OIL SPILL
6/3/2010 9 A.M.
MOBILE, ALABAMA

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

(0:05:23.0)

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

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

DENSON: Chris Denson with the Alabama Marine Resources Division.

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

MCGREW: Amelia McGrew with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

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

BUCK: Buck Sutter from NOAA.

BEARD: Ross Beard from NOAA.

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

Louisiana. We have similar sampling programs and protocols. I guess we're the critter people.

FRANKS: I'm Jim Franks. I'm a fisheries biologist with the Gulf Coast Research Lab in Mississippi. I can't add much more to what Harriet just said except that I do have particular interest in this time, particularly this species of fish that are off shore beyond the islands that we referred to as a pelagic species, that are perhaps undergoing impact as we speak. Thank you.

(0:07:55.9)
RESPESS: All right, thank you. Before we call our first speaker, if you're feeling comfortable walking to the microphone and speaking, we do have the question cards. Just raise your hand and we'll get one to you. We'll start at the top of the batting order today, who you got for us?

ASSISTANT: Carol Adams-Davis.

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

(0:09:20.3)
RESPESS: Okay, thank you. It's actually a two-point question you had. Hope people here on the ground, we don't have anybody that's decision makers in the room. Do we have people here because we have, we just handed over; who would like to speak?

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

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

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

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

DICKEY: He can answer that.

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

DICKEY: Mississippi.

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

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

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

DENSON: Scott Brown is the ADM Coastal Chief.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Where does he live?

DENSON: Where does he live?

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ADAMS-DAVIS: Yeah.

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

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

DENTON: He's stationed in Mobile.

ADAMS-DAVIS: Okay.

DENTON: He is the Mobile Section Chief.

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

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

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

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

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

DICKEY: He's the eighth district.

(0:12:30.6)
RESPESS: Yes, if you'd fill that out specific to the hierarchy of the joint incident command and state incident commands. Next up, Dave?

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ASSISTANT: Perry Berens.

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

(0:13:52.1)
RESPESS: Okay, it sounds like lab results for wildlife.

SUTTER: The stranding information on both bottlenose dolphins that have died, as well as the sea turtles that are stranded which, these procedural stranding is many, many times the normal rate for this time of year. The necropsies that have been done, well, to answer your question, the parts that I can remember. The University of Florida has a veterinarian, who's looking at all the tissue samples or that the ones that have been necropsied. I believe the information is all being posted online. I have it with me. It's being posted on the NOAA website, the number of turtles dead, number of porpoises and the reason why they were, a general description of where they're found, what was the cause of death. As far as the connection between the oil spill and the turtle deaths, and there have been several, I think even yesterday, there were four that were recovered not only working along the beach, but also out looking around in some of the Sargassum drifts because some of the turtles are being caught up in that. There is [pause] I'm trying to think of the best way to get that information, I think, let me

check and get a card for him. That way, I can give you the specific email or the specific website that has all that information because it is being published, I know. I have to go look in my computer. That's what I have to do. I'm sorry I can't remember the exact address. It's one of the NOAA websites that, I don't remember which one specifically, whether it's one for the regional office that has the fish closures on it or if it's the one that's on the main one that's out of headquarters.

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

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

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

SUTTER: I'll have to look into that but that's a great suggestion. I asked that question last night, also. What is the best way to communicate

because I realize that not everybody has access to computers especially if you're, you know, my age, and computers aren't instinctive like they are for kids. I'm going to ask that question of our NOAA media people to find out what the best way is to translate that information so that people can get it whether it needs to be published in newspapers or in some way that we can get that information to people who are not plugged into the Internet. I think we just assumed too much that people are plugged in that way. If you have some ideas along how we could, what are your ways that you look for information?

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

SUTTER: So, newspaper.

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

SUTTER: Okay.

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

SUTTER: I understand.

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

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

BARONS: Thank you.

(0:19:04.2)
RESPESS: Next Dave?

