

Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource
Damage Assessment Trustee Council
10th Annual Public Meeting
(Held virtually via webinar platform)

ORIGINAL

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

1:00 to 1:58 p.m. EST

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2

3 MR. FRANKLIN: Good afternoon. My
4 name is Perry Franklin, and I will serve as your
5 facilitator for the Deepwater Horizon Natural
6 Resource Damage Assessment Trustee Council's
7 10th Annual Meeting. This meeting also serves
8 as the annual meeting of the Regionwide Trustee
9 Implementation Group, or you will hear the
10 acronym TIG referred.

11 The Trustees and their representatives
12 will present a lot of useful information today,
13 and then you will have an opportunity to give
14 the trustees some feedback. Whether you are
15 listening via telephone or your computer's
16 audio, please know that we have all incoming
17 audio muted at this time. If you are
18 experiencing technical difficulties and would
19 like to request assistance, please use the
20 questions box located on the right-hand side of
21 the webinar's interface, and we will try to help
22 you.

1 We have a court reporter who will
2 transcribe the entire meeting, including your
3 important comments. The PowerPoint presentation
4 and the transcript will be posted on the Trustee
5 Council's website in the near future for your
6 convenience. We are providing, as you can see,
7 an American Sign Language interpreter via live
8 video.

9 The Trustees would also like the
10 public to know that there are fact sheets on the
11 Trustee Council's website, and that website is
12 gulfspringrestoration.noaa.gov. Again, you can
13 find important fact sheets on the Trustee
14 Council's website, and that website is
15 gulfspringrestoration.noaa.gov.

16 When you registered for today's
17 webinar, you received an email from
18 webinars@dwhtig.org confirming your
19 registration. That email contains helpful
20 instructions on how to manage your audio during
21 today's webinar.

22 Additionally, you were asked if you

1 would like to make verbal comment. After
2 today's presentation portion of the webinar, we
3 will take your verbal public comments.

4 If you didn't make a request to give a
5 comment before the beginning of this meeting,
6 that's okay as well, as I will give you many
7 reminders throughout today's webinar of how to
8 get yourself in order to make that comment.

9 So, at this time, I'm happy to say,
10 let's get started, and let's push off. I'd like
11 to introduce you to Chris Doley, Chief of the
12 National Oceanic and Atmospheric
13 Administration's Office of Habitat Conservation
14 and current Vice Chair of the Trustee Council.

15 Chris?

16 MR. DOLEY: Hello, Perry. Thank you.

17 Can you hear me okay?

18 MR. FRANKLIN: We can hear you just
19 fine.

20 MR. DOLEY: All right. Well, good
21 afternoon. Welcome, everyone, to this annual
22 meeting of the Deepwater Horizon Trustee

1 Council, and thank you for your interest and
2 your attendance.

3 Since the settlement with BP in 2016,
4 the Trustees have held a meeting every year to
5 bring you up to speed on our work. This is our
6 10th annual public meeting.

7 In today's presentation, I'm going to
8 go over a few slides that give you an update on
9 what the Trustee Council has been doing since
10 our last meeting. Then you will hear an update
11 from each of the Trustee Implementation Groups,
12 TIGs. After that, we want to hear from you, and
13 Perry will facilitate the public comment portion
14 of the agenda.

15 So now I will introduce the Trustee
16 Council representatives. We have a member
17 representing each of the five Gulf states and a
18 member who represents each of the four federal
19 agencies involved. Many of these names may be
20 familiar to you since quite a few of them were
21 also with us last year.

22 We have Chris Blankenship as our

1 Trustee Council representative for Alabama.
2 Gareth Leonard represents Florida, and Gordon
3 Dove represents Louisiana. Chris Wells
4 represents Mississippi, and Robin Riechers
5 represents Texas. Mary Josie Blanchard
6 represents the U.S. Department of Interior.
7 Mary Kay Lynch represents the U.S.
8 Environmental Protection Agency. Doris
9 Washington represents the U.S. Department of
10 Agriculture, and I represent National Oceanic
11 and Atmospheric Administration in the Department
12 of Commerce.

13 All right. Well, let's do a just
14 quick review of our responsibilities. Trustees
15 came together immediately after oil spill.
16 We've been working together to restore the
17 natural resources that were damaged. Because
18 the spill was an ecosystem-level injury, we take
19 an ecosystem approach to restoration.

20 We are working to restore wetlands,
21 fish, birds, and other resources that were
22 injured by the spill. We also focus on

1 restoring recreation opportunities and access to
2 outdoor recreation.

3 In 2016, the global settlement
4 determined how funds would be allocated across
5 areas impacted by the spill and those natural
6 resources also impacted. These allocations were
7 made based on a comprehensive and programmatic
8 restoration plan developed by the Trustees.
9 That plan indicated which resources were injured
10 and needed to be restored.

11 You can see a chart of these
12 allocations in the Trustee Council fact sheet
13 that is available to download from the webinar
14 interface or online at
15 gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.

16 The Trustee Council was created
17 following the settlement in 2016 and is composed
18 of the representatives I introduced earlier. An
19 important part of what the Trustee Council does
20 is ensure there is coordination for restoration
21 activities across each restoration area. The
22 Trustee Implementation Groups are shown at the

1 bottom of the slide. Each TIG has its own set
2 of resources that they are charged with
3 restoring and a corresponding allocation of
4 money from the settlement agreement.

5 The Trustee Council provides
6 coordination, ensures transparency, fiscal
7 accountability, and consistency with a
8 programmatic plan and across implementation
9 groups. The Trustee Council also directs the
10 cross-TIG monitoring and adaptive management
11 work group which helps fine-tune the restoration
12 program over time.

