Keeper, and I  
2 want to thank you again for the opportunity  
3 to speak. I want to thank you for  
4 traveling across the whole Gulf Coast  
5 states so that we get to meet you and see  
6 you.

7 At eight-and-a-half years, there are  
8 a bunch of new faces on that podium, so  
9 it's nice to see all of you. The thing  
10 that has also happened in that  
11 eight-and-a-half years is that this  
12 audience is significantly smaller than it  
13 was before.

14 So I also want to say thank you for  
15 hosting last night's 101, for creating an  
16 opportunity for people to either reengage,  
17 learn for the first time or catch up where  
18 they took a break and stepped off of these  
19 issues. I think there still need to be  
20 more, and that's what we really want to ask  
21 you for. We are very excited that Alabama  
22 is going to host a summit in October, and  
23 really excited to see how that rolls out,  
24 and the opportunities for people to ask and  
25 get questions answered. I appreciate what

1 happened yesterday, so hopefully we can get  
2 some ideas of what worked and didn't work,  
3 as well as what the Mississippi sites have  
4 been like and Louisiana. Let's make sure  
5 we're using best practices to really be  
6 able to incorporate, get new voices, get  
7 voices back up here.

8           Because the other things that we have  
9 to do -- NRDA, everyone knows, is probably  
10 the hardest one of the three funding  
11 sources. We also have to get into the  
12 local communities, communities of colors,  
13 communities who are more disadvantaged,  
14 those who are more affected, the seafood  
15 industry, those sectors of our communities  
16 that are impacted or that need to be  
17 engaged, but don't know to get here, and  
18 then don't know what to do to stand up and  
19 speak from the -- off the cuff, the way  
20 some of us can do this. I think -- and  
21 that is also very, very exciting.

22           We are also excited to see  
23 (inaudible) Administrative Conference  
24 Planning Fund. And I want to reiterate  
25 what I think Jesse Graham said and so many

1 others have said, is that please be working  
2 across all the funding streams, but also,  
3 you have an opportunity to look at  
4 comprehensive planning, and how are we  
5 building out each one of these, whether  
6 it's a TIG, in a one-off TIG or that  
7 Gulf-wide view. Let's figure it out. In  
8 Alabama, we're doing widespread restoration  
9 watershed management plan. How are we  
10 making all of those go together, and then  
11 how do those weave into what's happening in  
12 Florida and Mississippi? So let's be  
13 really thoughtful about one great plan.

14 I'm going to give kudos to Louisiana  
15 over and over because they have a plan.  
16 They have something that they know how to  
17 fund. We all need something that works for  
18 each and every one of us in all of our  
19 states, but also, very, very importantly,  
20 Gulf-wide.

21 And then I'll close with this. We  
22 had -- it's a Bob Brown quote. It's a Joe  
23 Bryant quote. It's a Chris Blakenship  
24 quote. But these are once-in-a-lifetime  
25 disaster funds. We don't ever want to see

1     this money come into our states for this  
2     reason again; therefore, we have to spend  
3     it that way, transformational,  
4     once-in-a-lifetime projects to address what  
5     we broke in the oil spill, what was  
6     documented in the oil spill, but to set us  
7     up for a future that we don't ever need to  
8     have those kind of problems again. Thank  
9     you.

10    MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Callaway.  
11    The next individual to make public comment,  
12    Chris Rhodes, followed by Kara Lankford.

13    MR. RHODES: Hi, I'm Christopher Rhodes,  
14    right here from Biloxi, Mississippi. I  
15    wanted to share a little bit about my early  
16    childhood. I'm a third generation  
17    fisherman.

18           And the scariest moment of my life  
19    usually was opening day for the shrimp  
20    season. I wasn't as fast or as strong as  
21    my brother or my dad, so they would send me  
22    to the wheelhouse. And it would be a  
23    frenzy of multiple folks, hundreds of  
24    folks, literally pushing each other out of  
25    the way. It was just -- man, for ten years

1 old, that was rough. Dad would say, steer  
2 towards them when they move. Go away.  
3 We're making money here, and it's got to be  
4 made quick.

5 So I seen the shrimp industry already  
6 dying before the oil spill industry -- or  
7 the oil spill. You know, the Blessing of  
8 the Fleet that we have here locally, if you  
9 are not familiar with it, it's very small  
10 now. Opening, you know, on the horizon,  
11 you don't see as many boats as you used to.  
12 So we were already struggling.

