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

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

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

So thank you again for braving the elements and coming out tonight. A special thanks to all of our elected officials who have come out tonight and are in
attendance, including a representative from Congressman Palazzo's office.

We are here tonight for the third public meeting of the Deepwater Horizon Trustee Council since the settlement with BP was finalized. The trustees and their staff will present lots of useful information to you this evening, and then you will have an opportunity to give the trustees some feedback. We have a court reporter here with us tonight who will record the entire meeting, including your comments. The PowerPoint presentation and the transcript will be posted on the trustee's website. Maybe you picked this card up at the registration desk. It gives you that website, www.Gulfspillrestoration.NOAA.gov.

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

The trustees want me to point out, just in case you missed it, that there are many fact sheets, and they appear like this, and they are also translated into
Vietnamese. These fact sheets are available for you to take home with you and to spread this information. They were available at the open house and will be available when you exit. We invite you to pick some of that helpful information up.

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

As you came in, you were asked to fill in a blue card. That helps us to keep track of attendance at these meetings. If you knew at the time that you intended to make a public comment, there was a box, and you would have said yes. That is the only way that I know to call you forward at the
end of tonight's meeting.

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

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

MR. RIKARD: Thank you, Perry. As Perry said, I'm Gary Rikard. I'm the executive director of MDEQ, but tonight, I'm here as
the Mississippi Natural Resource Damages

Trustee, and also, I'm the state cochair on
the Trustee Council.

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

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

So the Trustee Council

representatives are five states and four
federal entities. The Florida trustee is Phil Coram. The Alabama trustee is Chris Blakenship. I'm the Mississippi trustee. Louisiana is Alyson Graugnard. Texas is Robin Riechers. The Department of Interior is Mary Josie Blanchard. The EPA is Mary Kay Lynch. NOAA is Chris Doley, and the USDA is Homer Wilkes. And all the trustees, again, are here tonight to receive your comments.

So just as a quick review of what exactly does the Trustee Council do and what are we. And I know it gets confusing. There's a lot of different funding sources that are put out there to talk about in regard to restoration activities. There's the Restore Council and the Restore Act. And there's some information, and we have a representative from the Restore Council here tonight. There's the NWFW monies, which are the criminal penalties, and then there's the NRDA damages. And tonight, that's what we're here to talk about tonight, is the NRDA funding.

So, a quick review of what our
responsibilities are in regard to NRDA, as
the trustees. So we're responsible for
restoring the environment and compensating
you, the public, for the natural resource
injuries resulting from the Deepwater
Horizon oil spill. And in order to do
that, to figure out what the damages are,
we used a Natural Resource Damage
Assessment to determine the extent of the
injuries caused by the spill and to seek
restoration or compensation from the
parties responsible.

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

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

So before I get into the recent
activities that the council has been
undertaking this past year, I want to give you a little timeline of the key restoration events. This timeline shows the oil spill began in April of 2010. And we began the injury assessment right away.

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

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

Then on April the 4th, 2016, the federal government and the five Gulf states reached a settlement with BP that totalled approximately $20.8 billion. Out of that $20.8 billion, a total of $8.8 billion was
set aside for natural resource damages.

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

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

And then what the settlement did, in addition to totalling the amount of natural resource money that BP would have to pay, it broke the NRDA damages down into funds that were assigned to geographic restoration areas. So each of the
individual -- each of the states were considered restoration areas, along with open ocean, that was a separate area, and region wide. So there were -- those were the groups where the funding was broken down.

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

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

So these Trustee Implementation
Groups provide flexibility and accountability that allow for the differences between the various areas to play out.

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

So now to get into some of the background information. What have we been doing as a group, as the Trustee Council since the settlement? Well, we've released two annual reports. The content of those reports is in the Diver system, which you can access from our website, and that's Gulfspillrestoration@NOAA.gov, Gulfspillrestoration@NOAA.gov, where you can find those reports.

We received two of the 15 annual payments from the settlement with BP, and
that total is somewhere around $670 million.

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

So in addition to those activities, we've also worked with what we call the Cross TIG Work Group, and that work group has been working hard with the individual Trustee Implementation Groups to address our monitoring and adaptive management matters. (Inaudible) of the Trustee Council's Monitoring and Adaptive Management Procedure and Guidelines Manual. That manual includes project renewal guidance, and it's posted on our website, also. And they're also in the process of developing a data management system in DIVER and mechanisms for coordinating with
other Gulf restoration programs regarding monitoring and data management, such as NFWF and MSOL.

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

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

I'm excited to be here tonight with you to share our activities in Alabama since the last annual meeting that we had
The Alabama Trustee Implementation Group, the Alabama TIG, is made up of people from many of the federal agencies and then some of our state people that work in the restoration efforts in Alabama. As I mention your name, if you are here tonight, if you will just raise your hand or stand up.

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

Alabama, through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process, is set to receive about $296 million in funding. To date, we have committed approximately
$126 million worth of that funding towards projects that are being implemented or that are in the restoration plan, soon to come out. So about 43 percent of our funding that we will receive over the next 15 years has been committed.

