



U.S. OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION: MANAGING RISKS TO MOVE FORWARD

The Ecology of the Gulf Of Mexico, Post Macondo

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Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force* - Background

- >25% of U.S. oil supply comes from Gulf of Mexico
- 1/3 of domestic seafood production in Gulf
- Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill (4/20/10)
 - Approximately 4.9 million barrels released.
 - 88,522 square miles of waters closed for fishing.
- **Spill Effects:**
 - Significant adverse ecosystem impacts
 - Businesses effected – commercial fishing in particular, tourism
 - Behavioral health problems increased
 - Exacerbated several negative effects of Hurricane Katrina
 - Home values decreased

**created October 5, 2010
By Executive Order of the President*



Task Force Responsibilities

- **Prepare a Gulf of Mexico regional ecosystem restoration strategy**
- Engage stakeholders throughout the region in the development of the strategy
- Communicate with affected tribes
- Coordinate intergovernmental efforts
- Coordinate research needs and the consideration of relevant scientific and technical knowledge
- Support the NRDA process by referring potential ecosystem restoration actions
- Focus on health and economic benefits associated with proposed ecosystem restoration actions
- Prepare biennial updates on progress of efforts to implement the strategy



Task Force Responsibilities, con't

- Identify major policy areas where coordinated intergovernmental action is needed.
- Propose new programs to implement elements of the Strategy where existing authorities are not sufficient.
- Evaluate existing monitoring programs and identify gaps in current data collection.
- Identify monitoring, research, and scientific assessments that are needed.
- Describe the circumstances under which termination of the Task Force would be appropriate



The Challenge

- **In just 11 months, this Task Force will submit to the President a Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy.**
- We will have received and responded to input from stakeholders in the region, considered all the work currently underway by other entities, identified gaps in scientific and technical data, coordinated with NRDA and recommended restoration actions, established milestones for assessing progress, and put into place a mechanism for long-term interagency and intergovernmental coordination.

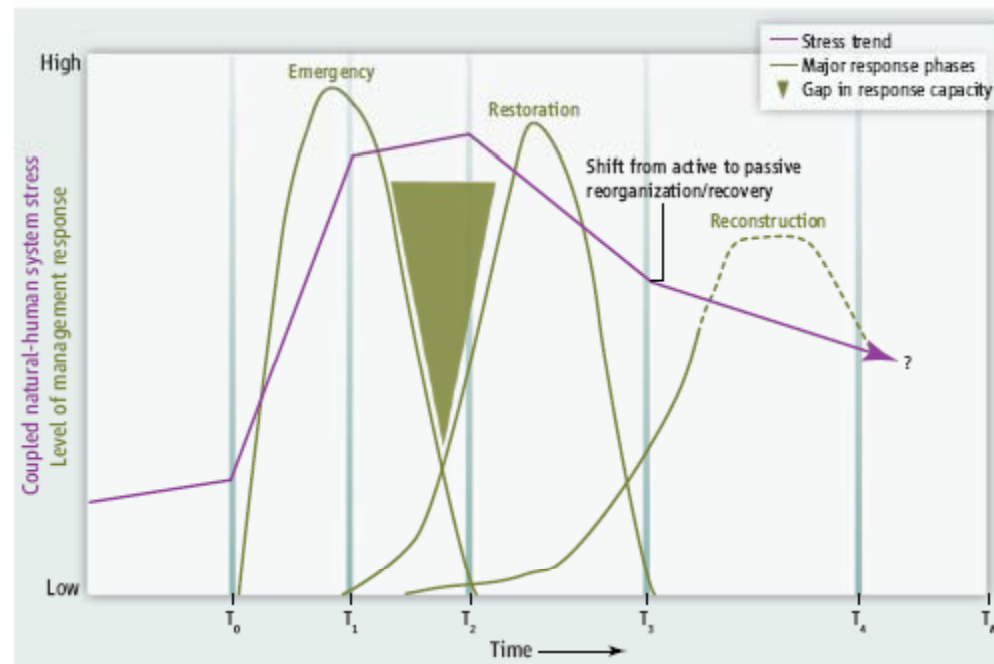
Scenario-Building for the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

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In May 2010, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) established a Strategic Sciences Working Group (SSWG) to assess how the Deepwater Horizon (DH) oil spill may impact the ecology, economy, and people of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM). It included scientists from diverse disciplines and federal, academic, and nongovernmental organizations. The SSWG was not to conduct a scientific investigation, but to provide rapid scientific assessment of potential consequences of the spill that could provide usable knowledge to decision-makers.

Such teams are not common to formal government response efforts. Most scientific activity at early stages of the spill was tactical, e.g., documenting preimpact conditions, monitoring oil transport, assessing resource damage, and supporting technical decisions associated with oil containment. Interdisciplinary and comprehensive analyses of consequences were not integral to these tactical efforts. The SSWG was a strategic and experimental response initiated by DOI, novel to

Interdisciplinary science-based scenarios can assist responses to the Gulf oil spill and similar environmental crises.



Conceptual scenario framework. This shows system stress, time horizons, major management response phases, and the potential gap in response capacity. [Adapted from (1)]

