

## Interview Summary Form

## Interview Details

Interviewee Name:	<b>CAPT Steve Poulin &amp; CAPT Bill Drelling</b>	Date:	<b>9/20/10</b>	Time:	<b>1:30pm</b>
Interviewee Title:	<b>Incident Commander &amp; Deputy Incident Commander</b>	Interviewee Job Location	<b>ICP Mobile</b>		
Interviewer Name(s):	<b>Team</b>	Interview Location:	<b>New Orleans, LA</b>		

## Interview Questions

Initial Question 1: What was your job/role and how did it evolve (if at all) during the DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident?

Focus Area: Political Demands	<b>Question 1:</b>	Understanding the nature of the response and the highly charged environment, how did you deal with the political effects? How did that influence your ability to oversee the spill response?
Focus Area: Cascading Resources	<b>Question 2:</b>	Ability to identify qualified personnel, equipment, and their status? What was in place before DWH, and did you change that because of the DWH response? What was the resource adjudication process?
Focus Area: Cascading Resources	<b>Question 3:</b>	When and how did you first realize that you needed to consider long-term sustainability?
Focus Area: VOO	<b>Question 4:</b>	What was your involvement in the VOO program? How was that program coordinated?
Focus Area: ESAs	<b>Question 5:</b>	With respect to ESAs, was there confusion in where to deploy boom? Did the state and locals understand the ACP?
Focus Area: COP	<b>Question 6:</b>	How did you establish the COP at the ICP to start? When/how did you transition to ERMA?
Focus Area: UAC/ICP	<b>Question 7:</b>	What was the division of roles between the UAC and the ICP? How did that evolve?
Focus Area: COP	<b>Question 8:</b>	What was the flow of information when you made requests? When information was requested of you? How did your Situation Unit in Mobile operate?

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

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?

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

Final Question 4: Who else should we interview?

**What was your job/role and how did it evolve (if at all) during the DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident?**

- CAPT Poulin served as Sector Commander of USCG Sector Mobile, although he was on leave in Destin, FL when the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) rig sank. He had turned over command to his Deputy Sector Commander, CAPT Drelling.
- CAPT Drelling was provided a web address from MSU Morgan City to watch the rig fire via a camera on an OSV – while watching the flames and burn time it seemed that maybe it would be more than regular fuel, and that there could be a leak.
- Drelling called the Gulf Strike Team and put the team on stand-by to stop their deployment for participation in an exercise, as then they would have been unavailable to support Sector Mobile.
- Drelling then reached out to stakeholders and state agency partners to initiate discussions. He also coordinated with D8 and RADM Landry. RADM Landry was also working with CAPT Stanton, the IC of Houma.
- When the rig sank and it was obvious that there was a leak (though unknown at the time that it was an uncontrolled leak), CAPT Poulin was called back from leave and served as the Incident Commander for ICP Mobile and continued to serve as Sector Commander for Sector Mobile. CAPT Drelling continued to serve as the Deputy Sector Commander.
- The Mobile ICP was stood up on Tuesday (Houma had already been stood up) to respond to the threats to Alabama, Mississippi, and the Florida panhandle. It was originally staffed with Sector Mobile personnel.
- On Wednesday, BP reps arrived at ICP Mobile.
- CAPT Poulin remained IC until pre-established demob date of May 31, according to a pre-approved plan to have him, RADM Landry, and CAPT Stanton demob to go back to normal duties to prepare for/be ready for hurricane season.
- CAPT Drelling then became the IC, and after 2 days of being back at Sector Mobile, CAPT Poulin received a call from RADM Watson to remobilize as IC and CAPT Poulin remained IC for duration of incident (until 0700 on September 20th).
- There was a change of command at Sector Mobile on July 9<sup>th</sup>, and CAPT Poulin was no longer serving the dual role, he was only ICP Mobile IC.