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

So I will just take a couple of
minutes, if you all don't mind, and just kind of set the stage for how the information will be presented. Hopefully, that will save everybody a little bit of time.

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

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

In the solid sections, that is funding that has already been approved, and
those projects are being implemented, if it
has the solid color. And the ones that
have the shaded color or the lines, those
are projects that are in a current
restoration plan that is in the process of
being approved.

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

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

I know it's difficult to go through
this whole slide. I don't want you to try
and see it all from there, so I'll just go
over a few of the projects and highlight a
few of the projects that are included in
Restoration Plan 2 and talk a little bit about some of the projects from Restoration Plan 1. So we're currently implementing those projects from Restoration Plan 1, and some of the projects have been completed, the construction has been completed and we're in the monitoring phase. Those include some oyster restoration projects that was done in Alabama, as well as the living shoreline project in Mobile Bay.

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

From Restoration Plan 1, which I said, was all of recreational opportunities, we have the Gulf State Park Lodge Conference Center and other public access amenities projects underway. The Lodging Conference Center is scheduled to
open later this year. The Interpretive Center will open later this month. And then the learning campus, as far as the project, will be completed and open by the end of December of this year.

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

And Restoration Plan 2 is the plan that we have out now that is in the process of working its way through the NRDA approval process, public comment period. And we'll respond to the comments, and then finally working its way towards final approval and implementation of those projects. That plan includes 26 projects -- it had 26 project alternatives. 22 of those projects were recommended for funding by the Alabama TIG for a total of about $35 million in project spending. The proposed projects are from all those other
restoration types. We anticipate releasing the final plan later this year. Any of the projects that are listed in that plan, like I say, our people will be out at the table afterwards, and will be glad to discuss any of those with you, if you haven't had a chance to see those or comment on those.

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

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

MR. CORAM: Well, thank you, Chris, and
thank you, Gary, and the great state of Mississippi for hosting us tonight, and all the beautiful weather we've had over the last several days.

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

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

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

So similar to Chris's presentation, Florida has about $680 million assigned to
the Florida restoration area. We've committed about 22 percent of that, or $148 million, almost all those dollars going to early restoration projects; a little bit of the funds going to restoration planning.

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

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

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

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

We have, under early restoration, 32
restoration projects, in which seven of
those projects have been completed and
they're in monitoring or long-term
operation and maintenance. That leaves us
with 25 projects. 12 of those projects are
currently under construction. We have nine
more projects that will start construction
later this year, and we have four projects
that we're still working on planning,
design or permitting.

In February of this year, the Florida
trustees approved what's called Phase 5.2
of the Florida Coastal Access Project. And
the Florida Coastal Access Project is where
we acquire coastal lands, build park
amenities, such as boardwalks, or
observational platforms, or trails or trail
heads. And we approved an additional
project in February of this year, which is
the acquisition of a parcel of an existing
park, in which we'll construct an elevated
boardwalk that will give a grand view of
St. Joseph's Bay. We'll construct trail
heads associated with an existing trail
there, and other amenities, including a
I wanted to mention one more thing about the Florida coastal access projects. Our first park, we will have a ribbon cutting or park dedication on October 9th, and that's the Island View park in Franklin County. So we're very excited about the completion of our first Florida Coastal Access Project.

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

Looking to the future, further future, we hope to start work on a second
restoration plan later this fall. And this will be looking at some of the other restoration types, including living, coastal and marine resources. So you will probably see later this fall a notice of restoration planning. Again, we would like to engage the public in this restoration planning efforts.

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

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

So as the other TIG groups did, I want to introduce the folks who work very hard to produce the various restoration ideas and projects for the public to consume over the past couple of years,
starting off with Michael Ellis, who is the executive director of CPRA. He is the representative for the State of Louisiana. There are actually five state agencies that he represents. It's the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Natural Resources, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator's Office, and, of course, CPRA.

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

So the Louisiana TIG has been allocated $5 billion, and of that $5 billion, we have so far committed $455 million of the total $5 billion. That's a little over 50 percent of the total of funds that we've received to date when you add in what we received through early restoration, and the first two BP payments in 2016 and 2017. So we've made
really good headway so far.

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

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

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

So exactly what does that mean for
projects? So this shows the four restoration plans that the TIG has put out since the settlement. The very first restoration plan was done last year, about six months after the settlement came to fruition, and that plan was for habitat and bird restoration.

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

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

We also have two bird projects that is for the restoration of two bird islands, one being Queen Bess Island, and the other
being Rabbit Island in Calcasieu Parish.

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

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

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

And then the last is the construction of an
education and science center in Lake Charles. So those projects total about $22 million, and they're all recreational use projects.

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

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

The trustees also looked at projects, examples that fit within those restoration categories, and said that we think that the new Baratria sediment diversion, as well as
an additional large scale marsh creation project in Barataria basin would be good for the trustees to look at further, and we would continue and move forward with restoration planning for those projects. We also funded the engineering design of that large scale marsh creation project through the NURA funding. And just as a side note, the mid Barataria version engineering design is also being funded through NWFW, so the trustees did not have to worry about funding that effort. We will move forward with restoration planning and take a look at those projects to see if that is something that we can move to restore for this type of Barataria basin.

