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Public Listening Session June 1 in Pensacola, FL

Commenter's Affiliation	Comment
Local Government	Proud of what Escambia County has done to clean up its environment. We've made remendous strides.
Local Government	Recognize the dependence of the local economy on natural resources. Three most important things are 1) environmental restoration, 2) economic recovery, and 3) public health. The challenge is all the multi-level jurisdictions.
Local Government	We had good participation and cooperation during the oil spill. We appreciate the resources of the federal government but the local government know what the people need and want done. You have to engage local government as well.
Local Government	We need equitable distribution. Helping the western Gulf doesn't do a lot for the eastern Gulf and vice versa. There are many projects in each jurisdiction ready to go and well through the various permits.
Local Government	To gain public credibility, you need to use local entities for research such as safety issues. People trust local entities more than out-of-area labs.
Local Government	Don't re-invent the wheel. Glad to see you are looking at the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force.
Local Government	What will success look like? We will be more prosperous.
Local Government	Suggests Task Force be an advocate for the Maritime Highway. Move forward the marine highway system. Good for many things, like reduced carbon, less road traffic.
Local Government	Another opportunity is to facilitate a multi-state effort for strengthen tourism. Restore Amstrak. Orlando to New Orleans. Creates job, including manufacturing jobs. Help the region increase commerce.
Local Government	Cited the Philadelphia area's Federal Reserve effort to revitalize old cities. Take that model and brng it to the Gulf of Mexico. Leverage that experience by the Federal Reserve in Atlanta. Hold "Reimagine the Gulf" meetings every two years to bring capital to the area. The Federal Reserve would bring in the right combination of people.

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Local Government	Ask for a Deepwater Research Center for Gulf, best to be located in Pensacola, where we are not tied to navigation industry and more objective.
Local Government	Get the water right. Get the land right. These are the right goals: be bold and go where no beauracracy has gone before! But, overriding goal is in the name...restore the Gulf environment. Key is establishing permanent federal funding stream. Need an apolitical process for prioritizing these projects based on how they fit in the overall scheme.
Local Government	Solutions need to be ecoshed wide, not along state lines. Need to establish a GoM restoration block grant program and a GoM/Mississippi River watershed wide education program.
Local Government	Success can be measured in reduced insurance claims, smaller hypoxic zone, acres of restored oysters, improved water quality.
Non-governmental Organization	Needs to be a multiyear effort. Everglades is a good model for how to develop a partnership for the effort. There are areas with baseline data (specifically the Tortugas, which weren't hit by the DWH). That data can be used to determine impacts across the Gulf. Project approved by the GoM Monitoring Council.
Non-governmental Organization	Estuarine fringe and mangrove forest in South Florida are important for protection. Do the C-43 project. Need a series of small marine protected areas across the Gulf to determine baseline and measure progress over time.
Business and Industry	Support research. Happy to see presentation on the research piece.
Business and Industry	TF needs to be flexible enough to really look at the questions and tackle the issues that threaten our fisheries. More questions about fisheries in GoM than answers. Need to really look for answers to these questions.
Business and Industry	Fish basically move from west to east. Many of our fish are born in Louisiana estuaries - those estuaries are important to our fisheries in Florida.

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Non-governmental Organization	Restoration begins with education. E.O.Wilson Biophilia Center serves schools in 6 counties, grades 4-7. Information from the Task Force can be used to educate children about the environment. Please consider educating the next generation. Allocate funds as these students will deal with the long term results. Planning to film their program and talks by scientists discussing the oil spill, to use it in schools across the state - need funding for that.
Local Government	Needed policy changes. Include a written statement of diversity for restoration projects included in procurement language for these efforts, so that minority workers can be utilized. Minority communities have been hurt as much or more than other groups.
Local Government	How can municipal governments be reimbursed? City government should not be penalized for their efforts. Needs retroactive statement that allows cities to recover funds for their earlier efforts. Reward them for being proactive.
Non-governmental Organization	Success will be looking at the abundance, biodiversity, and extension of range of species, particularly imperiled species. Need to count members of whole species, from whales to seahorses; sea turtles can be used as indicator species. Hope for well thought-out plans with implementation. Need to monitor and review the results for success. National Wildlife Refuge Association and Defenders of Wildlife have a report on important conservation areas along the Gulf that need protection. This report will be submitted to the Task Force.
Non-governmental Organization	Seven National Estuary Programs (NEPs) along the Gulf. In Florida, Tampa Bay, Sarasota Bay, and Charlotte Harbor. They are an outstanding mechanism to implement restoration.
Non-governmental Organization	Have plans in place, including shovel-ready projects, for water quality and restoration. Have a history of success. Hope Task Force will work with the NEPs to foster this relationship.



