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**Information Session on the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Strategy Development
Tribal Webinar
July 19, 2011
2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time**

Summary of Comments, Questions and Answers

Attendees:

Augustine Asbury, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town of Oklahoma
Angela Bandemehr, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (GCERTF) Tribal Coordinator
Pat Casey, GCERTF Staff
Keala J. Hughes, GCERTF Staff
Buck Sutter, GCERTF Deputy Director
Elizabeth Watts, Seminole Tribe of Florida

Question: After Katrina a Louisiana tribe was having problems with housing and fishing. How was that taken care of, did they rebuild, were they consulted on how to take care of the water system? How do you take care of the water when it is polluted? Here there are three lakes where people were getting sick due to algae when they get in the water.

Answer:

(Buck) A chronic problem is loss of wetlands, especially in Louisiana, due to a variety of things (oil companies cutting through the wetland, change in salinity causes the collapse of marshland results in the coast receding and increasing vulnerability of coastal communities to storms). Sediment and dirt that replenished the wetlands in the past, in Mississippi for example, is being pumped offshore into the deep water. As storms come in the wetlands would reduce the amount of storm surge and provide protection from the storms.

(Angela) Through this strategy we are trying to help the states do coastal planning. We are thinking of helping the states build up wetlands. We will not address the emergency response issue that is more of a FEMA issue. We will coordinate with FEMA. This is more of an ecosystems restoration strategy and not related to rebuilding homes, which is a FEMA issue.

(Buck) The water only reflects what is put into it. The water loses its ability to protect. We are looking for a long-term solution.



Comment -- None of our reservations are on the Gulf Coast but want to track this strategy because it is important.

Comment – One participant requested that Angela contact their tribal EPA program, she will send contact information to Angela. Have hunting grounds in AL all the way down into Mexico. Her concern is human remains, should any be discovered, what would be done with them.