The very last restoration plan that we just released is for both nutrient reduction, as well as recreational use. This plan totals 23 projects. There are a total of 19 rec use projects, and those projects consist of an education science center in Lafitte, improvements and developments to both state and federal parks, improvements and developments to a
couple of the WMAs along the coast, as well as enhanced opportunities for fishing along the coast. So we're excited about those projects.

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

The last effort that the TIG has been working on this year is an endeavor into adaptive management. So the TIG has funded the development of an adaptive management framework that the TIG can utilize. And through that effort, the TIG, just last month, hosted a small workshop and invited folks from several other adaptive management ecological programs, namely the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay and Columbia River to come in and speak with the folks on Louisiana TIG so that we can understand the experiences that they've had with
adaptive management, as well as to learn
some of the lessons that they've learned
through those programs.

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

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

Going back to what we saw on the last
slide, for that very first restoration
plan, we talked about the phased approach
that the TIG is working through. We have
the engineering and design underway. So
the next step is for us to look at the
various design alternatives that come out
of that engineering and design, and work on a next phase of restoration planning to potentially fund the construction of some of these projects, if not all of these projects. So there may be multiple Phase 2 plans. We have not yet decided. But be on the lookout for those restoration plans.

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

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

And what it is, it allows CPRA to let
a single contract for full delivery of a project, so it will get you from permitting, all the way through construction and monitoring with one contract. And this is something that we're looking at for potentially implementing a marsh creation project.

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

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

MR. WELLS: Thank you and good evening. I
am Chris Wells. I'm with the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and director of the Office of Restoration there, and I will try to update you tonight on where we are with the Mississippi TIG.

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

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

And since our last update, what we've
been doing is continuing the implementation of those projects, largely early restoration projects. We recently had the ribbon cutting on the Infiniti Science Center, which was one of our rec use projects. We anticipate the completion of the Popps Ferry Causeway Park project in Biloxi, and the Pascagoula Promenade in the next couple months, certainly by the end of this calendar year. We continue to work on our Hancock County Living Shoreline Project. We're moving into Phases 3 and 4 and hope to finish Phase 5 and complete that project by next spring.

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

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

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

And I will turn it over to Robin
Riechers from Texas.
MR. RIECHERS: Thank you, Chris. And, again, thanks to all of you for coming out and allowing us to share with you kind of what's been going on in the various states in the Trustee Implementation Groups. We really appreciate the opportunity to do that.

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

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

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

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

From the human use category or the enhanced recreation category that was predominantly in early restoration for us, or completely used up in early restoration for us, doing some artificial reefs as well as enhancing some state park properties
that needed to be enhanced after hurricane damages.

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

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

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

And then, as indicated in our most recent restoration plan, we basically are looking to two areas for engineering water quality and oysters, and so that's going to
set the stage for further discussion about those down the road.

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

Two projects that are probably worth highlighting there, and they really are complimenting many projects, but our two really bookend projects on the upper Texas coast and the lower Texas coast, both of them are hydrologic restoration projects, funding from NRDA, along with other Deepwater sources and other grant sources are really allowing us to tackle two landscape scale projects. One of them is what we're calling the McFaddin Beach Ridge Project, and it's really a restoration project from the Chenier Plains, which basically stretch at least from Galveston
Bay over into Louisiana, and then when we go to deep south Texas, near Brownsville, the Bahia Grande restoration, and another large hydrologic restoration landscape scale projects that are really worth noting in those projects. And, again, they're just part of the projects that help to do it, but that's how those building blocks occur, where you piece projects together and you do these landscape scale activities.

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

So with that, I want to thank you all for the time in allowing me to come and
present to you kind of what's going on with
the Texas TIG right now. And next, I will
introduce Laurie Rounds from the Open Ocean
TIG.

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

So the Open Ocean Implementation
Group is responsible for planning and
implementing restoration for the open ocean
area. We are represented by the federal
trustees. The federal trustees work
together to implement restoration for the
wide ranging and migratory species that
were injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil
spill. And we are conducting restoration
for those species, which include fish, sea
turtles, marine mammals, mesophotic and
deep benthic communities or those deep
sea corals, for birds, and for Gulf
sturgeons. And we're going to be
implementing restoration for those
resources across their life stages, across
their geographic ranges. So that might be
inland, coastal and offshore habitats.

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

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

So our funding update for the Open
Ocean Trustee Implementation Group, is
we've committed about $70 million to date.
This is about six percent of the
$1.2 billion allocation. And this has gone
to implementing our early restoration
projects, which we'll talk a little bit
more about. It's also gone to conduct restoration planning, outreach to stakeholders, developing restoration plans, and also to support the federal trustees in providing comprehensive planning and oversight as they participate across all of the Trustee Implementation Groups.

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

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

In addition, we've also committed $20 million in what you might call invertebrates allocation, which implement early restoration projects called the
Oceanic Fish Restoration Project. And approximately $22 million, it's about the full hundred percent of our allocation, but that amount of funding has been committed to implement four of our early restoration projects to provide enhanced recreation.

