OIL SPILL
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MOBILE, AL

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

(0:01:55.6)

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

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

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

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

had water spouts. It's our job to watch around the clock to make sure we keep those guys safe. I can talk about hurricane season and answer your question there and oil and we can go through that today.

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

(0:05:14.1)
JENNIFER: My name is Jennifer, I'll be one of your facilitators tonight. We have Mike. We have, lost your name. We have Miranda and Julian. We're from all different kinds of places around here on the Northern Gulf Coast. If you need assistance with something please ask one of us and we'll be glad to help you or show you to another room if you need to go. I do want to point out that, it was unfortunate but we were not able to get a representative of the Coast Guard in here tonight so some of the issues that you are asking may require an answer that only a Coast Guard person could answer. We do have one of those representatives in the fisheries and wildlife room, which is located in that small room that was off the main room you came from. I want you to feel free to get up and move to another room at any time that you'd like. You're not trapped in here, we're not just going to keep you here. Again, I will say that we're going to take one question at a time. You can ask a question, and you can have one follow-up question. If you have more questions you just get back in the queue and when everybody else has had a chance, we'll give you another chance to ask a question.

RESPONDENT: ***[0:06:32.4 Inaudible]***.

(0:06:34.1)
JENNIFER: No, you stay in your space but I'm going to take one row at a time, and then the queue moves and then you come back, and I'll do it again. Instead of making you guys get up and stand in line, I thought this might be easier. If you have any suggestions as we go, you can't hurt my feelings so let me know. I will be tough on you

so you get one question and one follow-up question. (Chuckle) Again, we're going to be talking about the monitoring type of activities that are going on associated with the spill. So, try to keep your questions on target as possible and we'll do the very best. Sometimes some of the facilitators know the answers to some of the questions. These people are all experienced as well and we'll do the very best we can. Are you guys ready?

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

(0:07:32.7)
JENNIFER: There will be a transcript that comes out of this meeting and not only will all the questions that you ask at the microphone but also the questions that you write down on the green piece of paper and the answers will be included in that transcript when it comes out.

AUDIENCE: Where is it going to be out?

(0:07:49.5)
JENNIFER: At this point I don't know what site it's going to be posted on but that would be a great question that you could write on here and I'll find out for the next meeting, there you go. There'll be probably links from several sites to this publication. To get started, again I'm going to start with the front row. Does anyone have questions in the front row? Would you step to the microphone please? State your name for the record and then ask your question.

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

LARRY: Thank you for your question sir. The easiest thing I can tell you is if you go online to cdc.gov, there's a link to oil spill page in which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention actually put out three different fact sheets on dispersants. Basically, what this stuff is, is a type of product that's almost like soap. As they use it out there to break up the oil, it basically has a half life of 15 days. After 15 days, it starts breaking down in the environment. When you read those fact sheets we have in there, and you start seeing when it says for general residents and the start showing you about for the medical screening and all that. You start getting concerned because it starts talking about, ooh if I get this I might aspirate or might burn me or I might choke. The main hazard that they're talking about for this stuff are the workers who are putting this on the aircraft or spraying it or the ones who are pumping it who are working with the raw product who may by accident swallow some of it from drinking, which I don't know you'd want to or might get a splash in the eye which will cause irritation. That was one of the effects we saw. One of our doctors basically says that, if you drink it and vomit, you might aspirate it which might cause you to have problems breathing. When you read the medical one or the one that, NIOSH put out for worker safety, it'll scare you but if you read the one for the general public it tells you what it is. Now what EPA has done is EPAs been going out there and sampling the air and the water for the constituents of the dispersants and they haven't found it which tells me that by the time it gets close to shore it's gone. Once it hits the water and starts working on the oil doing what it's supposed to do, it's breaking up, we're not seeing it. FDA, another part of the public health service, has basically said, they've looked into the components of the dispersants and said, listen we're not worried about it tainting the fish because some of it is actually a food additive.

WILLIAM: Aw. Come on.

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

WILLIAM: Fish, birds.

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

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

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

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

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

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

TERRY: As Mr. Meilberg ***[sic]*** said, there's two EPA regions. EPA Region 4, is doing the sampling here in Alabama, Mississippi and Florida. EPA Region 6 is also participating in sampling along with NOAA out near the spill. Larry can talk about some of those effects

because there have been some oil workers getting sick, and we also have folks out of CDC that are looking into that. Larry can address to that.

