## ORIGINAL

Sixth Annual Public Meeting of the Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustee Council [held virtually via GoToWebinar platform]

Thursday, June 17, 2021
6:03 p.m. to 7:17 p.m. Central

| 1 | C ONT E N T S Page 2 |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
| 4 | Opening Remarks |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |
| 6 | PERRY FRANKLIN, Facilitator | 5 |  |
| 7 | ROBIN RIECHERS, Chair, Trustee Council | 8 |  |
| 8 |  |  |  |
| 9 | Trustee Implementation Group Presentations |  |  |
| 10 |  |  |  |
| 11 | CHRIS BLANKENSHIP, Alabama TIG, |  |  |
| 12 | Alabama Department of Conservation and |  |  |
| 13 | Natural Resources | 21 |  |
| 14 | GARETH LEONARD, Florida TIG, |  |  |
| 15 | Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation |  |  |
| 16 | Commission | 24 |  |
| 17 | MAURY CHATELLIER, Louisiana TIG, |  |  |
| 18 | Louisiana Coastal Protection and |  |  |
| 19 | Restoration Authority | 27 |  |
| 20 | CHRIS WELLS, Mississippi TIG, |  |  |
| 21 | Mississippi Department of Environmen |  |  |
| 22 | Quality | 35 |  |




MR. FRANKLIN: Good evening, everyone. My name is Perry Franklin, and I will serve as your facilitator for the Deepwater Horizon Natural Damage Resource Assessment Trustee Council's sixth annual meeting. This meeting also serves as the annual meeting of the Regionwide Trustee Implementation Group, or TIG. You may hear that acronym tonight. Trustee Implementation Group is what that stands for.

For those of you who just attended that open house, hats off, and I hope that you received good information and got your questions answered.

The Trustees and their representatives will present a lot of useful information tonight, and then you will have an opportunity to give the Trustees some direct feedback.

This meeting is the Trustee Council's second virtual meeting. Whether you are listening in via telephone or your computer's
1 audio, please know that we have all incoming
2 audio muted at this time. If you are
3 experiencing technical difficulties and would
4 like to request assistance, please use the
5 questions box, which is located on the
6 right-hand side of the webinar's interface, and
7 we will try to reach out and give you direct
8 help. addition, as you can see, we are providing an American Sign Language interpreter via live video.
The Trustees also want me to point out that there are fact sheets on the Trustee Council's website, which can be found at gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov. Again, gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.
When you registered for tonight's webinar,

1 you received an email from webinars@dwhtig.org
2 confirming your registration. That email
3 contains helpful instructions on how to manage
4 your audio during tonight's webinar.
5 Additionally, you were asked if you would
6 like to make verbal comment at tonight's

7 meeting. We have received a number of requests
8 and have responded to each person via email with

9 instructions on how to make verbal comment.
10 Immediately following tonight's presentation is
11 when we will take those public comments.

12
If you do not make a request to make
13 comment tonight, by no means is it too late to
14 do so. Following tonight's presentation, I will

15 give you instructions on how to get your name
onto that list, and we will call you
17 accordingly.

So, at this time, we will get started with
19 the first presentation. First up is Robin Riechers, Director of Coastal Fisheries of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Chair of the Trustee Council.
Robin, the floor is yours.
MR. RIECHERS: Thank you, Perry. Thank you for that introduction, and good evening to everyone. Welcome to this annual meeting of the Trustee Council and the Region-wide Trustee Implementation Group, and thank you for being here and, of course, for your interest.
We do know that we have some elected officials who are in attendance, and so we want to also give special thanks for their attendance tonight as well.
Since the settlement with BP in 2016, the Trustees have held a meeting every year to bring you up to speed on our efforts to restore the natural resources injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and as Perry mentioned, this is our sixth annual public meeting.
In tonight's presentation, I'm going to go over some slides to give you an update of what we've been doing since our last meeting. Then you will hear an update from each of the restoration area Trustee Implementation Groups,

Page 9
1 and then after that, we want to hear from you.
2 As Perry just described, he'll help facilitate
3 the public comment portion of the agenda.
4 Now let me tell you who the Trustee Council
5 representatives are. We have members
6 representing each of the five Gulf States and a

7 member who represents each of the four Federal
8 agencies.

9
10 representative for Florida. Chris Blankenship
11 represents Alabama. Chris Wells represents
12 Mississippi. Bren Haase is representing the

13 State of Louisiana, and I'm the Trustee
14 representative for Texas, as was mentioned

15 earlier. Mary Josie Blanchard represents
16 Department of Interior. Mary Kay Lynch
17 represents the Environmental Protection Agency.
18 Chris Doley represents the National Oceanic and
19 Atmospheric Administration, and Homer Wilkes

20 represents the United States Department of
21 Agriculture.
Just as a quick review of our overall

1 responsibilities, the Trustees are responsible
2 for restoring the environmental and compensating
3 the public for natural resource injuries
4 resulting from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

5 We used a natural resource damage
6 assessment, released in 2016, to determine the

7 extent of injuries to natural resources and to
8 seek restoration of injuries from the

9 responsible parties.
10 The goal is to restore injured natural

11 resource, such as wetlands, fish, and birds, to
12 the condition they would have been in had the

13 spill not occurred. We are also responsible for
14 addressing recreational uses, like boating,

15 fishing, and swimming, that were lost or
16 affected as a result of the spill.
Let me give you a little background before
I talk about our recent activities. This

19 timeline shows the oil spill began in April of 2010, and of course, we all know and remember that. We began the Natural Resources Injury Assessment right away.

4 we were able to get a jump start on restoration.
In April 2011, BP agreed to make up to \$1 billion available for early restoration, even before the injury assessment was complete. So

From 2011 to 2016, we approved a total of five early Restoration Plans and 65 projects with a combined cost of $\$ 866$ million. Some of those projects have been completed, while others are still underway.

In April 2016, the Federal Government and the five Gulf States reached a settlement with BP totaling approximately $\$ 20.8$ billion. Of the \$20.8 billion, the settlement provided \$8.8 billion in Natural Resource Damage Assessment funds, which we're going to just term "NRDA" from this point on tonight, to support our work restoring the Gulf.

That total includes the $\$ 1$ billion for early restoration. So that means another \$7.1 billion was allocated to fund post-April 2016 planning and restoration, and $\$ 700$ million for adaptive management of unknown conditions.

1 On this timeline, you can see the
2 settlement date indicated here and today, which
3 indicates where we are along the 15-year
4 timeline for payments by BP of our restoration
5 funds to date.
6 In the 11 years since the spill, the

7 Implementation Groups have approved more than
8210 projects for an estimated cost of

9 approximately \$1.6 billion.
Along with the settlement, the Trustee

11 Council finalized a programmatic Restoration
12 Plan. That plan when we say it is programmatic,
13 it means it includes overarching restoration
14 goals for the entire Gulf ecosystem and broad

15 restoration types that guides development and 16 selection of restoration projects. It was not

17 intentioned and does not include a list of
18 information restoration projects like you often
19 see in Implementation Group Restoration Plans.

This next slide, I obviously don't expect
21 you to be able to read that slide. Many of you
22 have seen this table before, but what it does do

1 is really help to understand the funding goals, 2 and it shows us not only the total amount of 3 money BP will pay in NRDA damages, but it also 4 helps determine where those funds must be spent. 5 The funds are assigned to geographic restoration 6 areas, one for each State, as you can see there 7 in the table, and also two restoration areas 8 called "region-wide" and "open ocean." Then 9 within each restoration area, funds are assigned 10 to restoration types that were injured in those 11 areas.

To accomplish this huge restoration effort,

13 the settlement established Trustee
14 Implementation Groups, often referred to as

15 "TIGs," focusing on the different restoration
16 areas, which were described in that table.

17 The Trustee Council provides coordination

18 and ensures transparency, fiscal and scientific
19 accountability, and consistency within the

20 programmatic plan and across those
21 Implementation Groups.

As you all know, the Gulf ecosystem is very

1 diverse and with a wide variety of natural
2 resources and habitats that depend on each other

3 as shown in this diagram. The spill injured a
4 wide range of wildlife and habitats. It also
5 negatively impacted recreational o principles
6 like fishing and boating that we mentioned

7 earlier, and the injuries were across the entire
8 Gulf system.

9 Because of those ecosystem-wide injuries,
10 the Trustees, through the Implementation Groups,
11 are taking a comprehensive and integrated
12 ecosystem-level approach to restoring the Gulf,
13 consistent with our programmatic Restoration
14 Plan discussed a few moments ago.

We're seeing some common themes across all
the restoration activities. A lot of our projects are benefitting multiple restoration, as mentioned above. For example, projects focusing on improving water quality also benefit recreational opportunities, making areas more enjoyable for those visitors that go there. Restoration projects in wetland, coastal, and

1 nearshore habitats can also benefit birds and 2 oyster populations, as another example. restoration project restoring sea turtles across Florida, Louisiana, and Texas.

The work group is also supporting the development of the upcoming 5-year programmatic review.

Finally, the Monitoring and Adaptive Management Work Group is continuing to evaluate and make recommendations regarding our data management.

The Trustee Council is committed to proactively communicate and report out our work. We're continuing to communicate progress through our annual reporting. This year, we produced more than 210 project reports and our usual annual financial summary, all of which can be

1 found on the Gulf Spill website. We work to get
2 projects underway quickly after they are
3 approved.
4

5 articles and updates to the Gulf Spill
6 Restoration website, driving more than 130,000

7 visits to the site, an increase of 20 percent
8 from the previous year.

9

10 website through our email distribution program--or reaching the website through our email distribution program. We sent 77 emails notifying the public about plans, projects, and outreach events in 2020 and almost doubled the number of subscribers to more than 12,000.

We also updated the site with new features to make it easier to access information, including a feature that shows all the Restoration Plans out for public comment at any given time and one-click access to provide public comment on those plans.

Looking forward, we're working on a program

1 review of all of our work. We anticipate
2 releasing that document to the public later this 3 year.

4 Our review may include summaries of
5 administrative and financial information, public
6 engagement activities, monitoring data, and

7 project accomplishments as well as other metrics
8 that support restoration program evaluation. We
9 look forward to sharing with you what we have
10 accomplished and what we have learned so far.

11 We're also coordinating across funding
12 sources to maximize Gulf ecosystem restoration.

13 Along with NRDA funding, we're leveraging funds
14 managed through our other entities, including
15 Restore Council, Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund
16 managed by the National Fish and Wildlife
17 Foundation, and NOAA's National Estuarine

18 Research Reserve. Examples of this include the
19 Bahia Grande Coastal Corridor Habitat

20 Acquisition, McFaddin Beach and Dune
21 Restoration, and Weeks Bay Land Acquisition, 22 which leverage these funds.

1 And the Trustee Implementation Groups are
2 also leveraging funding with local and State 3 agencies. One example in Florida is Norriego

4 Point Restoration and Recreation Project, which

5 utilizes both NRDA and State funding.

22 that we maximize resource restoration. We can


1 Trustee Implementation Groups on what they are 2 doing for their restoration areas. As you hear 3 from each Trustee Implementation Group about the 4 work they undertook this year and anticipate in 5 the future, you'll hear some common themes.

6 As we plan for future restoration, we are 7 still getting public input early in the process.

8 Generally speaking, the Trustee Implementation

9 Groups are focused on a variety of activities,
10 including restoring the Gulf coastal habitats

11 and access to those habitats. The Trustee

12 Implementation Groups are also looking at
13 improving water quality and addressing living
14 coastal marine resources, which includes birds,

15 oysters, turtles, and marine mammals.
Perhaps most importantly for many of you, you'll hear that restoration projects are continuing to move forward, both on the ground and in the water.

First off tonight, we're going to hear from Chris Blankenship for the State of Alabama and a member of the Alabama Trustee Implementation

1 Group.
2

5 the opportunity to be here and share some of the 6 work that we've been doing with the Alabama

7 Trustees. I'd like to thank our Federal Trustee 8 partners as well as my staff in the great work 9 that they have done and are doing to implement 10 these projects.

15 see tonight that that is the highest percentage 16 of restoration funding of any of the Trustee

17 Implementation Groups of the overall anticipated 18 deposits.

19 So, with that, I'm going to talk a little 20 bit about the three Restoration Plans, but it's 21 unlikely that we'll have a Restoration Plan, new 22 Restoration Plan in the near future as we

1 implement the projects that are already 2 approved.

3 The recent activities--we'll continue to
4 implement and monitor the projects from early

5 restoration and from Restoration Plans 1, 2, and
63.

In early 2021, we released an addendum to
8 the final Alabama Restoration Plan 3 that

9 approved the use of some interest that was
10 earned to fund two additional recreational use

11 projects that were tentatively approved,
12 awaiting funding.

13

14 the acquisition of the West End of Dauphin

15 Island. In October of 2020, we acquired 838
16 acres of the West End of Dauphin Island. That
17 is the largest undeveloped beachfront property
18 in the Coast of Alabama. Acreage includes
19 dunes, marsh, and beaches, which sea turtles and several bird species use for nesting and as part of their life cycle. As most barrier islands and areas along the coast, Dauphin Island is the

1 last spot that a lot of birds use as they make 2 their migration to South America and Central 3 America and then also the first piece of land

4 that they see as they return from their
5 migration, as they head back north. It's an
6 extremely important piece of property for
7 habitat for birds and sea turtles.
8

9 a Bird Conservation Management Plan for this
10 spectacular piece of property that is now in
11 public ownership.

12
Future activities include implementation

13 and monitoring of the projects from early

14 restoration and Restoration Plans 1, 2, and 3.

15 We plan to have an annual meeting of the Alabama
16 Trustee Implementation Group in the fall of 2021
17 based on the governor's availability, but it

18 could be pushed to spring of 2022 in order to
19 have the best attendance possible for that summit.

With that, I'd like to turn it over to my good friend, Gareth Leonard from the State of

1 Florida, for an update on Florida restoration,
2 but if you have any other needs or questions
3 about not only NRDA but other restoration
4 activities in the State of Alabama, please visit
5 our website at alabamacoastalrestoration.org.
6 Alabamacoastalrestoration.org.