ASSISTANT: **Martha Crosby.**

CROSBY: My name is Martha Crosby. I'm an oyster gardener, so I know a lot of people from the Sea Grant Program. I'm an oyster gardener because when I was a child swimming in Mobile Bay I was always

cutting my feet on all the shells and that doesn't happen anymore. I also remember really clearly as a child sitting on the pier and my Dad talking about how, when he was a little boy, Mobile Bay was full of brown pelicans. From my childhood, there weren't any brown pelicans in Mobile Bay and I see the future, my daughter having that conversation with my granddaughter. I came here this morning expecting Mobile Bay to be full of oil for my lifetime, and was really delighted to hear two of the people on the panel, one of them you Mr. Dickey, say as soon as the evidence comes in that there isn't any more oil in the water, we'll reopen the fisheries as fast as we can or BP is going to support you. We will all be here until this is finished. We're coming from two different worlds. I'm thinking my grandchildren maybe will have a world with no oil in the water, and y'all are sounding like it's not so far off. I'm not asking anybody to give me a deadline, but clearly I'm into a 30-year time frame. Would any of you all volunteer the kind of time frame you think this project is going on? Am I asking too much?

(0:21:02.3)
RESPESS: The question is to hazard a guess… what kind of time frame we're looking at for a recovery.

SUTTER: I don't think anybody can really begin to even answer that question other than the fact that there have been other oil spills. One even in the Gulf of Mexico back in 1979 of even 150 million gallons and went on for nine months. I believe the well was at 200 feet. We can look at some of the impacts and what was the downstream, how long it's been before things started to recover in that particular area of Mexico. I think that would be some of the best things I think that Bob is the one who suggested last night, and maybe it will be best for you to answer on what the name of that one because I can't remember on the top of my head. Ixtoc spill. NOAA, which is one of the agency I work for, we have been working and gathering data in the Gulf of Mexico since the inception of the agency 30-some-odd years ago. Unless some unforeseen thing happens, we'll be part of the, in part of the community here, for years and years, well, for years to come. That's our responsibility, the stewardship of the ocean resource, whether you talk about fish, and endangered. Question about the openings, as soon as we do that, we'd look at those maps everyday and as soon as an area has been

cleared of oil, we send our research vessels out to collect water samples and fish tissue samples. They come back and then they go through a series of agreed-upon test with FDA so that we can reopen that area as quickly as humanly possible. Right now, with the oil still spilling out, it seems the oil is kind of sloshing back and forth around the mouth of the Mississippi River. It's off Louisiana off here. Based on which way the wind blows, what way the currents are, but once we get… so really, really once it stops, we will be working diligently to make sure we can open those areas as soon as it's safe. Seafood safety is a huge factor not only just for, we obviously want safe seafood for people for consumption but also for the perception that people who don't live here, the sense is that everything that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico, there's oil on it. We want to make sure that is not the case. We want to make sure we're extraordinarily clear that the seafood that comes out of the Gulf of Mexico is the best that there is. It's safe to eat and that so the fishermen can get back to work as soon as humanly possible.

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

(0:24:22.2)
RESPESS: Thank you. Do you have a re-direct?

CROSBY: No.

(0:24:26.5)
RESPESS: Okay, thank you. Next up Dave?

ASSISTANT: Daniel Johnson.

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

(0:25:17.1)
RESPESS: Okay. Thank you for that comment. We've heard this over and over again. BP was invited and I'm not exactly sure why they're not here today. I do need you to fill out one of those cards, those comment cards, so that we can pass that on to other folks because we've heard that repeatedly about Vessel of Opportunity.

JOHNSON: We just called it a few minutes ago.

(0:25:36.1)
RESPESS: Okay. These comment cards are actually going directly to folks. We're not sending an email. Does anybody want to comment on any of this Vessel of Opportunity? [muttering] Probably not. Okay. Did you have anything else, sir?

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

(0:25:51.5)
RESPESS: Okay. I appreciate it. Can we get him a card please? Next up Dave?