LARRY: To answer your question, when people start getting sick working out there, a request went through to have NIOSH which is a National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety. Which basically again, another part of public health service who assists OSHA which is Occupational Health and Safety Administration who basically has the regulatory authority for employees. NIOSH basically is like a scientific consultant who goes out there and does health hazard evaluations for employers when employees start getting sick from occupational exposure. When the sampling's being done of the vessels out there, people were getting sick and that's part of the site safety plan that the Coast Guard and BP put out to ensure the safety of their workers out there. How much medical monitoring is being done, air sampling whether they should be in respirators, what type of PPE they should be wearing. Because some people got sick they weren't quite sure what it was. Was it the fumes, was it heat stress, what was causing it? The states and CDC have a monitoring system in-place where they're looking at poison control calls, hospitalizations in the Gulf Coast region to see if we're seeing any trends of people who are possibly getting sick from petroleum products. These workers who are getting sick raise the red flag, and that's why NIOSH is out there and they're getting this assessment at this time. They're also looking at putting out more industrial hygienist on the boats to basically do more air monitoring out there to determine if they're using the proper protective equipment for those people out there. Again, most of the offshore operations with the scheming and all that is being managed by Region 6. Exactly what type of testing and all that is being done, I don't feel comfortable answering that because I'm not working over there. Does that make sense? We are looking into it. We, being the federal government, is assisting in looking into it. I'm not the one doing it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

CECELIA: Okay, thank you.

LARRY: You're welcome.

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

LARRY: I can't directly tell you what specifically what in the estuaries but I can tell you what's being done over the well head about a 50-nautical-mile box at this point. Primarily what we're trying to determine is the special and temporal dispersion of subsurface oil so we can get a handle on where the plume is, can we determine min-max values for oil detected in the water column. Again, this is in the 50 nautical mile box around the centroid well location itself. Is the presence of the oil related to other factors like dissolved

oxygen as oil biodegrades, oxygen is used up. It might be a good indicator that we do have hydrocarbons present and we're trying to identify if there's any kind of bathymetric steering, essentially think about winds it's being steered by the mountains much like currents and oil would be steered on the bottom by subsurface features. We're trying to get a handle on where the plume and oil exist in the water column and then how will the ocean conditions affect the transport and fate of the oil as well. What we're doing is looking at historical records that date back to the 1900s in the Gulf of Mexico. We have over 122,000 physical parameters and observations and comparing that to the first four surveys that have been taken so that we can hopefully identify variants and anomalies that are in the water column. I hope that answered some of your question.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TERRY: With regard to that, the operational components of dispersants' use, I'm not really in a position to discuss that because that's an area I don't have an information on. As far as how can we tell it's safe, what we're doing as a follow-up is to do this surface water or the sediment air sampling looking for dispersants, looking for the breakdown product of dispersants. Because even if we think it might be safe or we think it might breakdown in 15 days or what have you, the err on the conservative side we're looking for it, we're sampling it, it's being sampled where the spill sight is being sampled for all along the coast, not just here but also in Louisiana and Texas to try and find any evidence if there is. I'm not a fish tissue expert, but I know we're also taking samples of fish tissue looking for not just the components of the oil but also potential components of the dispersants.

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

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

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

TERRY: There have been federal, state, local responders, BP responders here in Mobile since the end of April. I've been working for EPA for 20 years, I've responded to hurricanes, responded to many different things. This is the largest response I've been associated with as far as folks out in the field and folks at the command center here in Mobile doing work and that's since my arrival. I arrived a week after, April 25th so before that it was already at the Mobile Convention Center, it recently moved, but there are, within this area within what we consider this zone, every responsibility,

there's thousands of workers, not mostly at the command center, mostly in the field but there's hundreds at the command center doing logistics and getting the crews ready for each day's work. They're working around the clock. Every day there's more people that come in as needed. We don't have the oil like they have it in Louisiana but it doesn't mean, given the seasonal changes it doesn't mean we're not expecting. In fact, you can see on the news, and I know that they're projections that there's likely to be some or potentially some oil beaches here and Mississippi and possibly in Florida so those activities have ramped up. There are teams in the field now who do shoreline assessment. There are teams that are continually doing clean up of what they find. There are more than hundreds, thousands of folks placing boom continuously around. You're asking for a timeline, what I'm saying is, those folks are already here doesn't mean there won't be more if needed and especially with the oil coming. You can count on more folks out on the water and on the beaches.

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

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

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

signals that the oil might arrive. As oil arrives, then you'll see more people in the areas that will need more response.

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

TERRY: We are sampling for, we're doing air sampling and we're doing water sampling for the dispersants and for potential breakdown products. We didn't do that initially, but we in this area, but we are doing that now all along the coast, Larry if you had specific information like Corexit or not.

