

Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill Mock Public Meeting

Panel Roles

Technical Panel Members

You are a panel member representing the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Breton and Delta National Wildlife Refuges. Use the description on your role card and the information about the refuges and oil spill response to develop your role-play character on the panel. Answer the questions on the student activity sheet. You may also use the additional links listed under your role to further develop your job/role character. Record any additional sources used on your role card.

Breton and Delta National Wildlife Refuges are the 2 refuges within the Southeastern Louisiana NWR Complex that have been most affected by the Gulf oil spill.

The following information and websites will help you develop your role in the activity:

Breton NWR:

- <http://www.fws.gov/breton/index.html>
- Breton 2010 Oil Spill Fact Sheet (included with the activity or visit <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/pdfs/Breton2010OilSpillFactSheet.pdf>)

Delta NWR:

- <http://www.fws.gov/delta/index.html>
- Delta 2010 Oil Spill Fact Sheet (Included with the activity or visit <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/pdfs/Delta.pdf>)

Overview of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Southeastern Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex. See factsheets included with activity.

General Oil Spill Response Information

Restore the Gulf: <http://www.restorethegulf.gov>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

General Info

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/>

Oil Spill Response

- Factsheet included with activity or visit <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/pdfs/OilSpillFactSheet.pdf>

NOAA: http://gulfseagrant.tamu.edu/oilspill/pdfs/Shorelines_coastal_habitats_FACT_SHEET.pdf

Wildlife Biologist

Your job focus is conserving wildlife and you are actively involved in monitoring wildlife populations within and adjacent to refuge lands impacted by the oil spill. Of particular interest is the endangered piping plover that winters on coastal refuges. The refuge also supports a large population of wintering redhead ducks. You are involved in monitoring the winter populations and making decisions on whether the hunting season can be opened or not on the refuge due to the oil spill. You want to encourage birders to help monitor bird populations by participating in bird counts.

Resources:

Career Profile factsheet: biologist James Harris

Science in Support of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/pdfs/ScienceinSupportFactSheet.pdf>

Update on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oil Spill Response

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/>

Additional Sources:

Botanist

Your job focus is on restoring coastal habitats that have been lost to hurricanes, annual erosion, and now the oil spill. You are actively involved in monitoring a variety of coastal and aquatic plants looking for signs of marsh vegetation affected by oil. You are actively recruiting volunteers and student interns to plant vegetation that will help stabilize the coast and provide additional habitat.

Resources:

Breton National Wildlife Refuge Factsheet:

- http://www.restorethegulf.gov/sites/default/files/imported_pdfs/external/content/document/2931/590347/1/DHR%20Breton%20NWR%20Oil%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

NOAA: Shorelines and Coastal Habitat in the Gulf Oil Spill

- http://gulfseagrant.tamu.edu/oilspill/pdfs/Shorelines_coastal_habitats_FACT_SHEET.pdf

Additional Sources:

Fisheries Biologist

Your job focus is on the fish populations of the area which includes finfish, oysters, mussels, shrimp and crab that support the aquatic food web. You are actively involved in monitoring the fish populations and looking for signs of the impacts by the oil spill. You are working closely with the wildlife biologist and botanist to identify habitat restoration needs and to decide if shellfish harvest and fishing should be permitted or not, to allow populations to recover. You would welcome assistance from commercial fisherman in monitoring the fishery and areas impacted by oil.

Resources:

'Kayla DiBenedetto's Story'

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/stories/kayladibenedetto.html>

Federal Fisheries closures

- http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/deepwater_horizon_oil_spill.htm

Hunting and Fishing at the SE Louisiana NWR Complex

- http://www.fws.gov/southeastlouisiana/hunting_fishing.html

Additional Sources:

GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Specialist

Your job focus is mapping the coastal areas that are constantly changing due to erosion and hurricanes. Currently, you are involved in mapping the oil spills projected path and gathering information to map the areas impacted. The refuge staff and the public use your GIS maps. For example, biologists can use the maps to identify habitat types where the oil has had the most impact and to evaluate habitat restoration activities. Currently, the GIS maps are being used to help make decisions about clean-up strategy and monitoring recovery.

Resources:

Mapping Responses to the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico

- <http://www.geoplatform.gov/gulfresponse/>

Additional Sources:

Refuge Manager

You are responsible for meeting the goals of the refuge to ensure protection for wildlife and their habitat, and also provide visitor opportunities on the refuge. The needs of wildlife must come first. You have to make the hard decisions about opening and closing portions or the entire refuge if necessary due to the spill to protect the wildlife and fisheries from further damage. You have also been active on the overall Incident Command for the oil spill in the entire Gulf Coast region. As the result of serving in that position you are able to answer a variety of general questions about the government spill response and can direct people to where to get more information.

Resources

Career Profile – Danny Breaux

The Spill on the Spill by Jack Bohannon

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/stories/jack.html>

Science in Support of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/pdfs/ScienceinSupportFactSheet.pdf>

Additional Sources:

Contaminants Specialist

You specialize in studying the impacts of pollutants on wildlife and their habitat. Since the oil spill, people often ask you if it is safe to eat the local seafood. Because your focus is on the wildlife, not on human health, you often have to tell folks to follow the recommendation of the Food and Drug Administration, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and other human health experts about the safety of Gulf seafood. Your main job is gathering information to be used in the Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration Program which will be used to assess damage to the environment. This information will be used to make sure that all costs to restore damaged natural resources are incurred by those parties deemed responsible for the spill, at no cost to the American taxpayer.

Resources

'The Spill on the Spill by Pete Tuttle'

- <http://www.fws.gov/home/dhoilspill/stories/pete.html>

Additional Sources:

Visitor Service Specialist

You serve as the environmental education coordinator, refuge interpreter and media contact. Though you have had to cancel school field trips to the coastal refuges due to the oil spill, you are still visiting classrooms and inviting students to the visitor center. You are interested in working with local teachers to talk about the impact of the Gulf spill on wildlife habitat in the local area. You are answering questions from news reporters about the current status of the spill at the refuge. You are currently designing signs for areas closed to the public due to the oil spill. You've decided that the signs should serve as an opportunity to inform refuge visitors about the environmental impacts of the spill, why beaches and marshes are currently closed, and what people can do to reduce their petroleum consumption so oil spills will be a less frequent hazard to wildlife both in the Gulf of Mexico and elsewhere.

Resources

- Career Profile: Byron Fortier

Additional Sources: