

Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill  
Alabama Trustee Implementation Group  
2018 Annual Meeting

Public Meeting  
April 18, 2018

Tensaw Theater  
5 Rivers Delta Resource Center  
31115 Five Rivers Boulevard  
Spanish Fort, Alabama  
6:30 p.m.

REPORTED BY:

Lois Robinson, RPR, RMR, RDR, CRR

1 MR. FRANKLIN:

2 Good evening, everyone. Thank you all  
3 for coming out to tonight's very important  
4 meeting.

5 My name is Perry Franklin, and I'll be  
6 serving as your facilitator for the Alabama  
7 Trustee Implementation Group's meeting, or TIG.  
8 You'll hear that acronym quite often, TIG, T-I-G.  
9 Stands for Trustee Implementation Group.

10 If everyone could just silence their  
11 phones at this moment, that will be greatly  
12 appreciated, as it will interfere with the PA  
13 system. Thank you in advance.

14 Also, if you have any personal  
15 conversations, we're in a very small, intimate  
16 room. If there's something that you really need  
17 to speak about with your neighbor, we would ask  
18 you to just kindly go to the lobby, as that will  
19 also be very helpful for the proceedings.

20 The purpose of tonight's meeting is  
21 twofold. This serves as the Alabama TIG's annual  
22 meeting. Therefore, we will update you on the  
23 activities of the Alabama TIG, including the  
24 status of early restoration and Restoration  
25 Plan I projects.

1           Second, this meeting will provide you  
2 details of the Draft Restoration Plan II and  
3 Environmental Assessment, which you will hear the  
4 acronym EA -- again, for Environmental  
5 Assessment -- from time to time, with specific  
6 focus on restoring habitat and living coastal  
7 marine resources as they relate to the Deepwater  
8 Horizon Oil Spill.

9           The trustees and their staff will  
10 present lots of useful information this evening,  
11 and then you will have an opportunity to give us  
12 your feedback, which is the most important part  
13 of tonight's meeting.

14           As you can see, we do have a court  
15 reporter with us tonight, and that person is  
16 capturing every second of this meeting. So don't  
17 think that because someone's not writing in front  
18 of you that these proceedings are not being  
19 captured.

20           The PowerPoint presentation and  
21 tonight's transcript will also be posted to the  
22 trustee's website following this meeting, and we  
23 will give you that URL shortly.

24           As you can also see, we have American  
25 Sign Language interpreters here as well, and they

1 will interpret the entire meeting tonight.

2 As you came in, you were asked to fill  
3 out a blue card. This not only helps us to keep  
4 track of attendance tonight but it also allows us  
5 to formally call you forward if you would like to  
6 make a public comment.

7 Throughout tonight, if you did not say  
8 "yes" and you change your mind after tonight's  
9 presentation, don't feel like you can't say your  
10 public comment tonight. Just simply raise your  
11 hand, and we'll get a blue card to you, and that  
12 will allow me to call you up properly.

13 So, at this time, is there anyone who  
14 would like to fill out a blue card who did not or  
15 a person who did not say that they wanted to  
16 speak and would like to speak? Just simply raise  
17 your hand, and we have individuals who will bring  
18 you those blue cards.

19 Okay. If you don't make comments  
20 tonight but prefer to submit your comments online  
21 or via mail, all comments must be received by  
22 May 7th, 2018, which will be reviewed and  
23 considered in preparing the final restoration  
24 plan and environmental assessment.

25 In the foyer just outside, there were

1 wonderful fact sheets. Those fact sheets are  
2 made available for the projects that you will  
3 hear about more tonight. If you did not have a  
4 chance to pick one of those up, we invite you to  
5 pick one on your way out.

6 If you want to read the full Draft  
7 Restoration Plan II, you can also do that. There  
8 are copies in the public libraries and different  
9 public spaces.

10 On that bench is a copy of both the  
11 plan and the appendix, and you can also go to the  
12 website, which is  
13 [www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov). And you'll  
14 see that link presented tonight as well.

15 So at this time, let's go ahead and get  
16 started with tonight's meeting. I'd like to  
17 introduce Commissioner Christopher Blankenship,  
18 the Commissioner of the Alabama Department of  
19 Conservation. He is also the lead trustee for  
20 the State of Alabama.

21 Commissioner?

22 MR. BLANKENSHIP:

23 Thank you, Perry.

24 Thank you all for being here tonight.

25 I would also like to thank Patty Powell, our

1 State Lands Director, and her staff for the use  
2 of this beautiful facility here for us to meet  
3 and for us to have this opportunity to share with  
4 you information from the Alabama TIG.

5 I'm most excited about having in  
6 attendance today Governor Kay Ivey. Governor  
7 Ivey was here today chairing the Alabama RESTORE  
8 Council meeting this afternoon, very important,  
9 and then here tonight to welcome you and to make  
10 a few remarks for the NRDA public meeting. I  
11 think that just shows how important the coastal  
12 area is to our governor for her to take time to  
13 be here and to participate with us tonight and  
14 her interest in what happens here in the  
15 restoration of coastal Alabama.

16 So at this time, I'd ask Governor Kay  
17 Ivey to come.

18 GOVERNOR IVEY:

19 Thank you so much. And welcome,  
20 everybody. I'm just glad to be with you and glad  
21 to see you, and this is a wonderful place that  
22 we're meeting in, and I just thank you for being  
23 here about this great project tonight.

24 And I want to say thank you to  
25 Commissioner Blankenship and all the NRDA

1 trustees for making it possible for me to be a  
2 part of your program this afternoon.

3           Y'all, as we gather on the southern  
4 edge of the Mobile-Tensaw Delta, you just have to  
5 be reminded that Alabama is indeed blessed and  
6 fortunate to have the most beautiful state in the  
7 country. From the Appalachian mountains to the  
8 Gulf of Mexico, Alabama's tremendous national  
9 diversity spans terrestrial and aquatic habitats  
10 that contain more than 4500 species of plants and  
11 animals. We have at least 144 unique species  
12 that only occur here in our state. Alabama's  
13 unique land of soil, water, rock, sunlight, and  
14 temperature creates the habitats that support all  
15 of these species.

16           Our state abounds with life. The  
17 Mobile-Tensaw Delta immediately to our north as  
18 we sit here covers more than 250,000 acres, with  
19 five rivers -- the Mobile, the Spanish, the  
20 Tensaw, the Apalachee and the Blakeley --  
21 emptying into Mobile Bay and flowing to the Gulf  
22 of Mexico and on to our beloved white sand  
23 beaches. We are a blessed state with lots of  
24 water.

25           In April 2010, that beauty was marred

1 when the Deepwater Horizon exploded, killing  
2 eleven people and causing injury to our natural  
3 resources and our way of life. Oil rolled onto  
4 our beaches throughout the summer, into the fall  
5 of 2010, and the work that's proposed in the  
6 restoration plan being presented here tonight  
7 continues our recovery efforts from that event.

8           This restoration plan proposes plans to  
9 improve wetlands, water quality, loggerhead sea  
10 turtles, bottlenose dolphins, birds, and  
11 Commissioner Blankenship's favorite, oysters.

12           This restoration plan that will be  
13 before you tonight covers 22 projects. And  
14 that's a lot. It's certainly not everything that  
15 we want or need, but it's sure a good step in the  
16 right direction.

17           And, so, I thank you all for your  
18 interest, being here tonight. Thank you for your  
19 participation. I'm delighted to see that you are  
20 also interested. And your interest and  
21 commitment to our state's natural resources  
22 demonstrates time and time again that Alabama's  
23 most valuable resource is her people.

24           I thank our federal and local partners  
25 on each of these 22 projects for their diligence



1 and their dedication. Truly this has been a team  
2 effort. And I look forward to continuing this  
3 journey with you as you all work to serve our  
4 state, Alabama, The Beautiful.

5 Thank you all so much, and may God  
6 continue to bless you and the great State of  
7 Alabama.

8 Mr. Blankenship.

9 MR. BLANKENSHIP:

10 Thank you so much, Governor, for being  
11 here, and thank you for trusting me to be your  
12 Commissioner of the Department of Conservation  
13 and Natural Resources.

14 I thoroughly enjoy what we do in the  
15 department, enjoy the work that we've been able  
16 to do through the NRDA process and some of the  
17 other restoration types, and really look forward  
18 tonight to being able to share these 22 projects  
19 and to talk about the restoration activities in  
20 our state.

21 At this time, I would like to recognize  
22 any of the elected officials that are here.

23 Mayor Bob Holk from Magnolia Springs, thank you,  
24 sir, for being here.

25 Are there any other elected officials

1 that I have -- that I have missed?