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

MAN: Oh, come on. Bullshit, man.

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

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

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

PAUL: How can we sit there and not know they were ever toxicological studies done on these products and be putting it into our water system, and then it sounds like to me what you're monitoring is

occurring right at the coast, what we noticed is that going on right at the site out there?

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

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

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

BRYON: I'm Bryon Griffith, and I'm the director of the Gulf of Mexico Program. It's easier to be there in the audience than listening to the questions and write the answers, and not be up here and answering the question. I'm filling half of the blanks, I was talking with the state of the actual monitoring regime. With the EPA Deep Blue Water is not a normal setting for us. It's actually not a normal setting for any of us in this table. The consequence of the dispersant when they're actually utilized, they are not allowed to utilize without this companion monitoring plan that is actually implemented by BP. You heard from the EPA administrator if you watch the news, or caught the news in the last several of days, she does not accept that as decisional science and has started a very regimented Texas to Florida water quality, air quality, sediment quality management plan that is underway. She does not accept the private sectors' science as the independent decisional science, period. With respect to the 5,000 feet, we don't go 5,000 feet, NOAA doesn't go to 5,000 feet. You heard earlier the Scripps lab and others have engaged the assets that they have, and they are now helping us fill in the blanks. That's why we are in cooperation with NOAA, and several of the other agencies to fill this knowledge void that we're involved in right now. Sir, your question about the assets that we deployed, you're probably here during, I

guess you've been around a couple of times, you're here during several working strikes. You know that needs one, whether that was Frederick or Kurt, Katrina or Ike, is an incident-related demand for manpower. We are in the stage right now of deciding having to watch and deciding how much that incident commands. The consequence, as Terry pointed out, we are not only mobilized, and I believed what the Coast Guard representative this morning and again this evening suggested this scene about command 7600 personnel. That's a huge deployment. In the EPA specifically make it more EPA eccentric when the demand becomes greater than Terry's operation or anybody else's operation. We have ten regional offices that are all companion regional offices are likely with Katrina. We have exchanged, we are actually cooperating between the Dallas regional offices and the Atlanta regional offices. Region 3 office, is it still out here? It's in Philadelphia. Our Region 3 office is the immediate next responder to load backload personnel that have that capacity, when we wear them out.

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

PANELIST: There's several efforts underway currently to assess the Gulf of Mexico in terms of data. As I said earlier, NODC, the National Oceanographic Data Center, has over a 12,200 observations in the Gulf of Mexico getting that in 1900. Also the GCOOS, which is the Gulf Coasts Ocean Observing Systems which Dauphin Island is a member of Texas A&M University, many universities, and in national levels service, ourselves are members. And Texas A&M, as you can imagine, has a huge collection of Gulf of Mexico data, all the way from Campeche over to Florida. Additionally, there's big assessments in the universities within the Gulf Institute, which makes up Dauphin Island an d Florida State, University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University and LSU. So those data sets will also be made available, and recently, a contracting firm that has over 50,000 still photographs of benthic habitat. The habitats that exist on the bottom of the near shore has been made available. We're now parsing that specifically for those areas that are being affected, so that we can build a baseline to work from. I hope that answers some of your question.

(0:44:27.6)
JENNIFER: Do you have a follow-up? Okay. Moving on to the next person.

RESPONDENT: ***[0:44:40.4 Inaudible].***

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

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

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

monitor because they all tie together, and they're going to be affected.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(0:51:35.5)
JENNIFER: You have 15 seconds to complete the question. Phrase it as a question.

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

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

MAN: It'll kill you a little bit.

JAY: Do what?

MAN: It'll just kill you a little bit.

JAY: Yes. It was kind of concerning because he was so sure that it was safe, but he didn't know what was in it. I don't know how that's possible. Then we hear the EPA tonight say "Well, we don't really know because it's never been used in this amount, but yet we think it's the lesser of two evils." Our concern is the long-term future, what this going to do to our whole ecosystem. The plankton and everything that will work backwards from the beginning. So, I don't know if somebody asked you this earlier, but he said that they are limitin' BP to 15,000 gallons. How's that monitored, and obviously, I hope you all are not trusting BP because they haven't told the truth from the beginning. First, they wasn't any oil spill and this amount, and they knew all along how much was spilling. How do you know if they've only pumped a million gallons? You know, they have no-fly zones, so you can't really, the public cannot really monitor it. We have to go by with whatever, whoever can get in there. Basically, our question is, are you trusting BP and how you verifying?