7

8

1 to conduct future restoration projects and
2 activities in the State of Florida.

Over the last year, the Florida TIG has
4 been busy implementing the projects that have

5 been previously approved, and we would like to
6 say that we have completed construction of about 715 of those 57 projects. forced to hold a virtual public meeting for the Florida TIG's annual public meeting, which was in December and was well attended.

Finally, in late February of this year, the Florida TIG released its Draft Restoration Plan 2 which proposed 19 projects for implementation for public review and comments. We held a virtual public meeting in March to present the plan to the public and to receive public comments, and this public comment period closed in late March.

As previously mentioned, the Florida TIG
21 has completed a number of projects. One of the

22 projects that I'd like to highlight is the Phase

13 Early Restoration Strategically Provided Boat 2 Access Along Florida's Gulf Coast Project. We 3 recently completed the monitoring phases of this 4 project and the process of closing it out. This 5 project funded enhancements to three existing 6 boat ramps and two existing marinas located in 7 Florida's Panhandle. In particular, the 8 facilities for the City of St. Marks program, 9 the City of Port St. Joe Frank Pate boat ramp, 10 the City of Mexico Beach Canals Parks Marina, 11 the City of Parker Earl Gilbert boat ramp, and 12 the City of Panama City St. Andrews Marina. We are pleased to say that the monitoring show that with the successful implementation of the proposed enhancements and the subsequent public use of these facilities, the Florida TIG has been able to meet the project goal of enhancing, increasing recreational boating and fishing opportunities in the Florida Panhandle.

Looking forward to the next share, the Florida TIG will continue the implementation and monitoring of previously approved projects. In

1 addition, the Florida TIG is in the process of
2 finalizing its second Restoration Plan, which 3 should be released to the public later this

4 month or the beginning of next month.
Once we have finalized and released RP 2, the Florida TIG plans on starting restoration planning for its third Restoration Plan later this year. So please be on the lookout for a call for projects related to that. We will do an email blast to let the public know that we are ready to accept project ideas.

At this point, I would like to hand the presentation off to Maury Chatellier with the State of Louisiana to give their update.

MR. CHATELLIER: Hey, Gareth. Thank you very much.

Good evening, everyone. Again, my name is Maury Chatellier with the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority representing the Louisiana Trustee site, and as the other presentations have done, we start off with our funding update.

To date, Louisiana Trustees have approved

1 or committed 1.4 of the $\$ 5$ billion settlement 2 that Louisiana was allocated, again, which is 3 distributed over annually for 15 years, ending

4 in 2031. This \$1.4 billion includes dollars
5 allocated via resolution by the Trustees in the 6 calendar year 2020 through May of this year.

8 very busy since our last annual meeting. We've
9 completed multiple Restoration Plans, run
10 through them here for you. We completed the
11 Final Restoration Plan and Environmental
12 Assessment 1.2 in February of last year. That

13 approved construction dollars for two projects,
14 two large-scale Marsh and Ridge projects, the

15 Spanish Pass project in Plaquemines Parish at a cost of about $\$ 88$ million. Recently, we just bid the Lake Borgne Marsh Creation project for about $\$ 61$ million, which will take dredged sediment out from Lake Borgne and create marsh. RPEA 5 was completed and funded and authorized in August of last year. This Restoration Plan included dollars for living

1 coastal marine resources, particularly marine 2 mammals and oysters. This was a little bit less 3 than a $\$ 30$ million effort. It includes multiple 4 projects, including the Marine Mammal Stranding

5 Network Effort overseen by NOAA and oyster
6 hatchery, cult plant, and brood reef projects 7 overseen by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife 8 and Fisheries. finalized Restoration Plan EA No. 7. This approved funding for three new design starts for wetland, coastal, and nearshore habitats as well as birds. This include HNC Bird Island in Lower Terrebonne Parish and the Isle of Pete in

15 St. Bernard Parish, both of which are important 16 pelican rookeries for the State, and it also

17 provided funding for design of the Bird's Foot

18 Delta project in Lower Plaquemines Parish. This
19 project will look to restore the hydrology of

20 the Bird's Foot Delta by dredging Pass-a-Loutre
21 and South Pass as well as small placement for

22 new habitat.

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                                    Page 30
6 Parish. The latter will use hydraulic dredge 7 spoil from the Mississippi River to create marsh 8 and ridge habitat at a cost of about \(\$ 65\) 9 million.
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1

2


10

17 Mississippi River sediment. This project will
18 be overseen by NOAA. It should bid in the next
19 few weeks. It's about $\$ 180$ million effort.

And then we have three projects that we moved forward in implementation from RP No. 6. These projects were funded for design in the

1 RESTORE Act and moved over for NRDA for 2 construction.

6 funded ongoing efforts, including the Louisiana

7 Coastwide Fish and Shellfish Monitoring Program
8 as well as funding for the Monitoring and

15 recently in May of this year--we just funded an effort to develop a plan to assess lower levels in the Barataria estuary. So we've been very, very busy.

So the project I'd like to highlight tonight is the West Grand Terre Island Project. Again, this was one that was funded previously with restored dollars and was moved over to NRDA

1 for construction. West Grand Terre Island is
2 located in Barataria Basin, just east of Grand
3 Isle, and it is home to the historic Fort
4 Livingston.
5 The top image, if you can make this out, is
6 a preconstruction photo of the project site

7 looking eastward along Grand Terre. The
8 projects will consist of hydraulically dredging

9 offshore material and creating beach and dune
10 habitat as well as intertidal marsh, with a

11 shoreline protection feature along Barataria
12 Pass in the Barataria Bay. The estimated cost
13 of this project is about $\$ 92.5$ million.
14 Construction is currently underway.
The facilities you see on the top of the
island have been removed from an earlier
construction effort. They were a research
facility that originally began construction in
19 1959, with a majority of those buildings

20 completed by the mid-'60s. So, again, those
21 were removed, and I think that top picture shows

22 very well the effects of coastal erosion in the

1 State of Louisiana, as obviously those
2 facilities were not constructed in the surf

3 zone, but it just shows you how much that island
4 has migrated since those facilities were
5 constructed.

6 Livingston on the western end of the island

8 bordering Barataria Pass. Just a tidbit on Fort

9 Livingston, in the early 19th century, Grand
10 Terre Island was home to pirates under the
11 command of Captain Jean Lafitte. These pirates
12 were forced to leave the island in the early
13 1800s when the U.S. Government decided to build
14 a coastal defense fort, i.e., Fort Livingston.

15 The fort was designed to control the
16 entrance to Barataria Pass, thereby guard New
17 Orleans against naval attacks from the south.

18

19
20 it was never resumed, so the fort was never
21 fully completed.
Then, finally, our future activities that

1 we have on the horizon and ongoing, currently,
2 the Trustees are focusing on two Restoration
3 Plan EAs that are underway. Restoration Plan
4 3.2, if this one is approved, this is for the
5 Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion. If approved,
6 the large-scale project would--at the

7 Mississippi River to the Barataria Basin. It
8 would allow a control release of fresh water

9 nutrients and sediment in the basin to rebuild
10 the wetlands and contribute to the broader

11 restoration of the ecosystem. Again, the
12 anticipated completion of this plan is sometime
13 in the spring of next year, and again, the
14 project's proposed budget would invest upwards
15 of $\$ 2$ billion on implementation.
Then, finally, we began a few months ago RP
17 8, Restoration Plan No. 8, focusing on wetland,
18 coastal, and nearshore habitat. We looked to
19 move one or more projects into the E\&D phase as

20 well as to construction, and we're hoping to
21 have RP 8 finalized by the end of this year.

22 The screening process is currently underway.

1 So I appreciate everyone's time tonight, 2 and with that, $I$ will turn it over to Mr. Chris 3 Wells, Mississippi Trustees.

4 MR. WELLS: Thank you, Maury, and
5 appreciate everybody's attendance tonight and 6 interest in what all we're doing. I am Chris

7 Wells, and it's my honor and privilege to
8 represent the Mississippi Trustee Implementation

9 Group and give everybody an update on our
10 activities over the last year.

11 You see here that we've committed

12 approximately 56 percent of our total allocation

13 thus far, the total allocation being \$295
14 million. \$6 million has been allocated across

15 various restoration types, including wetlands,
16 coastal, and nearshore habitats, nutrient

17 production, oysters, birds, and recreational
18 opportunities in addition to early restoration
19 work.

Our recent activities, last year in
21 September, we finalized and published our

22 Restoration Plan 2, our second Restoration Plan.

1 There being no rest for the weary, we started in
2 October with the process of developing our
3 Restoration Plan 3, and just this past Friday,
4 we published our Notice of Initiation of
5 Restoration Planning for that Restoration Plan
63.

7 The project that we would like to highlight
8 tonight is our Hancock County Marsh Living

9 Shoreline Project. This is one of our flagship
10 project with the Mississippi Department of

11 Environmental Quality, and NOAA, our
12 co-implementing Trustees, it's a $\$ 50$ million

13 project, included several components, 6 miles of
14 living shorelines, 46 acres of subtidal reef in

15 Heron Bay, 46 acres of marsh creation. The
16 living shorelines were constructed between 2016
17 and 2019, completed in March of 2019. We really

18 like this aerial photograph here because it
19 shows graphically or very clearly the reduction

20 in wave energy that those living shorelines
21 produce and therefore reduce the erosion rate

22 there in that marsh.

6 containment. We used dredged material, the
7 beneficial use or placement of dredge material 8 to construct that 46 acres of marsh, and we'll 9 be monitoring that as we go forward.

In terms of specifically with respect to implementation of previous projects, previously approved projects, we'll be constructing living shoreline of subtidal reefs in Bay St. Louis. It's one of those continuing the Mississippi Oyster Gardening Program, which has been previously funded through the National Fish and

1 Wildlife, Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund. We
2 will continue to fund that through under NRDA
3 and basic species management on coastal reserves
4 property also.
5 Finally, we'll be holding our annual
6 restoration summit fall of this year. We'll

7 also constitute the annual meeting of the
8 Mississippi TIG. We hope everyone can attend

9 the summit. Last year, it was held virtually.
10 This year, we will be conducting it as a hybrid.
11 We will be back face-to-face unless something
12 drastically changes that prevents us from doing
13 that. We will have a hybrid virtual
14 participation option available for those who
15 cannot attend in person.
If you have any additional questions or
want to see information about all of our

Deepwater Horizon restoration efforts in Mississippi, you can go to our website, restore.ms.

With that, $I$ will turn it over to Robin Riechers with the State of Texas.
[Pause.]

MR. WELLS: Robin may be on mute.
MR. RIECHERS: Thank you, Chris. Sorry about that, being on mute.

I'm excited to be here representing the Trustee Implementation Group of Texas, which is comprised of our Federal partners and, of course, the three Trustee agencies in Texas: Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, General Land Office, and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

Like others, we certainly have been attempting to be busy in spending those allocation of dollars that we received, and of course, Texas received $\$ 238$ million. To date, we've spent about $\$ 107$ million of that, which represents about 45 percent of the total dollars that we have committed so far.

When we think about recent activities, of course, with projects in different stages, we're going to first start with our construction projects that we recently have began on, and the

1 first one I'll mention is the Galveston Island 2 State Park Beach Redevelopment. It's a 3 large-scale redevelopment project of Galveston

4 Island there, obviously, an important visitor 5 and beach opportunity for many beachgoers, and 6 they're south of Houston. 7 Then as we highlighted last year in our 8 presentation, we're beginning construction on 9 parts of our continued efforts on the Bahia 10 Grande hydrological restoration in South Texas.

Then as some projects got completed, we then turned our attention to monitoring those projects, and of course, a couple of those here are Sea Rim State Park Improvement Project that occurred near the Louisiana-Texas border and, of course, the Indian Point Shoreline Erosion Project that we're starting to monitor there as well.

Then planned activities coming up, of course, there's completing our Bird Island Cover Habitat Restoration Engineering, so that we can then think about now moving to construction on

1 that project as well as our Dressing Point Texas
2 Rookery Island also in that regard.
3

4 it's hard not to have this as our featured

5 project. As so many of you know, we were really
6 hit by Winter Storm Uri over here in February, and over 13,000 turtles were affected by that stunning, cold stunning event, a tremendous effort of our partners that we're able to pass through, and one of our projects is to really help with that nesting, stranding, and rehabilitation activities.

This photo here is a photo of the convention center there in Corpus, which was opened up as a triage center because, obviously, with the cold stunning event that large, it somewhat overwhelmed some of the other places that we would typically rehabilitate in, and we were looking for places, but again, thanks to many, many partners up and down the coast who helped with that effort.

When we think about future Texas TIG

1 acquisition and construction activities, we're 2 going to continue. We've had some acquiring of 3 habitat. One of those is Follets Island, and 4 there are tracks that we're basically putting 5 together to basically help create that barrier 6 island and set it aside and so to keep it from 7 development.

8 Then I'll also just mention the

9 hydrological restoration of the Bahia Grande, 10 but also as a piece of that is some key

11 acquisitions for ocelot habitat and basically a 12 corridor there for many species that travel that

13 corridor and are in that migratory flyway as 14 well.

Then in addition to that, we're going to begin construction on Texas Rookery Islands. Specifically, we have one there in Dickinson Bay off of Galveston. We also are looking to begin construction on our Bessie Heights Wetland Restoration Project, and the McFaddin Beach and Dune Restoration Project, we also highlighted that at one of these meetings because that's a

1 large-scale project between Galveston and going
2 towards Louisiana. Pierce Marsh Wetland

3 Restoration is also included in that, and then
4 we hope to begin construction, as we talked
5 about, that hydrologic restoration portion,
6 which is a very large-scale project with many

7 different parts, but it's all intended to
8 re-create and revegetate that into a wetland

9 down there where it basically had become a dust
10 bowl for quite sometime.