ASSISTANT: Linda Barnes.

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

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

(0:27:01.7)
RESPESS: Okay. Two-point question; one is about modeling and where you came up with that, and then the second is the response type of question.

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

BEARD: I can tell you that just over this last weekend, we've taken the first four survey cruises for the Brooks McCall, which is funded by BP, and starting to integrate, visualize the data specifically to find the spatial and temporal distribution of the sub-surface oil. Also, to determine the approximate min, median and maximum value of oils detected in the water column. Is the oil itself correlated with any kind of bathymetric features. If you can think about winds through the mountains and the same with the currents through the bottom topography. Also, to get a better understanding of the vertical structure of the water, both historically, what was there before the oil, and how the oil in the water column may be affecting where the oil goes changing the physical characteristics of the ocean itself. What we're trying to do, and we actually produced a series of products that are being distributed today. At LSU, there's a major science conference that many of the folks that were here last night are now going to, that's bringing together the best and the brightest of the researchers and the scientists, to truly identify where these plumes go. I think there's a misconception.

People think this plume is one long continuous river flowing through the Gulf. It's really aggregations of oil and oil has been dispersed. I can show you what some of the results that we got just last night, that some of these samples, they have been able to show that beneath the surface there is the presence of hydrocarbons. There is the Thomas Jefferson and the Gunter, two NOAA ships will be. Gunter is already deployed. Thomas Jefferson will be going out and using sonar to help map these plumes. There's an excellent source for the New York Times today, if you can go online or get a New York Times, while the independent research is being done by universities that are identifying these aggregates of sub-surface oil. It's a situation where you don't know what we don't know because we've never had a disaster of this impact before. I do promise you that we're working night and day on trying to identify where the sub-surface oil is and what's the fate and transport; where is it going to go? **(0:30:13.6)**

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

(0:30:28.8)
ASSISTANT: David Cohen.

COHEN: Hi, how are you doing? I am David Cohen. I am the city clerk for Mobile, Alabama. I represent the city and I also represent a lot of the fishermen I fish with.. I am also a member of CCA. Watching the, I guess the federal level fishery closure, also the state level fishery closure, there seems to be a lack of direction or quick communication. It comes up on NOAA's website, very familiar with it, I pulled it up this morning but it strictly says, the federal area. Three miles off out of Alabama, 9 miles off from Florida. There is a break between Florida and Alabama 6 miles. Is it okay to fish in the 9-mile area of Florida and not okay to fish in the 9-mile area of Alabama? It says a closure, and I will get to that, what exactly does closure mean? Is it means catch on release? Does it mean, simply, do not go into the area? It states that you can cross the area but it does not really get into a very defined, "You don't need to be here, period, and the fines are..." On the Internet right now, it is rampant, wild, rumors, whatever. There is not really a

clear and concise. Alright? If you go in there, you are going to catch these fish. NOAA will bring resources, they are going to out there and say, "You are under arrest," whatever. You are not really defining what that means. People are out there right now fishing. I have friends, there in the Gulf as of this minute or catching snapper. Are they in Florida water? Are they in Alabama water? Are they in federal water? These things are happening right now. It's kind of like a Wild Wild West right now for a lot people, trying to catch fish before they die or they are contaminated or whatever. Mr. Franks, I want to ask you a few questions about that. Those are some very, I guess, rampant things going on in the fishing community. These are recreational fishermen, these are not commercial, these are not charter boat captains, these are just guys with boats, like myself, they are going out and trying to catch some fish before it closes or the fish are contaminated.

(0:32:56.8)
RESPESS: Let us get those two questions answered first. Okay, the first one was interaction between closures for the state and the feds. Second one was the actual definition of closure and what specifically that means to boat owners.

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

COHEN: Hourly.

SUTTER: Say that again, I am sorry.

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

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

COHEN: On the radio?

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

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

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

RESPESS: Ya'll provide projections to the state.

SUTTER: Right. Yes.