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

So let's talk a little bit about our current activities and what we see coming up. So as I mentioned, we've been conducting our -- and implementing our early restoration projects. We have five early restoration projects, so this includes implementing our oceanic fish restoration project and completing our
first full year of repose period. So for
that project, fishermen have been
participating in a voluntary repose period
in which they refrain from fishing and help
us test a cure to reduce bycatch of blue
fin tuna and other oceanic fish series.
We also, through our early
restoration projects, have been able to
provide and enhance recreation at the Gulf
Islands National Seashore in Florida, we've
been able to enhance recreation by building
two new passenger ferries, which are up and
running in Pensacola, and also by enhancing
beach habitat. We've been able to increase
bike and pedestrian recreation at the Gulf
Islands National Seashore in Mississippi,
and we've also restored the Jeff Friend
Trail at the Bon Secour National Wildlife
Refuge in Alabama. So we're going to
continue implementing these early
restoration projects over the coming year.
And then I'm also very excited to say
that the Open Ocean Implementation Group
has been developing two restoration plans
to propose restoration projects for all of
our restoration types.

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

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

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

In addition, the Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group is working on
identifying our priority to address
critical information gaps and monitor needs
into the open restoration and the open
ocean restoration area.

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

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

So the Region-wide TIG consists of
representatives from all state and federal
trustees. Most of these -- most all of the
representatives you see listed here this
evening are here. Hopefully, you had an
opportunity to visit and meet some of them,
either at the Region-wide TIG booth or at
one of the other restoration area TIG booths. It is a very experienced, hard-working and committed group of folks, a real privilege to work with.

So the Region-wide TIG is responsible for planning and implementing restoration activities for resources that range throughout the Gulf. This includes birds, oysters, marine mammals and sea turtles.

Approximately $245 million of the Region-wide TIG's $349 million in total funding will go towards these restoration activities. The other portion of the Region-wide TIG's allocation provides funding for Gulf-wide needs, including administrative oversight and planning, and monitoring adaptive management-related activities.

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

So the Region-wide TIG has committed funding for activities in all resource
types and restoration categories for which
the TIG has responsibilities. I'll begin
with column number 1 for sea turtles. For
sea turtles, the Region-wide TIG has
committed approximately one-third of its
available funding. This includes funding
for two early restoration projects. The
first is the sea turtle early restoration
project. It's a multifaceted project,
which includes components that cross five
Gulf states and address threats to sea
turtles on their nesting beaches, as well
as in the coastal environment. This
project is a ten-year project and it's in
its third year of implementation.

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

From the sea turtle allocation, the
Region-wide TIG also funded development of
the Sea Turtles Strategic Framework, one of
four frameworks released by the Region-wide
TIG in June of last year. These documents were developed to assist with restoration planning for all four resource types, sea turtles, marine mammals, birds and oysters.

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

So next, I'll cover columns 2 and 4. On this slide, it's marine mammals and oysters. And although it's hard to see, we've spent just less than one percent of funding for both of those with resource
types, and that funding was used for
development of strategic frameworks for
each of those resource types. These will
assist in future restoration planning
efforts for marine mammals and oysters.

I'll next speak to the fifth column
there, Monitoring and Adaptive Management.
Under monitoring and adaptive management,
the Region-wide TIG supports the trustee
council and TIGs by providing annual
funding for the MAM work group.
This funding supports activities to develop
and maintain MAM procedures and guidelines
and facilitate coordination across the
TIGs. To date, the Region-wide TIG has
committed approximately two percent of its
available MAM funding to support these
kinds of efforts.

And then last, but not least, in
column number 5, Administrative Oversight
and Planning. The Region-wide TIG also
assists the Trustee Council and TIGs by
providing annual funding for administrative
support and services, maintenance of the
administrative record, Trustee Council
website, and restoration project portal, and support for conducting the Trustee Council public meetings and other outreach. To date, the Region-wide TIG has committed approximately 12 percent of its available administrative oversight and planning funds to support these types of efforts.

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

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

With respect to our future activities, the Region-wide TIG has been watching closely ongoing restoration efforts related to birds, oysters, marine mammals and sea turtles to determine if there are any restoration needs or information gaps that the Region-wide TIG can help address.
Earlier this spring, after consulting with each of the other restoration area TIGs and considering the information presented in each of the strategic frameworks, the Region-wide TIG agreed it would be appropriate to begin conducting preplanning activities. These include developing the scope and scheduling of upcoming restoration plan efforts, including Restoration Plan Number 1.

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

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

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

This is the portion of the program that we want to transition to public
comments. Again, I want to remind you that everyone should have signed in on a blue card, and this is the proper way in which to allow me to call you forward.

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

Because we have a number of speakers, we are going to limit the speakers to three minutes. Some people have driven many miles to be here tonight, as you can see, from Texas to Florida, and so we want to be
as respectful as possible. And this
monitor here, when you begin to speak, if
you will state your name, and if you are
representing an organization, if you will
state the name of the organization. If you
are simply here for yourself, you won't
need to state your organization. At that
time, this little monitor will turn green.
For two-and-a-half minutes, it will be
green. Then at two-and-a-half minutes, it
will turn yellow. When you see it turn
yellow, I would appreciate if you would go
ahead and conclude your comments. When it
turns red, you have completed your three
minutes, and I am going to ask you to go
ahead and take your seat to allow the next
individual to come forward.