Our future Texas planning activities
include completing planning, engineering, and design on oyster restoration projects. We also are completing a dredge material planning for wetland restoration along the Texas coast. We are looking to Rollover Bay Island and in other Texas Rookery Islands as far as creating the engineering and design to basically reestablish those islands. Essex Bayou Habitat Restoration Engineering, we would hope to complete planning on that soon.

Then, obviously, as many of us are going to

1 do, we're going to continue monitoring the
2 projects that we've already completed, 20 for us
3 and those that we've completed in our 2017
4 Restoration Plan, and we'll continue to work on

5 a Draft Restoration Plan 2.

6 With that tonight, I'm going to hand it

7 over to the Open Ocean Restoration TIG, Laurie
8 Rounds from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

9 Administration. Laurie?
MS. ROUNDS: Great. Thank you very much, Robin, and good evening, everyone. I'm Laurie Rounds with NOAA, and I'll be providing tonight's update for the Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group, which works to restore the wide-ranging and migratory species injured by the spill, including fish, sea turtles, marine mammals, deep seas corals, sturgeon, and birds.

The Open Ocean TIG has committed approximately $\$ 335$ million, or about 27 percent, of our total allocation of $\$ 1.2$ billion. These funds are being used to plan and implementation restoration projects and monitoring activities

1 for all restoration types in the Open Ocean
2 Restoration area. In addition, these funds are 3 used to provide oversight and comprehensive

4 planning by the Federal Trustees serving on all
5 seven of the Trustee Implementation Groups.
6 Some of our recent activities include

7 continuing to implement and monitor three early
8 restoration projects, including two projects to
9 restore for lost recreational uses on federally
10 managed lands in Mississippi and in Florida. We
11 continued work to implement the 21 restoration
projects approved in 2019, and these total
13 almost $\$ 242$ million. They implement restoration
14 across the Gulf of Mexico and in key breeding

15 grounds for injured bird species.
And implementation continued for three
17 Monitoring and Adaptive Management activities to
18 build critical information needs for Gulf

19 surgeon and marine mammal restoration.
We also began planning for our third
21 Restoration Plan in March by requesting the 22 submission of bird and sturgeon project ideas.

1 We received 76 project ideas before the May 10th 2 deadline that are being reviewed now, so thank 3 you to everyone who provided ideas.
indicators to help us evaluate our progress over
8 time. An example of this work is the strategic
9 planning that's underway for the Fish and Water
10 Column Invertebrates restoration type, which was
11 announced in March. A team of fisheries experts
12 is leading Trustee planning, including
13 stakeholder engagement, to identify restoration
14 objectives and indicators for this important
15 restoration type.

We also held public and stakeholder
17 roundtable meetings to get input on priorities for restoration, and we appreciate everyone's participation in those.

Finally, we held a webinar in April to provide updates on our activities and asked for input on how to best engage with stakeholders.

1 The webinar materials and input we received were
2 recently posted to our Gulf Spill Restoration
3 website. So we appreciate all the ideas that
4 were provided and look forward to using them to
5 tailor our outreach and engagement activities
6 moving forward.
I'd like to highlight next one of our projects called the Oceanic Fish Restoration Project, which was approved during early restoration. Beginning in 2017, pelagic longline vessel owners have participated in a voluntary 6-month proposed period each year as part of this project. During the proposed period, they refrain from pelagic longline fishing and have the option to fish with alternative gear which produces less bycatch and increases the survival of any bycaught fish.

Throughout the project, data is being collected to help determine progress towards our goals and the need for adaptive management. A summary monitoring report for the project will be released soon that documents the methods,

1 data, and results from the beginning of the 2 project in 2017 through 2020. 19 stakeholders. These improvements help to 20 increase the number of participants and broaden

21 the project's geographic scope over time.
The Oceanic Fish Restoration Project will
Initial monitoring results show the project has been successful in reducing fishing pressure on pelagic fish species and avoiding bycatch mortality in the pelagic longline fishery. The combination of reposed periods and the use of alternative gear allows for large numbers of both commercial and noncommercial species to continue breeding in the Gulf of Mexico, which encourages the restoration of pelagic fish populations.

So, in addition to describing progress towards our goals, the report will highlight the importance of adaptive management. Improvements to the project were identified by closely monitoring results and by listening to recommendations from participants and

1 continue to partner with pelagic fishermen
2 through at least 2022 and will also continue to 3 monitor and report progress and meeting our

4 goals to restore oceanic fish that were injured 5 by the oil spill.

6 Moving forward, the Open Ocean TIG will 7 continue to implement and monitor a total of 24 8 restoration projects and three monitoring and 9 adaptive management activities. We will

10 continue developing restoration objectives and

11 indicators that address our monitoring and 12 adaptive management priorities, and we're

13 excited to begin drafting our third Restoration
14 Plan for birds and sturgeon. We also will

15 continue our stakeholder outreach efforts,
16 including holding our annual TIG meeting later
17 this year.

Thank you very much for your attention and
19 continued participation in the Open Ocean

20 Restoration. Next, I'd like to turn it over to
21 Jon Wiebe with the State of Louisiana who is

22 going to provide the presentation for the

1 Region-wide TIG.

2

21 birds, sea turtles, oysters, and marine mammals, 22 as well as in April, we held two public meetings

1 for the draft RPEA, which generated substantive 2 interest and comment. For additional

3 information, please reference the fact sheet
4 associated with Region-wide.

6 Colonial Waterbird Monitoring MAM activity. It 7 is being implemented as we speak. I believe

8 they're flying through Louisiana right now. As

9 you can see from the representative images, this
10 MAM activity principally consists of two

11 components, that being coastal-wide aerial nest

12 photographic surveys as well as nest dotting or

13 counting analyses. This is a proven and highly
14 accurate monitoring method that was extensively

15 utilized during the Deepwater Horizon response and assessment.

The Region-wide TIG plans on utilizing
information generated from this activity along with established ongoing small-scale monitoring programs. They document both Colonial Waterbird Breeding Population Performance Project outcomes as well as to inform future restoration project

1 decision-making at a Region-wide scale.

6 We hope to begin implementation of select

7 projects for RP 1 as well as discuss and
8 identify current and future Region-wide

9 priorities.
10

17 possible.
I thank you for your time and your attention, and with that, I'll hand the floor back to Perry.

MR. FRANKLIN: All right. Thank you, Jon, so much, and thank you to all of the other speakers who have participated in tonight's webinar and have made tonight's webinar

Now we're going to Public Comment portion of tonight's meeting. I'd like to remind each of you that when you registered for tonight's webinar, as asked that if you wanted to make a comment during the meeting, we gave you

1 instructions of how to do that.

2 Now we have sort of a unique situation
3 tonight. We had over 10 individuals to do that,
4 and they signed up, but for whatever reason,
5 they are not online. And so I see that there
6 are over 108 attendees participating in

7 tonight's webinar.
8 So, at this time, I'm going to appeal to

9 each of you that if you would like to add your
10 name on the list to provide public comment, it

11 is very simple to do. All you need to do is go
12 to the Questions box, which is located on the

13 right-hand side of the webinar's interface, and 14 simply type in your name, and there, we have the

15 instructions on the screen. All you have to do
16 is type in your name into the Questions box to
17 request a speaking slot, and a person from the

18 team will reach out to you, and we will get you
19 going. Don't be bashful. If you have something

20 on your mind and you would like to offer a
21 suggestion, now is that time. We would like to

22 hear from you.

4 public comments, and as with previous Trustee 5 Council public meetings, the Trustees will be 6 listening only and will not be answering 7 questions, consistent with previous Trustee 8 Council meetings.

19 different than the access code, and we'll teach 20 out to you if you have any questions related to 21 that.

22
So I would like to remind you that the Trustee Council Representatives shown on this slide are here on the webinar to listen to your

All right. So there's no sense in me going through the directions for those people who have signed up previously because those individuals are not here, but I do want to remind everyone that you are muted automatically, and we will unmute you, should you put your name into the Questions box and request a slot to speak.

Also, if you called in using a phone and are planning to speak, you must enter your individual audio PIN. Note that this PIN is

As shown on this slide, if you're using a

1 phone, please make sure your computer audio is 2 not selected.

6 public comment, and so we're going to just pause

7 for a moment and give you a moment to do that,
8 and if you look at that slide, it tells you how

9 to enter your name into the Questions box to request a speaking slot. And you'll just have to enter your audio PIN if you plan to speak via your phone, and then we will unmute you, and we'll go forward.

So, at this time, I would just like to
pause to give individuals a moment if they would like to consider making public comment at tonight's meeting.
[Pause.]
MR. FRANKLIN: Maybe I can offer an incentive and give you more than 3 minutes. How about that?

Oh, look, we have someone, a brave soul

1 amongst us, Samantha Richman. Samantha Richman,

2 if you are part of an organization or
3 representing an organization, when we unmute
4 your line, if you will state your name for the
5 record and the name of the organization if there
6 is one, and then we will give you 3 minutes to make your public comment.

Samantha, the floor is yours, and again, if you're using your phone, you'll need to type in the audio PIN, and you can see the instructions on the screen.

MS. RICHMAN: Can you hear me?
MR. FRANKLIN: Yes. We can hear you, Ms. Richman.

MS. RICHMAN: Fantastic. I clicked a number of buttons. Thank you.

MR. FRANKLIN: We can hear you. So please proceed.

MS. RICHMAN: My name is Samantha Richman. I work for the U.S. Geological Survey out of San Francisco Bay.

My question is in regards to the

1 presentation with the living shoreline project.
2 I apologize. I did not catch who gave that
3 presentation, but my question is, what
4 structures are you using for that particular
5 living shoreline? Because it was a great
6 example.

7 MR. FRANKLIN: Okay. And consistent with
8 other meetings of this sort, this is going to be

9 a public comment that we will put into the public record, and that public record will be taken into consideration when the final documents are produced, and so there will not be a Q\&A at this time but simply for you to place your public comment into the record.

Did you have any other comments, Ms. Richman?

MS. RICHMAN: Any plans on using other living shoreline structures that are being created right now, one in particular called ECOncrete, which is a bioactive concrete? I'm not affiliated with the company, but they seem to have great success.

17 you are currently speaking, Ms. Davis, we cannot
18 hear you. You may need to view the screen and
19 look at the audio PIN process. You also may be 20 self-muted.

MR. FRANKLIN: All right. Does that conclude your comment, Ms. Richman?

MS. RICHMAN: Sure. I guess so. Thanks for taking me.

MR. FRANKLIN: Well, we thank you so very much.

The next individual to provide public comment is Carol Adams-Davis. Ms. Davis, if you are part of an organization, if you will represent that organization stating the name of that organization following your name, we would appreciate it. The floor is yours.
[No audible response.]
MR. FRANKLIN: If you are speaking, Ms.
Davis, we cannot hear you. You may be self-muted. If you will unmute yourself? If

MS. ADAMS-DAVIS: Can you hear me now?
MR. FRANKLIN: I can hear you loud and

1 clear. Please proceed.

19 next individual who is going to be in the queue

21 with her.

Jessica, if you can hear me, you can now is going to be Jessica Bibza, and we're working

1 proceed, and please state your name for the 2 record.

19 not in a very, maybe, user friendly, easy-to-digest format. Back in the days that we had the in-person open house events and there were projects that were proposed, you all put

1 together these really attractive fact sheets,
2 similarly did things like with the GEBF-funded
3 projects, with kind of a glossy document. There
4 was a map of the area, the project partners, the
5 project funding.
6 Something that was a little bit more

7 visually engaging, I think, for the general
8 public, I'm just going to pick one example, not

9 picking on that project at all. Seagrass
10 Recovery at Gulf Islands National Seashore,

11 that's a Florida project. If I look at

12 as-builts, it just says type of habitat, SAV. 02

13 acres was restored, and there's a little
14 description and the number of bird stakes that

15 were put in, the predator control that was
16 implemented. It's really great stuff, and a
17 nerdy geek like myself, I am fine with digging
18 into those details, but if I want to get the
19 public excited about how these funds are being

20 invested, the documents that are available

21 online are not the way to do that. So I urge

22 you to kind of come up with something that's a

1 little bit more user friendly.
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Bibza.

15 you want to take a look at some of those fact
16 sheets that have been prepared, that is the
17 location, gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov.
All right. So there are now 99 attendees.
19 Certainly, there has to be one other individual
20 who would like to make public comment, and we
21 would just like to give them a moment to
22 consider that, and if you would like to give

1 public comment, simply as the image on the slide
2 on the screen says, you just need to enter your
3 name into the Questions box, which is on the
4 lower right-hand side of the webinar's
5 interface, and we will get you in the queue and
6 call you right up.

So there are a couple names that were
8 previously on a list, and now they're not. If

9 Horacio is still online and if you wanted to give public comment, simply type your name into

11 the Questions box, and we will call you right up. You have your hand up, and if you have your

13 hand up for that purpose, we would like to get
14 you on that speakers list. Just simply type

15 your name into the Questions box, which is on
16 the interface of the GoToWebinar, and we will

17 get you right up.
All right. It looks like he has done that.
19 So, at this time, the next person forward to
20 give public comment is Mr. Horacio Polanco, and
21 if I'm misstating your name, I apologize.

22 Please proceed with your public comment, sir.

8 Tamaulipas, Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche,
MR. POLANCO: Yes. Hello. Hi, everybody. Congratulations for this opportunity. It's very good for everyone. I am calling from Mexico.

I am very, very interested in your program because it's very important for us too. My question is why don't put some money in this program in the Mexican coast state like Queretaro, et cetera.

Remember the ecosystem is the same, and we share a lot of fisher spaces, for example, who come from Florida to Yucatan each year, going and back, and I believe we need some support to this large sums of the local money because we believe it's very important and may the same program or the same monitoring activities to care the Gulf of Mexico because we have--we share the same water, the same system every day. But I believe this is very urgent.

I have information in datasets, funds give a hand to the Tamaulipas biologists to care the turtles, for example, but we believe we need

1 more hands to protect some areas in the Veracruz 2 state shores, near to the Tuxpan Port, for 3 example.

5 for this program. It's very good. Thanks for
6 the opportunity.