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

DENTON: In Alabama, we are working with our health department as well as ***ADEM*** to verify whether the area is needed to be closed or let remain open. The closures are based on the presence of oil. Right

now, like Buck said, our waters go out to 3 miles, those are our territorial seas. The only waters that we have that are closed at this time start at around the eastern end of Dauphin Island and extend west to the Mississippi line. That area is closed for recreational and commercial fishing; that includes the catch-and-release. Generally, if an area is closed, press release is done, we are trying to get something up on our Outdoor Alabama website to detail the areas that are closed and the ones that are currently open.

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

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

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

(0:40:56.5)
PANELIST: Thank you, I'm gonna let you follow up.

DICKEY: The fin fish, in particular, have the ability to metabolize anything that is taken in their bodies. They have very well-developed metabolic systems. As you move to crustaceans, shrimp, crabs, and shellfish, their metabolic capability has become less and less and less, are less capable in terms of their ability to metabolize and excrete the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons primarily. That is what we are most concerned about in terms of seafood safety, are the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons. Crude petroleum has many, many hundreds of compounds, a lot of compounds. Among those are the PAHs, the polycyclics. They also have aliphatics and other highly volatile compounds. That is what is what gives it the pungent smell. Most of those evaporate off as it is in the water or on the water that is evaporating off. The PAHs are slightly heavier, they persist in the environment a little bit more. As the oil is diluted in the water column or on the surface, or its partitions into the water column, fish that are in the area, generally avoid it. If there are any fish, even shrimp and crabs will try to get away from polluted environment. Shellfish, unfortunately, cannot move, they are very highly susceptible and they are the ones we are most concerned about. That's the sentinel species in terms of us determining exactly what the seafood safety impact is. Fin fish, generally, move away. There will probably be some impact on the younger years or recurring generations of fishes as they get into the environmental nursery areas ***and Buck*** and NOAA are the experts

and the USM folks are the experts on that issue. All I can tell you is that, if PAHs are picked by shellfish, as they move through the water in light concentrations, they metabolize and excrete it fairly rapidly. It would be just a matter of days to weeks actually, once they reach clean water, before they would be okay. That has been the experience in previous oil spills where this has been studied quite extensively. A reference, NOAA has a superb scientist by the name of Yender, she published a 2003 paper, that is available on the web. It is a free PDF download that describes the impact of oil spills on seafood safety and it describes of the metabolism of the PAHs in marine organisms. It gives you some idea of the impacts that you might expect on the fisheries, all the way down to the shellfish, they talk about that as well. Y-E-N-D-E–R, 2003, and I think the title of the paper is, Management of Seafood Safety Following An Oil Spill Event. It's very informative.

(0:44:00.8)
COHEN: Thank you.

PANELIST: Is that on the website , LaDon?

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

(0:44:08.6)
RESPESS: Thank you sir.

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

PERRY: I think we would have the same concerns for the invertebrate fishery, particularly, shrimps and crabs. Their larvae are off shore,

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

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

(0:46:39.2)
RESPESS: Thank you. Okay. Two things I want to draw your attention to. We got some answers to some questions that were asked earlier. I'm going to post this on the wall, but just to give you some reference, this is Coast Guard Sector Mobile Report oiled shorelines, if you are out fishing or boating, that is the number to call We will post that on the board. Their sector Joint Information Center, the JIC, as they call it, this is the contact information. We were talking about local people on the ground that needed information. If you can put those on the wall for me, I would appreciate it. Next up Dave?

ASSISTANT: Steve Mitchell.

