

Gulf of Mexico Deepwater BP oil blowout

- ◆ Response
- ◆ Recovery
- ◆ Restoration

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Gulf of Mexico Deepwater BP oil blowout

- ◆ In first of three phases:
 - Response
 - Recovery
 - Restoration

Response

- ◆ Response oversight is highly orchestrated and consists of previously-designated positions. It is coordinated through the Unified Command, led by USCG and consisting of people from BP, federal agencies, and each state's water quality organization.

Response

- ◆ Involves initial actions to stop the leak, address water-bound oil, and prepare for “land fall.” Includes the offshore techniques employed such as skimmer boats, dispersants, fire booms, and various mechanical techniques at the well head. Also includes initial cleanup of oil in the water and as it comes on shore. Estimates for duration of *Response* cleanup operations following oil well capping vary from weeks to years.

Recovery

- ◆ Just starting. Primarily includes assessment of natural resource damages. This phase will take years. The means by which damage is measured is strictly guided by the methods of the National Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA). “Regular” ecological research and marine/estuarine community-assessment methods are not acceptable.

Recovery

- ◆ NRDA addresses the requirements for ecosystem data collection and the long term cost associated with the cleanup. This assessment is done in conjunction with trustees from NOAA, DOI, and respective state trustee agencies. These state agencies may be different than the Response agencies.

Recovery

- ◆ There are presently working groups forming to address: sediment, birds, human uses, marine mammals and turtles, chemistry/sampling, fish, shoreline, submerged vegetation, water column, and aerial imagery.

Recovery

- ◆ All of this information is used to determine the damage to natural resources and to apply monetary value to that damage. This sets the stage for the last and longest phase.

Restoration

- ◆ Remains some months away, but early planning has begun. *Response* and *Recovery* have an impact on *Restoration*. How information is collected today will be important for informing future restoration activities. When these projects begin, a multitude of partners will undoubtedly be involved. This phase will last years to decades.

Response

- ◆ Unified Command
- ◆ State Emergency Operations Centers
- ◆ County Emergency Response Centers
(at least in Florida)

Response

- ◆ This Response structure is well-developed and well-practiced...for hurricanes and other short-term disasters. Not designed for long-term 'emergency'.

Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA)

- ◆ GOMA as an organization is not directly involved in *Response*. The members and partners of which GOMA is composed, however, are directly involved.

GOMA

- ◆ GOMA examining how best to help with recovery and restoration. The annual All-Hands meeting is in Mobile the first week of August, where discussions will be held and decisions made.

Changes

- ◆ Disruptions/interruptions/cancellations of existing efforts; e.g., GOMA Annual Monitoring Forum; GOMA Nutrient Fate, Transport, and Effects studies around Gulf; “normal” Hypoxia (‘Dead Zone’) study.

Changes

- ◆ Secondary effects:
 - ◆ Seafood: fishery closures (~1/3 of Gulf), reduced sales from rest
 - ◆ Coastal tourism: vastly reduced in northern Gulf and Florida.

Problems

- ◆ Response structure not built to handle long-term 'emergency'. Staff and resources wearing down after three months of few/no breaks, weekend duty, and very long hours.

Changes to regional efforts:

- ◆ GOMA:
 - ◆ Existing Governors' Action Plan II composed of issues all five states agree are high priority. Oil not now one of those priorities.
 - ◆ Action Plan II purposefully built to allow changes/additions prompted by 'events'.

Changes to regional efforts:

- ◆ GOMA Teams identifying needed changes to their portions of the Action Plan as a result of the oil. This will be agenda topic at GOMA All-Hands meeting in Mobile Aug 3-5.

Changes to regional efforts:

- ◆ Seagrant had developed broad list of Gulf of Mexico research needs and established priorities as result of extensive survey around the Gulf. Being revisited to A) identify additions/changes as a result of oil spill, and B) assess potential changes in overall priorities.

Changes to regional efforts:

- ◆ NOAA CDDC just established database of Gulf spill response research. Identifies ‘who was doing what where’ to help guide recovery and restoration efforts. Similar list had already be developed that was specific to Florida academic researchers and which will migrate to the NOAA database.

GOMA

- ◆ GOMA's normal role is to identify priorities and coordinate state, federal, NGO and private efforts to address the priorities. It enjoys a robust and collegial network built after five years of successful collaborations.

GOMA

- ◆ GOMA's existing structure makes it a logical means to effect coordination of Gulf-wide efforts (e.g., *Recovery* and *Restoration* monitoring) since almost all the players are already involved in GOMA.