**Understanding the nature of the response and it was a highly charged environment, how did you deal with the political effects of this response? How did that influence your ability to oversee the spill response?**

- CAPT Poulin surrounded himself with good, experienced people. He brought in people early on with Type 1 incident management experience (CDR Jim Elliott and CAPT Drelling).
- Relationships that we have established with State and Federal agencies helped us a lot in this. We had a history of open dialogue and candor.

**How did you deal with the politics?**

- We tried to be transparent, ensure that elected officials understood that he was an advocate for them and their state. As Sector Commander he had an organic responsibility for those states. He made it clear to them that he intended to make the Gulf Coast his home (he is originally from Maine and was keeping his house near the Gulf Coast even after being transferred out of Sector Mobile), showing that it was not just their way of life being affected, it was his too. He tried to understand what was important to the state officials and give them a victory when he could.
- When coordinating with the state, he looked at what motivated their concerns, and did what he could to ensure they were adequately addressed. At times this meant he had to show failure in an idea being strongly pushed by the State, so that responders could move on to the next issue. An example of this was the hard booming of Perdido Pass; we knew it would not work and the project would fail, but it is one thing to say it and another to show it. Another example is the locking system outside Mobile Bay; we knew there was a risk, and this was not a strategy from the ACP. It was innovative, showed action, and despite doubts, we tried it and it failed. We were fortunate that we didn't do more damage by trying (as they ended up dragging pilings and ocean boom across Mobile Bay, across submerged pipelines).

- Symptomatic of a lack of familiarity and understanding of NCP and ACP at the senior political level within the state. There is a lack of understanding at political level of NIMS/ICS.
- The ACP was a collaborative document, well put together, but in hindsight there are some glaring deficiencies, but it was our playbook.
- People did not understand that deflection booming across a beach is appropriate. Most didn't understand that oil hitting a beach was not failure.
- CAPT Poulin was accused of making decision by committee, and to some it looked like he was deferring his authority to a committee, but he was not, and incorporated the input of other stakeholders to ensure the overall needs of the entire community were met by the actions taken. EPA was a member of the UC/committee from the beginning.
- While showing the failure in some of the state's ideas, we also had to press forward with what we knew would work - had to protect as many ESAs in the ACP as we could so we pressed ahead to protect areas we knew we could do effectively, such as booming marshes, etc.
- We stood up branches in the states using people with authority.
- Fully understood where elected officials were coming from, tried to put myself in their shoes, and I would have been equally concerned. Appreciated their position and on a whole, it worked well.
- Before being engaged in other meetings, CAPT Poulin made sure the objectives and priorities for the day were known and could be addressed by CAPT Drelling or other IC staff.
- The most significant way that the political pressures manifested was the obsession with boom and feet of boom (tyranny of the numbers) – it became a measure of effectiveness, and it shouldn't have been. It almost became a competition, which state had more boom set. We could not move boom across state lines; if it came to a state, it had to stay there and it became the measure of effectiveness. It was all about how much boom could we lay.
- Political pressures also manifested in the VOO program. We had over 3,000 vessels in the water in a short amount of time but had no command and control. It was a militia, but the measure of success was how many vessels you can get out. We became a victim of our own success without the command and control.

#### **What did you experience in terms of data mining?**

- Insatiable thirst for data up (and down) the chain - irrespective of what the data means.
- One of the frustrating things for us was that we were reporting the information, but we didn't control the context of how it was delivered. We would report we had X feet of boom, and then read the NIC report that said we have Y feet of boom – could not figure out originally where the discrepancies were coming from.
- There was an obvious “tyranny of the numbers” – could never get the data right.

#### **Did the failure help your credibility or did they take it to mean something else?**

- The failure of the state's booming strategies helped our credibility. We had suspicion that the particular projects would failure but had no real proof, so by trying, we showed we were willing to try anything.
- Spent an inordinate amount of time trying to stop the locals from backing bad ideas.
  - Counties were used to working under a Stafford Act response (bottom up structure). The NCP is different, more top down approach where the FOSC gets to make final call and response occurs using the RPs money.
  - Okaloosa County passed a resolution to sink barges off of Destiny's Pass where the water literally boils. They hired a local contractor (engineering contractor) and had to spend a lot of time talking to State of Florida about the dangers of what they were proposing – they might hit the bridge, and they were using equipment that was taller than the bridge. It was just a bad idea and CAPT Poulin had to convince them of that.