MITCHELL: I just saw these guys yesterday but I have a different problem or hypothetical situation. I have been asked with my new technology, my new alternative technology, and with Green Life Technology, we literally obliterate the crude oil and the contaminants, also. As we obliterate it with a completely non-toxic product, unlike what is being used for a lot of years, we dilute the oil to a water soluble

product. Now, I have got some people, locally, doing some test to know how fast that this will bioremediate. I know it is fast but I do not know how many thousands of times faster with sunlight and temperature varying and so on. I guess my point is that it is all about dilution. Because it is all in our marshes, getting it out with paper towels and absorbent rags is idiotic, it is ridiculous. I cannot stand to sit back and watch that being done when there are technology products available to make a difference, to save what is going away as we sit here and answer questions. They are going away. Okay, now as they are going away, I would like to help. My hypothetical is this, is about dilution. There are 643 quadrillion gallons of water in the Gulf of Mexico and that water is being turned over and turned over, there are 3.3 million gallons of water coming out of the Mississippi every second.

RESPESS: Thirty Seconds.

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

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

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

(0:49:54.3)
RESPESS: Okay. Anybody want to speak to that? We do not really have anybody here from EPA. We do need you to fill out a card for us sir, if you would.

DICKEY: I know that the National Incident Command Center at Fort McNair, they have started a program just for ideas to be... they’ve

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

MITCHELL: That's the Deepwater Horizon website?

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

MITCHELL: I've been on since day one.

(0:51:28.9)
RESPESS: Appreciate you coming out today. Next up, Dave?

ASSISTANT: Theresa White.

WHITE: Can you fix this for me please?

(0:51:39.1)
RESPESS: I certainly can. I reckon I could try.

WHITE: I want to thank you guys for holding this meeting and also for showing up. Everybody is very... well, everybody is past upset, and you guys get to be the ones that get their concerns voiced too, because you all were here and they are not. As I looked at Alaska and the Exxon Valdez accident, I realized that the Gulf's not ever going to be the same. This was 20 years later and Alaska is not the

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

(0:53:22.7)
RESPESS: Thirty seconds.

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

(0:53:38.7)
RESPESS: Okay. Seems like a two part question. One was better information and getting you sources of better information, is that correct?

WHITE: Correct.

(0:53:45.4)
RESPESS: The second one may be speaking about seafood safety again and reopening, and what the procedures for that as well.

WHITE: Right.

(0:53:52.8)
RESPESS: I am not sure if we have anybody here that can speak of long, long term situation, but here we go.

DICKEY: For your seafood safety question, the FDA, NOAA and EPA have been working very carefully over the last month to develop a

protocol; a specific procedure to assure the safety of seafood once oil does clear the area, and it will clear,to put it through Sensory Analysis testing, followed by Instrumental Chemical Analysis testing, to make sure that there are no residues or PAHs above levels of concern. The experts, sensory assessors are on site in Pascagoula, Mississippi, that's where we are locating the team. They are going to be training additional staff and personal from the states across the five Gulf states to increase our sample throughput, so that we can reopen these fisheries as quickly as we possibly can once we're sure that there are no petroleum-based residues left in any of the tissues. This has been worked out in great detail, we are working very closely with all of the five Gulf states, their health commissioners, to make sure that this plan is satisfactory to them for their state waters. Because they have their state water, state rights for their three water, three mile limit waters. NOAA and FDA have agreed on the federal water criteria. We are pretty much set and ready to go... to assure the seafood safety. We do not have any reason to believe that tainted product has been, has reached the open markets. Because NOAA has done a superb job closing down fisheries in areas where they know oil has occurred, either on the surface or sub-surface. We have been very careful in circumspect about this.

WHITE: That’s part of the problem, you may eat a bunch of seafood today and you may take 15 years down the road before you come down with...

DICKEY: No ma'am. I think if you look at the history, respectfully, if you look at the history of oil spills dating back to Exxon Valdez, through the Rhode Island, North Cape spill through the Ixtoc that occurred in the Gulf of Mexico which, by the way, was five times as large as the present spill. That was back in 1979. Read the literature and read the record since that time, I think you will find that first, remember that petroleum is a natural product. This is not a man-made material. It occurs in the Gulf naturally. Every year...

WHITE: There's quantities?

