

Building resilient communities: Lessons learned from the DWH oil spill

Tuesday, Sept 27, 2016 - USM Gulf Park campus, Long Beach, MS

Listen to all of the presentations and panel discussions at

<https://gulfseagrant.wordpress.com/oilspilloutreach/presentations/building-resilient-communities/>

Identifying traits that make communities resilient

What traits do you think we should focus on in order to make communities resilient?

- Faith and religiosity
- Social support
- Social ties
- Quality of life
- Social connectedness
- Meaning in life
- Hope
- Intentional belonging
- Social capital (e.g., pre-existing networks)
- Political capital (e.g., effective governance)
- Human capital (e.g., groups used to working together)
- Economic capital (e.g., tax-base)

What are best practices to increase community resilience?

- Include marine oil spills in resilience planning
- Build social capital
- Use local knowledge and involve locals in response
- Communicate risk through trusted sources
- Remember technological disasters are different than natural disasters
- Assess resilience pre-disaster and also use tools and knowledge (resilient comm with not-so)
- Develop networks, initiatives, and community groups prior to disasters
- Encourage social connectedness
- Provide incentives for groups to work together
- Build on existing networks and include local knowledge

Additional resources:

- Impacts of compensation process:
<http://www.brianmayer.org/research/community-resilience-after-the-bp-oil-spill>
- 24 yrs of research on the impact of Exxon Valdez:
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214790X16301587>

Identifying resources that are available to coastal residents

Introductions & overview of organization

- Ayanna V. Buckner, [Gulf Region Health Outreach Program](#)
- Melissa Finucane, [GoMRI Consortium for Resilient Gulf Communities](#)
- Janel Lowman, [Coastal Resource & Resiliency Center](#)
- Dan Hahn, [Community Organizations Active in Disasters](#)
- Elizabeth Tatum, [US Coast Guard](#)

What are some lessons that your groups have learned from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill?

- Have plans in place and trained (e.g., HAZMAT, Vessels of Opportunity) prior to disaster so prepared to help with response efforts
- Rely on people that are trusted and embedded in the community (e.g., local champions, Peer Health & Community Health Workers) to connect groups and share information
- Improve communication and collaboration among agencies prior to a spill and with communities during and after a spill about response efforts, potential impacts to environment and community, etc.

What are some resources needed to continue to build resilient communities?

- Funding – possibly use local funds first until other funds are available
 - o Use and build off of existing resources
 - o Find creative funding opportunities (new partnerships, new connections)
- People – rely on those in the community
- Sustained partnerships – continue to develop and strengthen relationships (may need \$ or incentives; use Area Committee meetings)

Identifying future needs of our coastal communities

Introductions & overview of organization

- David Gauthier, [Bayou Interfaith Shared Community Organizing](#)
- Thao Vu, [Mississippi Coalition for Vietnamese-American Fisher Folks and Families](#)
- Emily Blejwas, [BayouClinic](#)
- Robert Turpin, [Escambia County Marine Resources Division](#)

What was the biggest challenge that you faced in your work during DWH that you had not anticipated?

- Unknown and uncertainties – led to hopelessness
- Working under OPA 90 – did not allow local groups to participate in response efforts

- Suggestion: Preparedness, preparation, rewrite laws to include bottom-up approach similar to other disasters
- Getting the “right” information out to people in a timely manner
- Lack of translated and interpreted outreach materials and information
- Lack of baseline social science and ecological data
- Lack of funding

What do communities need to make them more resilient?

- Create a Citizen Advisory Council at regional, local, or county level – similar to ones started up after Exxon Valdez
- Rewrite federal laws to incorporate role for local responders
- Translate and interpret outreach materials and information
- Provide/obtain adequate resources and funding
- Create a well-coordinated health system and information
- Provide resources for different audiences related to claims, spills, health impacts
- Invest in small business development and local economy
- Increase trust during disasters by having info come from local community leaders