7

8 for participating and offering that public Comment portion of the public meeting. There is a listening panel who are taking notes of your public comments, and this is not a Q\&A session. That was during the open house where many of the same individuals did participate in a Q\&A session. So we thank you again for your participation.

19 So I'd like to remind you if you can hear 20 my voice and you're one of the 91, now,

21 individuals who are attending, we thank you very 22 much, first of all, for spending your precious

1 evening with us to learn about this process, and 2 secondly, if you are an individual who has a 3 comment based on the presentation that you have

4 listened to and received, simply go onto the 5 GoToWebinar interface, and in the Questions box, 6 if you'll just type in your name, we'll get you 7 in the queue to present your public comment. this time to see if others are typing in.
[Pause.]
MR. FRANKLIN: Okay. The next individual to provide public comment is Colin Nelson. Colin, if you will begin your public comment by stating your name for the record, and if you are representing an organization, the name of that organization. The floor is yours.

MR. NELSON: Thank you. My name is Colin Nelson. I am a private individual.

And my comment for the record is that in future presentations of this type, one of the items I would like to see addressed is a comment

1 from the organizers as to why the levels of 2 committed spending seem to be significantly 3 below the funding limits. On the bar charts

4 that we saw no various presentations, some of 5 them, I think, were as low as 15 percent, and

6 that just seems to be indicate to me that there 7 is money available, but the organization is not 8 actually keeping up with the availability of 9 that spending to create and manage projects. 10 I'm not asking, obviously, for money to be 11 wasted; however, I do note that there is a 12 significant gap there. And some explanation as

13 to why that exists would be, I think, useful to 14 the public.

With that, I wish you a good evening. Thank you for a very interesting presentation, and thank you for the opportunity to make a comment.

MR. FRANKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Nelson, for submitting that comment.

At this time, if there are any others who

22 would like to make formal public comment, we

1 would ask you to simply type in your name into 2 the Questions box, which is in the GoToWebinar 3 interface, bottom right-hand corner of your 4 screen, and we will gladly call you forward.

5 This will be our final pause to see if any
6 others would like to make public comment.
[Pause.]
MR. FRANKLIN: Okay. Seeing that we have no others, I do want to thank those individuals who came forward to provide public comment, as all of those comments are extremely important.

At this time, I would like to turn the meeting back over to Mr. Riechers to formally close out tonight's meeting. Thank you.

MR. RIECHERS: Thank you again, Perry.
I certainly want to take this moment here,
17 and really, as all of you can see by the work 18 in progress that we've shared with you tonight,

19 the Trustee Council and the Implementation Groups are all very committed to restoring the natural resources of the Gulf of Mexico for years to come.

1 We hope to continue with the pace that 2 we've been able--and the rate of progress that 3 we've been able to have up to this point here, 4 having our sixth meeting, but as we all know, 5 over the course of the last year and even moving 6 forward in this year, we're certainly having to 7 consider and go forward with safe practices in

8 light of the current public health situation.

But, again, on behalf of the Trustee Council and the Trustee Implementation Groups, I want to thank each of you very, very much for attending this webinar tonight. We hope you found the information presented both informative and useful, and I wish you all a very good

18

19

20

21

22
evening. Thank you again.
[Whereupon, at 7:17 p.m. Central, the
17 meeting concluded.]

| A | 51:6,10,18 | 9:21 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| able | Adams-Davis | Alabama |
| 11:4 12:21 26:17 41:9 69:3 | 4:8 58:8,21 59:2,9 | 2:11,12 9:11 20:21,22 21:6 |
| able--and | adaptive | 22:8,18 23:15 24:4 |
| 69:2 | 11:22 15:13 18:19 19:4,6,9,17 | alabamacoastalrestoration.... |
| accept | 31:4,9 45:17 47:20 48:15 | 24:5,6 |
| 27:11 | 49:9,12 60:15 | allocated |
| access | adapts | 11:20 28:2,5 35:14 |
| 16:17,20 20:11 26:2 54:19 | 18:21 | allocation |
| accomplish | add | 21:14 35:12,13 39:14 44:20 |
| 13:12 18:6 | 53:9 | 50:11 |
| accomplished | addendum | allow |
| 17:10 | 22:7 | 34:8 |
| accomplishments | addition | allows |
| 17:7 | 6:14 27:1 35:18 42:15 45:2 | 48:8 |
| accountability | 48:13 | alternative |
| 13:19 | additional | 47:16 48:8 |
| accurate | 22:10 38:16 50:11 51:2 | America |
| 51:14 | Additionally | 23:2,3 |
| acquired | 7:5 | American |
| 22:15 | address | 6:15 |
| acquiring | 46:4 49:11 | amount |
| 42:2 | addressed | 13:2 |
| acquisition | 66:22 | analyses |
| 17:20,21 22:14 42:1 | addressing | 51:13 |
| acquisitions | 10:14 20:13 | Andrews |
| 42:11 | Administration | 26:12 |
| Acreage | 3:8 9:19 44:9 | announced |
| 22:18 | administrative | 46:11 |
| acres | 17:5 | annual |
| 22:16 36:14,15 37:1,3,8 61:13 | aerial | 1:5 5:7,8 8:4,17 15:20,22 |
| acronym | 36:18 51:11 | 23:15 25:10 28:8 31:3 38:5,7 |
| 5:10 | affiliated | 49:16 |
| Act | 57:21 | annually |
| 31:1 | agencies | 28:3 |
| activities | 9:8 18:3 39:8 | answered |
| 10:18 14:16 17:6 20:9 21:13 | Agency | 5:15 |
| 23:8,12 24:4,19 25:2 31:10 | 9:17 | answering |
| 33:22 35:10,20 37:10 39:19 | agenda | 54:6 |
| 40:19 41:12 42:1 43:11 | 9:3 | anticipate |
| $44: 22 \text { 45:6,17 46:21 47:5 }$ | ago | 17:1 20:4 52:2 |
| 49:9 50:14 52:2 64:16 | 14:14 34:16 | anticipated |
| activities--we'll | agreed | 21:17 34:12 |
| 22:3 | $11: 1$ | apologize |
| activity | Agriculture | 57:2 63:21 |



| beginning | 2:11 9:10 20:21 21:3 | 32:19 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 27:4 40:8 47:10 48:1 | blast | busy |
| behalf | 27:10 | 25:4 28:8 30:10 31:5,18 39:13 |
| 69:9 | boat | buttons |
| believe | 26:1,6,9,11 | 56:16 |
| 51:7 64:13,15,19,22 | boating | bycatch |
| beneficial | 10:14 14:6 26:18 | 47:16 48:5 |
| 37:7 | border | bycaught |
| benefit | 40:15 | 47:17 |
| 14:19 15:1 17:15 38:1 | bordering | C |
| benefits | 33:8 |  |
| 18:10 | Borgne | C |
| benefitting | 28:17,19 | 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1 |
| 14:17 | bottom | calendar |
| Bernard | 33:6 68:3 | 28:6 |
| 29:15 | bowl | call |
| Bessie | 43:10 | 7:16 27:9 63:6,11 68:4 |
| 42:19 | box | called |
| best | 6:5 53:12,16 54:15 55:9 63:3 | 13:8 47:8 54:16 57:19 |
| 23:19 46:22 | 63:11,15 66:5 68:2 | calling |
| Bibza | BP | 64:3 |
| 4:9 59:20 60:3,6 62:8 | 8:12 11:1,12 12:4 13:3 | Cameron |
| bid | brave | $30: 15$ |
| 28:17 30:18 | 55:22 | Campeche |
| billion | breeding | 64:8 |
| 11:2,12,13,14,18,20 12:9 28:1 | 45:14 48:10 51:21 | Canals |
| 28:4 34:15 44:20 | Bren | 26:10 |
| bioactive | 9:12 | Captain |
| 57:20 | brief | 33:11 |
| biologists | 66:9 | care |
| 64:21 | bring | 64:17,21 |
| bird | 8:13 | Carol |
| 15:6 22:20 23:9 29:13 40:20 | broad | 4:8 58:8 |
| 45:15,22 61:14 | 12:14 15:5 | catch |
| Bird's | broaden | 57:2 |
| 29:17,20 | 48:20 | center |
| birds | broader | 41:14,15 |
| 10:11 15:1 19:11 20:14 23:1,7 | 34:10 | Central |
| 29:13 35:17 44:17 49:14 | brood | 1:11 23:2 69:16 |
| $50: 21$ | 29:6 | century |
| bit | budget | 33:9 |
| 21:20 29:2 61:6 62:1 | 34:14 | certainly |
| Blanchard | build | 39:12 62:19 68:16 69:6 |
| 9:15 | 19:8 33:13 45:18 | cetera |
| Blankenship | buildings | 64:9 |


| Chair | 51:11 | 21:11 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 2:7 7:21 50:7 | Coastwide | common |
| changes | 31:7,11 | 14:15 20:5 |
| 38:12 | code | communicate |
| Chart | 54:19 | 15:18,19 |
| 50:13 | cold | company |
| charts | 41:8,16 | 57:21 |
| 67:3 | Colin | compensating |
| Chatellier | 4:11 66:13,14,18 | 10:2 |
| 2:17 27:13,15,18 50:6 | collected | complete |
| Cheniere | 47:19 | 11:3 43:20 |
| 30:5 | Colonial | completed |
| Chris | 51:6,20 | 11:8 25:6,21 26:3 28:9,10,20 |
| 2:11,20 9:10,11,18 20:21 21:2 | Column | 30:11 32:20 33:21 36:17 |
| 24:8 35:2,6 39:3 | 46:10 | 37:4 40:11 44:2,3 |
| City | combination | completing |
| 26:8,9,10,11,12,12 | 48:7 | 40:20 43:12,14 |
| Civil | combined | completion |
| 33:19 | 11:7 | 34:12 |
| clear | come | components |
| 59:1 | 61:22 64:12 66:8 68:22 | 36:13 51:11 |
| clearly | coming | comprehensive |
| 36:19 | 40:19 | 14:11 45:3 |
| clicked | command | comprised |
| 56:15 | 33:11 | 39:7 |
| close | comment | computer |
| 68:14 | 7:6,9,13 9:3 16:19,21 25:18 | 55:1 |
| closed | 51:2 52:18,22 53:10 55:6,16 | computer's |
| 25:18 | 56:7 57:9,14 58:2,8 59:14 | 5:22 |
| closely | 60:8 62:20 63:1,10,20,22 | conclude |
| 48:16 | 65:9,12 66:3,7,13,14,20,22 | 58:2 59:14 |
| closing | 67:18,20,22 68:6,10 | concluded |
| 26:4 | comments | 69:17 |
| co-chair | 4:5 6:11 7:11 25:15,18 54:4 | concrete |
| 50:5 | 57:15 65:14 68:11 | 57:20 |
| co-implementing | commercial | condition |
| 36:12 | 18:9 48:9 | 10:12 |
| coast | Commission | conditions |
| 22:18,22 26:2 41:20 43:15 | 2:16 24:10 39:10 | 11:22 |
| 64:7 | commitment | conduct |
| coastal | 50:9 | 25:1 |
| 2:18 7:20 14:22 17:19 20:10 | committed | conducting |
| 20:14 27:18 29:1,12 32:22 | 15:17 21:12 24:16 28:1 35:11 | 38:10 |
| 33:14 34:18 35:16 38:3 | 39:18 44:18 67:2 68:20 | confirming |


| congratulations | 34:10 | create |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 64:2 65:4 | control | 28:19 30:7 42:5 67:9 |
| Conservation | 33:15 34:8 61:15 | created |
| 2:12,15 23:9 24:10 | convention | 57:19 |
| consider | 41:14 | creating |
| 55:16 62:22 69:7 | coordinating | 32:9 43:17 |
| consideration | 17:11 | creation |
| 57:11 | coordination | 28:17 30:4 36:15 |
| consist | 13:17 | critical |
| 32:8 | corals | 45:18 |
| consistency | 44:17 | cult |
| 13:19 | corner | 29:6 |
| consistent | 68:3 | current |
| 14:13 54:7 57:7 | Corpus | 18:20 51:5 52:8 69:8 |
| consists | 41:14 | currently |
| 51:10 | corrected | 32:14 34:1,22 58:17 |
| constitute | 59:18 | cycle |
| 38:7 | corridor | 22:21 |
| construct | 17:19 42:12,13 | D |
| 37:8 | cost | D |
| constructed | 11:7 12:8 24:21 28:16 30:8,14 | D |
| 33:2,5 36:16 37:2 | 32:12 | 5:1 |
| constructing | costs | damage |
| 37:18 | 62:4 | 1:7 5:6 10:5 11:14 |
| construction | Council | damages |
| 25:6 28:13 30:2 31:2 32:1,14 | 1:7 2:7 7:22 8:5 9:4,9 12:11 | 13:3 |
| 32:17,18 33:18 34:20 37:2 | 13:17 15:17 17:15 19:5 54:2 | data 17 19 ${ }^{\text {d }}$ |
| 39:21 40:8,22 42:1,16,19 | 54:5,8 68:19 69:10 | 15:15 17:6 19:19 47:18 48:1 |
| 43:4 | Council's | datasets |
| containment | 5:6,20 6:13,18 62:12 | 64:20 |
| 37:6 | counting | date |
| contains | 51:13 | 12:2,5 21:11,12 27:22 39:15 |
| 7:3 | County | 50:9 |
| continue | 36:8 | Dauphin |
| 22:3 26:21 37:10,13 38:2 42:2 | couple | 22:14,16,22 59:3 |
| 44:1,4 48:10 49:1,2,7,10,15 | 31:10 40:13 63:7 | Davis |
| 50:14 52:4 69:1 | course | 58:8,15,17 59:11,14 |
| continued | 8:7 10:20 39:8,15,20 40:13,16 | day |
| 3:1 40:9 45:11,16 49:19 | 40:20 69:5 | 64:18 |
| continues | court | days |
| 19:8 | 6:9 | 60:20 |
| continuing | Cover | deadline |
| 15:14,19 19:18 20:18 37:20 | 40:20 | 46:2 |
| 45:7 | COVID | deal |
| contribute | 25:8 | 50:17 |