So at this time, from my right, your
left, we have Mr. Phil Coram, State of
Florida; Next to Phil, we have Mary Josie
Blanchard, Department of the Interior; then
we have Christopher Blakenship, State of
Alabama; Mary Kay Lynch, U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency; Gary Rikard, State of
Mississippi; Chris Doley, from NOAA; Alyson
Graugnard, State of Louisiana; Homer
Wilkes, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and
finally Robin Riechers, from the State of
Texas.

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

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

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

And the seafood industry is not
getting any better here in Mississippi. We're having lots of problems all across the Gulf. The time is now to focus on our seafood industry. We've put enough into the recreational opportunities. It's time to focus on the seafood.

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

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

These folks are really struggling. I can't reiterate it enough. It's time to start putting some of these funds to
restoring these resources, restoring the
habitat. There's all kinds of stuff about
birds and marine mammals, nothing about
shrimp. That's what we're known for here
on the -- that's the biggest commercial
industry. What are we doing to help the
shrimp industry? We've got to start doing
that.

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

Allowing these stakeholders to
contribute meaningfully in these
restoration activities will ease the
burdens that they're feeling right now and
it can ease the pressure on these resources that are at critical levels.

Examples of participatory restoration include anything from oyster reef monitoring, oyster relays, oyster shell recycling and planting, voluntary electronic monitoring and data collection, water quality monitoring, bottom mapping and surveying, and consulting with restoration activities.

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

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

MR. BENDICK: Good evening. My name is Bob Bendick. I'm the Gulf of Mexico director for the Nature Conservancy. I'm here representing the conservancy and our five Gulf state chapters. Thanks for the
opportunity to be here. It's really exciting to see the progress that is being made (inaudible).

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

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

While NRD evaluations may be more
technical than are some other aspects of Deepwater Horizon funded restoration,
public communication and engagement are still essential for effective project selection.

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

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

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

Oysters and oyster reefs are in trouble across the Gulf. Oysters were basic building blocks of the Gulf ecosystem. The Deepwater Horizon funding, from multiple sources, is a once-and-forever opportunity to restore
oysters in the Gulf; however, this funding should be deployed without delay to avoid reaching a tipping point that prevents long-term recovery.

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

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

Third, bird nesting on barrier islands and in floodplain forests of rivers tributary to the Gulf are important in themselves, and their protection and restoration can contribute to the resilience of coastal areas from storms.
MR. FRANKLIN: If you can begin to wrap
up, Mr. Bendick.

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

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

MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Bendick.

The next person to make a comment, Howard
Page, followed by Julia Weaver.

MR. PAGE: I'm Howard Page. I'm speaking
for the North Gulfport Community Land
Trust, and I would like to ask -- it makes
a lot of sense that we have people from the
state agencies on this group and people
from the federal agencies because you had
core missions before this disaster happened
on water quality, a lot of other things, that gives you the expertise and the understanding to help make this a good effort and to achieve this.

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

But I do see a point of failure, and I would like to speak to some other folks that I heard in the room. I heard there's some Mississippi state legislatures in the room. I'm from Mississippi. I heard that Congressman Palazzo has some staff here.
The failure is not from your agencies for the essential synergy that is going to have to come from you meeting those core missions you already had of clean water and protecting the environment for this to be successful. It comes from the fact that the Congress and the state legislature provide you adequate resources, that they fund these essential missions. That is the failure point here. It's clear and obvious. There's one point of failure, and that's the failure of the Mississippi Legislature. When you have failing sewer systems in Mississippi and all the other Gulf states have it too, it's because the state legislatures don't fund those missions. When you have turtles dying from plastics in the oceans, it's because Congressman Palazzo and his colleagues do not fund that critical mission adequately.

And, again, I truly believe, you folks that I see at the table, you all have the expertise, you all have the desire, you all have outstanding staffs. You all have the existing law.
What you need is a Congress that gets away from the magical thinking that cutting taxes and reducing government solves all problems. That is magical thinking. It has no logic to it. That needs to change. The Congresses and the legislature need to fund you all so that you can do the existing core missions that you already had, and let this overall, very complicated project be a success and let your existing missions be a success. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

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

In regard to project selection and decision support, I have a lot of thoughts about that. Don't have time. One thing I would like to mention is to collaborate closely with the Restore Council's strategic conservation assessment project. Finally, we encourage NRDA and the other Deepwater Horizon decision-makers to adopt a common set of requirements for land acquisitions, and to hold state level land conservation planning and coordination meetings for the land conservation
community, including landowners. Although
don't forget (inaudible) land, conservation
easements. Thank you so much, and thank
you for being here.

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

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

Since the spill, NWF has been working
across the Gulf states to advocate for a
science-based restoration (inaudible) for
Gulf Coast ecosystems. We continue to
courage the trustee council to restore
nature's resources with a focus, wherever
possible, on addressing underlying
ecosystems and improving overall ecosystem
function. We believe a stressors-focused
approach will help to ensure the
restoration investments are strategic,
properly sequenced and sustainable,
ultimately increasing the long-range
resilience of these systems.