#### **Did you have an ability to identify qualified personnel, equipment, and their status? What was in place before DWH, and did you change that because of the DWH response?**

- In terms of qualified agency personnel, deferred to the agencies themselves. Set what we needed and waited for them to deliver (i.e., provided needs, and they provided me the right people (EPA, DOI, etc.)).

- We started with the Sector USCG personnel – we knew their backgrounds – and the event happened in our backyard.
- We did have a rough database for reserve personnel, but CAPT Poulin didn't deal with this a lot but on the whole, was told the process was inadequate to identify PI, FOSC, and ICS qualifications so the process went back to the old way by specifically stating the qualifications and waiting for someone to come forward and offer up their service. Bottom line – did not have a good system in place and had big delays getting the people we needed to grow the organization.
- We brought in the 9<sup>th</sup> District IMT – people we got were great, but it took a while to get them. Also utilized the Strike Teams to fill key roles.
- We knew we could not handle the event on our own, and the delay was a painful as we also had the challenge of continuing to run Sector business. So we knew we could not have Sector personnel involved in the DWH event for the long haul. We set a goal of 2-3 weeks to demob most personnel to continue with normal business. For that 2-3 week period, it was almost solely Sector Mobile staff.

#### **What was the resource adjudication process?**

- We relied a lot on the OSROs to bring equipment and the UAC to broker resources. We needed as much boom and skimmers as we could get.
- Don't think we ever had the opportunity or need to reach out directly to procure equipment, and most things we needed, were the critical resources being brokered across the response by the UAC.
- Houma had set up staging areas and tried to stock Mobile ICP up early, and not keep all the resources.
- Had a challenge with 213 request process. Request would go to UAC, and people we requested were getting rerouted to Houma. This happened more than once. Some of these were senior people that we had asked for them by name and they were stopped at the UAC and sent to Houma. Think this was because LA was getting most of the impact initially and they felt that the talent was better used in LA. This was shortsighted as we faced an onslaught of oil in June that Houma did not have.

#### **When and how did you first start thinking long term? How will we sustain the response?**

- We knew it from the beginning, though did not envision 5 months. We were thinking about sustainability almost from day 1 at the Mobile ICP. When the junk shot failed, knew we were going to be in this for a long time.
- Knew it was not a response that we could sustain with only active duty, we had to mobilize reservists, didn't realize the extent of who would be mobilized, but needed to keep some of the most senior positions filled by active duty personnel who had the most experience and expertise.
- In hindsight, should have initially reached out for voluntary activation of reservists (active duty for operational support (ADOS)). The 60-day rotation undermined continuity and impeded the response. Some of the 60-day rotation was spent in New Orleans getting trained. Title 14 does offer some protections that you don't get with ADOS, but most reservists have good normal jobs that understand and give them some leeway.
- We had more equipment than we needed – more back trucks, more brush skimmers, shallow water skimmers, etc. Most of the skimmers were in a staging area – what we needed were near shore skimming vessels (MARKOs, VOSS, harbor/current busters).
- We were limited to 5 near shore skimming task forces and had to move them across 400 miles of coastline as the trajectory changed each day. It was very challenging and we did our best to stay on top of the needs of the day.
- Also critically lacked ocean boom that could have been helpful in areas with the heavier currents.
- Short period where we were short the 17/18" boom, but it wasn't a big deal.

#### **Who was in control of the VOO program? What was the VOO communication requirement? How did the VOO actually work?**

- At ICP Mobile, Ed Thompson a former USCG employee had control. We tried to mimic much of the successes he had in Alaska.