13 The Trustee Council is committed to
14 proactively communicating and reporting our work
15 to the public. We are continuing to communicate
16 progress through our annual reporting. This
17 year, we produced more than 360 project reports
18 and our annual financial summary, all of which
19 can be found on the Gulf Spill Restoration
20 website.

21 You've seen the timeline of every one
22 of our events at every one of our meetings. We

1 all know this bill occurred in 2010, and early
2 restoration work took place until the settlement
3 in 2016. Overall, the 2016 global settlement
4 was for \$20.8 billion. Of that, \$8.8 billion
5 was allocated to do work which is known as
6 "Natural Resource Damage Assessment
7 Restoration." That's a legal term, but
8 essentially, it means the process of evaluating
9 the damage to natural resources from the oil
10 spill with the goal of restoring it. That's a
11 mouthful, but so we often refer to Natural
12 Resource Damage Assessment restoration as NRDA,
13 N-R-D-A.

14 But rather than spending time looking
15 back, let's look forward from the settlement.
16 As you can see on this timeline, we are almost
17 two-thirds of the way through the 15-year
18 payment period by BP of the restoration funds.

19 Our restoration won't works -- our
20 restoration work won't stop when we receive the
21 last payment from BP. We will continue to plan
22 and implement new projects and ensure our work

1 is successful through monitoring and adaptation.
2 Restoration of this scale takes time. As a
3 result, the Trustees will continue to work
4 beyond the 2031 time frame.

5 The Trustee Implementation Groups
6 continue to implement approved projects as well
7 as finalize new restoration work. In 2024, the
8 TIGs finalized four restoration plans. To date,
9 the Trustees have approved more than 370
10 projects for a total of \$5.38 billion. More
11 details on these can be found on our Gulf Spill
12 Restoration website.

13 So we have put together a brief video
14 sharing some of the great restoration work going
15 on around the Gulf. The link to that video is
16 in the chat.

17 MR. FRANKLIN: And, Chris, I'd also
18 like to add -- this is Perry-- that that video
19 is available on the Trustees' YouTube channel,
20 and the link is in the chat as you mentioned.

21 Thank you, Chris. Please proceed.

22 MR. DOLEY: All right. Thank you.

1 Oh, one second. I'm sorry.

2 Now we will hear from -- some updates
3 from the Trustee Implementation Groups on what
4 they've been doing with their -- within their
5 restoration areas.

6 Across the Gulf, there are some common
7 themes. As we plan for future restoration, we
8 are collaborating with a variety of partners and
9 continuing to solicit restoration project ideas
10 from the public.

11 Generally speaking, the Trustee
12 Implementation Groups have focused on a variety
13 of activities, including restoring the Gulf's
14 coastal and deep habitats and access to those
15 habitats. They are also looking at improving
16 water quality, while addressing living coastal
17 marine resources, which includes birds, oysters,
18 fish, sea turtles, and marine mammals.

19 Perhaps most importantly for many of
20 you, you'll hear that restoration projects are
21 continuing to move forward, both on the ground
22 and in the water.

1 To begin, Chris Blankenship will share
2 some updates from the Alabama restoration area.

3 MR. BLANKENSHIP: Thank you, Chris.

4 Thank you all for taking time today to
5 attend this webinar and learn about the Trustee
6 Council's activities over the past year.

7 I'm pleased to represent my boss,
8 Governor Kay Ivey, and share some of the work
9 that's going on in Alabama.

10 I would like to recognize my team that
11 do all the real work on the NRDA for Alabama:
12 Jaime Miller, who you'll hear from a little bit
13 later on the regionwide update: Deepwater
14 Horizon coordinator Amy Hunter; and Jane
15 Calamusa.

16 At this time, I'll provide you with a
17 brief update on the progress from the Alabama
18 Trustee Implementation Group.

19 As of April, the Alabama TIG has
20 committed approximately \$200 million of our
21 total \$295 million restoration allocation from
22 BP. We've approved 43 restoration projects to

1 date.

2 At the end of 2024, the Alabama TIG
3 released its restoration plan for an
4 environmental assessment. This restoration plan
5 looked at past planning efforts and projects
6 from all of our prior restoration plans and also
7 the Regionwide TIG restoration plan to determine
8 whether any of those projects could provide
9 restoration benefits if they were implemented,
10 expanded, or continued.

11 We identified seven projects that fell
12 into one or more of these categories, and we are
13 currently implementing these project
14 enhancements. The projects include the Puppy
15 Creek--Juniper Creek-Big Creek nutrient
16 reduction, stewardship of coastal Alabama beach
17 nesting bird habitat, improving resilience for
18 oysters by linking brood reefs and sink reefs,
19 oyster grow-out and restoration reef
20 replacement, a five-year continuation of that
21 project, the Bayfront Park restoration
22 improvements Phases IIa and IIb, Laguna Cove

1 Little Lagoon natural resource
2 protection--small-scale amenities, and the Lower
3 Perdido Islands Habitat Restoration.

4 The Alabama TIG is excited to share a
5 detailed project update on the Lower Perdido
6 Islands Habitat Restoration project in Orange
7 Beach. NOAA is the project implementer of this
8 project.

9 This project was originally funded
10 from Restoration Plan 2 and was continued and
11 supplemented by Restoration Plan 4.
12 Construction is moving along very well. It is
13 expected to be completed in August of 2025.

14 This photo shows the new eastern end
15 of Walker Island emerging from the waters as
16 sediment material is being pumped to restore the
17 island's habitats. The western end of Walker
18 Island will also receive sediment materials.
19 Altogether, the project will restore 23 acres of
20 coastal habitat.

21 The Alabama TIG will be continuing the
22 implementation and monitoring of all of our

1 projects during the next year. This photo shows
2 the work in progress to replace the boardwalk at
3 Bayfront Park. Bayfront Park restoration for
4 most of the facility was completed, and we had
5 the ribbon cutting and opening for that in March
6 of 2025. The additional work at the park will
7 really make this a special place for the
8 residents of South Mobile County.