| December | 42:17 | doubled |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 25:11 | different | 16:14 |
| decided | 13:15 16:4 39:20 43:7 54:19 | draft |
| 33:13 | difficulties | 25:13 37:13 44:5 51:1 |
| decision-making | 6:3 | drafting |
| 52:1 | digging | 49:13 |
| deep | 61:17 | drastically |
| 44:17 | direct | 38:12 |
| Deepwater | 5:19 6:7 | dredge |
| 1:65:5 8:15 10:4 38:18 51:15 | directed | 30:6 37:7 43:14 |
| defense | 62:11 | dredged |
| 33:14 | directing | 28:18 37:6 |
| Delta | 60:14 | dredging |
| 29:18,20 | directions | 29:20 32:8 |
| Department | 54:10 | Dressing |
| 2:12,21 3:5,10 7:21 9:16,20 | Director | 41:1 |
| 29:7 36:10 39:9 50:4 | 7:20 | driving |
| depend | discuss | 16:6 |
| 14:2 | 52:7 | due |
| deposits | discussed | 25:8 |
| 21:18 | 14:14 | dune |
| described | disseminated | 17:20 32:9 42:21 |
| 9:2 13:16 | 60:11 | dunes |
| describing | distributed | 22:19 |
| 48:13 | 28:3 | dust |
| description | distribution | 43:9 |
| $61: 14$ | 16:10,12 | $\mathbf{E}$ |
| design | DIVER | $\mathbf{E}$ |
| 29:11,17 30:22 43:13,18 | 62:2 | E |
| designed | diverse | 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1,1 |
| 33:15 | 14:1 | E\&D |
| details | Diversion | 34:19 |
| 50:12 61:18 | 34:5 | EA |
| determine | document | 29:10 |
| 10:6 13:4 47:19 | 17:2 51:20 60:16 61:3 | Earl |
| develop | documents | 26:11 |
| 15:4 19:10 31:16 | 47:22 57:12 61:20 | earlier |
| developing | doing | 9:15 14:7 32:16 |
| 31:13 36:2 49:10 | 8:20 20:2 21:6,9 35:6 38:12 | early |
| development | Doley | 11:2,6,19 15:7 20:7 22:4,7 |
| 12:15 15:11 19:15 23:8 42:7 | 9:18 | 23:13 26:1 33:9,12 35:18 |
| 46:6 50:17 | dollars | 45:7 47:9 50:16 52:5 |
| diagram | 28:4,13,22 31:22 39:14,17 | earned |
| 14:3 | dotting | 22:10 |
| Dickinson | 51:12 | EAs |


| 34:3 | enhancements | 67:15 69:15 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| easier | 26:5,15 | event |
| 16:17 | enhancing | 41:8,16 |
| east | 26:18 | events |
| 32:2 | enjoyable | 16:14 60:21 |
| eastward | 14:21 | everybody |
| 32:7 | ensure | 35:9 64:1 |
| easy-to-digest | 18:21 | everybody's |
| 60:20 | ensures | 35:5 |
| ECOncrete | 13:18 | everyone's |
| 57:20 | enter | 35:1 46:18 |
| ecosystem | 54:17 55:9,11 63:2 | example |
| 12:14 13:22 17:12 34:11 | entire | 14:18 15:2,5 18:3,12 46:8 |
| 64:10 | 12:14 14:7 | 57:6 61:8 64:11,22 65:3 |
| ecosystem-level | entities | Examples |
| 14:12 | 17:14 | 17:18 |
| ecosystem-wide | entrance | excited |
| 14:9 | 33:16 | 39:5 49:13 61:19 |
| effects | environmental | existing |
| 32:22 | 2:21 9:17 10:2 17:15 28:11 | 26:5,6 |
| effort | 36:11 38:1 39:11 | exists |
| 13:12 29:3,5 30:19 31:9,16 | erosion | 67:13 |
| 32:17 41:9,21 50:17 | 32:22 36:21 40:16 | expect |
| efforts | Essex | 12:20 |
| 8:14 31:6 38:18 40:9 49:15 | 43:19 | expended |
| either | established | 50:16 |
| 62:5 | 13:13 51:19 | experiencing |
| elected | estimated | 6:3 |
| 8:8 | 12:8 24:21 32:12 | experts |
| email | estimating | 18:8 46:11 |
| 7:1,2,8 16:10,12 27:10 | 30:13 | explanation |
| emails | Estuarine | 67:12 |
| 16:12 | 17:17 | extensively |
| encourages | estuary | 51:14 |
| 48:11 | 31:17 | extent |
| energy | et | 10:7 |
| 36:20 | 64:9 | extremely |
| engage | evaluate | 23:6 68:11 |
| 46:22 | 15:14 19:18 46:7 | F |
| 17:6 46:13 47:5 | evaluates $18: 20$ | face-to-face |
| engaging | evaluation | 38:11 |
| 61:7 | 17:8 46:5 | facilitate |
| engineering | evening | 9:2 |
| 40:21 43:12,18,20 | 5:3 8:3 27:17 44:11 66:1 | facilitator |


| 2:6 5:5 | fiscal | 7:10,14 58:11 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| facilities | 13:18 | Foot |
| 26:8,16 32:15 33:2,4 | fish | 29:17,20 |
| facility | 2:15 10:11 17:16 18:12,13 | forced |
| 32:18 | 19:12 24:9 31:7 37:22 44:16 | 25:9 33:12 |
| fact | 46:9 47:8,15,17 48:5,11,22 | formal |
| 6:18 51:3 61:1 62:9,12,15 | 49:4 | 67:22 |
| fall | fisher | formally |
| 23:16 38:6 52:3 | 64:11 | 68:13 |
| Fantastic | fisheries | format |
| 56:15 | 3:11 7:20 18:11 29:8 46:11 | 60:20 65:10 |
| far | 50:5 | fort |
| 17:10 35:13 39:18 43:17 | fishermen | 32:3 33:6,8,14,14,15,18,20 |
| feature | 18:9,15 49:1 | forward |
| 16:18 22:13 32:11 | fishery | 16:22 17:9 20:18 26:20 30:11 |
| featured | 48:6 | 30:21 37:9 47:4,6 49:6 55:13 |
| 41:3,4 51:5 | fishing | 63:19 66:9 68:4,10 69:6,7 |
| features | 10:15 14:6 26:19 47:15 48:4 | found |
| 16:16 | five | 6:19 16:1 31:3 62:13 69:13 |
| February | 9:6 11:6,11 | Foundation |
| 25:12 28:12 41:6 | flagship | 17:17 |
| Federal | 36:9 | four |
| 9:7 11:10 21:7 39:7 45:4 | floor | 9:7 |
| federally | 8:1 21:2 52:11 56:8 58:12 | Francisco |
| 45:9 | 66:17 | 56:21 |
| Federation | Florida | Frank |
| 4:9 60:7 | 2:14,15 9:10 15:9 18:3,15 | 26:9 |
| feedback | 24:1,1,9,11,17,19 25:2,3,10 | Franklin |
| 5:19 | 25:13,20 26:16,19,21 27:1,6 | 2:6 5:3,4 52:13 55:19 56:13 |
| final | 45:10 61:11 64:12 | 56:17 57:7 58:1,5,14,22 59:8 |
| 22:8 28:11 57:11 68:5 | Florida's | 59:10,16 62:7 65:7 66:12 |
| finalized | 24:15 26:2,7 | 67:19 68:8 |
| 12:11 27:5 29:10 34:21 35:21 | flying | fresh |
| finalizing | 51:8 | 34:8 |
| 27:2 52:3 | flyway | Friday |
| finally | 42:13 | 36:3 |
| 15:13 18:8 19:17 25:12 33:22 | focused | friend |
| 34:16 38:5 46:20 | 19:11 20:9 | 23:22 |
| financial | focusing | friendly |
| 15:22 17:5 | 13:15 14:19 34:2,17 | 60:19 62:1,4 |
| fine | Follets | front |
| 61:17 | 42:3 | 31:5 |
| first | follow | fully |
| 7:19,19 20:20 23:3 39:21 40:1 | 60:13 | 33:21 |
| 50:18 65:22 | following | fund |


| 11:20 17:15 22:10 38:1,2 | 4:7 56:20 | great |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| funded | getting | 21:8 44:10 50:17 57:5,22 |
| 26:5 28:20 30:2,22 31:6,11,12 | 20:7 | 61:16 |
| 31:15,21 37:22 | Gilbert | ground |
| funding | 26:11 | 20:18 |
| 13:1 17:11,13 18:2,5 21:16 | give | grounds |
| 22:12 24:15,17 27:21 29:11 | 5:18 6:7 7:15 8:10,19 10:17 | 45:15 |
| 29:17 31:8 50:8,13 61:5 67:3 | 27:14 35:9 55:7,15,20 56:6 | group |
| funds | 60:8 62:21,22 63:10,20 | 2:9 5:9,10 8:6 12:19 15:10,14 |
| 11:15 12:5 13:4,5,9 17:13,22 | 64:20 66:9 | 19:4,8,14,18 20:3 21:1 23:16 |
| 24:22 44:21 45:2 61:19 | given | 24:12 35:9 39:6 44:14 |
| 64:20 | 16:20 | Groups |
| future | gladly | 8:22 12:7 13:14,21 14:10 18:1 |
| 6:13 19:1 20:5,6 21:22 23:12 | 68:4 | 20:1,9,12 21:17 45:5 68:20 |
| 25:1 33:22 37:10 41:22 | glossy | 69:10 |
| 43:11 51:22 52:2,8 66:21 | 61:3 | guard |
| G |  | 33:16 |
| G | 8:18 14:21 37:9 38:19 53:11 | guess |
| G | 55:13 60:3 66:4 69:7 | 58:3 |
| 5:1 | goal | guidance |
| Galveston | 10:10 26:17 | 19:10 31:13 |
| 40:1,3 42:18 43:1 | goals | guides |
| gap | 12:14 13:1 47:20 48:14 49:4 | 12:15 |
| 67:12 | going | Gulf |
| Gardening | 8:18 11:15 20:20 21:19 39:21 | 9:6 11:11,17 12:14 13:22 14:8 |
| 37:21 | 42:2,15 43:1,22 44:1,6 49:22 | 14:12 16:1,5 17:12,15 20:10 |
| Gareth | 52:18 53:8,19 54:9 55:6 57:8 | 26:2 38:1 45:14,18 47:2 |
| 2:14 9:9 23:22 24:7,9 27:15 | 59:19,20 61:8 62:3 64:12 | 48:10 61:10 64:17 68:21 |
| gear $47: 1648: 8$ | $\underset{5}{\text { good }}$ | gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov |
| 47:16 48:8 | 5:3,14 8:3 23:22 27:17 44:11 | 6:20,21 62:14,17 |
| $61: 2$ | 64:3 65:5 67:15 69:14 GoToWebinar | H |
| geek | 1:8 63:16 66:5 68:2 | Haase |
| 61:17 | Government | 9:12 |
| general | 11:10 33:13 | habitat |
| 39:9 61:7 | governor's | 15:6 17:19 23:7 29:22 30:8 |
| Generally | 23:17 | 31:13 32:10 34:18 40:21 |
| 20:8 | Grand | 42:3,11 43:19 61:12 |
| generated | 31:20 32:1,2,7 33:9 | habitats |
| 51:1,18 | Grande | 14:2,4 15:1 20:10,11 29:12 |
| geographic | 17:19 30:4 40:10 42:9 | 35:16 |
| 13:5 48:21 | graphically | halted |
| geographies | 36:19 | 33:19 |
| 15:5 | grayish-looking | Hancock |
| Geological | $37: 5$ | 36:8 |


| hand | highest | 38:10,13 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 27:12 44:6 52:11 63:12,13 | 21:15 | hydraulic |
| 64:21 | highlight | 30:6 |
| hands | 25:22 31:19 36:7 47:7 48:14 | hydraulically |
| 65:1 | highlighted | 32:8 |
| hard | 40:7 42:21 | hydrologic |
| 41:4 | highlights | 43:5 |
| hatchery | 50:8 | hydrological |
| 29:6 | highly | 40:10 42:9 |
| hats | 51:13 | hydrology |
| 5:13 | historic | 29:19 |
| have--we | 32:3 |  |
| 64:17 | hit | I |
| he'll | 41:6 | i.e |
| 9:2 | HNC | 33:14 |
| head | 29:13 | ideas |
| 23:5 | hold | 27:11 45:22 46:1,3 47:3 |
| health | 25:9 | identified |
| 69:8 | holding | 48:16 |
| hear | 38:5 49:16 | identify |
| 5:9 8:21 9:1 20:2,5,17,20 | home | 46:13 52:8 |
| 53:22 56:12,13,17 58:15,18 | 32:3 33:10 | image |
| 58:21,22 59:22 65:19 | Homer | 32:5 63:1 |
| Heights | 9:19 | images |
| 42:19 | honor | 51:9 |
| held | 35:7 | Immediately |
| 1:8 8:13 25:15 38:9 46:16,20 | hope | 7:10 |
| 50:22 | 5:13 38:8 43:4,20 52:6 69:1 | impacted |
| Hello | 69:12 | 14:5 |
| 64:1 | hoping | imperative |
| help | 34:20 | 18:18 |
| 6:8 9:2 13:1 41:11 42:5 46:7 | Horacio | implement |
| 47:19 48:19 | 4:10 63:9,20 | 18:17 21:9 22:1,4 45:7,11,13 |
| helped | horizon | 49:7 |
| 41:21 | 1:6 5:5 8:16 10:4 34:1 38:18 | implementation |
| helpful | 51:15 | 2:9 5:9,10 8:6,22 12:7,19 |
| 7:3 | house | 13:14,21 14:10 18:1 20:1,3,8 |
| helps | 5:13 60:10,21 65:15 | 20:12,22 21:17 23:12,16 |
| 13:4 | Houston | 24:12 25:14 26:14,21 30:14 |
| Heron | 40:6 | 30:21 34:15 35:8 37:11,17 |
| 36:15 | Howard | 39:6 44:14,21 45:5,16 50:15 |
| Hey | 50:7 | 52:4,6 68:19 69:10 |
| 27:15 | huge | implemented |
| Hi | $13: 12$ | $51: 761: 16$ <br> implementing |
| 60:6 64:1 | hybrid | implementing |