- There are many things we can do to improve this process. VOO was very valuable, performed as well as the OSROs did in many cases. This needs to be included in updated ACPs.
- Eventually after program was stood up, we committed CG personnel to coordinate this, though the logistics and contracting were done by BP; BP also hired Parsons to provide the needed equipment to the VOOs. Organizing and tasking was an ICP action; a USCG Chief came and got it sorted out and running smoothly in 2 weeks.
- It was a requirement to have a vhf radio to be a VOO. Most don't use the VHF radios, even had to put CG and NG officers on VOO with a MS radio on the task force. This placement helped to make it a success.
- One downside was that they were paid a rate that made it a disincentive to go back to normal business. The claims process was not attractive as they mostly would operate on a cash basis, and could not provide the necessary proof.
- Future RPs and USCG need to think about a fair rate to compensate for the effort, one which does not create disincentive to go back to normal jobs. It was a money maker to be a VOO – had people buying boats to be a member of the VOO program.
- VOO were sentinels doing surveillance, reporting oil, and as the program became more organized, used some to corral oil. We did not see the source oil, we had the emulsified oil and tar balls, and they would corral it and pick it up with nets – BP purchased the nets through Parsons.
- Some VOOs had VOSS or served as transport, some were force multiplier for off shore and near shore task forces. Also worked on subsurface and surface monitoring program by taking scientists out for sorbent drops, using dip nets, lowering probes, etc. – that was very successful also.

#### **What was the effectiveness of the VOO program? What did you experience with VOOs vs. OSROs?**

- Effectiveness in recovering oil – working in the response would be about 50%. Another 50% was buying goodwill in local community. The VOO program was a decision that BP used to tamp down the heated rhetoric at town hall meetings.
- Had CG person go out and try to identify who should and should not be allowed to be a part of the VOO program – needed to sit down with charter fishermen to identify who could be disengaged and who should not be in the VOO program. Priority was people making their living on the water.
- The VOOs were making a good wage, so they wanted to be involved. They are familiar with the currents in the area, so they were better at placing boom in certain areas, even working at night.
- A lot of the oil was a “peanut butter” substance, and they were scooping oil out using on the fly equipment – some had storage barges, others would tow absorbent boom.
- It was hard to determine their effectiveness; could not quantify their effectiveness – started reporting poundage vs. volume.

#### **With respect to ESAs, was there confusion in where to deploy boom? Did the state and locals understand the ACP? What about Federal involvement?**

- Drew was the primary lead for the Sector Mobile ACP. The ACP was good and bad.
- It had a prioritized list of ESAs to reflect order of priority, was digitized in a GIS format, contained comprehensive list of contacts which proved helpful. It did not have booming strategies, but we had kept them in a separate file – only to discover that they were obsolete/out of date, but it was a good starting point.
- Over time, we were forced to do double and triple layers of booming.
- The ACPs did not have a skimming strategy – need to go back and fix that. Also need to include what it would take to organize a skimming strategy – again, this was not in the ACP.
- Did not have a good WCD estimation in the ACP; and we never considered an uncontained source.
- We didn't have a good inventory of skimming capacity in the area.
- We had just amended the ACP to provide list of volunteer activities and found quickly they were unacceptable; they were either overly restrictive or not restrictive enough.

**Did you have the right people involved in the process?**

- We had complete visibility with some stakeholders and buy-in, but didn't have visibility at the political level – both locally and at the state level.
- The ACP was quickly nullified – used it as the basic playbook, but had to call audibles.
- Federal involvement (NOAA, DOI, etc.) helped to develop ACP and they understood deflection booming along the shoreline and they were ok with it. Understood and appreciated the ACP.
- The ACP had never received the needed political pressure that occurred during this event and never anticipated this scenario.
- People not understanding how boom works were helping to develop strategies – this caused some confusion.
- ACP includes list of members, and they show up to meetings. We have meetings about once per year; the security committee has taken up much of our time with our area committee. Took about a year to have a meeting following Katrina, but we have never had problem getting the SMEs there.
- Had to quickly negotiate what we called “ACP 2.0” or “Magnolia Project” and get the state to buy-in.
- A lot of the issues were surrounding economics, ACP does not factor this in, and it is not designed to. On a major event, that is a factor that has to be looked at. The beaches did have a deflective booming strategy, and that would not change based on environmentally or economically sensitive.