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

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

NWF supports the strategic framework
developed by the region-wide TIG, and we
hope they'll be actively used by all
trustees as restoration planning advances
for the (inaudible) categories. We also
note that all TIGs have the option of
developing strategic frameworks or
strategic restoration plans for the
resources in their jurisdictions, and we
courage each TIG to do so, for actively
looking across the restoration type of
geography and laying out that long-term
vision for restoration dollars helps the
public understand where the TIG wants to go
and also will lead to more strategic
investments.

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

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

First, when soliciting project ideas
from the public at the initial stages of
development of a plan, we encourage the TIG
to provide as many details as possible
regarding not only the restoration types
under consideration, but also geographies
of particular concern, if applicable, and
the range of dollars likely to be spent on
the particular restoration plan. This will help the public to provide project ideas that are more appropriately tailored to that particular funding opportunity. In its restoration plans, we encourage the TIGs to provide a detailed explanation of the criteria and the process used for project selection, including why other project types were eliminated from further consideration.

And, finally, frequent updates on progress of program projects are so important, shared not only in public forums, like this tonight, but also on the website for greater access and awareness. It's critical that we continue to tell the story of our projects for success, not only for audiences in this room and down in the Gulf, but also for a national audience. Thank you again for the opportunity.

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

MS. FERGUSON: Hi. Good afternoon. I'm Mrs. Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson isn't speaking. I wanted to ask you all a
question. Eight years ago, we had this spill, and you all sprayed the dispersant on the spill. You all didn't, but it got sprayed.

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

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

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

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

MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Ferguson.

Andrew Whitehurst, followed by Casi
Callaway.

MR. WHITEHURST: Hello. I'm Andrew Whitehurst. Thank you all for the opportunity to provide comments tonight. I'm the water program director for the Gulf Restoration Network, and I live in Madison, Mississippi, and work on Mississippi water issues.

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

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

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

I have something that applies to restore because Restore Act was open, the floor was open last night for comments about the Restore Act, and I know there's some folks here from the Restore Council. So this spring, at the Mississippi Water Resources Conference, a presentation by a USGS scientist from Nashville was very instructive. It's one of the Gulf-wide flow studies with the Mississippi component. And that scientist, Rodney Knight, talked about the research problem that he set out for one of the streams in
the state, and he set out these three questions. How far down a river can a dam's disruption flow be detected? How sensitive are the freshwater needs of coastal marshes and bays to upstream damming? And third, can the coastal waters be so distant from the dam's influence that it can't be detected?

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

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

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

MS. CALLAWAY: Hi, I'm Casi Callaway. I'm
the director of Mobile Bay Keeper, and I
want to thank you again for the opportunity
to speak. I want to thank you for
crossing the whole Gulf Coast
states so that we get to meet you and see
you.

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

So I also want to say thank you for
hosting last night's 101, for creating an
opportunity for people to either reengage,
learn for the first time or catch up where
they took a break and stepped off of these
issues. I think there still need to be
more, and that's what we really want to ask
you for. We are very excited that Alabama
is going to host a summit in October, and
really excited to see how that rolls out,
and the opportunities for people to ask and
get questions answered. I appreciate what
happened yesterday, so hopefully we can get some ideas of what worked and didn't work, as well as what the Mississippi sites have been like and Louisiana. Let's make sure we're using best practices to really be able to incorporate, get new voices, get voices back up here.

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

We are also excited to see (inaudible) Administrative Conference Planning Fund. And I want to reiterate what I think Jesse Graham said and so many
others have said, is that please be working across all the funding streams, but also, you have an opportunity to look at comprehensive planning, and how are we building out each one of these, whether it's a TIG, in a one-off TIG or that Gulf-wide view. Let's figure it out. In Alabama, we're doing widespread restoration watershed management plan. How are we making all of those go together, and then how do those weave into what's happening in Florida and Mississippi? So let's be really thoughtful about one great plan.

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

And then I'll close with this. We had -- it's a Bob Brown quote. It's a Joe Bryant quote. It's a Chris Blakenship quote. But these are once-in-a-lifetime disaster funds. We don't ever want to see
this money come into our states for this reason again; therefore, we have to spend it that way, transformational, once-in-a-lifetime projects to address what we broke in the oil spill, what was documented in the oil spill, but to set us up for a future that we don't ever need to have those kind of problems again. Thank you.

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

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

And the scariest moment of my life usually was opening day for the shrimp season. I wasn't as fast or as strong as my brother or my dad, so they would send me to the wheelhouse. And it would be a frenzy of multiple folks, hundreds of folks, literally pushing each other out of the way. It was just — man, for ten years
old, that was rough. Dad would say, steer
towards them when they move. Go away.

We're making money here, and it's got to be
made quick.

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

So we were already struggling.

So moving forward, I would like to
see the local fishermen involved. There's
a lot that I've learned, even as a young
child. I'm not a scientist, by any means,
but just different trends that I don't
think people think about. Like, you will
be working on a batch of shrimp, and
magically, they'll change to nighttime or
to daytime, and the fish will show up.

It's things like these that I think we can
bring to the table.