9 We'll be hosting our annual TIG
10 meeting in January 2026 and are excited to
11 provide additional updates to the public at that
12 time. Please check our website where you can go
13 and sign up for email updates to receive
14 forthcoming information about this meeting. You
15 can find the information about the Alabama
16 projects at outdooralabama.com and just search
17 for Alabama coastal restoration.

18 Thank you again for your time, and I
19 will pass things over to our next speaker, Mr.
20 Gareth Leonard from Florida.

21 MR. LEONARD: Thank you, Chris.

22 Good afternoon. I'm Gareth Leonard

1 with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation
2 Commission, and I'm currently serving as the
3 chair of the Florida Trustee Implementation
4 Group. I'm pleased to be here today to share
5 with you what the Florida TIG has been doing
6 over the past year.

7 The Florida TIG's funding update
8 highlights a current commitment of \$380 million
9 for restoration planning and project
10 implementation as well as monitoring and
11 adaptive management activities and
12 administrative oversight out of the \$461 million
13 received to date from BP.

14 Just as a reminder, the full
15 allocation to the Florida TIG is approximately
16 \$680 million with the final annual payment of
17 \$36.5 million scheduled to be received in 2031.

18 For additional details, please see the
19 funding chart that's located on the Florida
20 restoration area website.

21 Since the last Trustee Council
22 meeting, the Florida TIG has been busy. A quick

1 overview includes the following. We are
2 currently implementing 66 projects. To date, we
3 have completed 17, including 11 recreational use
4 projects, three habitat restoration projects,
5 two water quality projects, and one bird
6 project. More information on these can be found
7 on DIVER.

8 In July 2024, we approved the third
9 post-settlement restoration plan. We selected
10 11 projects for implementation to address the
11 water quality restoration type at an estimated
12 cost of \$111 million.

13 We would like to highlight the Florida
14 TIG's Florida Gulf Coast Marine Mammal Stranding
15 Network project. From March 2024 to March 2025,
16 FWC and five other network partners received 522
17 public reports of stranded cetaceans in their
18 primary coverage areas and conducted 151
19 cetacean responses in their primary
20 out-of-coverage areas.

21 Our future project is the Department
22 of the Interior's Johnson Beach Access

1 Management and Habitat Protection project, which
2 is almost fully complete. The project improved
3 the beach dune habitat of a two-mile stretch of
4 barrier island along Johnson Beach Road in the
5 Perdido Key Unit of Gulf Islands National
6 Seashore by managing visitor access.
7 Specifically, the project replaced all roadside
8 parking with three paved parking lots and
9 expanded the existing main parking lot. It also
10 installed post and rope fencing primarily around
11 the new parking areas to guide visitors onto
12 dune crossovers. It converted a half-mile
13 stretch of road to a bicycle/pedestrian-only
14 path; replaced 11 dune crossovers with eight
15 elevated, one with handrails; implemented
16 temporary seasonal closures of sensitive areas
17 to protect habitat, wildlife, and bird nests;
18 installed speed humps and increased law
19 enforcement patrols. It also installed
20 predator-proof dumpsters and implemented visitor
21 education measures.

22 The only work remaining is to install

1 a car-counting system at the entrance station to
2 ensure that the number of vehicles proceeding
3 past the gate does not exceed the number of
4 established parking spaces.

5 So what's next for the Florida TIG?

6 We will continue to implement and monitor early
7 restoration projects and projects selected in
8 the Florida TIG's Restoration Plans 1, 2, and 3.
9 We will also continue implementing, planning,
10 and monitoring and adaptive management projects.
11 Furthermore, we will continue to assess progress
12 and appropriately adjust restoration planning
13 efforts as needed. Finally, we will hold the
14 2025 annual public meeting later in the year.

15 At this point, I'd like to hand off
16 the presentation to Maury Chatellier, who is
17 representing the Louisiana Trustee
18 Implementation Group.

19 MR. CHATELLIER: Hey, Gareth. Thank
20 you very much.

21 Good afternoon, everyone. As Gareth
22 said, I'm Maury Chatellier with the Coastal

1 Protection and Restoration Authority here in
2 Louisiana. I'm going to provide you the
3 Louisiana restoration area update.

4 As the other Trustees have, we'll
5 start with our funding update. To date, the
6 Louisiana Trustees have approved or committed
7 \$3.85 billion for projects and restoration
8 efforts. We've received about \$3.1 billion to
9 date. Once the LA TIG receives its full funding
10 after 15 years, which will end in 2031, the
11 allocation will be approximately \$5 billion.
12 This \$3.85 billion includes dollars allocated
13 via resolutions through May of this year.

14 To talk about what the Louisiana
15 Trustees have been up to, we'll start with our
16 monitoring and adaptive management program. The
17 Trustees have continued to move forward
18 implementing numerous MAM activities. There are
19 currently multiple programmatic monitoring
20 efforts ongoing to better understand the various
21 ecosystems and organisms that depend on them, as
22 well as efforts to integrate and update models

1 and decision documents that will inform various
2 NRDA as well as other programmatic efforts.

3 Specific activities include data
4 collection to inform barrier island
5 comprehensive monitoring, lower trophic-level
6 monitoring, inventory sampling, and analysis in
7 the Barataria Basin that will quantify the
8 current condition of the lower trophic-level
9 organisms, which we'll use to evaluate the
10 outcomes of the LA TIG restoration efforts, and
11 as well, an oyster metapopulation model, which
12 is a tool to examine connectivity through larval
13 transport and enable informed decisions aimed at
14 achieving the Louisiana Trustees oyster
15 objectives, as well as other -- other more --
16 multiple MAM activities.