**How did you establish the COP at the ICP to start? When did you transition to ERMA?**

- We had good GIS people working on the COP, CAPT Poulin told them what he wanted, and they created and provided what he needed.
- ERMA was not our preferred system, we were using something much different (don't know what it was). Also had National Geospatial Agency there, they had a beautiful integrated chart (it was not ERMA, but don't know what it was). They even had the digitized ACP incorporated, and then we went to ERMA.
- Signed on to ERMA reluctantly, as we had a COP that was working for us.
- Also had GPS on all VOOs, and a separate system (on a computer screen) could show us real-time where all the VOO were located. GPS was on the Task Force and Strike Team leads of the VOO. This equipment was BP provided, through TRG. This was a system that was already being built and was in place, using the Lipsey trackers.
- We also used EPA website to track sampling data.
- Took a while to build it, and we had a number of days that we could not build a battle rhythm/COP, and then we got it working at ICP Mobile, prior to ERMA.
- Thought that ERMA incorporated too much data and was not very effective.

**If you had ERMA from Day 2, would that have made a difference?**

- Do not know.

**What was the division of roles between the UAC and ICP? How did that evolve? Did you ever have to overstep your authorities? What was the relationship with the NIC?**

- Roles evolved as the NIC stood up and there became more of a national interest.
- There was some initial confusion on if CAPT Poulin retained FOSC or if the UAC was going to be the FOSC.
- We heard early that the UAC would have an operational section – we thought that was wrong. Over time we saw the UAC delve into operational issues, and it was not bothersome, but we were guarded about it. We thought that they were going to take the offshore piece, then the air assets.
- CAPT Poulin was told he was FOSC-R, and eventually he did receive something in writing (end of June from RADM Watson) though he never had anything to outline his boundaries.
- CAPT Poulin did not know if certain decisions were ones he could make – such as demob assets, press conf on a certain issue, use of NG, RFAs – or when he had to send these decisions to the UAC to sign off on. Most things went to UAC to sign off on, except for tactical decisions.
- We have had the discussion, should the FOSC be removed from ICPs to the UAC? Agree with CAPT Drelling, think we could have been more effective if FOSC maintained at the ICP level.

- Biggest concerns were sending issues to UAC for approval when their battle rhythm was more dictated by Houma vs. Mobile. UAC tended to treat it as a single incident across the AOR and it was very different in the different states.
- We wanted to be more aggressive on public messaging and outreach than the UAC wanted us to be. There was a time where we could not have press conferences.
- We always had a JIC at the Mobile ICP. We received the gag order, and could not appear with BP in press conferences. Then all press releases had to be cleared through UAC (think this came down from the Administration, did not originate at the UAC). Messaging was dictated by Houma vs. Mobile.
- There were a few times when we got tactical movement direction from the UAC, and it was challenging, especially as they didn't seem to have a need for the resource.
- We were always free to develop objectives/tactics at the ICP level.
- Understand having a single FOSC for a single incident, and although this was a single source, this was not a single response.
- We could have set up the branches in the states earlier. We tried to get the states to send liaisons to the UAC to have representation, and had the state SOSC within the ICP, not at the UAC level.
- We kept a lot of assets idle that we could have mobilized because what happened in FL was different than MS or AL. Static nature had to be uniform across the Gulf.

**Air assets had difficulty working for individual ICPs; is there a difference in aircraft vs. vessels?**

- Biggest issue was deconfliction. Think the tasking should remain at the ICP, don't know how we could have centrally managed aircraft across the AOR without having the ability to direct them at the ICP level.
- Airspace deconfliction was the issue.
- Tyndall Air Force Base air traffic control was a best practice.
- Our aircraft stayed within our own AOR, same with Houma aircraft.

**Difference at UAC with decision making authority when the FOSC changed?**

- No, we understood their priorities and objectives.
- The UAC was always approachable and responsive. Always felt confident that we could email or call to have a candid conversation. It was this way with all who held that position.

**We have heard that many of the ICS positions were co-chaired within all of the ICS organizational structure; did it work that way in ICP Mobile?**

- We would have a CG Ops Chief and a BP or BP designated Ops Chief. This was same with other key positions (i.e., planning).
- BP and CG worked well together. We had mutual respect, understood each others equities.
- We rarely had to execute the 51% of the vote. There was a level of congeniality and cooperation that is not well known on the outside.
- Naturally evolved as it was a hybrid event, not a Federal event, or BP run event.
- Think that BP welcomed the mutually beneficial relationship. It reflected the nature of the hybrid response.
- At ICP Mobile we all worked together, didn't have neutral space, we worked together and had a more cooperative and collaborative environment.
- Had USCG and BP embedded throughout the organization to work together as a team at all levels/positions.

**With the different personalities from state to state, is it still appropriate to operate under the sector philosophy? Did it work to have everything set up in Mobile or should you have had 3 ICPs?**

- Absolutely must operate under the Sector boundaries. There are unique challenges if you split COTP authorities.
- The Sector Commanders have pre-existing relationships within their AOR.

- CAPT Poulin said he would let history judge if we should have had 3 ICPs (ICP Florida, ICP Alabama, and ICP Mississippi). He resisted it; the fact we didn't rely solely with him. He was concerned that if there were 3 separate ICPs, USCG and BP could not have supported that.
- CAPT Poulin acknowledged that he should have stood up the branches (forward operating bases) earlier. He resisted, but saw the challenges in Louisiana with Parish Presidents, having the separate responses in the separate states, and did not want to do that for his AOR, so worked to maintain a handle on the situation from the Mobile ICP. This caused some consternation, response was slower than it should have been to establish the branches, which were loosely organized, but the centralized power was still at the ICP.
- Doing this earlier could have solved some problems. Once it was done, the tone of the local communities changed. Was slow to realize the importance of ownership in the counties. Had an epiphany in the VOO program – when in Bayou La Batre, AL – and wanted to give the Mayor and County Commissioner a personal audience, and realized that these guys had to be part of the solution if we were going to be successful. Had to get them to join me at the table, so he went there with that attitude and it worked. Realized that this needed to be replicated throughout the AOR.

**How did the response organization evolve within ICP Mobile? Was ICP Mobile too large of a geographical area? How did the process work with the mini ICP in Tallahassee, when the CG and RP reps were sent to the State EOC?**

- Conceptualization was thanks to CAPT Drelling. We put it into effect because of my epiphany. President and ADM Allen were coming to FL, and Governor Crist was the single biggest advocate of a separate ICP so CAPT Poulin had a call with ADM Allen and together they realized they had to make Governor Crist happy. Had CAPT Drelling as the deputy, but needed 3 separate deputies to be in each state (AL, FL, and MS). The idea was to have them work out of the ICP, but do traveling as needed. ADM Allen convinced him to think hard about moving them forward and giving them mini IMTs. CAPT Poulin agreed to forward deploy, got three 05s, and explained the process to them. It all worked well, the deputy ICs were a masterstroke – forward deploying them was the key and creating the branches was the best approach (as states were used to the SA response).

**According to the BP Report, branch chiefs were making tactical decisions outside the ICP organization, is this true?**

- ICP would draft and promulgate the IAP daily and then the branches had input. Branch managers did have a level of discretion, and the decision to make tactical choices outside the IAP, as long as we got back briefed. If it was 24 hrs out, they had to report it and get it into the IAP process.
- Branches had dual reporting; they were hard lined to the Operations Section Chief at ICP Mobile, and a dotted line to the Deputy ICs.
- Deputy ICs were in Tallahassee in FL, Mobile ICP (local branch operated out of the ICP), and Biloxi, MS. These 05s were Deputy ICs empowered with FOSC-R authority, but it was bound to tactical decisions on beach cleaning, boom deployment, and recovery.
- Near and off shore skimming still needed to go through the ICP.
- We also still had 14 LNOs in addition to the Deputy ICs.