| 25:4 | 12:2 | 67:16 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| importance | indicates | interface |
| 48:15 | 12:3 | 6:6 53:13 63:5,16 66:5 68:3 |
| important | indicators | Interior |
| 23:6 29:15 40:4 46:14 64:5,15 | 46:7,14 49:11 | 9:16 |
| 68:11 | individual | interpreter |
| importantly | 54:18 58:7 59:17,19 62:19 | 6:15 |
| 20:16 | 66:2,12,19 | intertidal |
| improve | individuals | 32:10 |
| 19:2 | 53:3 54:11 55:15 65:16,21 | introduction |
| Improvement | 68:9 | 8:3 |
| 40:14 | inform | Invertebrates |
| improvements | 51:22 | 46:10 |
| 48:15,19 | information | invest |
| improving | 5:14,17 12:18 16:17 17:5 19:1 | 34:14 |
| 14:19 20:13 | 38:17 45:18 51:3,18 60:18 | invested |
| in-person | 64:20 69:13 | 61:20 |
| 60:21 | informative | island |
| incentive | 69:13 | 22:15,16,22 29:13 30:15 |
| 55:20 | Initial | 31:20 32:1,16 33:3,7,10,12 |
| include | 48:3 | 40:1,4,20 41:2 42:3,6 43:16 |
| 12:17 17:4,18 23:8,12 29:13 | Initiation | 59:3 |
| 30:14 43:12 45:6 | 36:4 | islands |
| included | injured | 22:21 42:16 43:17,19 59:7 |
| 28:22 36:13 37:12 43:3 | 8:15 10:10 13:10 14:3 44:15 | 61:10 |
| includes | 45:15 49:4 | Isle |
| 11:18 12:13 20:14 22:18 28:4 | injuries | 29:14 32:3 |
| 29:3 50:19 | 10:3,7,8 14:7,9 | items |
| including | injury | 66:22 |
| 6:10 16:18 17:14 20:10 29:4 | 10:21 11:3 | J |
| 49:16 | 20:7 46:17,22 47:1 | Jean |
| incoming | instructions | 33:11 |
| 6:1 | 7:3,9,15 53:1,15 56:10 60:13 | Jessica |
| increase | integrated | 4:9 59:20,22 60:6 |
| 16:7 48:20 | 14:11 | Joe |
| increases | intended | 26:9 |
| 47:17 | 43:7 | join |
| increasing | intentioned | 24:14 |
| 26:18 | 12:17 | joining |
| Indian | interest | 21:4 |
| 40:16 | $8: 7 \text { 22:9 35:6 51:2 }$ | Jon |
| indicate | interested | 3:9 49:21 50:3 52:13 |
| 67:6 | $64: 4$ | $\underset{\text { Josie }}{\text { ¢ }}$ |
| indicated | interesting | 9:15 |


| jump | 17:10 | long-term |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 11:4 | leave | 18:10 |
| June | 33:12 | longline |
| 1:10 | leaves | 18:15 47:11,14 48:6 |
|  | 24:22 | look |
| K | Leonard | 17:9 29:19 47:4 55:8,22 58:19 |
| Kay | 2:14 9:9 23:22 24:8,9 | 61:11 62:15 |
| 9:16 | levels | looked |
| keep | 31:16 67:1 | 34:18 |
| 42:6 | leverage | looking |
| keeping | 17:22 | 16:22 20:12 26:20 32:7 41:19 |
| 67:8 | leveraging | 42:18 43:16 |
| key | 17:13 18:2 | lookout |
| 42:10 45:14 | life | 27:8 |
| kind | 22:21 | looks |
| 61:3,22 | light | 63:18 |
| know | 69:8 | lost |
| 6:1 8:8 10:20 13:22 27:10 | limits | 10:15 45:9 |
| 41:5 69:4 | 67:3 | lot |
| L | line | 5:17 14:16 23:1 64:11 |
|  | 56:4 | loud |
| Lafitte | list | 58:22 |
| 33:11 | 7:16 12:17 53:10 63:8,14 | Louis |
| Lake | listen | 37:19 |
| 28:17,19 | 54:3 | Louisiana |
| land $17.23 .3{ }^{\text {l }}$ | listened | 2:17,18 3:10 9:13 15:9 18:16 |
| 17:21 23:3 39:10 | 66:4 | 27:14,19,22 28:2,7 29:7 31:6 |
| lands | listening | 31:11 33:1 43:2 49:21 50:4 |
| 45:10 | 5:22 48:17 54:6 59:12 65:13 | 51:8 |
| Language | little | Louisiana-Texas |
| 6:15 | 10:17 21:19 29:2 30:13 61:6 | 40:15 |
| large | 61:13 62:1 | low |
| 16:9 41:16 48:8 64:14 | live | 67:5 |
| large-scale | 6:15 | lower |
| 28:14 30:16 34:6 40:3 43:1,6 | living | 29:14,18 31:16 63:4 |
| largest | 20:13 28:22 36:8,14,16,20 | Lynch |
| 22:17 | 37:18 57:1,5,18 | 9:16 |
| late | Livingston | $\mathbf{M}$ |
| Laurie | local | majority |
| 3:6 44:7,9,11 50:2,3 | $18: 2,864: 14$ | 32:19 |
| leading | located | making |
| 46:12 | 6:5 26:6 32:2 53:12 | 14:20 55:16 |
| learn | location | MAM |
| 66:1 <br> learned | $62: 11,17$ | 31:4,10 51:6,10 |


| mammal | 17:20 42:20 | 11:7,21 21:13,14 24:22,22 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 29:4 45:19 | means | 28:16,18 29:3 30:3,9,13,19 |
| mammals | 7:13 11:19 12:13 | 32:13 35:14,14 36:12 39:15 |
| 19:12 20:15 29:2 44:17 50:21 | meet | 39:16 44:19 45:13 50:9,11 |
| manage | 26:17 | 50:20 |
| 7:3 18:18 67:9 | meeting | mind |
| managed | 1:5 5:7,7,8,20,21 6:10 7:7 8:4 | 53:20 |
| 17:14,16 45:10 | 8:13,17,20 23:15 25:9,10,16 | minutes |
| management | 28:8 31:3 38:7 49:3,16 52:19 | 55:20 56:6 |
| 11:22 15:14,16 18:20 19:4,6 | 52:22 55:17 65:11,12 68:13 | Mississippi |
| 19:10,18,20 23:9 31:4,9 38:3 | 68:14 69:4,17 | 2:20,21 9:12 30:7,17 34:7 |
| 45:17 47:20 48:15 49:9,12 | meetings | 35:3,8 36:10 37:20 38:8,19 |
| 60:16 | 42:22 46:17 50:22 54:5,8 57:8 | 45:10 59:6 |
| manager | member | misstating |
| 50:4 | 9:7 20:22 | 63:21 |
| Manual | members | moment |
| 19:10 | 9:5 59:12 | 55:7,7,15 62:21 68:16 |
| map | mention | moments |
| 61:4 | 40:1 42:8 62:2 | 14:14 |
| March | mentioned | money |
| 25:16,19 36:17 45:21 46:11 | 8:16 9:14 14:6,18 25:20 62:9 | 13:3 64:6,14 67:7,10 |
| 50:19 | method | monitor |
| Marina | 51:14 | 18:18 22:4 40:17 45:7 49:3,7 |
| 26:10,12 | methods | monitoring |
| marinas | 47:22 | 15:13 17:6 18:19 19:1,3,6,9 |
| 26:6 | metrics | 19:17 23:13 26:3,13,22 31:4 |
| marine | 17:7 | 31:7,8,12,14 37:9 40:12 44:1 |
| 19:11 20:14,15 29:1,1,4 44:16 | Mexican | 44:22 45:17 46:4 47:21 48:3 |
| 45:19 50:21 | 64:7 | 48:17 49:8,11 50:15 51:6,14 |
| Marks | Mexico | 51:19 52:5 60:15 64:16 |
| 26:8 | 26:10 45:14 48:10 64:3,17 | month |
| marsh | 68:21 | 27:4,4 |
| 22:19 28:14,17,19 30:3,5,7,16 | mid-'60s | months |
| 32:10 36:8,15,22 37:3,8 43:2 | 32:20 | 34:16 |
| Mary | Mid-Barataria | mortality |
| 9:15,16 | 34:5 | 48:6 |
| material | migrated | move |
| 32:9 37:6,7 43:14 | 33:4 | 20:18 34:19 |
| materials | migration | moved |
| 47:1 | 23:2,5 | 30:21 31:1,22 |
| Maury | migratory | moving |
| 2:17 27:13,18 35:4 50:6 | 42:13 44:15 | 30:11 40:22 47:6 49:6 69:5 |
| maximize | miles | multiple |
| 17:12 18:22 | 36:13 | 14:17 15:6 28:9 29:3 |
| McFaddin | million | mute |


| 39:2,4 | Network | obviously |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| muted | 29:5 | 12:20 33:1 40:4 41:15 43:22 |
| 6:2 54:13 60:4 | never | 67:10 |
|  | 33:20,20 | occurred |
| N | new | 10:13 40:15 |
| N | 16:16 19:10 21:21 29:11,22 | ocean |
| 2:1,1 3:1,1 4:1,1 5:1 | 31:10 33:16 59:3 | 3:613:8 44:7,13,18 45:1 49:6 |
| name | night | 49:19 |
| 5:4 7:15 27:17 53:10,14,16 | 19:22 | oceanic |
| 54:14 55:9 56:4,5,19 58:10 | NOAA | 3:7 9:18 18:12 44:8 47:8 |
| 58:11 60:1 63:3,10,15,21 | 29:5 30:18 36:11 44:12 62:2 | 48:22 49:4 |
| 66:6,15,16,18 68:1 | NOAA's | ocelot |
| names | 17:17 | 42:11 |
| 63:7 | noncommercial | October |
| National | 48:9 | 22:15 36:2 |
| 3:7 4:9 9:18 17:16,17 37:22 | Norriego | offer |
| 44:8 60:6 61:10 | 18:3 | 18:10 53:20 55:19 |
| natural | north | offering |
| 1:6 2:13 5:5 8:15 10:3,5,7,10 | 23:5 | 65:8 |
| 10:21 11:14 14:1 68:21 | note | Office |
| naval | 54:18 59:13,18 67:11 | 39:10 |
| 33:17 | notes | officials |
| near | 65:13 | 8:9 |
| 6:13 21:22 40:15 65:2 | Notice | offshore |
| nearly | 36:4 | 32:9 |
| 50:20 | notifying | Oh |
| nearshore | 16:13 | 55:22 |
| 15:1 29:12 34:18 35:16 | NRDA | oil |
| need | 11:15 13:3 17:13 18:5 24:3 | 8:16 10:4,19 49:5 |
| 47:20 53:11 56:9 58:18 63:2 | 31:1,22 38:2 | Okay |
| 64:13,22 | number | 57:7 59:8,16 60:3 66:12 68:8 |
| needed | 7:7 16:15 25:21 48:20 56:16 | Once |
| 18:21 | 61:14 | 27:5 |
| needs | numbers | one-click |
| 24:2 45:18 46:5 | $48: 8$ | 16:20 |
| negatively | nutrient | ongoing |
| $14: 5$ | 35:16 | 31:6 34:1 51:19 |
| Nelson | nutrients | online |
| 4:11 66:13,18,19 67:19 | $34: 9$ | 53:5 61:21 63:9 |
| nerdy | $0$ | open |
| 61:17 | 0 | 3:6 5:13 13:8 44:7,13,18 45:1 |
| nest |  | 49:6,19 60:9,21 65:15 |
| $51: 11,12$ | 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1 14:5 | opened |
| nesting | objectives | 41:15 62:10 |
| 22:20 41:11 | 46:6,14 49:10 | Opening |


| 2:4 | oysters | 49:1 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| opportunities | 20:15 29:2 35:17 50:21 | partners |
| 14:20 26:19 35:18 | P | 21:8 39:7 41:9,20 61:4 |
| opportunity |  | partnership |
| 5:18 21:5 40:5 64:2 65:6 | $\mathbf{P}$ | 18:14 |
| 67:17 | 5:1 | parts |
| option | p.m | 40:9 43:7 |
| 38:14 47:15 | 1:11,11 69:16 | pass |
| order | pace | 28:15 29:21 32:12 33:8,16 |
| 23:18 | 69:1 | 41:9 |
| organization | PAGE | Pass-a-Loutre |
| 56:2,3,5 58:9,10,11 66:16,17 | 2:2 3:2 4:3 | 29:20 |
| 67:7 | Panama | Pate |
| organizer | 26:12 | 26:9 |
| 60:4 | panel | pause |
| organizers | 59:12 65:13 | 39:1 55:6,15,18 66:9,11 68:5 |
| 67:1 | Panhandle | 68:7 |
| originally | 26:7,19 | pay |
| 32:18 | Parish | 13:3 |
| Orleans | 28:15 29:14,15,18 30:6,16 | payments |
| 33:17 | Park | 12:4 |
| outcomes | 40:2,14 | pelagic |
| 51:21 | Parker | 18:15 47:10,14 48:5,6,11 49:1 |
| outreach | 26:11 | pelican |
| 16:14 47:5 49:15 | Parks | 29:16 |
| overall | 3:5 7:21 26:10 39:9 | people |
| 9:22 21:17 | part | 16:9 54:10 |
| overarching | 22:20 47:13 56:2 58:9 | percent |
| 12:13 | participants | 16:7 35:12 39:17 44:19 67:5 |
| oversee | 48:18,20 | percentage |
| 50:15 | participate | 21:15 |
| overseen | 65:16 | Performance |
| 19:5 29:5,7 30:18 | participated | 51:21 |
| oversight | 47:11 52:15 | period |
| 45:3 | participating | 25:18 47:12,14 |
| overwhelmed | 53:6 55:4 65:8 | periods |
| 41:17 | participation | 48:7 |
| owned | 38:14 46:19 49:19 65:18 | Perry |
| 59:4 | particular | 2:6 5:4 8:2,16 9:2 52:12 68:15 |
| owners | 24:18 26:7 57:4,19 | person |
| 47:11 | particularly | 7:8 38:15 53:17 63:19 |
| ownership | 29:1 | Pete |
| 23:11 | parties | 29:14 |
| oyster | $10: 9$ | phase |
| 15:2 29:5 37:21 43:13 | partner | 25:22 34:19 |