I've also operated a technology
business for the last four-and-a-half
years. And at the end of the day, all this money is spent, just like the previous comment, and it's gone. So, I mean, we're just dying out here. I hear it all the time. And if I didn't state it, I'm with the Mississippi Commercial Fisheries United Group. And so I hear the concerns from Ground Zero all the time, every day, actually.

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

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

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

Christopher Rhodes. Thank you.

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

MS. LANKFORD: I'm Kara Lankford. I'm with the National Audubon Society. First, I want to thank you for hosting the education and community workshop last night. These
types of (inaudible) are incredibly helpful to the public, and it's clear that providing open platforms to ask and answer questions was well embraced. We hope you will consider having similar workshops in the future. It's great to see increased transparency and engagement from the Trustee Council, and we offer our support to ensure this remains a priority moving forward.

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

We were pleased to see the release of the monitoring and adaptive management procedures (inaudible) annual from the cross TIG work group and look forward to seeing how these are applied in practice. As restoration continues to ramp up, these
procedures and guidelines will be critical
to ensure that monitoring standards are
consistent across TIGs and restoration
progress is measured per funding level.

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

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

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

MS. COLLINS: Pass.
MR. FRANKLIN: Collins passes. Alexis
Baldera will then be followed by Jackee
Antalan.

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

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

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

So going forward, it would be helpful to have one predictable planning timeline for those of us interested in project submission and tracking the progress of the TIGs. That doesn't necessarily mean all TIGs have to be on the same timeline, but just so we know what's coming in the next couple of years.
We also hope that you will continue
to coordinate with the other restoration
programs, like Restore and NWFW,
(inaudible) projects, and then as projects
get done, sharing lessons learned, what's
working, what's not working, what are we
learning as we go.

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

We would also like to see you invest
in developing programmatic level monitoring
so that you can begin to track progress
towards those high-level goals. We think
this is going to be a really important
piece of planning, so you can select
projects that are going to meet those goals
best, and it will also help you tell the
story of Gulf restoration and how you are
having an impact on the ecosystem as a
whole, and how projects are working
together around these metrics to get you to those goals.

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

And, lastly, let me just make the point that we are very supportive of the early investments in science that are being made. Some of the states have decided to
spend restoration dollars on answering key questions. And this is especially important for marine resources, like marine mammals and sea turtles, deepwater communities that we know we have a lot of gaps in knowledge in. So the best thing -- and that points, early on, to pinpoint those stressors that we can identify for later restoration planning is really important.

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

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

MS. ANTALAN: Hello, everyone. I guess I don't even need to tell you what all of my concerns are. I'm sure you can regurgitate it from hearing it year, after year, after year; meeting, after meeting, after meeting, after meeting; time, after time,
after time. The lack of accountability, the lack of transparency, and first and foremost, meaningful public engagement. I am -- I am -- I do not want to say disappointed because I'm not giving up. We're not going away. We are still very, very, very concerned about the lack of engagement, meaningful engagement.

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

It's your responsibility. That is why you are here. The natural resources are for the humans, and we are so, so disappointed in the level of meaningful public engagement. It does not exist. I'd like to say it again. If we have
meaningful public engagement, transparency would happen. If we had meaningful public
e engagement, accountability will happen.
It's not after a decision has been made by
a TIG who -- when we first started this
process, none of the council members had
help. Now, you have help. And the TIGs,
they haven't reached out to the community.
If they had reached out to the community,
the seafood industry, and the fishermen,
and the communities directly impacted by
this disaster, not oil spill, but this
disaster would not have to come in year,
after year, after year and say, you are not
doing anything for me. You know that.
Everybody at this table knows -- knows
that. There are issues that you know that
the community has brought to you over and
over and over again, and none of these bar
graphs represent you addressing those
issues.
I believe you can do it. I believe
if you take the initiative to come to the
community -- we come to you constantly.
You come back to us and say, and we want
your meaningful public participation. No
you, you don't. You want us to come to
your meetings. Thank you.

MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Ms. Antalan.
The next individual to give public comment,
Mr. Derrick Evans, followed by Jill
Mastrototara.

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

Some of the people behind me are
aware, some of the folks aren't, that about
eight years ago -- well, first of all, even
before that, I think all of us will agree
that the Gulf region is probably, and
always has been, for a very long time,
without peer, as far as local citizens and
residents whose familiarity with the part
of our planet or our continent where the
freshwater meets the salt, and whose
intergenerational experience in this mixing
zone has produced a whole bunch of written
and unwritten wisdom, and insight, and
knowledge, and experience.

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

My point is a very diverse, deep,
eclectic community of very good advocates
from various angles, science and others,
for the Gulf have always been here. So
much so, that eight years ago, we were
able, some of us who had backgrounds in one
of those or other areas -- I'm not talking
about people from government. And I'm not
talking about people, with a few
exceptions, from your major large nonprofit
green groups, but people from Barataria,
persons from Biloxi Bay, Turkey Creek, where
I'm from, and up and down the Gulf Coast
convened ourselves, and, frankly, produced
what would become the Restore Act.