**What was the flow of information when you made requests and when information was requested of you? How did your Situation Unit in Mobile operate?**

- Info flow within the ICP worked ok. We had to find the best way to time reports and ended up doing this through cell phones (purchased by BP) and then transitioned to emails. This was if we had a marine animal, someone injured, etc. We established the reporting requirements and then found the means to do it.
- Took us a while to get a Situation Report we were satisfied with. We had fairly inexperienced people doing the status report, and they didn't know what information was most important for the IC, and then we had to find a way to package it in the reports. Took about a month to find report that met the concerns of the FOSC-R, BP, and State.

- Everyone had a different focus/concern that they wanted presented/broken down in a particular way. Packaging of info suitable to everyone's needs was a struggle. Took us time to figure out what we needed to do, including how to count boom.
- We did suffer through the validation of numbers – how much boom set, stored, etc. There was a 24 hr lag time. It took us a long time to validate equipment and feet of boom; had to have people at staging areas counting. We eventually tagged all logistics with a GIS or RFID tag, which helped to track all resources – at one point we even found some of our resources supporting the oil spill in Michigan.
- Had a flooding of equipment that was being pushed out of the UAC.
- We knew we had to submit a report every night, only periodically did we get frantic phone calls for information.
- UAC and NIC did not poke us for information as often as we anticipated.
- We produced two reports, an evening and morning report, which seemed to satisfy most needs for information.
- The LNO program was a little of a challenge. We viewed it as an extension of the IC, and integral to the ICP. In this case, the LNOs reported to the UAC and were directed by the UAC and S2. That was happening on the periphery of our incident command. It did raise concern over the chain of command.
- LNOs did a report every night, and they would report out every evening on a call; S2 would provide requirements. Didn't have time to review the report that was being sent outside the chain up to the S2 and participate in the conference calls, we had to trust that if there was something significant, it would be brought to his attention. It was a complete bypass of the chain of command; LNO program was co-opted outside the ICP.

#### **Talk about your ICs and how it all worked?**

- We effectively had 1 IC for 5 months. Had a lot of good deputies, talented people. It worked well.
- States had a difficult job, particularly the SOSCs for the state were response professional's not political appointees, but the decisions were political, so there were times they could not operate as SOSCs, as the decisions were held at a much higher level – such as when the Governor needed to make the decision. Saw many times that they had to go higher for approval of decisions.
- There were a lot of times when we spent more time reaching out directly to the Governors rather than the SOSCs (BP and myself). SOSCs were not empowered as you would expect, because of how the situation evolved.
- There was turnover in SOSC for FL. AL was the same people we would work with time and again. MS had a cadre of 3-4 people who would cycle through.
- EPA had 2-3 people who would cycle through, and they were people we knew and had worked with for years, so there was continuity to it.
- In my ICP I had a trusted committee working together, including trusted EPA Advisor (Dean Ulock), DOI brought the largest landowner, had the head of NPS (John Jarvis), etc. It wasn't until end of the response that we started to get new people in.
- We never got down to voting, all discussed issues, sometimes we disagreed, and ultimately we reached a consensus decision. There were a few times when CAPT Poulin needed to have a closed door conversation to make someone see his side, but in general it was never anything that could not be worked out.
- We require the responsible party to have a QI – someone to sign the check, but we do not require this of the state. Sometimes a higher level official would come down to negotiate.