13 So moving forward, I would like to  
14 see the local fishermen involved. There's  
15 a lot that I've learned, even as a young  
16 child. I'm not a scientist, by any means,  
17 but just different trends that I don't  
18 think people think about. Like, you will  
19 be working on a batch of shrimp, and  
20 magically, they'll change to nighttime or  
21 to daytime, and the fish will show up.  
22 It's things like these that I think we can  
23 bring to the table.

24 I've also operated a technology  
25 business for the last four-and-a-half

1 years. And at the end of the day, all this  
2 money is spent, just like the previous  
3 comment, and it's gone. So, I mean, we're  
4 just dying out here. I hear it all the  
5 time. And if I didn't state it, I'm with  
6 the Mississippi Commercial Fisheries United  
7 Group. And so I hear the concerns from  
8 Ground Zero all the time, every day,  
9 actually.

10 And we're just asking that you  
11 include us, not just for an opportunity to  
12 make some money in this, but for insight.  
13 You know, the only way to truly make  
14 someone do something that you want, which  
15 is results for your superiors later, is to  
16 make somebody really want the end result,  
17 and what better than a fisherman? I mean,  
18 they know how to take care of the product  
19 that we're trying to shape, whether it be  
20 shaping oysters, and not to crack the edges  
21 and let everything leak out so they die.  
22 They know what they adhere to. They know  
23 that if it's a tonging ground, not to dump  
24 them in 18 feet of water or maybe where the  
25 bottom isn't suitable, where they will

1 suffocate.

2           And so the end result to all of the  
3 trustees will be, I believe, better  
4 results. It will be a huge community  
5 service in the local economy here. And at  
6 the end of the day, you still get exactly  
7 what you are looking for.

8           And even with our insight, I believe  
9 we could find ways, if we were in the  
10 beginning phases of implementation, to  
11 reduce costs, as well. So being around  
12 business, I've also looked into bringing a  
13 lot of things to the table that your common  
14 day fishermen can't get, like umbrella  
15 policies for insurance and things of that  
16 nature that these things require.

17 Christopher Rhodes. Thank you.

18 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you so much,  
19 Mr. Rhodes. The next individual coming  
20 forward is Kara Lankford, followed by  
21 Terese Collins.

22 MS. LANKFORD: I'm Kara Lankford. I'm with  
23 the National Audubon Society. First, I  
24 want to thank you for hosting the education  
25 and community workshop last night. These

1 types of (inaudible) are incredibly helpful  
2 to the public, and it's clear that  
3 providing open platforms to ask and answer  
4 questions was well embraced. We hope you  
5 will consider having similar workshops in  
6 the future. It's great to see increased  
7 transparency and engagement from the  
8 Trustee Council, and we offer our support  
9 to ensure this remains a priority moving  
10 forward.

11 It was nice to hear updates from our  
12 region-wide and open ocean TIGs tonight.  
13 (Inaudible) communication and insight on  
14 how projects for these TIGs will be  
15 developed and ultimately chosen, as needed.  
16 More information on the front end will lead  
17 to better, more informed projects when the  
18 trustees open the project portals for  
19 recommendations.

20 We were pleased to see the release of  
21 the monitoring and adaptive management  
22 procedures (inaudible) annual from the  
23 cross TIG work group and look forward to  
24 seeing how these are applied in practice.  
25 As restoration continues to ramp up, these

1 procedures and guidelines will be critical  
2 to ensure that monitoring standards are  
3 consistent across TIGs and restoration  
4 progress is measured per funding level.

5 Audubon would encourage the trustees  
6 to invest in science-based projects, when  
7 necessary, to inform restoration planning.  
8 As made evident by the BP Oil disaster,  
9 there's much we don't know about the Gulf  
10 and its wildlife. In many cases, more  
11 information is needed before sound  
12 restoration and conservation options can be  
13 identified.

14 Lastly, I'll reiterate that  
15 coordination among TIGs and other  
16 restoration efforts is likely the biggest  
17 challenge, and also likely the most  
18 important factor to achieving restoration  
19 goals. Thanks so much.

20 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Lankford.  
21 The next individual coming forward, Terese  
22 Collins, followed by Alexis Baldera.