DICKEY: Yes ma'am. Actually, 40 million to 50 million gallons are naturally seeped into in the Gulf every year, but it's spread out over space

and time. It is not all at once. The tragedy here is that it's all in one place at one time. It is going to be taxing to Mother Nature and to the recovery responders to take care of it. That is what NOAA is here to do. That's what EPA is here to do and FDA as well, and that, and we meant what we said out in the general session that we're here for the duration. We're going to be doing everything we possibly can to account for the ecological impacts and monitor that to see when we get back to normal, when we get back to where it was before, and to assure the safety the seafood that reaches the market.

WHITE: What we need to do is… Somebody needs to refuse to let BP drill anymore.

(0:57:20.8)
RESPESS: Did you get one of these cards ma'am? I want to give you one of these. This is the Gulf Sea Grant Program. It's got links to all the websites, there's a lot of good information on there about seafood safety, etc.. It also has got some links to some of the historic spills that have occurred in the Gulf of Mexico as well. Dave, next up?

ASSISTANT: I have Ms. Adams-Davis on this, but I don't see her in the room.

(0:57:47.3)
RESPESS: Okay. She may have left; gone to another room, gone to another session.

ASSISTANT: Okay, so then I have Daria Dean.

DEAN: Thank you all for being here. I'm going to get to this because I know my time is limited. I have some suggestions. First of all, I'm a local resident. I'm here on behalf of all the fisherman, all of the people that are going to suffer, or aren't getting the claims made, some unpaid and so on and so forth. The Gulf will never be the same. There could have been many other methodologies used that are tried and true. The established protocols were not used. Number one, tankers. Tankers have been used in the Arabian gulf in the 90's oil spill, thicker than this, 85% picked up. Tankers are available from all the oil companies en mass. There should be armadas of oil tankers coming, scooping up the surfacing oil,

taking it to refineries and separating it. Other countries do this, other countries would be doing this from Day One. Number two, the 13 countries have offered their help to us, we have refused all but three. The Dutch are now sending six ships which were offered from the beginning. These have special arms and they scoop up the oil the same way that the tankers vacuum up the oil. We do not need toxic dispersants, we do not need the burns. I'll go into that in just a minute. Federal government should have been called into play immediately and not just the Coast Guard, they're doing a magnificent job but they can't do it all. Navy, Army, Air Force, Coast Guard, Merchant Marine, NASA, you name it. They've got robotics, they got technology, they've got massive ships. I've talked to the Navy, I've talked to all of these people for the most part. All of the documentation I've been doing for the past four weeks is documented in either Washington Post, New York Times… I've read the Nalco fact sheets, I know what I'm talking about. I'm not an expert but all these other people are. We need tankers, massive armadas of them, sucking up the oil. We do not need to be burying the evidence. We need the federal government and we need to accept the help of 13 countries. Okay. BPs track record, 760 violations in three years. **W**e're talking egregious. This is where loss of life occurred, or serious danger to human life occurred.

RESPESS: Excuse me, Miss Dean. Thirty seconds.

DEAN: How many?

RESPESS: Thirty seconds.

DEAN: I know, this is… whatever. The other countries, excuse me, the other companies with similar size oil companies had single digit violations. What does that tell you? Why have you been believing BP from the start? Toxic, Nalco. Thirteen out of the thirteen dispersants they could be using, it is the most toxic. Some of it is proprietary, you don't even know what's in some of it. Okay? Burns, toxic to the environment, it buries the evidence. BP is fined per barrel, for what they're releasing into the ocean. We are burying the evidence. Also, April 27th, check it out, everyone in this room. May One Mobile press register, article, secret meeting between NOAA and between BP, where on the chalkboard it said, 64,000.

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RESPESS: Miss Dean, do you have a question today?

DEAN: Now wait, This is the end. 64,000 to 110,000 estimated barrels. There's the evidence. I don't have a question, because all the questions are answered by people that are very nice to be here, but you don't have the answers. This is the evidence, the established protocols are not being used. We're talking about not only lawsuits from people, we're talking about lawsuits from countries.