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

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

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

And so I want to just say, I want to
echo what's been said by others here, that when it comes to community participation and engagement, you are looking at the best there is in the United States, from my perspective, and with respect to the BP Oil spill, in particular, and to this region. And I don't know exactly what it's going to take. I'm sure that in the interfunding source deliberations and so forth, there will be many opportunities for you to do so. But, yes, a much better job has to be done in terms of getting the most from these communities, not just downloading to these communities, which, frankly what was brought to this process from these communities in the first place, in many instances. Thank you.

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

MS. MASTROTOTARA: Good evening. I'm Jill Mastrototara, policy director with Audubon Mississippi. And I echo my colleague's thanks to all of the hard work and also your effort to develop new and innovative
tools to reach out to the public and to try
and get ideas and an exchange as this
restoration process moves forward.

I feel compelled, given that we're in
the state of Mississippi and recognizing
your aspirational charge to restore the
injuries that our Gulf has sustained, to
acknowledge that there is a project of
great concern to Audubon Mississippi and
many partners around the region commonly
referred to as the One Lake Project that is
a dam proposal just south of Jackson,
Mississippi, on the Pearl River, which is
the Gulf's fourth largest freshwater input
east of the Mississippi River. And our
concerns about the downstream impacts, in
particular, of this project as it relates
to our seafood industry, as well as the
many investments that you shared with us
tonight, and those being planned by the
restore and Gulf environmental benefit
fund. And recognizing that there's a
tremendous amount of synergy with our
resources around the region, how projects
that are upstream can impact our downstream
investments given that we are looking at an unprecedented investment for this and generations to come.

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

MR. FRANKLIN: Mr. Shane Landry.

MR. LANDRY: Hello. My name is Shane Landry. I'm with Plaquemine Parish government. I'm here today to represent our president, Amos Cormier. I want to thank all of you for giving us an opportunity to speak, and I also want to say, thank you to Ms. Antoine, and to
Chris, and to the other gentleman that spoke about the shrimping industry. Plaquemine Parish is one of the most prolific shrimp areas in the world, and so I have a special place in my heart for shrimpers. I grew up with them.

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

I see logical inconsistency in the expenditure of funds to stop nutrients from going out into the various estuaries and other marsh areas from various agricultural runoff and whatnot. But then we are going to go, we're going to cut my parish in half, create two very large diversions where the Mississippi River's going to take a whole continent's worth of farm runoff and put it into Breton Sound and Barataria Bay. This, to me, does not make much sense. It seems like we're working at
cross purposes with one another if we were
to do that.

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

But I will say that if one takes the
hidden costs, especially to our shrimpers
and our oyster fishermen, and you add that
cultural devastation, which will be
affected by changing the salinity line in
Barataria Bay. You are going to push that
salinity line all the way out, all the way
to Grand Isle, and then way out into the
Gulf, this is going to hurt the little guy.
Only big corporate fisheries are going to
be able to go out there and harvest the
shrimp once you do that. It's going to
destroy the oyster industry. Okay. And
all the ancillary industries that depend on
that, they're going to go away. It's going
to make it very difficult for Plaquemine
Parish and the southern part of the parish
to survive economically because it's
diversion.

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

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

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

MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Landry.

That concludes the list of individuals who
have elected to come forward to make public
comment.

Are there any others who, at this
time, who would like to make public comment
that originally had not? We'll get you a
card, sir. I need a card for this
gentleman.

MR. FERGUSON: I've already been signed up.

I'm Mr. Ferguson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Ferguson. Next to come forward to make public comment, Ms. Thao Vu. While Ms. Thao Vu is
coming forward, are there any others who
would like to make public comment at this
time?

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

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

I participated a great deal in early
restoration, and I've been trying to follow
my -- to the best of my ability, to follow
the projects. At this point, at this juncture, it's critically important that we pass early restoration, post BP consent decree, that we take a step back and evaluate, thoroughly evaluate outcomes of these various projects that have been implemented.

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

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

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

I do want to applaud the Trustee Council for taking our recommendations about having the workshop. I think it could be expanded upon more than just outreach and education. It really needs to
get to the point where the outreach workshop could include soliciting community priorities, their knowledge of their natural resources in their own backyard, what are their concerns, and how would they like the sea to be restored.

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

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

MS. THAO VU: And that needs to be factored into a lot of these projects that are being implemented by your not taking steps to remediate the environment properly, and therefore, you are not seeing some objectives met, and you are not seeing restored habitats or restored fisheries.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

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

I would like to remind everyone that tonight's presentation can be found on the Gulfspillrestoration.NOAA.gov website.

There's also some very good handouts in the
lobby. And if you want to interact with
any of these experts, they will also be
found in the lobby and will be here until
the last person's question is answered.

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

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

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

I, MONICA SCHROEDER, Court Reporter and Notary Public, in and for the County of Jackson, State of Mississippi, hereby certify that the foregoing pages, and including this page, contain a true and correct transcript of the proceedings taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated, and later reduced to typewritten form by computer-aided transcription under my supervision, to the best of my skill and ability.

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

Witness my signature and seal, this the _____ day of ________, 2018.

_________________________________
Monica Schroeder, RPR, CRR, CSR #1285

My Commission Expires July 19, 2019