23 MS. COLLINS: Pass.

24 MR. FRANKLIN: Collins passes. Alexis  
25 Baldera will then be followed by Jackee

1 Antalan.

2 MS. BALDERA: Hi. I'm Alexis Baldera. I'm  
3 with the Ocean Conservancy and I'm  
4 providing comment on behalf of the Ocean  
5 Conservancy tonight.

6 So first, I just want to echo the  
7 gratitude other people have shared with me  
8 for the workshop last night. I think the  
9 interactive dialogue was really helpful,  
10 and I hope you will continue that on other  
11 town meetings.

12 At Ocean Conservancy, we've been  
13 excited to see restoration plans get  
14 finalized and implemented in the Gulf of  
15 Mexico. We're eight years into this, so  
16 it's great to see restoration really geared  
17 up.

18 So going forward, it would be helpful  
19 to have one predictable planning timeline  
20 for those of us interested in project  
21 submission and tracking the progress of the  
22 TIGs. That doesn't necessarily mean all  
23 TIGs have to be on the same timeline, but  
24 just so we know what's coming in the next  
25 couple of years.

1           We also hope that you will continue  
2           to coordinate with the other restoration  
3           programs, like Restore and NFWF,  
4           (inaudible) projects, and then as projects  
5           get done, sharing lessons learned, what's  
6           working, what's not working, what are we  
7           learning as we go.

8           We're very encouraged by the work of  
9           the Cross-TIG Monitoring Adaptive  
10          Management Working Group. We are very  
11          supportive of the work they've done on  
12          project level monitoring, and we hope you  
13          will continue your commitment in  
14          coordinating that project level monitoring.

15          We would also like to see you invest  
16          in developing programmatic level monitoring  
17          so that you can begin to track progress  
18          towards those high-level goals. We think  
19          this is going to be a really important  
20          piece of planning, so you can select  
21          projects that are going to meet those goals  
22          best, and it will also help you tell the  
23          story of Gulf restoration and how you are  
24          having an impact on the ecosystem as a  
25          whole, and how projects are working

1 together around these metrics to get you to  
2 those goals.

3 At Ocean Conservancy, we talk with a  
4 lot of our members and the public about  
5 Gulf restoration, and we get a lot of  
6 questions from people about how is  
7 restoration going, how is this specific  
8 habitat or animal that I care about that I  
9 know that was injured doing, how is it  
10 recovering. And so we really encourage you  
11 to openly report on your research-specific  
12 goals with the public on your website, in  
13 addition to how are individual resources  
14 doing with recovery, where are they at on  
15 their recovery timelines, because I think  
16 people are really interested in more than  
17 just where projects are being implemented  
18 or how much is being spent on them. They  
19 want to know how they are contributing to  
20 what you are trying to achieve in the  
21 ecosystem.

22 And, lastly, let me just make the  
23 point that we are very supportive of the  
24 early investments in science that are being  
25 made. Some of the states have decided to

1 spend restoration dollars on answering key  
2 questions. And this is especially  
3 important for marine resources, like marine  
4 mammals and sea turtles, deepwater  
5 communities that we know we have a lot of  
6 gaps in knowledge in. So the best thing --  
7 and that points, early on, to pinpoint  
8 those stressors that we can identify for  
9 later restoration planning is really  
10 important.

11 So to wrap up, just to hit my high  
12 points, we ask you to coordinate, report on  
13 progress and invest in science. So thank  
14 you for your work and your commitment to  
15 restoration.

16 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Baldera.  
17 The next individual coming forward is  
18 Jackee Antalan, followed by Mr. Derrick  
19 Evans.

20 MS. ANTALAN: Hello, everyone. I guess I  
21 don't even need to tell you what all of my  
22 concerns are. I'm sure you can regurgitate  
23 it from hearing it year, after year, after  
24 year; meeting, after meeting, after  
25 meeting, after meeting; time, after time,

1 after time. The lack of accountability,  
2 the lack of transparency, and first and  
3 foremost, meaningful public engagement. I  
4 am -- I am -- I do not want to say  
5 disappointed because I'm not giving up.  
6 We're not going away. We are still very,  
7 very, very concerned about the lack of  
8 engagement, meaningful engagement.

9 This is not an update if you don't  
10 have the information. You are updated on  
11 information you already have. We have  
12 continued, for years, to talk about the  
13 seafood industry. And if you look and  
14 review the allocations of funds are going  
15 to recreational enhancement and our seafood  
16 industry is dying. Not only dying  
17 economically, but we're aging out, and we  
18 can't even beg people to stay in the  
19 industry. It's sad. It's past sad.

