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Habitat Restoration Listening Session

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
NGO	BP spill affected Vietnamese fisherman - would like to see that the fisherman are involved in restoration process. They have decades of experience in oyster reef restoration and would like to see them be hired. Also can do assessment and monitoring - have the right skills and knowledge. For example, they know where there should be shrimp, so can identify when they are missing. Very much want to contribute to the restoration.
Business and Industry	Lost a lot of habitat. Salt water intrusion. Creates issues for osyters. Need to build back some of the barriers to hold back salt water. Losing critical habitat with changing habitat and salinity. Impacts families and livelihoods. Need to improve water quality by improving barrier islands, improve freshwater inflow to help reduce salinity, and reduce oyster drill predation. Opposed to salt dome mining - it is adding extra salty water. Want to keep fishing; not managing resources well. Need help from the Corps - need some fresh water. Need barrier islands and need to build some bars. Problems are a combination of natural and manmade. Corps can help by rebuilding some of the areas. There were 55 oyster houses pre-Katrina; now there are only 7.
NGO	Barrier islands -- conservation easements and land acquisition are important. Fisherman and livelihoods are number 1, but development is a big problem for barrier islands. Need to limit development to stop the islands from washing away. Buy the property to stop the problem in the future.
NGO	Until we can understand the habitat in the deep water, we can provide Environmental Impact Statements and really understand where we are looking to drill. Need to have a "NASA" type Agency for deep water before we can properly drill for oil and gas.

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NGO	Would like a strong and detailed strategy including sources of funding, outcomes, and timelines. Want something that can get all interested folks on the same page across the Gulf.
NGO	Task Force has a copy of our report outlining what needs to be done for restoration -- increase the pace of conservation and protection. We have a number of suggestions for new programs, realignment of incentives to improve conservation. Want not just public land acquisition but also more private land protection/conservation. Believe the majority of GC should stay in private ownership. Partnerships to improve conservation.
Business and Industry	Continues to repeat herself at these things. Can't discuss restoration until the oil spill clean up is complete. Very polluted in Orange Beach in the back bay. Wildlife has not returned to the back bay, but are elsewhere. No birds, no fish -- just dead catfish. Dolphins are still in an unusual mortality event, and are still washing ashore. Have lesions on the outside of their bodies. Need to discuss bio-remediation before restoration.
NGO	To extent that any restoration requires manpower, we should be hiring local. Fishing boats can be hired. Folks can't fish, shrimp or oyster, so use them to help restoration. Lessons of Katrina show that when something goes to, for example, the Governor's office, it doesn't always get where needed. Can also translate for Vietnamese community.
Business and Industry	Can use mitigating bank -- like Week's Bay mitigation area. If someone destroys oysters/habitats, restore in the same county, as close as you can to the impacted area. True mitigation. Have made suggestions on how to mitigate damage to oysters. Need to make the effort to restore -- so many companies are causing damage. Oyster is a bivalve, 60 gallons filtered per day -- replace close.



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NGO	Storm water management. Coastal cities are historic many times and have fragile, deteriorating sewer systems. Without stormwater management systems, restoration will not survive. Need to bring contaminated, antiquated systems up to EPA standards. Same old dredging systems, and not using sediments well. Need to be sure to match the sediment with where it is needed and can be used. Need new technology to ensure we are properly using sediment resources from dredging activities.
NGO	Policy changes -- getting freshwater to flow, restoring hydrology, channels that have been dredged and no longer relevant. Miles of channels that have been authorized for shipping that are no longer used for shipping. Cites specific example where there is a channel that is disused in Jean Lafitte National Park. May want to make deauthorization of channels easier.
NGO	Want to know if there is a place to look at policies...local,city,... put something together for folks.
General Public	1) From Georgia, a professional geologist, heavy metals chemist and outdoor writer-- an idea guy. Has come up with a plan for the restoration of the Louisiana delta. Nobody will ever see it completed. The Louisiana delta has gone through 100's of years of degradation and it would take 100's of years to see restoration. Could start restoration today with his program. Would need input from everybody - not a dictate from high in DC. Would need to be enacted by Feds. Not the time for Feds to enact a plan - not right economic climate. No bad time to start a good thing. Can get a good thing started today.
General Public	2) Large problem. Even just the Louisiana delta is large in many respects. Going to be winners and losers. Complex system - any changes make positive and negative impacts on different people.