17 On Lake Borgne, the continued
18 construction of this project that was authorized
19 in the Restoration Plan 1.2, which is
20 approximately 2,700 acres of marsh creation,
21 this project is utilizing about 13 million cubic
22 yards of fill material dredged from Lake Borgne

1 and St. Bernard Parish. This is an ongoing
2 construction. The notice to proceed for the
3 contractor was issued in July of 2021, so it's
4 about to enter its fifth year of construction.
5 We do anticipate the completion of this project
6 this fall.

7 The Bayou La Loutre Ridge and Marsh
8 Creation Project, another construction effort
9 that was funded in Louisiana Trustees
10 Restoration Plan No. 8, it includes the use of
11 dredge material to create nourish marsh near
12 Lake Borgne and to utilize materials dredged
13 from Bayou La Loutre to restore the ridge along
14 the southern bank of the bayou. The ridge
15 component was designed and bid separately from
16 the marsh creation component, and this project
17 began construction in March of last year and was
18 completed around November.

19 Ultimately, almost five and a half
20 miles of ridge was enhanced or constructed, and
21 the project will be planted with hardwoods when
22 the soil conditions are acceptable.

1 Then lastly, the Joint Restoration
2 Plan Environmental Assessment No. 1 for the
3 Chandeleur Islands restoration, this is the
4 first-of-its-kind joint restoration plan between
5 the Louisiana and Open Ocean Trustees. The plan
6 will allocate funds from six restoration types,
7 from both TIGs, including wetland coastal
8 nearshore habitat, birds, restoration on
9 federally managed lands, SAV, sea turtles, and
10 fish and water column invertebrates.

11 The draft plan was just released and
12 is currently out for public comment through July
13 16th. The plan includes alternatives for
14 habitat restoration for the island as well as
15 alternatives for fish and water column
16 invertebrates restoration.

17 So the featured project Louisiana
18 trustees would like to present today is the Lake
19 Charles Science Center and Educational Complex,
20 locally known as Port Wonder. This facility is
21 located along Lake Charles lakefront in
22 southwest Louisiana and is a family-focused

1 destination that opened this past April.

2 At the heart of Port Wonder are two
3 major attractions, the Children's Museum of
4 Southwest Louisiana and the Louisiana Department
5 of Wildlife and Fisheries Nature and Science
6 Center.

7 The museum is a state-of-the-art
8 facility designed to spark curiosity, inspire
9 learning, and foster creativity for children of
10 all ages. The Nature and Science Center is an
11 immersive educational facility designed for
12 families, students, and nature enthusiasts of
13 all ages. The center features over 15,000
14 gallons of fresh and saltwater aquariums,
15 showcasing the biodiversity of Louisiana's
16 bayous, reefs, and gulf.

17 Outdoors, the site features walking
18 trails, an ADA-compliant covered fishing pier,
19 and connections to the existing habitat along
20 the lakefront boardwalk.

21 Construction of the facility was
22 funded in part by the Louisiana Trustees. We're

1 very proud to be part of this unique
2 recreational use project.

3 And then finally, what's next --
4 what's up next for the Louisiana Trustees?
5 Restoration Plan EA 8 -- Environmental
6 Assessment 8.1. We're about to initiate this
7 restoration planning effort that will select
8 construction -- construction alternatives for
9 two projects that are currently under design,
10 the East Orleans Land Bridge and Raccoon Island.

11 For East Orleans, this project's
12 located in the Pontchartrain Basin in Orleans
13 Parish, west of Lake Borgne and east of the
14 Rigolets. This project will have two
15 components, marsh creation and shoreline
16 protection. The marsh creation component of the
17 project is being designed to create and restore
18 over 1,500 acres of emergent marsh using
19 hydraulically dredged sediment. The project
20 will also likely include shoreline protection
21 component, the project to protect the newly
22 created marsh.

1 In Raccoon Island, Raccoon Island is
2 the state's westernmost barrier island in lower
3 Terrebonne Parish. This project will include
4 enhancements to the island that will provide
5 geomorphic form and ecological function and
6 restore the diversity of the barrier island
7 habitats. Project features will include the
8 creation and/or enhancement of beach, dune,
9 supratidal, intertidal, and subtidal habitats
10 through sand fill placement and shoreline
11 protection. Other project features such as sand
12 fencing, herbaceous and woody plantings,
13 aggregate substrate, and hay bales may be used
14 to promote avian nesting habitat. This project
15 is currently being designed by NOAA and hope to
16 have implementation underway in 2026.

17 And as assuming all the other Trustees
18 are doing, we'll continue our planning for
19 future restoration efforts. No timelines as of
20 yet, but we could possibly see some additional
21 planning efforts initiated either by the end of
22 this year or early 2026.

1 So, with that, that ends the update
2 for the Louisiana restoration area. Up next
3 will be the Mississippi area. So I'll turn the
4 presentation over to Mr. Chris Wells,
5 representing the Mississippi Trustees for
6 update. Chris?

7 MR. WELLS: Thank you, Maury.

8 And I want to -- I am Chris Wells,
9 Executive Director, Mississippi Department of
10 Environmental Quality and Mississippi's
11 representative on the Mississippi TIG.

12 I want to echo everyone else's
13 appreciation for -- for your attendance on
14 today's webinar. And like everybody else, I'll
15 start with a funding update.

16 And as you see here, we've committed
17 \$214 million out of our total allocation of \$295
18 million toward 29 projects under four
19 restoration plans.

20 What we've been up to, we have 24 of
21 those 29 projects that are in progress, and we
22 also held the TIG's annual public meeting and

1 update as part of our annual Mississippi
2 restoration summit, which we conduct every
3 November.