20 It's your responsibility. That is  
21 why you are here. The natural resources  
22 are for the humans, and we are so, so  
23 disappointed in the level of meaningful  
24 public engagement. It does not exist. I'd  
25 like to say it again. If we have

1 meaningful public engagement, transparency  
2 would happen. If we had meaningful public  
3 engagement, accountability will happen.

4 It's not after a decision has been made by  
5 a TIG who -- when we first started this  
6 process, none of the council members had  
7 help. Now, you have help. And the TIGs,  
8 they haven't reached out to the community.  
9 If they had reached out to the community,  
10 the seafood industry, and the fishermen,  
11 and the communities directly impacted by  
12 this disaster, not oil spill, but this  
13 disaster would not have to come in year,  
14 after year, after year and say, you are not  
15 doing anything for me. You know that.

16 Everybody at this table knows -- knows  
17 that. There are issues that you know that  
18 the community has brought to you over and  
19 over and over again, and none of these bar  
20 graphs represent you addressing those  
21 issues.

22 I believe you can do it. I believe  
23 if you take the initiative to come to the  
24 community -- we come to you constantly.  
25 You come back to us and say, and we want

1 your meaningful public participation. No  
2 you, you don't. You want us to come to  
3 your meetings. Thank you.

4 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Antalan.

5 The next individual to give public comment,  
6 Mr. Derrick Evans, followed by Jill  
7 Mastrototara.

8 MR. EVANS: Good evening. First of all, I  
9 would like to echo, also, my own gratitude  
10 and appreciation for the good faith and  
11 good work that this body and the different  
12 TIGs have done. And I would like to, for  
13 whatever it's worth, speak briefly about  
14 what might be called the ecosystem of Gulf  
15 Coast stakeholders and the ecosystem of  
16 their participation and restoration  
17 historically, and now going forward,  
18 because it's very important.

19 Some of the people behind me are  
20 aware, some of the folks aren't, that about  
21 eight years ago -- well, first of all, even  
22 before that, I think all of us will agree  
23 that the Gulf region is probably, and  
24 always has been, for a very long time,  
25 without peer, as far as local citizens and

1 residents whose familiarity with the part  
2 of our planet or our continent where the  
3 freshwater meets the salt, and whose  
4 intergenerational experience in this mixing  
5 zone has produced a whole bunch of written  
6 and unwritten wisdom, and insight, and  
7 knowledge, and experience.

8           And when I returned back to the Gulf  
9 Coast personally, after years of living up  
10 north as a student and a teacher, I was not  
11 surprised, but awed, nonetheless, about how  
12 amazing the local roster from Florida to  
13 Texas was of environmental educators,  
14 serious world class marine and other  
15 ecological scientists, local conservation  
16 groups and land trusts, the still existing  
17 commercial fishing communities, unlike some  
18 other places in the country, local  
19 fishermen, indigenous people, particularly  
20 in Louisiana. And even what you might call  
21 the hell-raising clean water advocate  
22 community that a lot of the established  
23 leadership frequently got tired of hearing.

24           My point is a very diverse, deep,  
25 eclectic community of very good advocates

1 from various angles, science and others,  
2 for the Gulf have always been here. So  
3 much so, that eight years ago, we were  
4 able, some of us who had backgrounds in one  
5 of those or other areas -- I'm not talking  
6 about people from government. And I'm not  
7 talking about people, with a few  
8 exceptions, from your major large nonprofit  
9 green groups, but people from Barataria,  
10 people from Biloxi Bay, Turkey Creek, where  
11 I'm from, and up and down the Gulf Coast  
12 convened ourselves, and, frankly, produced  
13 what would become the Restore Act.

14 There was nothing in federal law that  
15 said that 80 percent of BP's fine money was  
16 going to return to the five states where it  
17 came, but we knew, those of us particularly  
18 familiar with the Clean Water Act --

19 MR. FRANKLIN: If you can go ahead and  
20 conclude, Mr. Evans.

21 MR. EVANS: Sure. Its unfortunate  
22 provisions, penalty calculations and its  
23 expenditures that we had to make this  
24 happen.

