

Interview Summary Form

Interview Details

Interviewee Name: Roland Guidry Date: 8/24/10 Time: 1:00pm

Interviewee Title: Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinator Interviewee Job Location: Baton Rouge, LA

Interviewer Name(s): Team Interview Location: New Orleans, LA

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: ACs	<p>1. With an understanding that there is a One Gulf Plan, BP Regional Plan, Louisiana Parish Plans, separate Area Contingency Plans – how were they used integrated and used for response?</p> <p>Follow-up:</p> <p>a. What is the level of interest and participation in the development and maintenance of these plans?</p> <p>Question 1:</p>
Focus Area: State of LA	<p>1. How did the State participate in the review of industry and regional contingency plans for off-shore operations? (Jim)</p> <p>2. How did the State participate in the development, review or approval of the Worst Case Discharge portions of the industry plans or area plans? (Larry)</p> <p>Question 2:</p>
Focus Area: RRTs	<p>1. Describe the State's response interaction with the RRT with respect to: (Randy)</p> <p>a. Dispersants</p> <p>b. In situ burning</p> <p>c. Permitting</p> <p>d. Alternative technologies</p> <p>Question 3:</p>
Focus Area: ESAs	<p>1. How are the ESAs addressed in the response plan? (Jim)</p> <p>2. What is the process for identifying ESAs location and protection strategies? (Jim)</p> <p>3. 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? (Larry)</p> <p>4. 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? (Larry)</p> <p>Question 4:</p>
Focus Area: Political	<p>1. Were the State and parishes adequately included and involved in the command structure? Please describe.</p> <p>Question 5:</p>

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?

Notes

What were your jobs/roles/responsibilities within the State during the DEEPWATER HORIZON Incident?

- He has served as the Oil Spill Coordinator for State of Louisiana for last 18 years and typically the SOSOC for all spills.
- On April 20th when the blowout occurred, he was in FL for a Clean Water meeting with Coastal States. When all were alerted through messages that the rig had crumbled, got on an airplane and headed back to Louisiana.
- Initially incorporated the local OSROs (including their equipment) in an attempt to keep the oil offshore.
- He first reported to State EOC on Friday for a full day State meeting with the Governor.
- On Saturday he went to the Unified Area Command in Robert, LA. He arrived early Saturday morning and was at the UAC for 11 days where RADM Landry was the FOSC from his viewpoint. He left DEQ in charge at the UAC serving as his deputy.
- The Governor assumed the role of SOSOC, appointed himself as the State of LA voice for incident and would not allow anyone to provide messages to the media.
- He then went to the ICP in Houma, LA and was there for 2 months until he was called to Baton Rouge for a break. Following the break, he was then reassigned as the lead for NRDA and told to go and visit the field locations and provide oversight (travel via helicopter).
- His replacement at the UAC, Mr. Garrett Graves, had very little ICS experience and did not appear to be familiar with the plans and processes.
- The SOSOC's role has been blurred between response and restoration, as Mr. Guidry's replacement had former experience with NRDA
- He brought with him an article from a local Baton Rouge newspaper.

With an understanding that there is a One Gulf Plan, BP Regional Plan, Louisiana Parish Plans, separate Area Contingency Plans – how were they used integrated and used for response? Is the State of Louisiana aware of the BP Offshore Response Plan? How did the State participate in the review of industry and regional contingency plans for off-shore operations?

- We have a copy of all of these plans in our office – probably have about 200 plans in the office. Do not go through all of them, and he was not personally familiar with the BP Off-shore Response Plan.
- Everyone sends us a copy of their contingency plan. Offshore is a little different, we are involved to some extent, as we drill with these guys, but looking at their offshore plans, we don't see them.
- When a spill occurs, the Louisiana Parish's have multiple OSROs (approximately 5) and they go to work and know what they need to do, and work to get the job done.

What is your level of involvement with local Area Committees (ACs)? What is your involvement with developing the Area Contingency Plans (ACP)? What was the level of attendance for Parish Presidents?

- There are 3 ACs with US Coast Guard (USCG): one shared with Texas, one in Morgan City, and one in New Orleans. As far as he knew, there is no EPA involvement.
- He attends all of the AC meetings and works with them to adopt whatever needs to be done.
- The ACs meet quarterly.
- ACPs are a living document, if there is a need for something to change, the Area Committee adds it. During the Area Committee meetings, participants bring up concerns, and they are addressed during the meeting. Needed changes or additions are then made to the plans continually.
- Some Parish Presidents would attend AC meetings, however, many would not. He expects now that attendance will be much higher.

Did you sign off on the ACP on behalf of the state when it was written? Are you still confident in the ACP?

- He did sign off on the ACP, and is confident in it.

NIMS is a requirement for States in order to receive Federal grant dollars; all Governors have signed a statement saying that they will use ICS. Have the Governor and other lead State representatives had ICS training? Are they familiar with the ICS requirements? Do you think they will be trained in the future? Do the parishes fall under ICS?

- He was not sure on the level of ICS training that the Governor and other lead reps have, however, ICS training is offered frequently and all State agencies have been invited to attend.
- He thought that following this incident, additional State personnel will have NIMS/ICS training.
- The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) is still using the Stafford Act instead of the NCP.
- The parishes go through GOHSEP for control and coordination. This was started during Hurricane Katrina (new process). GOHSEP wanted to serve as his deputy, but it is State law that DEQ serve as his deputy.

When the State had a request that should have gone through the ICS process, how was information requested?

- Requests were sent directly to BP from the Governor's office. It did not go through the ICP or UAC. The Office of Coastal Restoration made the requests directly of BP.
- GOSEP also had direct coordination with BP after he left.

Who was responsible for reporting information to the Governor?

- CNN
- His boss reported directly to the Governor's office. The Louisiana Oil Spill Control Office sends reports over 3 times a day.
- They also receive 16-20 reports from other agencies, OSROs, etc. and they consolidate this information and provide it as a full report submitted every morning, highlighting the previous days' activities.
- Governor talks to all parish presidents regularly and has people at the UAC and ICP that report back.

What plan was the State and Parish's operating under? How do the Parishes fit into State government?

- The Governor and some parishes were under the mistaken impression that this was a Stafford Act response, and although many tried to convince them otherwise, they still tried to follow the Stafford Act instead of the NCP.
- In his opinion, he thought that politics took over, and people just ignored the rules
- The Parishes view themselves as independent.
- Parrish presidents exerted dominance over OSRO's equipment (boom and skimmers), felt like they had ownership over resources that were staged in their boundaries. This was a major issue, because they would not release the equipment to other Parishes that needed it.
- After Admiral Allen arrived, he designated specific staging/storage areas for boom and skimmers within the Parishes. This ended the Parishes hoarding the equipment allocated to their geographic areas by the Incident Command

Was FEMA located in the parishes supporting the assumption that this was a Stafford Act declaration?

- He did not know.

How does the State Oil Spill Plan fit? Who signed it? What does it include?

- The State Oil Spill Plan provides the command structure for the State. It shows an ICS structure.
- It was signed by the secretaries at the time. Plan can be found online.
- It is a State oil spill plan, meant to blend with the ACP and outlines how the State operates.

Were the State and Parishes included in the command structure?

- Yes, they were both adequately included. By law, the parishes have to be included in the command structure.
- This is the first time a governor has been actively involved in oil spills.

Describe the State's response interaction with the RRT with respect to:

- a. Dispersants
- b. In situ burning
- c. Permitting
- d. Alternative technologies

- The deputy from his office was responsible for coordinating with the RRT regarding all of these topics. She has worked with dispersants for many years.
- He didn't know other details, as he was involved in other stuff. From what he witnessed, it worked as it should.
- Discussions with the RRT included setting limits on the amount of dispersants that could be used, but there was always more being used.

How are the ESAs addressed in the response plan? What is the process for identifying ESAs location and protection strategies? Is there a list of ESAs? Who set the ESA priorities for where boom should be placed? Did the OSROs know what areas needed to have boom placed? Is there a system in place through your plans to identify the equipment and process needed for the placement of boom?