4 And I should have noted on the title
5 slide, the derelict vessel that you saw, it's
6 related to a habitat on federally managed lands
7 project that's being implemented by DOI, MDQ,
8 and EPA. It's a marine debris removal project
9 on Mississippi barrier islands. It's managed by
10 the National Park Service's Gulf Island National
11 Seashore, the barrier islands are, and they
12 include Petit Bois, West Petit Bois, Horn and
13 Ship Islands, and a portion of Cat Island.

14 Cleanup activities began in the fall
15 of 2023, and in 2024, there were 10 removal
16 events, which included and involved both
17 volunteers and park staff and resulted in the
18 removal of 8,789 pounds of debris over 530
19 acres. In addition, that 55-foot derelict
20 vessel was removed from Horn Island.

21 The next project that I'd like to
22 highlight is our most recent project to cross

1 the finish line, which is the Clower-Thornton
2 Park Project. It's a recreational-use project.
3 It improved an existing historical community
4 park in Gulfport, Mississippi, adjacent to
5 Coffee Creek.

6 Construction began in May of 2024 and
7 was completed earlier this month. The project
8 created new trails and boardwalks and other
9 amenities, including informational kiosks,
10 signage, and landscaping.

11 I can tell you that as pretty as it
12 looks in this picture, it's even more beautiful
13 in person.

14 Next up for the Mississippi TIG, we
15 just began drafting of the Mississippi
16 Restoration Plan 5, which includes projects
17 benefiting birds and projects designed to reduce
18 nutrient loads to coastal waters.

19 We've also just moved into
20 construction on Phase 6 of the Hancock County
21 Marsh Living Shoreline Project, Phase 6 of the
22 breakwater in particular, which was authorized

1 in our last restoration plan and will extend the
2 current project footprint an additional 1.7
3 miles from Bowlan Bayou to Bayou Caddy. We're
4 also completing final design of the St. Louis
5 Bay Living Shoreline, which will be the final
6 component of our Restoring Living Shorelines and
7 Reefs in Mississippi Estuaries Project, which
8 was an early restoration project.

9 And finally, we're in final design of
10 the Jourdan River Boardwalk, and we'll begin
11 construction on that project this year to be
12 completed in 2026.

13 That concludes Mississippi TIG update,
14 and I will turn it over to Robin Riechers with
15 the State of Texas.

16 MR. RIECHERS: Thank you, Chris, and
17 good afternoon to everyone.

18 Again, my name is Robin Riechers with
19 the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and
20 today I'm representing the Texas Trustee
21 Implementation Group, which includes Parks and
22 Wildlife, but also the Texas General Land

1 Office, the Texas Commission on Environmental
2 Quality, as well as the federal trustee
3 agencies.

4 As we turn to our funding update, we
5 can see as of April 2025, we've committed
6 approximately \$150 million, or 63 percent, of
7 our total settlement allocation of \$238 million
8 to projects or planning activities.

9 When we look at what we've been up to,
10 today I'm going to highlight some of the
11 accomplishments of the Texas Restoration Area
12 and some of the activities that the TIG has been
13 working on during the past year.

14 We've completed 12 projects, and 22
15 projects are either in the implementation or
16 monitoring phase. One of our notable
17 accomplishments is that we've enhanced our
18 coastal area by preserving 4,602 acres of
19 coastal lands.

20 As a featured project, I'm going to
21 look at some Texas Rookery Islands today. I'm
22 going to update you on restoration projects that

1 include several islands here. The project
2 focuses on three bird islands. One island was
3 eroded substantially, and two of the islands
4 eroded to be completely submerged. Construction
5 for Rollover Bay Island is expected to begin
6 sometime this year. Construction of Dickinson
7 Bay Island, which is Dickinson Bay Island No. 2,
8 was completed in 2022 and is now in its
9 monitoring phase, and the Dressing Point Island
10 restoration is currently under construction. We
11 look forward to the continuation of those
12 construction and restorations on those islands.

13 Dressing Point has suffered severe
14 erosion, and the breakwater was completed this
15 year to protect existing bird nesting island --
16 bird nesting habitat on the island. We expect
17 the restoration of the island mass to be
18 completed in 2025.

19 Dickinson Bay Island No. 2
20 construction was completed three years ago and
21 now has over 4,000 nesting pairs of over eight
22 different species.

1 I believe we're on to the next slide
2 there, actually. There's those pictures of
3 those nesting pairs I just discussed.

4 So then, now, what's next? As we're
5 looking forward, we anticipate finalizing our
6 third restoration plan this summer. This
7 restoration plan was developed during the past
8 year and was provided to the public for their
9 consideration. Restoration Plan 3 builds upon
10 the results of the Dredge Material Planning
11 Restoration Project funded through the Trustee
12 Implementation Group's first restoration plan.
13 That project selected priority marsh restoration
14 sites and produced the engineering and design
15 plans for those sites.

16 The upcoming Restoration Plan No. 3
17 will provide funding for the construction and
18 monitoring of multiple selected restoration
19 sites. The construction activities would
20 involve using dredge material beneficially to
21 create and restore marsh habitat.

22 Again, I want to thank you for being

1 here today and thank you for the opportunity to
2 present the work of the Texas Trustee
3 Implementation Group, and now I'd like to turn
4 the presentation over to Laurie Rounds who will
5 be representing the Open Ocean Trustee Group.

6 MS. ROUNDS: Thank you, Robin.

7 Hello, everyone. I'm Laurie Rounds
8 with NOAA. Thank you for joining us this
9 afternoon. I'll provide the Open Ocean TIG's
10 update for the Open Ocean Trustees which include
11 NOAA, the Department of the Interior, the U.S.
12 Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S.
13 Department of Agriculture.