25 And so I want to just say, I want to

1 echo what's been said by others here, that  
2 when it comes to community participation  
3 and engagement, you are looking at the best  
4 there is in the United States, from my  
5 perspective, and with respect to the BP Oil  
6 spill, in particular, and to this region.

7         And I don't know exactly what it's  
8 going to take. I'm sure that in the  
9 interfunding source deliberations and so  
10 forth, there will be many opportunities for  
11 you to do so. But, yes, a much better job  
12 has to be done in terms of getting the most  
13 from these communities, not just  
14 downloading to these communities, which,  
15 frankly what was brought to this process  
16 from these communities in the first place,  
17 in many instances. Thank you.

18 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Evans. Next  
19 individual, Jill Mastrototara, followed by  
20 Shane Landry.

21 MS. MASTROTOTARA: Good evening. I'm Jill  
22 Mastrototara, policy director with Audubon  
23 Mississippi. And I echo my colleague's  
24 thanks to all of the hard work and also  
25 your effort to develop new and innovative

1 tools to reach out to the public and to try  
2 and get ideas and an exchange as this  
3 restoration process moves forward.

4 I feel compelled, given that we're in  
5 the state of Mississippi and recognizing  
6 your aspirational charge to restore the  
7 injuries that our Gulf has sustained, to  
8 acknowledge that there is a project of  
9 great concern to Audubon Mississippi and  
10 many partners around the region commonly  
11 referred to as the One Lake Project that is  
12 a dam proposal just south of Jackson,  
13 Mississippi, on the Pearl River, which is  
14 the Gulf's fourth largest freshwater input  
15 east of the Mississippi River. And our  
16 concerns about the downstream impacts, in  
17 particular, of this project as it relates  
18 to our seafood industry, as well as the  
19 many investments that you shared with us  
20 tonight, and those being planned by the  
21 restore and Gulf environmental benefit  
22 fund. And recognizing that there's a  
23 tremendous amount of synergy with our  
24 resources around the region, how projects  
25 that are upstream can impact our downstream

1 investments given that we are looking at an  
2 unprecedented investment for this and  
3 generations to come.

4 And so I just felt compelled to  
5 underscore, as our natural resource and  
6 Gulf decision-makers, as you look forward  
7 to ensuring that our investments on the  
8 ground in the Gulf region have many years  
9 of benefit to come to our communities here  
10 in Mississippi and around the Gulf, that  
11 you recognize that there are some proposals  
12 of concern that may imperil those many  
13 investments. So we appreciate your  
14 awareness in looking at the broad scope of  
15 what restoration faces both here on the  
16 front lines on the coast, as well as  
17 upstream. Thank you.

18 MR. FRANKLIN: Mr. Shane Landry.

19 MR. LANDRY: Hello. My name is Shane  
20 Landry. I'm with Plaquemine Parish  
21 government. I'm here today to represent  
22 our president, Amos Cormier. I want to  
23 thank all of you for giving us an  
24 opportunity to speak, and I also want to  
25 say, thank you to Ms. Antoine, and to

1 Chris, and to the other gentleman that  
2 spoke about the shrimping industry.  
3 Plaquemine Parish is one of the most  
4 prolific shrimp areas in the world, and so  
5 I have a special place in my heart for  
6 shrimpers. I grew up with them.

7 I really would like to implore this  
8 body, and LATIG, specifically, to have an  
9 open mind about alternatives to the  
10 diversion program. As a proud Louisianian,  
11 I'm glad that we're getting kudos for  
12 having a plan, but I'm here to tell you  
13 that this plan may not be the best one.

14 I see logical inconsistency in the  
15 expenditure of funds to stop nutrients from  
16 going out into the various estuaries and  
17 other marsh areas from various agricultural  
18 runoff and whatnot. But then we are going  
19 to go, we're going to cut my parish in  
20 half, create two very large diversions  
21 where the Mississippi River's going to take  
22 a whole continent's worth of farm runoff  
23 and put it into Breton Sound and Barataria  
24 Bay. This, to me, does not make much  
25 sense. It seems like we're working at

1 cross purposes with one another if we were  
2 to do that.

3 I would also suggest that we can  
4 accomplish both goals if we would focus  
5 more on the dredging and perhaps -- and I  
6 know that there's been this discussion,  
7 CPRA is very disenchanted with our parish  
8 at the moment because we are creating such  
9 a stink about this diversion project which  
10 I think they believe has this sort of  
11 inevitability to it.

12 But I will say that if one takes the  
13 hidden costs, especially to our shrimpers  
14 and our oyster fishermen, and you add that  
15 cultural devastation, which will be  
16 affected by changing the salinity line in  
17 Barataria Bay. You are going to push that  
18 salinity line all the way out, all the way  
19 to Grand Isle, and then way out into the  
20 Gulf, this is going to hurt the little guy.  
21 Only big corporate fisheries are going to  
22 be able to go out there and harvest the  
23 shrimp once you do that. It's going to  
24 destroy the oyster industry. Okay. And  
25 all the ancillary industries that depend on

1 that, they're going to go away. It's going  
2 to make it very difficult for Plaquemine  
3 Parish and the southern part of the parish  
4 to survive economically because it's  
5 diversion.

6 Now, if we were to dredge, we could  
7 accomplish coastal restoration and keep the  
8 nutrients out that's going to harm and  
9 cause pollution, and we could still protect  
10 those fisheries.

11 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you. Conclude,  
12 Mr. Landry.

13 MR. LANDRY: Please have an open mind about  
14 alternatives to this diversion. Even if we  
15 made it smaller and maybe had some dredging  
16 incorporated into it. But just these large  
17 diversions, they're really going to hurt  
18 our people. Thank you.

19 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Landry.  
20 That concludes the list of individuals who  
21 have elected to come forward to make public  
22 comment.

23 Are there any others who, at this  
24 time, who would like to make public comment  
25 that originally had not? We'll get you a

1 card, sir. I need a card for this  
2 gentleman.

3 MR. FERGUSON: I've already been signed up.  
4 I'm Mr. Ferguson.

5 MR. FRANKLIN: Mr. Ferguson, come on up.

6 MR. FERGUSON: Thank you. I'm Mr. Joseph  
7 Ferguson, and I kind of wanted to hear what  
8 other folks had to say to you all's panel  
9 here so I wouldn't repeat what they had  
10 already said.

11 But there is some things that I may  
12 want to repeat. But I'm going to reflect  
13 on three of the areas or maybe even four of  
14 the areas of which you all have already  
15 funded. One is water quality. One is the  
16 marine -- the dolphins and the whales, and  
17 the oysters.

18 You can't forget that you've got to  
19 feed these animals, and that water quality  
20 has a lot to do with it. 50 years ago, you  
21 look at the water in our sound,  
22 Mississippi, and you pick up the glass of  
23 it and you couldn't hardly see through it.  
24 It was dark. It was green. Okay? It had  
25 good stuff in it for oysters to live

1 because oysters are filtering this stuff  
2 out.

3 You pick up a glass of water out of  
4 our sound today and it's virtually clear.  
5 So when you think about water quality and  
6 stopping nutrients from going into the Gulf  
7 of Mexico, you can't forget the good  
8 nutrients that make the algae and the --  
9 the plankton live. Because when you take  
10 those nutrients out of the water, you don't  
11 have algae and the plankton for oysters and  
12 the sea -- other small seafood to feed  
13 upon.

14 So I want you to think about that  
15 because all these animals, these fish and  
16 mammals, they need this stuff to live on.  
17 They've got to have food. If they don't  
18 have the food, then they can't live. So,  
19 you know, our seafood -- we like our  
20 seafood too, and so we need that to be  
21 there, too, to live upon, as well. Thank  
22 you very much.

23 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Ferguson.

24 Next to come forward to make public  
25 comment, Ms. Thao Vu. While Ms. Thao Vu is

1 coming forward, are there any others who  
2 would like to make public comment at this  
3 time?

4 MS. THAO VU: Good evening. I'm the  
5 director of the Mississippi Coalition for  
6 Vietnamese-American Fisherfolk and  
7 Families. For those who are here for the  
8 first time, welcome to the Mississippi Gulf  
9 Coast. My organization is a  
10 community-based organization located in  
11 Biloxi, Mississippi.

12 And about eight-and-a-half years  
13 since this major BP, not a spill but  
14 disaster, all the fishing communities  
15 across the Gulf is in dire straits,  
16 particularly here in Mississippi. I cannot  
17 -- there's no words to describe how dire it  
18 is. And the reason why it's a serious dire  
19 situation is because we are having great  
20 difficulty restoring the key resources that  
21 these communities vitally depend on, such  
22 as oyster reefs.