- Louisiana has a list of ESAs – this is included in the contingency plans. Support staff referenced the plan and identified areas that needed to be boomed, and prioritized the areas that needed boom first.
- We worked with State and Federal agencies to review what areas needed to be boomed to fight the oil.
- The local parishes kept making requests for boom, there were requests for more and more boom, and BP kept providing it.
- Boom got placed everywhere, and placement became chaotic. Boom is in the marshes now, where it should have been in the first place. There is boom in the marshes that is 3-4 layers, additional boom just kept being dropped; boom was moved via high tide or high winds, and then more boom was dropped. There is a lot of physical damage to the marshes and the plan is now to use a helicopter with a grappling hook to remove the boom and place it on a barge.
- Parishes and local fisherman dictated where boom was deployed too
- The environmental people from the State and Federal agencies were the voice of reason.
- The OSROs in Louisiana are familiar with the placement of boom; we have small spills in the area. We do not have a list of equipment, gear, etc. in any plans, the OSROs just know the routine and what is needed to place boom, including restrictions on heights of helicopters, noise levels, etc.

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? Were VOO deployed to do near shore protection? Do you have MOUs in place to engage the shrimp boats as VOO?

- We do not have a VOO program, never had a spill of this size, and never needed to have that already in place. We did utilize the out of work shrimp boaters to engage them in helping to collect oil, place boom, etc. We did this process on the fly. They did not seem to be very productive and it resulted in the OSROs having their hands full trying to direct the boats.
- Do not know who brought the shrimp boats into the process. They had a ½ day training to show them how to operate, how to place boom, etc., and then were engaged in oil collection.
- We did have some oil on the marshes. If that fleet of boats could have captured the oil, they would have captured it.

One thing that was unique in this event was the Unified Area Command vs. a Command Post. Did you have training with that?

- He participated with ADM Allen (Ret.) in SONS 2002 and that was the only training or experience he had.

In your opinion, based on what you have seen at all operational levels, is there open communication flow?

- He has seen the entire spectrum of the response organization, and from his time in the field and from when he served at the ICP and UAC, he witnessed that a battle rhythm for communication flow (conference call schedule)

has been set.

In your opinion, how is the state managing expectations for long-term sustainability?

- Many State agencies (such as DEQ, Wildlife & Fisheries, etc.) are all spread very thin.
- The State has hired some attorneys to work out of my office and the Governor has advised me of a plan/need to hire some additional staff (2 people).
- He has also been given additional office space for an extended staff that will be working the oil spill response, including the renovation of 2 ballrooms to office space.
- There is also funding that has been cut out of the budget for the Louisiana Oil Spill Control Office (approximately 3.75 million).

It appears that the SOSC is not making decisions within the State, how are those decisions being made? Is there a de-facto SOSC?

- No one has authority to sign any agreement or paperwork of any kind. They need to be sent to the attorneys, who review, and then provide the authority to sign (if they agree with the documents).
- After he left Houma, no one was authorized to sign IAPs or any planning documents. Prior to his departure, he signed all IAPs.
- The Governor is the de-facto SOSC, as the buck stops there.
- Normally he serves as the coordinator for the State, although he does not make decisions by himself, he calls the agencies and trustees, and then proceeds forward once additional feedback is solicited.

What were the top 2 “best practice(s)” during this incident, from your perspective?

- We followed the unified command system, had Unified Command set up in Robert.

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?

- He was handicapped by not being able to talk to the press, as the Governor was the spokesperson.
- The State/Parishes did not follow the ICS/Unified Command system. To fix this for future response, they need to get ICS/NIMS training and education.
- BP’s upper management (in the incident organization) was taken advantage of by the State (Governor’s office) and Parrish presidents
- More local participation in oil spill response exercises and Area Committee meetings

Who else should we interview?

- He would recommend that we meet with the Parish Presidents, but do it separately, as there are some that will not speak up in a group while others who are more overpowering. If we conduct the interviews separately, he would anticipate that the Parish Presidents would be more open, honest and candid.
- We should also interview Dwight Bradshaw and Jeff Dozak, both of which are senior scientists with DEQ and [REDACTED] Garrett from Louisiana Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration.
- We should also talk to the former Senator who became the lead of Wildlife and Fisheries (didn’t get name).