

# Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill Mock Public Meeting

## Definitions

**Bioaccumulation:** The increase of a pollutant in the tissues of an animal over time.

**Biomagnification:** The process by which a pollutant increases in concentration as it moves up the food chain.

**Botanist:** A person that specializes in the study of plants.

**Contaminants Specialist:** A person that specializes in studying pollutants in the environment and their impacts on fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitat.

**Deepwater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill:** The drilling platform called the Deepwater Horizon exploded on April 20, 2010, killing 11 workers and injuring 17. The damaged platform sank, leaking an estimated 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf for more than 85 days.

**Delta duck potato:** Plant that produces a tasty white tuber, which is favorite food for ducks.

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Specialist:** A person who specializes in using computer software to create and update maps, graphs and other tools that help natural resources managers understand land use and cover, habitat types, wildlife populations, environmental practices, and much more.

**Gulf of Mexico:** A large body of water bordered to the north by Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida, to the west by Mexico, and to the southeast by the island of Cuba. The Gulf supports a great diversity of animal life. It is extremely important region for wintering and migratory birds and is very rich in marine life. The Gulf is economically important for the U.S. because of its oil and natural gas industry and commercial fisheries.

**Invertebrates:** Animals without backbones. In the Gulf of Mexico, examples include shrimp, crabs, oysters and mussels.

**Intertidal resources:** The small organisms such as mussels, crabs, limpets, and snails that live in the area of the coast that is exposed at low tide and submerged in water at high tide.

**Light crude:** The oil spilled in the Deepwater Horizon oil spill is classified as light crude. Light crude leaves a film on intertidal resources and can potentially cause long-term contamination.

**Marsh:** Wetlands that are frequently inundated with water.

**Migratory birds:** Birds that undertake regular seasonal flights in response to food availability. Some birds make short migrations while others make thousand mile journeys.

**Moderator:** A designated person at a public meeting that enforces the meeting rules and speaking time limits.

**National Wildlife Refuge:** A federally designated area managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the conservation and management of the fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats.

**National Wildlife Refuge Complex:** A collection of national wildlife refuges in a particular geographic area.

Each refuge is managed individually for its unique fish and wildlife resources but is supervised by the complex headquarters.

**Oil booms:** Booms are floated in the water to keep oil away from the shore. Absorbent booms are used to collect oil that reaches land. Booms require constant maintenance and repair, and do not work well in rough water.

**Oil pipeline:** Carries oil from underground to the surface.

**Oil platform:** The platform is the place at the surface of the water where the oil from the pipeline is collected. From the platform it is shipped to land for refining.

**Oil slick:** Oil floating on the water surface. It can coat everything it touches in a layer of sticky oil.

**Oil weathering:** The physical, chemical, and biological changes that occur when oil interacts with the environment. The exposure of the oil to air, sunlight, tidal action, and certain microscopic organisms degrade and disperse the oil over time. Weathering rates depend on the type of oil, weather, temperature, and they type of shoreline and bottom in the area of the spill.

**Plankton:** Tiny drifting organisms living in marine and fresh water environments that form the basis of the food web.

**Public meeting:** A formal gathering that addresses an issue or concern of people living in a particular geographic area. People attending the meeting learn about how the issue is being dealt with by authorities and have an opportunity to ask questions and share their concerns and perspectives.

**Refuge Manager:** A person responsible for the overall management of a national wildlife refuge and meeting the conservation goals for the refuge.

**Roseau cane (Latin name - Phragmites):** Common reed, a large perennial grass found in wetlands.

**Three-square:** Another name for Bulrush sedge which is a common wetland plant. Geese will eat the entire plant, while ducks will feed on the seeds.

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:** The federal agency within the Department of Interior responsible for many of the nation's fish and wildlife resources, and is one of the primary trustees for protection of fish, wildlife, and their habitat from oil spills.

**Wetlands:** Marshes, bogs, and swamps are examples of landforms that are permanently or seasonally saturated with water. Wetlands are important nurseries for fish and wildlife; they protect inland areas from severe flooding and storms; they act as a natural water filtration system, removing pollutants; they function like sponges storing water and slowly releasing it; and they provide valuable resting and feeding area for migrating birds.