

Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill Mock Public Meeting

Audience Member Roles

You are an audience member at the public meeting. You live in St. Tammany Parish in northeastern Louisiana not far from New Orleans. Conduct research on the local area to more fully develop your role-play and to be able to ask informed questions of the panel. Use the student worksheet to help guide the development of your role.

These websites are a good place to begin your research:

- St. Tammany Parish Community Resources - <http://www.stpgov.org/community.php>
- Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana - <http://www.crcl.org/>
- Governor's Office of Coastal Activities - <http://www.goca.state.la.us/>

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

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

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

Local Family

Your family enjoys the coast, swimming, fishing, birdwatching, and boating. You love the wildlife refuges because of their unique, undeveloped natural environments, teaming with wildlife. You are anxious to get back out and enjoy the coastal area again but worry about your family getting sick from the oily water or the air. You find the oil-stained booms deployed to protect the beach unsightly and depressing and are unsure that they really are working as designed.

Teacher

You are a science teacher. In the past you arranged field trips with your students to visit the refuges to study wildlife biology and wetland ecology. Because of the spill, all of those opportunities have been cancelled for this term. You are wondering about when you might be able to visit the refuge again and if there are any volunteer opportunities for your students to assist in the oil cleanup or to help restore the damaged marshes.

Parish President (similar to a Mayor)

The national wildlife refuges are natural gems in your parish. They attract out-of-town visitors and enhance the quality of life for everyone who lives here and or may consider moving here in the future. You are concerned about what the long-term forecast for full recovery of the refuges and the surrounding bay environment.

Hotel Owner

Hunting season is coming up and duck hunters come from all over the Southeast U.S. to hunt at the Louisiana refuges. You are worried about what to tell hunting clients when they call. You want to be able to say to them that they should come on down; that it is safe to consume fish, other seafood and the ducks they will harvest. You are concerned about the future of your business.

Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber is the voice of business at the local, state, and federal levels of government. It provides members with opportunities to come together for monthly programs, committees and annual events while promoting business, addressing issues of common concern, and helping to contribute to the growth and prosperity of our Region by working with our other Chamber coalition partners, legislative representatives and community and civic organizations. You have a members meeting coming up. Your boss assigned you to attend this public meeting so you get the latest information about the impact of the oil spill on local refuges and bays to share at the meeting.

Resources

St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce

- <http://estchamber.com/index.htm>

St. Tammany One of Nine Parishes Chosen For Federal Economic Assessment of Oil Spill

- <http://www.stedf.org/photos/1282767471.pdf>

Additional Sources:

Local Birdwatcher

You are an avid birder. You recently got training on how to safely rescue and care for oiled birds and volunteered at the Ft. Jackson Bird Rehabilitation Center for 2 months. Now that aspect of spill recovery is over. You want to continue to help birds and their habitats recover from the spill but are not sure how you can help.

You Tube Video of Bird Rehab Center

- <http://www.gulfcleanupfund.org/Videos/Player/TabId/80/VideoId/94/Fort-Jackson-Bird-Rehabilitation-Center-Jun--6-2010.aspx>

Additional Resources:

Louisiana Audubon Society

You are representing the Audubon's Great River Birding Trail, a project of the Society designed to attract birding tourists to the region. One of the birding trail sites is at Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge. You've come to get an update on the refuge's status and to learn if opportunities to see birds have been impaired by refuge area closures due to the spill. You want to post refuge information on your website to keep birding trail users up-to-date.

Resources:

Great River Birding Trail – Bayou Sauvage NWR

- http://www.greatriverbirding.org/site/index_new.php?site=1360

Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge

- <http://www.fws.gov/bayousauvage/>

Sporting Goods Owner

You own the local sporting store where local folks and visitors buy their hunting and fishing equipment, including guns, ammo, rods, reels and bait. You just got in a big shipment of ammo, bait worms and minnows for the season and wonder if you will be able to sell any of it. You are concerned about the status of hunting and fishing on the refuge and the future of your business.

Seafood Restaurant Owner

You own a popular local bayside restaurant. You are concerned about the future availability of finfish and shellfish harvested from the Gulf upon which your business depends. You are attending the meeting to find out if there is anything new that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, FDA, or NOAA Fisheries can tell you about the safety of your seafood product.

Fisherman

You have spent your entire life fishing in the Gulf. You own your own shrimp boat and know the area like the back of your hand. You love the freedom of earning your living as a waterman much like your Cajun ancestors did for generations. The fishing closures due to the spill have kept your boat at the dock, although you were able to earn a little income helping to skim oil using your rig. You are wondering when the fishing closures will be lifted so you can get back to work.

Duck Hunter

Duck hunting season is here. You can't wait to get out and hunt, but your favorite hunt blind out on the refuge is in area closed because of the spill. You are not happy. You are thinking about where else you might go to hunt.

Boat Tour Company owner

Your tour business is based on taking visitors to see rare and unusual birds on remote refuge islands. Since the spill you have been unable to take out any clients. You have been busy helping the authorities pickup oil booms that were deployed to protect bird nesting islands. You are thinking about what other work might be available until you can start taking out tourists again.