#### **Intersection of NCP and NRF, do you have any views on how to adjust either to rationalize them?**

- It is not a matter of changing text, so much as changing practice – they are inconsistent.
- We need to better educate.
- CAPT Poulin always understood that the NCP fell under NRF, but we need more DHS decision making in coordination with HSPD-5. He thinks that the S1 does have a role to play by necessity.
- Making people understand the response framework of the NCP is different than the Stafford Act. That is where the rubber meets the road.
- There were a lot of calls for a Stafford Act declaration, several of the states we dealt with said no, we don't want a Stafford Act declaration, and they understood the dangers of that process.

- Think we need to look at NIC authority that may be where the changes need to be.
- We definitely do not require a wholesale rewrite of NRF, NCP or ESF #10; it is just a matter of education on how they work together.

**What was the quantification information that you had available to you that told you to ramp up X percentage scale response accordingly?**

- We largely ignored the quantification as it would not have dramatically changed the way we responded. The areas to boom was not going to change based on the amount of oil.
- Initially, did not pay attention, although it did call into question our credibility in the response from a public relations perspective. We had to do a lot of outreach and explaining at the beginning. The changes in quantification resulted in answering lots of media questions.
- An imperative came to be to set as much boom as quickly as we could, that was a measure of effectiveness that clouded the response. It wasn't until the dust settled that we could take step back and think more largely about the incident.
- We didn't have oil hit any beaches for about 45 days in my AOR, so we could set up a strategy and get crews ready – we had the benefit of time that Houma did not have.
- Quantification had no impact as we were prepping for duration more than quantity.
- Mobile ICP focused on protecting the shoreline, as Houma also had to deal with the offshore rig as that was within their AOR.

**Request for 3,000 personnel for each state**

- This was for beach cleanup, etc. It was not CG personnel.
- This number ended up being way low; number was our best forecast for what we would need once we had oil reach beaches.
- We did not expect to see the amount of emulsified and mousey oil that hit the beaches – were expecting more tar balls.

**Best Practice**

- Subsurface surveillance and monitoring program that was comprehensive across the AOR with a 5 prong program, and helped to defend our budget.
- Decon went well. ACP did not have pre-established decon. So we set up sites to do on water decon and set up a training program to sign off on cleanliness.
- NIMS/ICS went well. This incident reinforces the value of ICS. It promoted a unity of effort. Once we consolidated into New Orleans over the last few days, were able to do it without much pain. Parts and pieces just fit. ICS has to remain the model.
- JIC worked well initially, but then lost value of the JIC when ICPs were gagged and overly constrained messaging, which made us appear less responsive.
- Relationships were pre-established. Everyone was welcome with open arms. White House sent down people to help with messaging. Unified Commanders were very open and transparent – didn't have any secrets.
- Everything discussed in group setting and everyone knew why decisions were made the way that they were.
- UAC or NIC running cover on the innovative ideas, such as the A-WHALE.

**Area of Improvement and Recommendation**

- VOO program – how do we fix it? Fix it by addressing VOO in the ACP, exercising, pre-organized, pre-equipped, almost like a stand-by militia through working with trusted agents in the fishing community. We know who they are and ensure they are equipped, and know the protocol. We ultimately we got it to work, but did not work well initially.
- Should have done branches sooner – ICS is a bottom up approach. ICS is built from bottom and expanded based on the needs of the situation. ICS driven by operational requirements. Implementation of ICS could have been better.

- LNO program did not work as well as it could have because we lost circuit discipline. Need to continue to enforce that LNOs are an extension of the command.
- Media issues – early on, first few weeks were ok – but there were messages we needed to get out and we couldn't get them out.
- Did not anticipate the impact on the economics of the area, that was not factored in to any thinking and it was a challenge. We did not anticipate the economic push of tourists, etc.
- Ocean boom is good to 1 knot of current, not the 5 knot current. If we had moved quicker, might have been able to keep that boom and use it instead of it going to Houma.
- With the unmitigated flow across the entire Gulf, was there a better way? Should we have developed more of a campaign plan approach as they do in Afghanistan? Just wonder if we are beyond ICS? Is there a better way?