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General Public	<p>3) Have centralized organization based in Louisiana, and mandated by Federal agencies. Similar to Tennessee Valley Authority, get funding from oil and transport resources. Funding should be independent of Congress. Agree beforehand that the approach needs to be systematic and long-term. If you have an organization in place with some pre-planned actions and pre-approved actions, you can take rapid actions. Have a lot of interest in this. The central mission of organization should be restoration, unlike the Corps. Need a stable management in the organization. Need independent resources: its own source of funding, so it is not subject to economic recession or depression. Need to take a similar approach as did the authors of the Constitution - create a survivable organization.</p>
General Public	<p>4) Will negatively impact people, so need to help compensate people for negative impacts. Form a non-governmental organization (NGO) with this directive, since Congress can't do this. Maybe it already exists. If you think this ought to be voiced, then he needs some help, needs some lawyers. Need to get it started. On September 15, will do a one-hour radio show about this event. Will be on national and international radio by the internet. Can Google it and find it. Convinced that long-term cyclic approach is vital to make a real difference in restoration.</p>
NGO	<p>Most of coastal land is privately owned. In restoring living shorelines, private land owners hesitant even after losing shoreline if any new expansion of the living shoreline is not owned by landowner. Should be a program change that allows new, accreted living coastline in front of private land to be considered property of land owner, and should help incentivize more living shoreline restoration.</p>

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NGO	<p>Did a number of surveys of those active in Gulf conservation program delivery. A few things from the stakeholders. Have a list of different programs available to private landowners. Full-report on the web. Increase awareness of programs among stakeholders/landowners. Analyze those that are not being used and those not effective. Target programs so the non-profits can acquire land. Reduce match requirements - is a barrier. Improve coordination between entities. Provide land owner assistance through programs. Farm Bill programs are popular. Recommend one for coastal. Living shoreline, seagrass meadow, trees... Florida Forever Program to reinstate. Help to provide non-federal match and education on what's available. Handed a hard copy of their results.</p>
NGO	<p>Metrics like acreage are out there, and may work in places where the coast is more stable. However, when looking at river delta and hydrology, acreage doesn't hold. Metrics based more on ecosystem services - having a functioning estuary, rather than acres.</p>
NGO	<p>Yes acreage - yes mileage. Think he is right. Also jobs: how many people are back at work? Look at long-term investment and sustainability. How our communities and economy come back. Not lots of little, tiny projects but big scale projects that cover a region or area -- more meaningful. Also, how much we learn from our mistakes. Need to know how much better educated we are on the other end. BP spill was not the first bad thing - it was the latest thing. Gotta make some changes. Maybe how we do economic recovery and restoration - by investing in environment.</p>



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General Public	<p>May approach perfection or an endpoint but may never achieve it. Metrics are really tough. Can finally get some things - nitrate contents. Easy to get that. But when start looking at health of ecosystems its so complex it's almost beyond man's comprehension. Making progress but a long way from being there. Lot of data gathering and long-term looks. Decadal approach.</p>
Business and Industry	<p>Oyster catchers endangered species -- no zero oyster catchers when you drive over the bridge. local seafood is healthier for you. If we can get the number of oyster shops back up your talking jobs. Seafood getting out there - good protein and good for you. Will help America by eating a good product out of our own waters. If we build back the foundation will see other things come along with it. Want to increase proportion of GC market for oysters in US. Need to re-open oyster bottoms -- no longer polluted.</p>
NGO	<p>Legislators often have short memory. Can't let people forget what has happened here- preventive maintenance. Need to be part of the program. It will take years to recover - need to keep at forefront of political discussion with Congress.</p>
Business and Industry	<p>What are you doing for comercial fishermen? People are afraid to buy the shrimp, afraid to buy the products. Nothing is being done or said about it. Our business is on the water. BP not doing anything to help - delayed and denied.</p>

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General Public	<p>Came down on June 6 and did a Louisiana seafood boost on his radio show. Plight of fisherman nationwide is very bad - selling boats at give-away prices in North Carolina. On sediment issue - as geologist very interested. If breached, the levee at Spanish Pass would release considerable sediments. Easier to rebuild an island if you have some remaining structure. Sediment may have heavy metals in it, not much we can do but use anyway, and it takes care of itself when used. Once the heavy metals are in contact with organics they will stay there -- it's fixed, held indefinitely. Carbons fix heavy metals. Also, nutrients - can see what nutrients did in Atchafalya from flooding. These things can naturally do a lot of good.</p>
NGO	<p>Between this Task Force meeting and last one, there was another disaster on the Pearl River. Killed a lot of organisms and took a lot of oxygen out of river. Hope they will be fined and held to account, permits will be ratcheted down. Hope for new treatment system, so it can't happen again. They are in situation where it is cheaper for them to keep polluting than it is to build a proper treatment plant.</p>
NGO	<p>No incentive to backfilling of canals -- much cheaper than other methods. There was some backfilling in 70's & 80's, when large corporate landowners thought they would be ordered to do it with Coastal Zone Management (CZM) regulations. If were stronger - if public agencies upheld public trust and interest in stronger way - could protect the marsh and could have had a lot more marsh. Not inspired if Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality says its too expensive for a company to make treatment process better. A Department of Environmental Quality should make good actions cheaper than bad actions.</p>

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