23 I participated a great deal in early  
24 restoration, and I've been trying to follow  
25 my -- to the best of my ability, to follow

1 the projects. At this point, at this  
2 juncture, it's critically important that we  
3 pass early restoration, post BP consent  
4 decree, that we take a step back and  
5 evaluate, thoroughly evaluate outcomes of  
6 these various projects that have been  
7 implemented.

8 We would like -- we are asking for  
9 monitoring data that is accessible to the  
10 public, and have someone assigned both at  
11 the federal and state level, to be able to  
12 help us navigate the numbers or whatever  
13 database is established, thoroughly review  
14 the data, take some lessons learned, and  
15 utilize some adaptive management strategies  
16 and take corrective measures if certain  
17 restoration activities have not produced,  
18 for example, restored oyster reefs, and  
19 look at the performance metrics. Are those  
20 the proper performance metrics or not and  
21 what are we missing? I think critical  
22 missing -- what is critically missing here  
23 is input from local knowledge. That's  
24 what's -- and some of the trustees'  
25 presentation mentioned that there are some

1 critical information gaps.

2 Local people have the most knowledge  
3 of their local environment, and  
4 particularly for the underserved fishing  
5 communities who have lack of access to  
6 technology, and they have -- they are known  
7 to be very independent, but it's very  
8 challenging to get them here in this kind  
9 of public setting. They know a great deal  
10 of traditional ecological knowledge and  
11 experience that they could help restore our  
12 beach, for example, and that needs to be  
13 greater utilized across the Gulf states.

14 And if we could focus more on  
15 restoring one at a time, oyster reefs, I  
16 think we -- particularly in the central  
17 habitat, if we focus on that, we improve  
18 water quality, we improve all these  
19 species, I think that's critically  
20 important. I cannot overstate that enough.

21 I do want to applaud the Trustee  
22 Council for taking our recommendations  
23 about having the workshop. I think it  
24 could be expanded upon more than just  
25 outreach and education. It really needs to

1 get to the point where the outreach  
2 workshop could include soliciting community  
3 priorities, their knowledge of their  
4 natural resources in their own backyard,  
5 what are their concerns, and how would they  
6 like the sea to be restored.

7 Then another missing information here  
8 that the trustees need to incorporate is  
9 remediation efforts.

10 MR. FRANKLIN: If you can go ahead and  
11 conclude, Ms. Vu.

12 MS. THAO VU: And that needs to be factored  
13 into a lot of these projects that are being  
14 implemented by your not taking steps to  
15 remediate the environment properly, and  
16 therefore, you are not seeing some  
17 objectives met, and you are not seeing  
18 restored habitats or restored fisheries.  
19 Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

20 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you for your comment,  
21 Ms. Vu.

22 I would like to remind everyone that  
23 tonight's presentation can be found on the  
24 Gulfspillrestoration.NOAA.gov website.  
25 There's also some very good handouts in the

1 lobby. And if you want to interact with  
2 any of these experts, they will also be  
3 found in the lobby and will be here until  
4 the last person's question is answered.

5 At this point, Mr. Gary, if you will  
6 come back up and close this portion of  
7 tonight's meeting.

8 MR. RIKARD: Thank you for coming out and  
9 participating. The trustee representatives  
10 will be around to talk if you have any  
11 questions you want to ask, and just wish  
12 everybody a safe travel home and be careful  
13 on the roads. Thank you for coming.

14 (Meeting concluded at 8:45 p.m.)  
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## 1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

2 I, MONICA SCHROEDER, Court Reporter and  
3 Notary Public, in and for the County of  
4 Jackson, State of Mississippi, hereby  
5 certify that the foregoing pages, and  
6 including this page, contain a true and  
7 correct transcript of the proceedings taken  
8 by me at the time and place heretofore  
9 stated, and later reduced to typewritten  
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11 my supervision, to the best of my skill and  
12 ability.

13 I further certify that I am not in the  
14 employ of, or related to, any counsel or  
15 party in this matter, and have no interest,  
16 monetary or otherwise, in the final outcome  
17 of the proceedings.

18 Witness my signature and seal, this the  
19 \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2018.

20  
21 \_\_\_\_\_  
Monica Schroeder, RPR, CRR, CSR #1285

22 My Commission Expires July 19, 2019  
23  
24  
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