| phases | 11:6 12:19 16:13,19,21 21:20 | 61:15 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 26:3 | 22:5 23:14 27:6 28:9 30:12 | prepared |
| phone | 37:12 51:17 57:17 59:5 | 62:16 |
| 54:16 55:1,12 56:9 | plant | present |
| photo | 29:6 | 5:17 25:16 66:7 |
| 32:6 33:6 41:13,13 | Plaquemines | presentation |
| photograph | 28:15 29:18 30:5 | 6:11 7:10,14,19 8:18 27:13 |
| 36:18 | platform | 40:8 49:22 57:1,3 66:3 67:16 |
| photographic | 1:8 | presentations |
| 51:12 | please | 2:9 27:20 66:21 67:4 |
| pick | 6:1,4 24:4 27:8 50:12 51:3 | presented |
| 61:8 | 55:1 56:17 59:1,18 60:1 | 69:13 |
| picking | 63:22 | pressure |
| 61:9 | pleased | 48:4 |
| picture | 26:13 | prevents |
| 32:21 | pleasure | 38:12 |
| piece | 24:11 | previous |
| 23:3,6,10 42:10 | point | 16:8 37:12,17 54:4,7 |
| Pierce | 6:17 11:16 18:4 27:12 40:16 | previously |
| 43:2 | 41:1 65:4 69:3 | 19:9 25:5,20 26:22 31:21 |
| PIN | Polanco | 37:17,22 54:11 63:8 |
| 54:18,18 55:11 56:10 58:19 | 4:10 63:20 64:1 | principally |
| pirates | Population | 51:10 |
| 33:10,11 | 51:21 | principles |
| place | populations | 14:5 |
| 57:13 | 15:2 48:12 | priorities |
| placement | Port | 46:17 49:12 52:9 |
| 29:21 37:7 | 26:9 65:2 | private |
| places | portion | 66:19 |
| 41:17,19 | 9:3 16:9 43:5 52:18 65:12 | privilege |
| plan | possible | 35:7 |
| 12:12,12 13:20 14:14 20:6 | 23:19 52:17 | proactively |
| 21:21,22 22:8 23:9,15 25:13 | post-April | 15:18 |
| 25:17 27:2,7 28:11,22 29:10 | 11:20 | proceed |
| 30:1 31:16 34:3,3,12,17 | posted | 56:18 59:1 60:1 63:22 |
| 35:22,22 36:3,5 37:13,14 | 6:12 16:4 47:2 | process |
| 44:4,5,21 45:21 49:14 50:18 | PowerPoint | 20:7 26:4 27:1 34:22 36:2 |
| 52:3 55:11 | 6:11 | 58:19 66:1 |
| planned | practices | produce |
| 40:19 | 69:7 | 36:21 |
| planning | precious | produced |
| 11:21 21:13 24:18 27:7 31:9 | 65:22 | 15:20 57:12 |
| 36:5 43:11,12,14,20 45:4,20 | preconstruction | produces |
| $46: 9,1250: 1054: 17$ | $32: 6$ | $47: 16$ |


| $35: 17$ <br> program | $2: 18 \text { 9:17 27:18 32:11 }$ <br> proven | $\begin{array}{\|l\|} \hline \text { quarter } \\ \text { 24:17 37:3 } \end{array}$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 16:12,22 17:8 18:7 26:8 31:7 | 51:13 | Queretaro |
| 37:21 50:3,5 64:4,7,16 65:5 | provide | 64:9 |
| program--or | 16:20 45:3 46:21 49:22 53:10 | question |
| 16:11 | 58:7 66:13 68:10 | 56:22 57:3 64:6 |
| programmatic | provided | questions |
| 12:11,12 13:20 14:13 15:11 | 11:13 26:1 29:17 46:3 47:4 | 5:14 6:5 24:2 38:16 53:12,16 |
| 19:15 | provides | 54:7,15,20 55:9 60:9 63:3,11 |
| programs | 13:17 | 63:15 66:5 68:2 |
| 51:20 | providing | queue |
| progress | 6:14 44:12 | 59:19 63:5 66:7 |
| 15:19 46:7 47:19 48:13 49:3 | public | quick |
| 68:18 69:2 | 1:5 4:5 7:11 8:17 9:3 10:3 | 9:22 |
| project | 16:13,19,21 17:2,5 20:7 | quickly |
| 15:8,21 17:7 18:4,13 22:13 | 23:11 25:9,10,15,16,17,17 | 16:2 |
| 26:2,4,5,17 27:11 28:15,17 | 25:18 26:16 27:3,10 46:16 | quite |
| 29:18,19 30:4,5,17 31:19,20 | 50:19,22 52:18 53:10 54:4,5 | 43:10 |
| 32:6,13 34:6 36:7,9,10,13 | 55:6,16 56:7 57:9,10,10,14 |  |
| 37:11 40:3,14,17 41:1,3,5 | 58:7 60:12 61:8,19 62:11,20 | R |
| 42:20,21 43:1,6 45:22 46:1 | 63:1,10,20,22 65:8,11,12,14 | R |
| 47:9,13,18,21 48:2,3,16,22 | 66:7,13,14 67:14,22 68:6,10 | 5:1 |
| 51:5,21,22 57:1 61:4,5,9,11 | 69:8 | Rabbit |
| project's | publication | 30:15 |
| 34:14 48:21 | 37:14 | ramp |
| projects | publicly | 26:9,11 |
| 11:6,8 12:8,16,18 14:17,18,22 | 59:4 | ramps |
| 15:4,6 16:2,13 18:17,21 19:2 | published | 26:6 |
| 19:11 20:17 21:10,13 22:1,4 | 35:21 36:4 | range |
| 22:11 23:13 24:18,20 25:1,4 | purchase | 14:4 |
| 25:7,14,21,22 26:22 27:9 | 59:3 | rate |
| 28:13,14 29:4,6 30:2,11,14 | purpose | 36:21 69:2 |
| 30:20,22 32:8 34:19 37:11 | 63:13 | re-create |
| 37:17,18 39:20,22 40:11,13 | pushed | 43:8 |
| 41:10 43:13 44:2,22 45:8,8 | 23:18 | reach |
| 45:12 47:8 49:8 50:10,16,20 | put | 6:7 53:18 |
| 52:5,7 60:11,22 61:3 67:9 | 54:14 57:9 60:22 61:15 64:6 | reached |
| property | putting | 11:11 |
| 22:17 23:6,10 38:4 59:5 | 42:4 | reaching |
| proposed | Q | 16:11 read |
| 25:14 26:15 34:14 47:12,13 50:20 60:22 | Q\&A | 12:21 |
| protect | 57:13 65:14,16 | ready |
| 65:1 | quality | 27:11 |
| protection | 2:22 14:19 20:13 36:11 39:11 | really |



| restoration | Richman | Samantha |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 2:19 3:6,9 8:22 10:8 11:2,4,6 | 4:7 56:1,1,12,14,15,19,19 | 4:7 56:1,1,8,19 |
| 11:19,21 12:4,11, 13, 15,16 | 57:16,17 58:2,3 | San |
| 12:18,19 13:5,7,9,10,12,15 | ridge | 56:20 |
| 14:13,16,17,22 15:4,8 16:6 | 28:14 30:3,5,8 | SAV. 02 |
| 16:19 17:8,12,21 18:4,13,17 | Riechers | 61:12 |
| 18:22 19:11,13,21 20:2,6,17 | 2:7 3:4 7:20 8:2 38:22 39:3 | saw |
| 21:16,20,21,22 22:5,5,8 | 68:13,15 | 67:4 |
| 23:14,14 24:1,3,20 25:1,13 | right | says |
| 26:1 27:2,6,7,19 28:9,11,22 | 10:22 51:8 52:13 54:9 55:3 | 61:12 63:2 |
| 29:10 30:1,12,15 31:14 34:2 | 57:19 58:1 62:18 63:6,11,17 | scale |
| 34:3,11,17 35:15,18,22,22 | 63:18 | 52:1 |
| 36:3,5,5 37:12,13 38:6,18 | right-hand | scientific |
| 40:10,21 42:9,20,21 43:3,5 | 6:6 53:13 63:4 68:3 | 13:18 |
| 43:13,15,19 44:4,5,7,22 45:1 | Rim | scope |
| 45:2,8,11,13,19,21 46:6,10 | 40:14 | 48:21 |
| 46:13,15,18 47:2,8,10 48:11 | River | screen |
| 48:22 49:8,10,13,20 50:5,16 | 30:7,17 34:7 | 53:15 56:11 58:18 63:2 68:4 |
| 50:18 51:22 52:3,5 59:5,6 | Robin | screening |
| restore | 2:7 3:4 7:19 8:1 21:3 38:21 | 34:22 |
| 8:14 10:10 15:6 17:15 29:19 | 39:2 44:11 | sea |
| 31:1 44:14 45:9 49:4 | Rollover | 15:8 22:19 23:7 40:14 44:16 |
| restore.ms | 43:16 | 50:21 |
| 38:20 | Ron | Seagrass |
| restored | 50:7 | 61:9 |
| 31:22 61:13 | rookeries | seas |
| restoring | 29:16 | 44:17 |
| 10:2 11:17 14:12 15:8 18:11 | Rookery | Seashore |
| 18:13 20:10 68:20 | 41:2 42:16 43:17 | 61:10 |
| result | Rounds | seat |
| 10:16 | 3:6 44:8,10,12 | 19:12 |
| resulting | roundtable | second |
| 10:4 | 46:17 | 5:21 27:2 35:22 |
| results | RP | secondly |
| 19:2 48:1,3,17 60:10 | 27:5 30:21 34:16,21 52:7 | 66:2 |
| resumed | RPEA | sediment |
| 33:20 | 28:20 51:1 | 28:19 30:17 34:5,9 |
| return | run | see |
| 23:4 | 28:9 | 6:14 12:1,19 13:6 21:15 23:4 |
| revegetate | S | 24:16 32:15 33:6 35:11 37:5 |
| 43:8 review | $\overline{\mathbf{S}}$ | 38:17 51:9 53:5 55:3 56:10 66:10,22 68:5,17 |
| 9:22 15:12 17:1,4 19:16 25:15 | 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1 | seeing |
| reviewed | safe | 14:15 60:10 68:8 |
| 46:2 | 69:7 | seek |


| 10:8 | 32:11 36:9 37:19 40:16 57:1,5 | 12:20,21 21:11 24:16 54:3,22 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| seen | 57:18 | 55:8 63:1 |
| 12:22 | shorelines | slides |
| select | 36:14,16,20 | 8:19 |
| 52:6 | shores | slot |
| selected | 65:2 | 53:17 54:15 55:10 |
| 55:2 | short- | small |
| selection | 18:10 | 29:21 |
| 12:16 | show | small-scale |
| self-muted | 26:14 48:3 | 51:19 |
| 58:16,20 | shown | somewhat |
| sense | 14:3 30:12 54:2,22 | 41:17 |
| 54:9 | shows | soon |
| sent | 10:19 13:2 16:18 32:21 33:3 | 43:21 47:22 |
| 16:12 | 36:19 | Sorry |
| September | side | 39:3 |
| 35:21 | 6:6 53:13 63:4 | sort |
| serve | Sign | 37:5 53:2 57:8 |
| 5:4 | 6:15 | soul |
| serves | signed | 55:22 |
| 5:7 | 53:4 54:11 | sources |
| serving | significant | 17:12 |
| 45:4 | 67:12 | south |
| session | significantly | 23:2 29:21 33:17 40:6,10 |
| 65:14,17 | 67:2 | spaces |
| set | similar | 64:11 |
| 42:6 | 59:6 | Spanish |
| settlement | similarly | 28:15 |
| 8:12 11:11, 13 12:2,10 13:13 | 61:2 | speak |
| 28:1 | simple | 51:7 54:15,17 55:11 |
| seven | 53:11 | speakers |
| $45: 5$ | simply | 52:15 63:14 |
| share | 53:14 57:13 63:1,10,14 66:4 | speaking |
| 21:5 26:20 64:11,18 | 68:1 | 20:8 53:17 55:10 58:14,17 |
| shared | sir | special |
| 68:18 | 63:22 | 8:10 |
| sharing | site | species |
| 17:9 | 16:7,16 27:20 32:6 | 18:11,14 22:20 38:3 42:12 |
| sheet | situation | 44:15 45:15 48:5,9 |
| 51:3 | 53:2 69:8 | specifically |
| sheets | sixth | 37:16 42:17 |
| 6:18 61:1 62:9,12,16 | 1:5 5:7 8:17 69:4 | spectacular |
| Shellfish | slated | 23:10 |
| $31: 7$ | 37:14 |  |
| shoreline | slide | $8: 14$ |