(1:01:28.2)
RESPESS: Right. I thank you for coming out this morning. I do want you to fill out one of the cards because the specific question I picked up was response techniques and why things are being done the way they are. We have had that raised in every meeting that we've had. I do need you, ma'am, to fill out one of those green cards for us, if you would, about questions about response techniques. The other question that I picked up for that was concern about the dispersants, we have a gentleman here from FDA that can speak to dispersants.

DICKEY: Thank you for your question. The FDA's position on dispersants, and I'm not talking about environmental impact, I'm talking about in terms of seafood safety, is that the dispersants are not a concern for FDA in terms the safety of the seafood that would be harvested once waters are reopened. The dispersants are composed of four different chemicals, we know all four of them.

DEAN: You know the proprietary?

DICKEY: Yes, we know the proprietary one. We have taken a look at each of those particular chemicals, we've done all the appropriate calculations, we've looked at all the appropriate studies. We happen to know that they have a low likelihood of being absorbed in across the lipid membranes of living organisms because of their chemical nature. I'll tell you exactly what they are, they're called propylene glycol. Propylene glycol is a very common product, it's present in a lot of consumer products. For example, it's a moisturizer in some of the medicines that we take. It's used in lip gloss in cosmetics. Two, butoxyethanol is another component that's

also present in a lot of consumer products in trace quantities. The third component is petroleum distillates, light fraction, mineral spirits, kerosene. They're actually a petroleum product. They're putting petroleum that were purified petroleum products back into the crude to help disperse it, so that the bacteria that occur naturally could break it down naturally. That's the purpose of the dispersants. The fourth proprietary compound is what we call an organic sulfonic acid, it has been, we know the structure, we've taken and looked at all the toxicity data, looking all of the information that we have available on that. They have what we would call a low bioconcentration factor. They're on the order of less than 100 on a scale of zero to upwards of 10,000. In the concentrations that they are found, that the dispersants has being used in the Gulf, which has a huge dilution effect, especially at the time when fisheries are going to be reopened, it was determined that it does not represent a seafood safety concern. Now, in concentrated form, CDC has on their website, detailed information on the hazards of working with this material as it arrives in drums, as they dilute it into water, spray it on the water to break up the oil. It is a contact/inhalation/ingestion hazard in concentrated form as people are dealing with it. There's a specific protocol on how these products are supposed to be used. They are not supposed to be used without appropriate protective gear. In term… I can only speak to seafood safety. This is the analysis that we've done by our lead toxicologist who was on site at the ***Exxon Valdez***, this guy has a vast experience and he's a board-certified toxicologist. We've looked at all of the angles on dispersants; I guess that was really the only thing you needed me to comment on. Is there anything that I can explain further?

DEAN: Well, we still have never addressed why super tankers were not used,..

DICKEY: Thank you, ma'am.

DEAN: But, what I'm saying is, we don't need to be using dispersants at all. Why are you putting more toxins in the water? And you have underwater plumes and you have no idea where they are? You know, you've got it. Okay. That's my point.

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DICKEY: That would be for the engineers in the… I guess the Coast Guard and BP to answer that type of question.

DEAN: Well, they don't answer my questions.

DICKEY: Yes, well I'm sorry.

UNKNOWN: They don't come to the meetings, either.

(1:05:47.7)
PERRY: I would like to thank Logan who's standing up here for, approximately like, nine hours, and I'm going to give him a little bit of a relief. Dave, who's next?

ASSISTANT: Desilee Wallace.

WALLACE: Good morning, I just want to thank each end every one of you for coming, to listen to everyone, to answer questions with the best of your ability. I have two specific questions. The first is, I'm interested in what agencies are monitoring the levels of the PH's in the waters where folks are swimming, what types of tests are being done, I guess what type of monitoring… Actually I guess I do have more than two questions. I'm wondering where the public can access the data that's being gathered. Finally, I'm wondering if there are any prior studies that have looked at this in the scientific literature, where other oils spills and impacts have occurred in the past. If there are, where can we access that information? Thank you.

END OF AUDIO.