14 The Open Ocean TIG has received about
15 \$759 million in settlement funds from BP. As of
16 May this year, we committed over \$432 million to
17 implement a total of 45 planning, restoration,
18 and monitoring projects. This represents more
19 than 56 percent of funds received. We will
20 continue to develop restoration plans until the
21 full amount allocated to the Open Ocean
22 Restoration Area is committed.

1 I'm excited to add a very recent
2 funding update. The Trustees finalized our
3 fourth restoration plan just this month,
4 increasing the total commitment for restoration
5 to more than \$642 million.

6 So next, I'd like to share some
7 highlights from our restoration activities over
8 the past year. In 2024, the Marine Mammal Noise
9 Reduction Project held more than 10 outreach
10 events and meetings with the vessel and seismic
11 marine industry sectors to develop pilot
12 projects that will test promising noise
13 reduction technologies. This project also
14 funded scientists at NOAA and the Scripps
15 Institute of Oceanography to collect and analyze
16 data at five long-term passive acoustic
17 monitoring sites. These sites complement 30
18 acoustic monitoring sites across the Gulf for
19 the LISTEN project, which is funded by NOAA's
20 RESTORE Science Program.

21 Scientists are using this data to
22 better understand ocean noise and help us

1 develop projects to reduce noise impacts on
2 marine mammals.

3 We completed the third year of
4 mesophotic and deep benthic community
5 restoration, with 14 missions totaling about 200
6 days at sea. With our many partners, we made
7 incredible progress in mapping and
8 characterizing deep sea habitats, understanding
9 the species found there, and developing
10 techniques to propagate deep sea corals.

11 For example, three mesophotic coral
12 species are now spawning in project labs. In
13 the Galveston Coral Propagation Lab, over 1,000
14 corals spawned and began growing on substrates
15 that can be transplanted to the wild.

16 In 2023, almost 200 coral colonies
17 were planted at a site located offshore from
18 Pensacola, Florida, and in 2024, we returned to
19 monitor the corals and found that between 60 to
20 90 percent of the corals were healthy and
21 growing.

22 We also exceeded our goals to provide

1 training and tools to help restore injured reef
2 fish by reducing post-release mortality.
3 Through the Return 'Em Right Program, more than
4 41,000 anglers completed training and received
5 gear that helped safely return reef fish to
6 depth. Each year, millions of reef fish are
7 caught and released, and some die from impacts
8 of barotrauma, which is a pressure-related
9 injury. Anglers participating in the Return 'Em
10 Right training and outreach learned about best
11 practices that help these fish survive, and 98
12 percent of these anglers said they now have a
13 better understanding of barotrauma and venting
14 techniques.

15 Also, over the last year, the Active
16 Management and Protection Project completed
17 several immersive educational projects to
18 connect the public with the Gulf's amazing
19 deep-sea communities. We helped 35 live-stream
20 programs during restoration missions from ships
21 at sea and from our labs on land.

22 Three new public exhibits were also

1 opened across the Gulf. The Audubon Aquarium in
2 New Orleans and the Mississippi Aquarium in
3 Gulfport opened educational exhibits that
4 include live deep-sea corals. And the Man in
5 the Sea Dive Museum in Panama City Beach opened
6 an interactive exhibit featuring technical and
7 saturation diving techniques to restore deep-sea
8 habitat.

9 We also hosted a traveling art
10 installation with the Galveston Arts Center,
11 featuring preserved specimens of 370 Gulf
12 species that were collected following the oil
13 spill.

14 These exhibits provide a window into
15 parts of the Gulf that most will never get the
16 opportunity to visit, and we are grateful to the
17 partners who brought these exhibits to life.

18 The project team also worked with a
19 number of partners to develop educational
20 resources for all ages that are available to
21 download for free, from coloring pages,
22 beautifully illustrated posters, and deep-sea

1 scavenger hunts, to lesson plans and an
2 interactive computer game to simulate scientific
3 surveys of deep-sea habitats using remotely
4 operated vehicles. There are now many ways for
5 people to learn about these incredible species
6 and habitats. A link to these resources is
7 available in the chat.

8 So what's next? So those were just a
9 few of our successes from last year, and we have
10 already had a busy start to 2025. As I
11 mentioned earlier, we finalized our fourth
12 restoration plan, which commits more than \$210
13 million to 10 projects to help restore fish and
14 water column invertebrates and sea turtles.

15 The Trustees also began drafting a
16 supplemental restoration plan to continue our
17 projects to restore mesophotic and deep benthic
18 communities.

19 We look forward to sharing the draft
20 supplemental plan for public comments late this
21 year or early in 2026, and as you heard earlier,
22 the Louisiana and Open Ocean TIGs released a

1 draft restoration plan for the Chandeleur
2 Islands. This draft plan proposes alternatives
3 for island restoration and restoring fish and
4 water column invertebrates through collaborative
5 engagement and outreach. The public comment
6 period for the draft plan is open now through
7 July 16th, and we look forward to receiving your
8 input.

9 There is also a lot happening with our
10 restoration projects. Please see this year's
11 fact sheet to read more about the sea turtle
12 projects that successfully completed field
13 activities in 2024. Under our fourth
14 restoration plan, the work of two of these
15 projects will continue, the conservation of
16 beach nesting habitat and a project with the
17 Gulf Shrimp Fishery to provide newly developed
18 turtle excluder devices that prevent bycatch of
19 small turtles.

20 Two more of the seabird restoration
21 projects approved in our third plan are
22 beginning implementation. The predator removal
and seabird nesting colony restoration at Mona

1 Island Project and the seabird nesting colony
2 protection and enhancement at Dry Tortugas
3 National Park Project are beginning field work
4 this summer.