| spending | 41:6 | supporting |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 39:13 65:22 67:2,9 | stranding | 15:10 19:14 |
| spent | 29:4 41:11 | supports |
| 13:4 39:16 | strategic | 19:5 |
| spill | 46:8 | sure |
| 8:16 10:4,13,16,19 12:6 14:3 | Strategically | 55:1 58:3 |
| 16:1,5 44:16 47:2 49:5 | 26:1 | Surely |
| spoil | strive | 55:5 |
| 30:7 | 15:3 | surf |
| spot | structures | 33:2 |
| 23:1 | 57:4,18 | surgeon |
| spring | stuff | 45:19 |
| 23:18 34:13 | 61:16 | Survey |
| St | stunning | 4:7 56:20 |
| 26:8,9,12 29:15 37:19 | 41:8,8,16 | surveys |
| staff | sturgeon | 51:12 |
| 21:8 | 44:17 45:22 49:14 | survival |
| stages | submission | 47:17 |
| 39:20 | 45:22 | swimming |
| stakeholder | submitting | 10:15 |
| 46:13,16 49:15 | 67:20 | system |
| stakeholders | subscribers | 14:8 31:12 64:18 |
| 46:22 48:19 | 16:15 | T |
| stakes | subsequent | I |
| 61:14 | $26: 15$ | T |
| stands | substantive | 2:1,1 3:1,1 4:1,1 |
| 5:11 | 51:1 | tab |
| start | subtidal | 60:16 |
| 11:4 19:22 27:21 33:19 39:21 | 36:14 37:1,19 | Tabasco |
| started | success | 64:8 |
|  | 18:19,20 57:22 | table |
| starting | successful | 12:22 13:7,16 |
| 27:6 40:17 | 26:14 48:4 | tabs |
| starts | suggestion | $60: 15,16$ |
| 29:11 | 53:21 | tailor |
| state | summaries | 47:5 |
| 9:13 13:6 18:2,5 20:21 23:22 | 17:4 | take |
| 24:4 25:2 27:14 29:16 33:1 | summary | 7:11 28:18 62:15 68:16 |
| 38:22 40:2,14 49:21 56:4 | 15:22 47:21 | taken |
| 60:1 64:7 65:2 | summit | 24:13 57:11 59:13 |
| States | 23:20 38:6,9 | talk |
| 9:6,20 11:11 15:7 | sums | 10:18 21:19 |
| stating | 64:14 | talked |
| 58:10 66:15 | support | $43: 4$ |
| Storm | 11:16 17:8 64:13 | Tamaulipas |


| 64:8,21 | third | 42:4 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| targeted | 27:7 45:20 49:13 | transcribe |
| 18:11 | three | 6:10 |
| teach | 21:20 26:5 29:11 30:20 39:8 | transcript |
| 54:19 | 45:7,16 49:8 | 6:12 |
| team | Thursday | transparency |
| 46:11 53:18 | 1:10 | 13:18 |
| technical | tidbit | travel |
| 6:3 | 33:8 | 42:12 |
| telephone | TIG | tremendous |
| 5:22 | 2:11,14,17,20 3:4,6,9 5:9 | 41:8 |
| tell | 24:18 25:3,13,20 26:16,21 | triage |
| 9:4 62:3 | 27:1,6 38:8 41:22 44:7,18 | 41:15 |
| tells | 49:6,16 50:1,6 51:17 | Trustee |
| 55:8 | TIG's | 1:7 2:7,9 5:6,8,10,20 6:12,18 |
| tentatively | 25:10 50:8 | 7:22 8:5,5,22 9:4,9,13 12:10 |
| 22:11 | TIGs | 13:13,17 15:17 18:1 19:5 |
| term | 13:15 19:6 | 20:1,3,8,11,22 21:7,16 23:16 |
| 11:15 | time | 24:11 27:20 35:8 39:6,8 |
| terms | 6:2 7:18 16:20 24:13 35:1 | 44:13 45:5 46:12 54:2,4,7 |
| 37:16 | 46:8 48:21 52:10 53:8,21 | 62:12 68:19 69:9,10 |
| Terre | 55:14 57:13 59:18 63:19 | Trustees |
| 31:20 32:1,7 33:10 | 66:10 67:21 68:12 | 5:16,19 6:17 8:13 10:1 14:10 |
| Terrebonne | timeline | 15:3 21:7 27:22 28:5,7 30:10 |
| 29:14 30:3 | 10:19 12:1,4 | 34:2 35:3 36:12 45:4 54:5 |
| Texas | today | try |
| 3:4,5 7:20 9:14 15:9 38:22 | 12:2 | 6:7 |
| 39:6,8,9,10,15 40:10 41:1,22 | tonight | tuna |
| 42:16 43:11,15,17 | 5:10,17 7:13 8:11 11:16 20:20 | 18:14 |
| thank | 21:4,15 22:13 24:12,14 | turn |
| 8:2,2,6 21:3,3,7 24:8,13 27:15 | 31:20 35:1,5 36:8 44:6 53:3 | 23:21 35:2 38:21 49:20 68:12 |
| 35:4 39:3 44:10 46:2 49:18 | 68:18 69:12 | turned |
| 50:2 52:10,13,14 56:16 58:5 | tonight's | 40:12 |
| 59:9,10 60:13 62:6,7 65:7,17 | 6:10,22 7:4,6,10,14 8:18 | turtles |
| 65:21 66:8,18 67:16,17,19 | 44:13 52:15,16,19,20 53:7 | 15:8 19:12 20:15 22:19 23:7 |
| 68:9,14,15 69:11,15 | 55:4,17 65:11 68:14 | 41:7 44:16 50:21 64:22 |
| thanks | top | Tuxpan |
| 8:10 41:19 58:3 65:5 | 32:5,15,21 | 65:2 |
| themes | total | two |
| 14:15 20:5 | 11:5,18 13:2 21:14 24:21 | 13:7 22:10 26:6 28:13,14 30:1 |
| things | 35:12,13 39:17 44:20 45:12 | 34:2 45:8 50:22 51:10 |
| 61:2 | 49:750:11 | type |
| think | totaling | 46:10,15 53:14,16 56:9 61:12 |
| $\begin{aligned} & 32: 21 \text { 39:19 40:22 41:3,22 } \\ & 61: 767: 5,13 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 11: 12 \\ & \text { tracks } \end{aligned}$ | $63: 10,1466: 6,2168: 1$ types |


| 12:15 13:10 15:4 19:13 | 6:4 19:1 22:9,10,20 23:1 | 16:7 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 35:15 45:1 | 26:16 30:6 37:7 48:7 | visually |
| typically | useful | 61:7 |
| 41:18 | 5:17 67:13 69:14 | voice |
| typing | user | 65:20 |
| 66:10 | 60:19 62:1,4 | voluntary |
| U | uses | 47:12 |
| U.S | usual | W |
| 4:7 33:13 56:20 | 15:21 | want |
| understand | utilized | 6:17 8:9 9:1 38:17 54:12 |
| 13:1 | 51:15 | 60:17 61:18 62:15 65:10 |
| undertook | utilizes | 66:8 68:9,16 69:11 |
| 20:4 | 18:5 | wanted |
| underway | utilizing | 52:21 59:2 60:8 63:9 |
| $\begin{aligned} & 11: 916: 232: 1434: 3,2246: 5 \\ & 46: 9 \end{aligned}$ | 51:17 | $\begin{aligned} & \text { War } \\ & 33: 19 \end{aligned}$ |
| undeveloped | V | wasted |
| 22:17 | variety | 67:11 |
| unique | 14:1 20:9 | watching |
| 53:2 | various | 16:9 |
| United | 35:15 67:4 | water |
| 9:20 | Veracruz | 14:19 20:13,19 34:8 46:9 |
| unknown | 64:8 65:1 | 64:18 |
| 11:22 | verbal | Waterbird |
| unmute | 7:6,9 | 51:6,20 |
| 54:14 55:12 56:3 58:16 | vessel | wave |
| upcoming | 47:11 | 36:20 |
| 15:11 19:15 23:8 | Vice | way |
| update | 50:7 | 61:21 |
| 8:19,21 19:3 24:1,15 27:14,21 | video | we'll |
| 35:9 44:13 50:8 | 6:16 | 21:21 37:8,18 38:5,6 44:4 |
| updated | view | 52:4 54:19 55:13 66:6,9 |
| 16:16 | 58:18 65:4 | we're |
| updates | virtual | 11:15 14:15 15:19 16:22 |
| 16:5 19:21,22 46:21 | 5:21 25:9, 16 38:13 | 17:11,13 18:8 20:20 34:20 |
| upwards | virtually | 35:6 39:20 40:8,17 41:9 42:1 |
| 34:14 | 1:8 38:9 | 42:4,15 44:1 49:12 52:18 |
| urge | visit | 55:6 59:20 69:6 |
| 61:21 | 24:4 | we've |
| urgent | visitor | 8:20 21:6,11,12 28:7,8 31:3,5 |
| 64:19 | 40:4 | 31:17 35:11 39:16 42:2 44:2 |
| Uri | visitors | 44:3 68:18 69:2,3 |
| 41:6 | 14:21 | weary |
| use | visits | 36:1 |


| webinar | 19:4,7,8,14,18 20:4 21:6,8 | 10-year |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 6:22 7:4 46:20 47:1 52:16,16 | 35:19 44:4 45:11 46:4,8 | 15:7 |
| 52:21 53:7 54:3 55:4 69:12 | 56:20 68:17 | 100 |
| webinar's | working | 50:20 |
| 6:6 53:13 63:4 | 16:22 18:8 59:16,20 | 107 |
| webinars@dwhtig.org | works | 39:16 55:3 |
| 7:1 | 44:14 | 108 |
| website | would--at | 53:6 |
| 6:13,19 16:1,6,10,11 24:5 | 34:6 | 10th |
| 38:19 47:3 62:3,13 | X | 46:1 |
| weeks | X | 11 |
| 17:21 30:19 | Y | 12:6 50:20 |
| Welcome | yeah | 12,000 |
| 8:4 | yeah | 16:15 |
| Wells | 60:17 | 13,000 |
| 2:20 9:11 35:3,4,7 39:2 |  | 41:7 |
| West | 8:13 15:20 16:8 17:3 20:4 | 130,000 |
| 22:14,16 31:20 32:1 59:3 | $25: 3,1227: 8 ~ 28: 6,6,12,21$ $29 \cdot 934 \cdot 13,21 ~ 35 \cdot 10,2037 \cdot 4$ | 16:6 |
| western | 29:9 34.13,21 35:10,20 37.4 | 15 |
| 33:7 | $37: 15$ 38:6,9,10 40:7 47:12 $49: 1752 \cdot 464: 12$ 69:5,6 | 25:7 28:3 67:5 |
| wetland | 49:17 52:4 64:12 69:5,6 | 15-year |
| 14:22 29:12 34:17 42:19 43:2 | year--we | 12:3 |
| 43:8,15 | 31:15 | 157 |
| wetlands | years | 30:2 |
| 10:11 34:10 35:15 | 12:6 28:3 68:22 | 17 |
| wide | Yucatan | 1:10 |
| 14:1,4 | 64:12 | 180 |
| wide-ranging | Z | 30:19 |
| 44:15 | zone | 1800s |
| Wiebe | 33:3 | 33:13 |
| 3:9 49:21 50:2,3 |  | 1834 |
| wildlife | 0 | 33:18 |
| 2:15 3:5,10 4:9 7:21 14:4 |  | 184 |
| 17:16 24:10 29:7 38:1 39:9 | 1 | 21:12 |
| 50:4 60:6 | 1 | 187 |
| Wilkes | 11:1,18 22:5 23:14 50:18 52:3 | 24:21 |
| 9:19 | 52:7 | 19 |
| Winter | 1.2 | 25:14 |
| 41:6 | 28:12 44:20 | 1959 |
| wish | 1.4 | 32:19 |
| 67:15 69:14 | 28:1,4 | 19th |
| wondered | 1.6 | 33:9 |
| 59:4 | 12:9 | 2 |
| work ${ }^{\text {w }}$ (1:16 15:10,14,18 16:117:1 | 10 | $\bigcirc 2$ |
| 11:16 15:10,14,18 16:1 17:1 | 53:3 | 2 |


| 22:5 23:14 25:14 27:5 34:15 | 30 | 60 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 35:22 44:5 | 29:3 | 4:9 16:4 |
| 20 | 335 | 61 |
| 16:7 44:2 | 44:19 | 28:18 |
| 20.8 | 35 | 64 |
| 11:12,13 | 2:22 | 4:10 |
| 2010 | 350 | 65 |
| 10:20 | 50:10 | 11:6 30:8 |
| 2011 | 39 | 66 |
| 11:1,5 | 3:5 | 4:11 |
| 2016 |  |  |
| 2017 | 400 | 7 |
| 37:2 44:3 47:10 48:2 | 30:13 | 29:10 30:1 |
| 2019 | 44 | 7.1 |
| 36:17,17 45:12 | 3:8 | 11:19 |
| 2020 | 45 | 7:17 |
| 16:4,14 22:15 28:6 37:4 48:2 | 39:17 | 1:11 69:16 |
| 2021 | 46 | 700 |
| 1:10 22:7 23:16 | 36:14,15 37:1,3,8 | 11:21 |
| 2022 | 490 | 76 |
| $\begin{aligned} & 23: 18 \text { 49:2 } \\ & \mathbf{2 0 3 1} \\ & 28 \cdot 4 \end{aligned}$ | 24:22 | 46:1 |
|  | 5 | 77 $16 \cdot 12$ |
| 28:4 | 5 | 16:12 |
| 21.1345 .11 | 2:6 28:1,20 | 8 |
| 210 | 5-year | 8 |
| 12:8 15:21 | 15:11 19:15 | 2:7 34:17,17,21 |
| 238 | 50 |  |
| 39:15 | 3:11 36:12 | 11:13 |
| 24 |  | 838 $22 \cdot 15$ |
| 2:16 49:7 | 50:9 | 22:15 $\mathbf{8 6 6}$ |
| 242 | 56 4 35:12 | 866 11:7 |
| 27 | 57 | 88 |
| 2:19 44:19 | 24:18,20 25:7 | 28:16 |
| 295 | 59 $4: 8$ | 9 |
| 21:14 35:13 | 4:8 | 91 |
| 3 | 6 | 65:20 |
| 3 | $6$ | 92.5 |
| $\begin{aligned} & \text { 22:6,8 23:14 26:1 36:3,6 } \\ & 37: 13 \text { 55:20 56:6 } \end{aligned}$ | 30:21 35:14 36:13 <br> 6-month | 32:13 $\mathbf{9 9}$ |
|  | 6-month | 62:18 |
| 3.2 34 | 6:03 |  |
|  | 1:11 |  |