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Non-governmental Organization	Many impacts on wildlife, especially birds on beaches, came from response efforts. Unintentional, poorly coordinated. These future restoration projects need to be well-coordinated and not at odds to other work.
Non-governmental Organization	Our coastal habitats are dynamic. Coastal dynamism: early successional habitat mosaic that includes appropriately placed bare sand. Coastal habitat is very important to shore birds' ability to nest and feed. Keep coastal dynamism as a Task Force goal.
Non-governmental Organization	States are not consistent in their development policies, and do not treat their coast lines with equal care. Ensure that local conditions and efforts do not compromise the restoration efforts over time. Emphasize the record card as a method to keep focused on the goal. Monitoring helps the public understand what is being done both short and long term.
Business and Industry	The Task Force needs help to revitalize our small businesses. Healthy fish stocks are our business. Use fishermen, charter and commerical boats for fishery cooperative research.
Business and Industry	Fund annual fishery stock assessments, efforts to ensure seafood safety, and development of artificial reefs.
General Public	Been involved in ecology education, and restoration efforts in 4 states. Task Force needs to include health impacts to the people. Has been poisoned by dispersants. All these people living near the water are sick. I want to hear about public health. Some of my friends have died. Some are on life support. Begging Task Force to put this issue on your radar. This is life-or-death.
Non-governmental Organization	Key to restoration is key to protecting our great nature-based economy. We have to get the water and land right. We need to restore the habitat. Initial funding will come from the oil spill. Need long-term funding and partnership.



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Non-governmental Organization	We have plans for restoration projects. Task Force should support large-scale and critical local-scale projects. Includes conservation land projects and local scale projects like oyster reef restoration.
Non-governmental Organization	Need to institute a Gulf Coalition, like the Everglades coalition for the Gulf.
Non-governmental Organization	We need long-term ecosystem monitoring. Incorporate the fishing industry as much as possible in the monitoring. Combine this with education.
Non-governmental Organization	What new programs and actions are needed? There is a report that half of the oil is still in the Gulf. If that's true, how can we restore the Gulf without addressing that issue? Need public discourse on this issue.
Non-governmental Organization	Policy changes: We need real federal oversight as well as citizen oversight on local projects including oyster reef development, and barges that were recently eliminated and caused danger to fishermen.
Non-governmental Organization	Liked the proactive approach, and acknowledged this as a rare opportunity. Need the same enthusiasm as they had for developing the atom bomb. We need clean, renewable sources of energy. We are here because of our nation's dependence on an unsustainable oil. Look at a renewed effort to develop green energy and jobs. Good examples: Pensacola project for clean.renewable energy, the energy technology center, and the green incubator.
General Public	Key policy changes need to start at the county level. Within the last 2 months, the county dug up harbor sediments at a marina, and placed them for other use without any testing. Concerned that future projects will be undertaken this way.



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Business and Industry	Need to protect natural communities that are in good shape, then restore the rest. Task Force should consider West Bay/Andrews Bay ecosystem - it is an outstanding example of diversity. Has the greatest amount of sea grass along the Florida coastline (10,000 acres). Has 9,200 acres of salt marsh. Provides essential fish habitat for 55 species. 15,000 acres are already protected through mitigation. Could use more restoration. Makes sense to add more acres.
Non-governmental Organization	Need a clear definition of what a healthy Gulf looks like, and how to get there. your overall goal. Will provide a target to aim for, and avoid taking on many individual projects that do not add up to Take a lesson from the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. They have overall goals, needed to get overall Gulf Restoration
Academia	Policy Change: Think about how to effectively engage communities in this effort. Need a community strategy. On October 17, there will be a conference at the University of West Florida to assess what was done right and done poorly since DWH (18 months earlier).
Local Government	Represent 16 counties across Florida. Have projects that include hydrologic restoration, urban stormwater restoration, land acquisition, groundwater recharge, sedimentation from unpaved roads. All projects approved under watershed plans, but are not currently funded. Task Force should consider these as potential restoration projects.
Non-governmental Organization	Keep in mind that we are still in a "response" state, with lots of oil on the beaches and offshore. Warning signs have been removed prematurely, and those signs served to minimize public health impacts.
Non-governmental Organization	Task Force goals are pretty much right on: community resilience, environmental protection, and human health should be included.
Non-governmental Organization	Oppose maintenance of sea walls, beach renourishment projects, building piers, or any alteration of the natural environment. Need to restrict drilling in federal water off the Florida coast.



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Non-governmental Organization	Support acquiring land for preservation. Increase energy efficiency and public education. Providing public transportation would be good. Develop long-lasting ways to promote the economy.
Non-governmental Organization	Important to have a Citizens Advisory Council. Community input is needed.
Non-governmental Organization	Walton has 50 coastal dune lakes; noted that coastal dune lakes were not mentioned -they are unique bodies of water and we had oil intrusion into them.
Non-governmental Organization	Compared to the November meeting, I note a strong shift to discussion of economic issues. Remember, this is about ecological restoration. That's where the focus should be: the projects that get done are in the context of the ecosystem.