5 We will also hold our annual public
6 webinar in the fall and hope you'll be able to
7 join us for more updates.

8 So thank you again, and next, Jaime
9 Miller will provide an update for the Regionwide
10 TIG.

11 MS. MILLER: Thanks Laurie.

12 Good afternoon. I am Jaime Miller
13 with the Department of Conservation and Natural
14 Resources, and I'm currently serving as a chair
15 of the Regionwide Trustee Implementation Group
16 with Tim Landers from the U.S. Environmental
17 Protection Agency, serving as the vice chair. I
18 am pleased to be here today to share what the
19 Regionwide TIG has been doing over the last
20 year.

21 The Regionwide TIG's funding update
22 highlights a current commitment of \$160 million

1 for restoration planning, project
2 implementation, monitoring and adaptive
3 management, and administrative oversight
4 activities out of the 219 million received to
5 date from BP.

6 Just as a reminder, a total funding
7 amount allocated to the Regionwide TIG is \$350
8 million over 15 years. We are now in year 10.
9 For additional details, please see the funding
10 chart that's located on the Regionwide
11 Restoration Area website.

12 During the past year, the Regionwide
13 TIG has continued to implement the 11 projects
14 selected in the TIG's first restoration plan, as
15 well as two early restoration projects. One of
16 the early restoration projects, the Sea Turtle
17 Early Restoration Project, has a project
18 component focused on improving the use of turtle
19 excluder devices, or TEDs, in the shrimp trawl
20 fishery.

21 During 2024, NOAA's great -- sorry --
22 NOAA's gear monitoring team conducted 37 events,

1 including outreach events, TED trainings, and
2 workshops across the Gulf. The gear monitoring
3 team also provided courtesy inspections to over
4 50 vessels and 154 TEDs last year, assisting the
5 fishermen with any installation errors. All of
6 these efforts are instrumental in minimizing
7 bycatch of sea turtles in Gulf trawl gear.

8 The Regionwide TIG trustees also
9 continue to make progress on the Bird Nesting
10 and Foraging Area Stewardship Project selected
11 in Restoration Plan 1. Last year, trustees
12 protected more than 1,200 bird nests through
13 implementation of this project. I'll talk about
14 the project in more detail in the next slide.

15 Work is also underway on the Shrimp
16 Trawl Effort Project. NOAA has partnered with
17 LGL Ecological Associates for outreach and
18 installation of cellular VMS units onto
19 voluntary shrimp vessels. These units will
20 collect fishing data from participating vessels
21 in nearshore and state waters. We will help
22 identify any areas of overlap in sea turtle

1 distribution and shrimping efforts for potential
2 future restoration work. LGL has begun outreach
3 efforts, has participants signed up for the
4 voluntary effort, and is already installing
5 these units on boats. We aim to collect fishing
6 data for up to two seasons.

7 As I mentioned earlier, the Regionwide
8 TIG is featuring our Bird Nesting and Foraging
9 Area Stewardship Project. The objective of this
10 project is to conserve and enhance nesting and
11 foraging habitat for nesting shorebird species
12 injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
13 Specifically, the project involves stewarding
14 and monitoring beach and bay shorebirds to
15 reduce human disturbance and predation of nests
16 and chicks to increase bird productivity and
17 survival.

18 The project is being implemented in
19 Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. A few
20 of the project highlights from last year
21 include, in 2024, Florida began implementing
22 bird nesting and foraging stewardship activities

1 at two priority sites. Activities include but
2 are not limited to placement of symbolic fencing
3 and signage, predator control, stewardship of
4 nesting areas to reduce human disturbance. In
5 2024, this resulted in the protection of 1,055
6 least terns nests, 103 snowy plover nests, 57
7 black skimmer nests, 14 Wilson's plover nests,
8 and two American oyster catcher nests. In 2025,
9 activities will continue at approximately 20
10 priority sites.

11 In 2024, breeding bird surveys were
12 conducted across the Mississippi coast as well
13 as Deer Island, Round Island, and the coastal
14 preserves portion of Cat Island. Non-breeding
15 surveys, migrant and wintering bird surveys were
16 conducted in 2024 at 18 sites on the mainland
17 and nearshore islands. Project stewardship and
18 outreach engagement activities were also
19 ongoing.

20 Alabama will begin using Regionwide
21 TIG project funds this year to supplement and
22 continue a bird stewardship project, which the

1 Alabama TIG has been implementing over the past
2 several years using Alabama TIG funds. These
3 Regionwide TIG funds will allow Alabama to
4 continue successfully monitoring and restoring
5 bird habitats.

6 As for future activities, we
7 anticipate continuing the implementation of the
8 11 projects approved in the Regionwide TIG
9 Restoration Plan 1 as well as our early
10 restoration projects. We will also continue to
11 discuss and plan for current and future
12 regionwide restoration priorities.

13 I thank you for your time and your
14 attention, and with that, I'll hand the floor
15 back to Perry.

16 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you very much,
17 Ms. Miller, and thank you to all of today's
18 speakers, including Trustees and Trustee
19 representatives alike.

20 I'd like to remind you that each of
21 you had an opportunity to register to give
22 public comment when you registered for today's

1 seminar -- or webinar. At this time, I'd like
2 to remind you that the Trustee Council
3 representatives shown on this slide are here on
4 the webinar to listen to your comments, and as
5 with previous Trustee Council meetings, they
6 will be listening only.

7 You may also want to comment on the
8 work of the Regionwide Trustee Implementation
9 Group because this meeting also serves as the
10 TIG's annual meeting. Each of the Trustees is
11 also a member of the Regionwide TIG.

12 If you did not sign up to speak in
13 advance but would like to do so, that is not a
14 problem. Simply type your name into the
15 questions box on the interface, and let me just
16 tell you, if you like to be first in line, those
17 of you who type your names in at this time will
18 be first in line.

