

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Living Coastal and Marine Resources Listening Session

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
Business and Industry	<p>Related to MS - philosophically restoration begins with prefix "RE" -</p> <p>1) Oysters were lost in Mississippi - whether we restore them or we put them elsewhere, that's the philosophy that we consider here. We need to expand oyster resources so that they are not all in one place. Consider a MS-specific project that includes RE-building the Grand Batour Islands which are off of Heron Bayou in Eastern Jackson County.</p>
Business and Industry	<p>2) The Grand Batour Islands that are close to shore have eroded. We need to RE-introduce fresh water from the Escatada River, it was pirated from Pascagoula River years ago. There is now a berm upon which the CSX railroad travels that's obstructing FW flow and prevents freshwater from getting out there. It would take a public-private partnership to allow fresh water to get back out there.</p>
Business and Industry	<p>3) RE-open shellfish growing areas - Currently closed for pollution. There needs to be a cleansing effect of those areas, so polluted waters don't get back out into that area.</p>
Business and Industry	<p>4) RE-establish oysters in those areas by relaying oysters from elsewhere. There is a large population in Pascagoula Bay that can be moved to Eastern Jackson County to restore oyster populations.</p>
NGO	<p>Our organization tries to limit marine litter and debris. Part of the effect on the habitat is man-made. Not asking for more legislation or regulation because we have enough, but something should be done to raise people's awareness of the consequences of their actions. NOAA currently has a program - grant - to reduce the use of unencapsulated flotation foam. It gets lose-then gets changed out or gets lose-lasts for 800 years. Need to raise people's awareness on alternatives. There are a couple of such projects going on about marine debris that educate people on doing things in a better way.</p>

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NGO	Most of the strategy seems to focused landward; yet most of the impacts of the oil spill were focused in the deep water, not landward. One of the reasons we're having difficulty with the NRDA process is that we didn't have good data to start with. Need to have a comprehensive way to get baseline data. We don't have good baseline data-currently one of the challenges for NRDA now. Without data, don't know what the restoration goals should be. If we don't know what we have, we can't restore it. Need to have a more concrete way to prioritize projects-not just projects. Need to have some prioritization scheme-would be very helpful to get really good projects as opposed to politically supported comments.
General Public	This comment is directed at NOAA specifically, what was the basis for raising of thresholds for the level of toxicity of shrimp? And the toxicity level and safeness was never really conveyed to people. The amount of shrimp that a person could safely consume was much less than their "normal" diet, and they weren't communicated to about this in. Many people believed they were sick from being exposed to oil and corexit, and this is a difficult thing to prove. Need to have clear communication.
General Public	Meeting in Texas-a lot of people who went believed that they were sick due to exposure to oil and dispersant. Two major non-profits released information on turtle deaths attributed to fishing, since disproved. But what was disappointing in the Texas meeting, was that the commercial fisherman were being blamed for turtle deaths. Two non-profits had released information on turtle deaths attributed to fishing, that has since been disproved. This has created a divide between the fisherman and the environmentalists. Hopefully the Task Force didn't intend for this to happen; but the fallout was that two groups who could previously work together are not trusting each other.
General Public	Claim process isn't working. The real thing that was concerning in the Texas meeting is that there was no discussion on dispersant or Corexit-people have the right to know. How can we find out more through FOIA?
NGO	What was most bothersome at the Texas Ocean's meeting was that there was no mention of dispersants or corexit.
General Public	Need to know what exactly is in Corexit

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Academia	How can information be gained from the FOIA process - to whom? where? We have a right to know.
NGO	Glad to hear that education will be part of the strategy. Should be integrated into all the issues-education, outreach, communication are important. Would be good to come back to the listening sessions to relay what the TF has learned.
Academia	Problem with some restoration of fishereis is that we don't know how to do it. Need to take the time to develop methodologies, e.g., for hatcheries. Big idea is to create a Gulf of Mexico fisheries and research consortium that involves all five states to come up with policy and technologies that can be transferred. So when we have fisheries breakdown and insutls, we can not only monitor but come in with restoration plans.Red drum and spotted sea fish the only two that we can put back immediately. Scope would be all of Gulf of Mexico-single species could be used as sentinel species. Hatchery consortium would be a new program-success would be that we could respond to insults e.g., oil spills and others.
NGO	A big idea would be to provide full funding for the programs that the federal agencies currently run for conservation and acquisition of lands, and restoration of property. Also, provide funding for programs that provide benefits for conservation easements on private lands. Funding picture is dire without BP money. We should fund the programs that work. This is an important time to do this-huge inventory of willing sellers in the region. There is an opportunity to do an inventory of willing sellers and to purchase land at a lower price, a discount price and could be held by public agencies, private lands and thus conserved.
NGO	Recently had the opportunity to take Senator Graham down Apalachicola River. Recent research has been put out deomonstrating similar connectivity to Gulf as to the inputs to Appalachicola and Bay. ACF basin where it drains into the Gulf. Maintaining the ecological diversity and the productivity of the fishing grounds in the Gulf is dependent on the flows of the freshwater nutrients into the Gulf.

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Ngo	<p>The basins are the lifeblood of the Gulf, and the impacts can be both positive and negative; hypoxia is obviously a negative example. Therefore, taking a watershed type approach to restoration plans is key, and each river system is different. Each river system is different. Adequate flows in the Apalachicola and Flint Rivers are compromised. Federal policies on the Chattahoochee Rivers are managed by the Corps and how the Corps addresses water flows needs to be looked. Need an instream flow assessment to determine what's needed to protect the river, the bay and the Gulf.</p>
Ngo	<p>Substantial comments have been submitted. Given that there are few good baselines for habitat or living resources, work should be done to establish baselines as well as monitoring conducted in the future to understand where we are going. It is also important to use adaptive management in the future for setting measures and milestones and tracking progress.</p>