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

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

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

BOB: My name is Bob Suberry, I live in Orange Beach, Alabama. We live on the water. I'm just wondering if there's been much effort trying to take advantage and utilize the volunteer help that is available from all feedback that we get, you know if you volunteer for any of these projects and come up, you get these 'thank you for

volunteering' we've had an overwhelming response. You need to be trained in this, and you need to be trained in that. You try to find out how you can get Hazmat training, and keep running into dead ends. How to get trained for wildlife rehabilitation. I haven't been able to get any information with that. It seems like you have a tremendous manpower available. You know, people that just want to volunteer. I, myself, am retired, so I have plenty of time, but you need the training, and you need the certification to get out there. I know the Coast Guard has a program called CAN, Citizens Action Network that they pioneered up in the northwest. It is been so successful that it has spread to other Coast Guard stations and sectors around the country. They're utilizing people that live on the water to monitor the waterways both environmentally, and also for law enforcement. I'm wondering if you guys are really putting effort into that area to utilize the people that live on the waterway to do testing. I do testing with the Wolf Bay Waterway Watch. I have a degree in biology. I'd love to help out in any way I can. But, there doesn't seem to be the resources or the training available. That's my question.

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

ROBERTA: Hi, I'm Roberta Swann**,** I'm with the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. The challenge with using volunteers for this particular incident is that there are several people in these rooms or that showed up tonight that want work. BP has said that they will pay workers to clean the beaches, to monitor for tar balls or oil. And, so we've been challenged as a program and working with the community collecting all of this volunteer information, and then being told that volunteers cannot touch any of the hazardous materials. So, even if you do get HAZWOPER I training, which is basically safety training, you still can't go out and do any of the actual work that would bring you into any contact with the oil, or the mousse, or the tar balls, at this point. If we were, what I've been told by VOAD, which is the volunteer response unit in Unified Command, is that if it does get really bad, if the coast is hit really hard, they will then setup volunteer response centers, one in Robertsdale and one in Bayou la Batre, where volunteers will have

to go re-register at the volunteer reception centers, be trained, be issued equipment to go out on the beaches and to do the beach cleanup in effect. And they will bused to the sites, and then bused back. They want full control over the volunteers. What we have been doing as a program, in particular with Wolf Bay Watershed Watch, actually, is supporting volunteer water monitoring programs. We'll continue to do that, with our citizens advisory committee working with, there's 13 some odd, grassroots organizations like Wolf Bay Watershed Watch throughout Mobile and Baldwin counties. We're going to continue to work with them to do water quality monitoring, however, as you well know, the water quality monitoring that you're doing with Alabama Water Watch, we're not monitoring for the types of things that would show up as a result of an oil spill. It's a catch 22, we are looking for opportunities to get volunteers out there to work with people who actually own coastal properties. One of the ways that you might want to get involved is Alabama Coastal Foundation is now doing a volunteer field observer protocol program, and you can get trained to do that when you're on shoreline assessments throughout the course of this event and beyond to just to gather data on what the shoreline looks like pre-spill and then post-spill, and to keep an eye out for any arrival, if you will.

AUDIENCE: I have a follow-up question.

(1:01:44.5)
MODERATOR: Could you use the microphone please.

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

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

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

(1:05:47.0)
JENNIFER: It's not your turn yet. You have to hold. Back row? Do you a question?

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

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

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

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

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

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

KEN: No.

(1:10:45.1)
JENNIFER: Anybody that's in the room that has not had any chance to ask a question that wants to ask a question. Anyone?

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

TERRY: For certain things.

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

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

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

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

DIANE: Could you tell us what NIOSH is?

PANELIST: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

DIANE: Right, but no results yet?

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

DIANE: Alright, thank you very much.

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

one of the oil executives that's not tied to BP said that the film that we're getting from the site is managed. There's four cameras on the bottom and they're only showing us the good scenes not the bad. I'm wondering, are we going to be able to as a government monitor this a little bit better using our Armed Forces, our Marines or our Navy?

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

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

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

(1:17:02.8)
JENNIFER: You ahead.

BRYON: I like to pose a question to the group for the record. Again, I'm the director of Gulf of Mexico Program. EPA has three great water body program: the Chesapeake Bay, the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico. The government, the table up here and it could have been suited with a lot more people, the government works for you, we don't work for each other. Each region defines its constituency. Defines its kinds of assets it has to deal with. I would give you this to think about. Today, the horizon incident has left us with a lot of unknowns. Tomorrow, there'll be another incident at some point in time. You as citizens need to think about whether you want us to be in the same situation 10 years from now as we are today or different. If we're going to be different, we cannot make it different, only you can. When it comes time to rattle the cages that say I want it different. I want to know a lot more tomorrow than I know today. Then you're the ones that have to do that. We're simply the responders. So, just think about that. Our region does not look like the other regions in consideration of capabilities. Yet, we are, without question, the most valuable marine ecosystem in the entire world.