19 As a remember -- as a reminder, all
20 attendees are muted automatically, and we will
21 unmute you when it is your turn to speak. When
22 we call your name, we will unmute your line, and

1 at that time, when you begin to speak, simply
2 state your name, and if you're representing an
3 organization, please state the name of the
4 organization that you are representing as well.

5 So, at this time, I'd like to ask, are
6 there any individuals who would like to make
7 verbal comment at this time? If so, please use
8 the questions box, and that is the way that I
9 will recognize you.

10 And so just as a reminder, lots of
11 helpful and useful information was given today,
12 and you can find most of this information and
13 many fact sheets on the Trustee Council website.
14 That website is gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.
15 Again, the Trustees would like you to know that
16 there's a lot of information that you have at
17 your disposal, and the fact sheets, you can find
18 at the Trustee Council website. That website is
19 gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.

20 Also, there's a lot of information on
21 the internet. If you go to YouTube, if you're
22 one of those individuals who like to gain

1 information and educational materials from the
2 internet, there's a YouTube channel that has a
3 lot of information, and again, if you just go to
4 www.youtube.com/@GulfSpillRestoration and you can
5 find a lot of information there as well.

6 All right. So, again, if you did not
7 sign up to speak but would like to do so, please
8 type your name in the questions box, and that is
9 the way that I will then recognize you to speak.
10 When we call your name, we will unmute your
11 line, and you will have three minutes to speak.
12 I thank you in advance for respecting the
13 three-minute rule.

14 Okay. The first individual to make
15 public comment is Simone Maloz. Simone, please
16 proceed. Your line is now being unmuted, and
17 state your name for the record. And if you're
18 representing an organization, please state the
19 name of that organization as well.

20 Ms. Maloz.

21 MS. MALOZ: Thank you. Thank you for
22 the opportunity to comment. My name is Simone

1 Maloz. I am the campaign director for Restore
2 the Mississippi River Delta. We appreciate the
3 opportunity to comment today, and we'll keep our
4 comments brief.

5 We want to call upon the Trustees to
6 ensure that they will continue to protect the
7 process that has included public transparency
8 and science-based decision-making. These are
9 truly hallmarks of the NRDA restoration planning
10 to date.

11 The Trustees and the resources that
12 they have been entrusted with must remain
13 committed to restoring the injuries of the
14 wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats across
15 the Gulf and here in Louisiana, especially in
16 the Barataria Basin, in alignment with the
17 programmatic restoration plan. We believe the
18 science is clear on the most effective and
19 efficient ways to restore the injury to the
20 wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitats,
21 especially in the Barataria Basin at scale.

22 Thank you again for the opportunity to

1 comment today.

2 MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you very much for
3 your comment.

4 Again, if you're listening -- and we
5 have numerous individuals who are participating
6 and listening in on today's webinar -- and if
7 you would like to place your comment into public
8 record, this is the time to do it. If you did
9 not sign up previously but like to speak at this
10 time, please type your name in the questions
11 box, and we will acknowledge you.

12 And while we're giving some time for
13 that, just want to also acknowledge all of
14 today's speakers, Trustees, and trusted
15 representatives alike for compiling such
16 comprehensive and thorough information. Thank
17 you for your work and your dedication to this
18 process.

19 I'd also like the public to know about
20 the website that has so many fact sheets on it.
21 Again, that is gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov. I
22 would invite you to go to that website at your

1 leisure to look at those fact sheets and to get
2 more firsthand information on the process.

3 And if you're more of an internet
4 browser and you like video, many videos have
5 been uploaded to the Gulf Spill Restoration
6 channel on YouTube, and so please spread that
7 information.

8 All right. Why don't we just give it
9 a little bit of time for those who may be
10 considering giving public comment.

11 Now this might be because those
12 presentations were so thorough that there are no
13 questions. So hats off to our presenters.

14 Okay. Are there any other individuals
15 who like to make public comment at this time?
16 If so, please just direct your attention to the
17 interface and type in your name in the questions
18 box, and we will acknowledge you.

19 All right. But we can't thank you
20 enough for spending your lunch hour with this
21 group of professionals who have presented the
22 updates along the Gulf Coast related to the

1 Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill, and so at this
2 time, I'd like to proceed and go to our close.

3 At this time, I'd like to turn the
4 meeting back over to Mr. Doley. Chris?

5 MR. DOLEY: Thanks, Perry.

6 Just in closing, we are committed to
7 restoring the natural resources of the Gulf for
8 the years to come, and we'll continue to keep
9 you updated as we strive to maintain our rapid
10 rate of progress.

11 And as Perry said, please check out
12 our website, gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov, for
13 an immense amount of resources that can keep you
14 up to date as we proceed through the year.

15 And I want to thank everyone for
16 joining us and have a good rest of your day.
17 Good night.

18 (Whereupon, at 1:58 p.m. EST, the
19 meeting concluded.)
20
21
22

1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

2 I, CHERYL NICHOLSON, Certified Court
3 Reporter, Certified LiveNote Reporter, and
4 Certified Realtime Systems Administrator, hereby
5 certify that the foregoing proceedings were
6 recorded by me stenographically and
7 electronically at the time and place mentioned
8 in the caption hereof and thereafter transcribed
9 by me; that said proceeding is a true record of
10 the testimony given by said participants; that I
11 am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed
12 by any of the parties to the action in which
13 this proceeding was taken; and further, that I
14 am not a relative or employee of any counsel or
15 attorney employed by the parties hereto, nor
16 financially or otherwise interested in the
17 outcome of this action.

18 *Cheryl L. Nicholson*

19 _Cheryl L Nicholson_

20 CHERYL L. NICHOLSON

21 Electronic Notary Public in and for
22 the Commonwealth of Virginia

Notary Registration Number- 00282622

My Commission expires July 31, 2028.

A		
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