

Interview Summary Form

Interview Details

Interviewee Name:	CAPT James Hanzalik	Date:	8/25/10	Time:	9:00am
Interviewee Title:	RRT VI CO-Chair	Interviewee Job Location:	Houma, LA		
Interviewer Name(s):	Team	Interview Location:	Houma, LA		

Interview Questions

Initial Question1: What was your job/role and how did it evolve (if at all) during the DWH incident?

The CAPT is the RRT Co-Chair in Region VI and works in pollution response at USCG District 8, working with RADM Landry. He was in the District 8 Command Center when the incident started, and then was charged with setting up the UAC in Robert, LA. He was at the UAC for 52 days, then went to Houma and served as the IC for a week and Deputy IC for the next week. He was off for a few weeks and then returned as Deputy IC in Houma (current).

Focus Area: Common Operating Picture	Question 1:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What organization produced the COP used by you and most responders? How effective was it? 2. Who was the FOSC at each stage of the response?
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Who was the FOSC?

- CAPT Paradis was FOSC for first week, and then RADM Landry took over as FOSC.
- After the rig went down, there was a discussion for RADM Landry taking over the FOSC role because of the nature of the incident and potential impact (multiple USCG Sector Commands). That decision was made over the weekend (he remembers sitting in the Chief of Staff's conference room when RADM Landry announced she was going to be FOSC).

What organization produced the COP used by you and most responders? How effective was it? Who was the FOSC at each stage of the response? How often was the COP changing? When did it become the UAC COP?

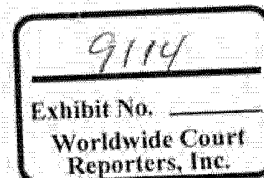
- BP was running an ICP out of Houston initially, and RADM Landry called and asked for the function to move to Robert, LA to be part of the UAC. In Houston, they remained focused on source control only (blow-out preventer) and reported to the UAC daily. They needed to have input to some decisions, especially since they had to coordinate movement of equipment around the well head, potentially in areas we were looking to use dispersants or conduct in situ burns.
- BP was focused on one ICP, and had no concept of an area command; they had similar organizations and different terminology for it. It was explained that the UAC was not operational but was looking at strategic picture and allocating/brokering critical resources, as well as managing issues regarding ICPs, other federal agencies, and the national media.

Where was COP emanating from?

- The COP began in Houma, and it was being fed to Robert. The IAP was still under the control of the ICP even after the FOSC transferred to RADM Landry. The UAC created an Area Guide (similar to an IAP), but they were not tactically in control of all of the assets. The UAC set objectives for the overall incident, but the ICP was in control of tactical operations. The UAC dealt with managing the big picture, political (President, governors, OFAs) and national media pressures.

Focus Area: Planning and Plan Execution	Question 2:	<p>There has been a lot of discussion about quantification of the spill rate and its impact on the response. From your standpoint, do you think uncertainty had an impact on the actual response? Do you think the accuracy had an impact in terms of public perception?</p>
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- Quantification of spill amounts did not affect the response. They assumed a worst case discharge (WCD) from the start (fully open well scenario). This was a thinner/lighter oil in a temperate environment (better weather than experienced for Exxon Valdez).
- Flow rate estimates were ancillary to the response; they were just doing everything possible to stop oil from hitting the



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shore.

- Was there an impact because of public perceptions? Yes, public perception drove us crazy. The new numbers did not matter to the response (still in WCD mode), but it made USCG look like they did not know what they were doing. (Though there actually was a change in amount. Once the riser was cut, there was significantly more oil flowing.) The media and public placed a lot of pressure on the operating environment.

Focus Area:

Political

Demands

Question 3:

Were you influenced by politics in the execution of the response? Did it have a positive or negative impact on the response operations? What were those impacts?

How did politics influence the response? (Parish and State)

- ACPs – people are invited to participate in the AC and the development process, but they do not attend.
- Early on went to the Governor and briefed him on OPA90, NCP, and explained it was not a Stafford Act response. NCP is part of NRF, but this just muddled the waters, and his own SOSC was there and agreed that it was not SA.
- When the Parish Presidents got involved in the response, the order was given to make them happy. This led to the parish presidents thinking they were in charge. The CAPT thought that the emergency management people in the parishes may have thought it was like hurricane response. The parishes came up with own plans in the middle of the response, and did not know what they were doing. They asked for boom, skimmers, etc. and said they would handle it and prevent impact on a marsh (or other area). They would get the boom, place it, and then there would still be an impact on the marsh. CG knew the plans were not going to work (to prevent tarballs). But BP really could not refuse, since the NIC told them to make parish presidents happy. They were always coming up with more and more requests, and the NIC reinforced that they needed to be kept happy.
- The decision to make Parish Presidents happy interfered with achieving response objectives. The Parish Presidents were taking advantage of the situation, by complaining and constantly getting fed to be quiet.
- It turned into a competition for who could get the most boom and put it where they want it. The State Police were out stopping the movement of equipment to different areas, on the basis that the Governor declared a State of Emergency. The politicians would not let boom leave parishes even for the threat of the hurricane, because they thought the equipment was going to be taken away for good, not protected.
- Those politicians requesting boom did not have any idea what they were doing with it or what the boom could/could not prevent from coming ashore.
- BP probably should not have given the states \$25 million up front, because the states kept asking for more.

Did things get better after Parish Liaisons were established?

- Parish Liaisons were set up to talk directly to the DepSec of DHS. They were not assigned to the ICP and were a separate organization outside the ICPs. They reported to the USCG CAPT at Houma, who would then also report information on the daily call with DepSec of DHS. Someone brought up the question of possible conflict of information, but was told that it was happening anyway.

The SOSC was at the UAC and then pulled and moved to the ICP; do you think that move hurt things in any way?

- USCG wondering what was going on when Roland Guidry was moved from UAC to ICP, but they did not see a problem with him moving. The State put gag order on SOSCs. They could not speak to the press and were told to stop signing IAPs. State law designates a LOSCO staff person as the SOSC (Roland's office). Instead they put someone from Coastal Restoration (Dwight Bradshaw) in charge. He was not an oil spill person, and had to ask lots of questions, made things difficult.

Focus Area:

Political

Demands

Question 4:

Do you believe pressure from senior officials, elected officials or BP impeded the decision making process? If so, could you give us an example?

See Question 3.

Question 5:

1. Describe your interaction with the RRT and the UAC's interaction with the NRT with respect to:

Focus Area:

RRTs

- Dispersants
- In situ burning
- Permitting

d. Alternative technologies

How did dispersants work?

- RRT 6 has pre-authorization to use dispersants. A request is submitted to the FOSC, and once they approve it, it does not need to go to the RRT for approval because trustees already approved and signed the plan/documents, knowing the trade-offs in advance. For a novel approach to dispersants, RRT approval is needed. That can not be decided by the FOSC.
- CAPT Stanton brought up to RRT the request for subsea dispersant application. The RRT looked over the application, reviewed two earlier spills where that was done, and decided to do as a test and see if it would work.
 - Monitoring was set up to see what would happen at the surface. This was not like a normal spill, since the oil had to travel 1 mile to get to the surface, so they were not sure what would happen. Surface dispersant use had to be stopped so that the monitoring could be done. For the first test, monitoring could not be done because of weather issues.
 - During the 2nd test, there was disagreement on sampling (with USCG and NOAA scientist), as the samples were mixed with source material, and there was a chain of custody issue on the initial samples due to a subpoena placed on them (which turned out to be a CG subpoena). Until that was sorted out, they could not see the initial samples. During this test, there were big changes on the surface of the water with subsea application.
 - The 3rd test was successful and all agreed they could continue with subsea dispersant application. And by that time, a decision was made to not continue surface application of dispersants.
- The RRT was getting briefed on the dispersant issues, but decisions were not made at that level, only at the RRT level. (EPA does have veto power to stop using dispersants.) However, EPA did not allow the RRT co-chair to make those decisions. Information went all the way to the EPA Administrator to make decisions, not the RRT level, which created conflict.
- There was constant negotiation between EPA and USCG on different issues throughout the response. There was a lot of pressure on RADM Landry to sign EPA directives (e.g., reduce amounts of dispersants used, change dispersants, etc. These directives went from Lisa Jackson to the Administrator to ADM Allen).
 - For example, a target issue that came up was an area that they needed to use aerial dispersants to work on. USCG called Lisa Jackson, it took days to make a decision to agree on dispersant use, and by that time the target had changed.
 - There was a major shoreline impact when dispersants were not used. The CAPT believes that EPA delays in approving dispersant use caused negative shoreline impacts.
- There was a concern over the use of certain dispersant products - there was a specific dispersant (green dispersant) that someone asked why it was not being used. EPA issued a press release (after the inquiry on this dispersant being more toxic than the current one) saying BP would be forced to change dispersants. Then a directive went right into command post to sign to force the use of a different dispersant. (If USCG had asked BP to change, they would have. A directive was not needed, as it was not an adversarial relationship.)
 - The green dispersant had a lower toxicity on the EPA National Products Schedule than COREXIT, but it was not as effective. USCG already knew toxicity of each product, and the 2nd product probably ended up being more toxic than the COREXIT. Also, there was much more COREXIT available.
 - There was surface monitoring of dispersants with the SMART protocol signed off on by EPA. The trade-offs of the different dispersant types were already established in consultation with trustees.
 - They did not end up switching dispersants.
 - The same conversation occurred for subsea dispersants.
- Describe the coordination between RRT IV and VI. First there was a RRT IV call, and then RRT VI was brought in. They held joint calls to inform everyone on what was going on - dispersants, etc. There were 23 RRT calls, at least 12-15 on dispersants. After RRT dispersant calls were over, they had to call HQ. This slowed the process down - there was a reason we had the pre-authorization process in the first place.
 - State was represented, but LA abstained from voting because the oil was far off-shore, not in their waters. Other states were not involved because there was no impact to other shorelines at that time.

- Was there a target missed because an opportunity passed because no decision made?
 - Probably yes. There were probably shoreline impacts (when the use of dispersants was delayed for a period of time, for weather or decision delays).

Focus Area: Use of Dispersants/In- Situ Burning	Question 6: What was your role in deciding on the use of Dispersants or In-Situ Burning? Were you involved with the use of subsea dispersants? Did you follow protocols from the plans and procedures or did you have to deviate to address real-world issues?
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See Question 5.

Focus Area: ESAs	Question 7: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How are the ESAs addressed in the response plan? What is the process for identifying ESAs location and protection strategies? Should contingency planning and preparedness include site-specific strategies, tactics, equipment and personnel for pre-identified shoreline segments, critical passages, inlets, harbors and other ESAs? How would you approach this? Please describe if any Vessels of Opportunity programs, comprised of contracts for trained crews and equipment, were in place prior to the spill to protect ESAs?
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Permitting process for ESAs?

- Put out boom in accordance with plans (ACP, One Gulf Plan). They went with the pre-identified ESAs if they existed. If not, they went with what operators in the field decided. The state representative at the UAC was there to give input and maintain awareness. Though this was a tactical issue, handled at the ICP, not UAC.
- CG was sensitive to keeping navigation channels open.
- What is missing regarding ESAs? How to incorporate into plans? There just is not enough boom in the US to boom the State of LA's coastline. They had to make decisions and prioritize those areas that needed to be protected the most.

Berm development?

- The building of berms was a coastal restoration project for state of LA that was put forth 10-12 years ago, but did not get federally funded. It was pushed for post-Katrina, but FEMA would not fund it. Then the state pushed for it to be funded after this spill. BP agreed to fund 6 small projects the state wanted.
- Some of the small sand berm projects USACE created did stop the oil from reaching those areas, but the ones that were in the Governor's coastal restoration plan did not.
- The CAPT was not sure if there was extensive discussion at the ICP about berms, since it was largely an issue at the NIC.
- The recommendation to berm came through state, not USCG. Not to his knowledge did USCG think or say it was a good idea to create berms as the state wanted.

Focus Area: Environmental Compliance	Question 8: Please describe the decision-making process regarding environmental compliance requirements for the spill response regarding National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Native Graves Protection, Repatriation Act, etc. How and when were these delegated to BP and its contractors?
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- The CAPT did not know when they were delegated to BP. They were dealing directly with DOI.

Final Question 1: What were the top 2 "best practice(s)" during this incident, from your perspective?

- The setup of response organization went well, with the ICPs and UAC; although the NIC should have been integrated with UAC.
- In situ burning was a huge success – moving resources out there was done well.
- Even though constrained with the usage of dispersants, the use of dispersants in general was a big win.
- Overall, burning, dispersing, and skimming was successful. If you look at the shoreline impact, it is relatively minimal compared to the amount of oil spilled (it would have been better without being constrained).

Final Question 2: What do you assess to be the top 2 "areas needing improvement" (or downright "failures") from your perspective, and do you have any related recommendations regarding these areas?