(1:18:39.1)
JENNIFER: We've gone through the room once and we're getting close to the time where will be ending here soon. We're going to go through a second time. I ask you to keep your questions short and stay on point whenever possible so that maybe everyone gets a chance to ask that second question.

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

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

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

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

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

(0:18:18.5)
JENNIFER: Are there any more questions? Want to pass for a minute?

AUDIENCE: No, I have a question.

(0:18:26.8)
JENNIFER: Is this the first meeting you've been in or have you been in others?

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

PANELIST: National Weather Service.

PANELIST: CDC.

PANELIST: EPA.

RESPONDENT: My question, first of all, for EPA, I know Lisa Jackson reported that there were some new trials being done on dispersants in Florida, that was a week ago. Tonight it was reported that if it's approved budget-wise, that there is some kind of comprehensive

testing on dispersants. That was a conflicting part of information and I'm sorry that if those test haven't already started to happen as far as finding the least toxic and the most effective for Gulf of Mexico crude. Anyway, that's a disappointment that I kind of got out of the earlier comments from EPA tonight. On NOAA, NOAA has about five research vessels I understand, and there are only two right now that have been, started doing research, what do we have to do? What kind of noise do we have to make to have all five NOAA vessels in our Gulf of Mexico?

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

RESPONDENT: What time frame was that done in?

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

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

(0:21:47.6)
JENNIFER: Please finalize your question.

PANELIST: What?

(0:21:51.8)
JENNIFER: Please finalize your question.

PANELIST: Take your time. (Laughter)

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

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

AUDIENCE: More than one?

PANELIST: Absolutely.

AUDIENCE: With two vessels?

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

AUDIENCE: Thank you.

(0:24:39.1)
JENNIFER: Sir, do you have a question?

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

TERRY: Under the Oil Pollution Act, on coastal zone spills, and this is a coastal zone spill, the Coast Guard is in charge of pollution response. For this spill, the Coast Guard, while part of what we are calling Unified Command, is in charge, they direct clean-up operations, and that's really all operations not just clean up, but also they direct EPA to do monitoring, NOAA provides technical support to the Coast Guard and the Coast Guard directs BP operations. There is a Unified Command that includes the states and includes Department of Interior and EPA here and in region 6. As well as an area command that provides resource brokering between here and in Louisiana. The purpose of the Unified

Command is to bring all resources bear under the direction of the Coast Guard. We follow a national incident management system, that was developed first by the Forest Service during forest fires but is now implemented by Department of Homeland Security. That system has an incident commander with operations sections and finance and planning and logistics. It's a very structured system that is all focused on field operations, supported of field operations, maintaining situation awareness but is all directed by the incident commander who's with the Coast Guard. For both locations, it's the sector captain, the captain of the Mobile sector for here. It is a very structured system, and it's a tested developed system and long tested over 30 years of forest fires.

(0:28:16.9)
JENNIFER: I'm giving the two-minute warning. I'll be taking two more questions. We're going to start with the questions. If you could.

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

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

(0:30:00.2)
JENNIFER: One more question.

AUDIENCE: I heard recently that there is a larger platform out in the Gulf, the Atlantis, several times in volume larger than this platform and that it may have some of the structural compromises that this did. Can you confirm or deny? I'm not sure who to address this to. I'm

asking whether it would be reasonable and prudent to shut it down until we find out whether we find out if it's safe or not because I'm trying to imagine anything bigger than this. I don't know whether it's true or not it's something I heard on the news.

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

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

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

Okay, so you know as much as I do?

PANELIST: Exactly.

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

(0:31:56.9)
JENNIFER: You can write that on a comment slip if you'd like, turn it in. We have come to the close of our meeting. I want to thank all of you for coming tonight, contributing as a commentator or as a participant up here on the stage. I do want everyone to give the panel a hand because they did their very, very best to answer your questions tonight, and I want to remind you if you still have a question, it's not too late to fill out a green form and turn them into us. Put your contact information on there along with your question and someone will personally get back in touch with you. As we leave tonight, I want to say have a safe drive back, and let's all keep our fingers crossed. All right. Thank you all.

END OF AUDIO.