- There was too much Parish empowerment, which brought in too many political problems.
 - Recommendation: Involve Parish Presidents in ACP process and up to speed on ICS.

Final Question 3: Is there anything else we should know?

Final Question 4: Who else should we interview?

Sidebar: Governor's Press Conference

- There was an instance a few days after the shoreline impact (area of oil in Tassaloutre), where the Governor kept flying around for press conferences. USCG has someone who travels around with the Governor, and heard that they were going somewhere to do a press conference in an area that had shoreline impact. The CAPT happened to be in Houma and spoke to a state representative to find the area and send equipment to begin the cleanup and show progress of the response. The crews went out there to clean it up, and when the helicopter went there to do the press conference, it diverted because the area was already being cleaned up.

Discuss cascading of resources

- All spill response resources are easily accessed in the gulf area, the issue was manpower. USCG did not have enough trained people to handle spill response. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the focus has been on security and not spill response.
- The CAPT was in contact with NSFCC to gather information on resource availability using the RRI system. They used the RRI a lot, but one problem is that those are people who want to be OSROs in the system (it is a volunteer system), but not necessarily certified. Other OSROs and their resources may not be in the system. They are aware of this and working on it.

Demobilization

- Overlay of what is being done but may not be necessary. There is boom and vessels on hire, but no oil in the water, but they have a financial interest to keep things going, and are charging BP way above market rate. They were trying to demobilize equipment, but the parishes keep holding on to it.
- BP made decisions to get the volunteer program in place, hiring fishermen and shrimp boaters to help. A lesson learned would be to have them paid at the market rate, not as high as BP paid them. BP is having a hard time letting them go and demobilizing because they complain to Parish Presidents.
- Who is making decisions on demobilization? They need to make the decision to move it, deal with the complaining from the parishes, and move on. The equipment is still sitting there.

Were there any concerns with decanting and discharging into federal water?

- Not aware of anything out there. They decant offshore all of the time. There is not a need for a regulatory fix; there is already one out there.

The State of LA participated, but did not sign documents for legal reason. Were they informed every step of the way?

- The State was present and we were fairly transparent. They never expressed any dissatisfaction that I was aware of, other than what I saw in the press.

How active is the Area Committee?

- The Area Committees have pretty good participation. Most participants are from the OSRO community and the State, but no local government, even though they are invited.

In the CB incident the media got out of control and the JIC never caught up – did that happen here? When JIC shifted to the UAC, did it complicate trying to get the message out as one message?

- Early on there was a JIC getting the message out to local media, at the UAC had a similar entity, focusing more on national media. It was working and if someone said something that wasn't true, we did a fact check, and then

got it released. It got to the point of having to send it a few levels up for approval, and then it was too late and the time of opportunity to release information in a timely manner had passed. This was a lesson from a previous exercise, and we watched it play out again in real life.

At any time during the response, did anyone brief you about LL from past events or exercises that would help?

- Some individuals (at the NIC level) called back to those who were involved in Exxon Valdez.

Current operations – what are you doing to prepare for any new release of oil?

- They have a 600,000 barrel capacity skimmer. The well does seem to pretty much be killed right now.

Where did the estimates for the flow rates come from?

- BP provided estimates on flow rates. When the UAC was set up on 24th, flow rate was 1,000 barrels a day. Once they saw the surface problems, everyone realized it was a lot more and needed to be analyzed further. There was involvement by NOAA, academia, BP, and others to determine better estimate of flow rate.
 - Second estimate, BP – 6,000-12,000 barrels (CG estimate: 5,000-10,000 barrels)
 - The fear was in estimating too low, and there was not an easy way to measure the amount. In a typical oil spill response, there is a container that spills and can easily estimate how much is in there. There was a pipe and no idea how much oil was in there and what the pressure was, and there was really no way to measure that.
 - They did not want to pinpoint a number for the media, but if they did not, it would have appeared if they were “keeping secrets” from the public.

This being a spill where resources were pulled in domestic and internationally – did the unknown flow rate change the ramp up?

- The unknown flow rate did not affect the ramp up. USCG asked MMS what the worst case flow rate was based on the plan and they were told it was 165,000 barrels a day. Based on that number, USCG assumed it was the worst case and were pulling resources from everywhere; it just took time to get the resources here. There was always a sense of urgency to get more equipment.

Should USCG be in the marine protection business?

- If we are going to do the job then we need the equipment, resources, and training. If not, then someone else needs to do it. We need to be able to do a job right or not at all.