2 All right. Thank you very much.

3 And now I'll get started. I want to go  
4 over tonight's agenda with you, and first I'd  
5 like to spend a little bit of time talking about  
6 the other NRDA trustees that are here tonight.

7 During the comment period of the  
8 meeting, you'll see the TIG representatives at  
9 the table up front, the listening table. For now  
10 I'll ask them to stand when I call their name.

11 Ron Howard with USDA is the lead  
12 federal trustee.

13 Homer Wilkes I think is gonna join us  
14 tonight, but he's a little -- little delayed  
15 getting here.

16 Kevin Reynolds with the Department of  
17 Interior.

18 Chris Parker with Environmental  
19 Protection Agency.

20 Rachel Sweeney, the National Oceanic  
21 and Atmospheric Administration.

22 And then the other trustee from the  
23 State of Alabama, I think -- the other trustee  
24 from the State of Alabama is Dr. Nick Tew with  
25 the Geological Survey of Alabama. Dr. Tew

1 tonight is represented by Seth Newton with the  
2 Geological Survey.

3 And, as I explained, I'm Chris  
4 Blankenship, the Commissioner of the Department  
5 of Conservation, the lead -- the lead state  
6 trustee for the Alabama Trustee Implementation  
7 Group.

8 I'm going to go over some of the slides  
9 and give you a little bit of an overview of  
10 Deepwater Horizon restoration in Alabama, and  
11 then you'll hear about activities undertaken by  
12 the Alabama TIG, followed by an overview of the  
13 Draft Restoration Plan II.

14 And, as has been already pointed out,  
15 the Restoration Plan II is a document that's well  
16 over a thousand pages of work that's been done by  
17 our staff and the department, by the trustees,  
18 and then also by many other staff members that  
19 have worked to do the environmental assessments  
20 and put all of this information together for  
21 our -- for your information tonight.

22 After that, we want to hear from you.  
23 Perry will facilitate the public comment portion  
24 of the agenda. And after the meeting ends, we'll  
25 be available for further conversation if there

1 was something you wanted to ask and just didn't  
2 feel comfortable getting up in front of everybody  
3 to ask. The trustees will be around to answer  
4 questions as long as you'd like.

5 This is a slide you're probably very  
6 familiar with. This talks about the four buckets  
7 or four funding sources for Deepwater Horizon  
8 restoration. Tonight we're here for the NRDA,  
9 the Natural Resource Damage Assessment. And  
10 there's \$296 million that has been allocated to  
11 the State of Alabama for restoration under the  
12 NRDA process, and those are the projects that  
13 we'll be discussing tonight from Restoration  
14 Plan II.

15 There's also funding through the  
16 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the  
17 Clean Water Act criminal fines, \$356 million that  
18 is allocated to the State of Alabama. We will  
19 have several projects that we've already done  
20 with NFWF, and we'll have others that we'll  
21 announce later this year.

22 The Alabama Gulf Coast Recovery  
23 Council, or the Alabama Council, as it's usually  
24 called, has the Clean Water Act civil penalty  
25 fines, and that's about \$725 million for the

1 State of Alabama.

2 And, as you may be aware, in a public  
3 meeting a few weeks ago, the Alabama Council  
4 recently approved projects for RESTORE buckets 1  
5 and buckets 3 for over \$300 million worth of  
6 projects.

7 And then there's the Federal RESTORE  
8 Council, and that's also with the Clean Water Act  
9 civil fines. And Governor Ivey is the  
10 representative on the Federal RESTORE Council for  
11 the State of Alabama, and I'm her designee, and  
12 we also work with the other four gulf states and  
13 six federal agencies on the restoration through  
14 the Federal RESTORE Council.

15 To date, we've dedicated over \$648  
16 million to restoration in Alabama. More than  
17 \$160 million of that has gone towards habitat  
18 conservation and restoration. We have proposed  
19 funding in this plan and has been approved  
20 already for recreational use, marine resources,  
21 monitoring and adaptive management, nonpoint  
22 source nutrient reduction, and then in other  
23 areas and injury types dealing with NRDA.

24 Now I'd like to welcome Mr. Ron Howard  
25 with the USDA, our lead federal trustee for

1 Restoration Plan II, to tell you a little more  
2 about NRDA and the Alabama Trustee Implementation  
3 Group.

4 Ron?

5 MR. HOWARD:

6 Thank you, Chris.

7 On behalf of the other federal  
8 trustees, we join the state trustee in welcoming  
9 and thanking you for joining us tonight in this  
10 public meeting.

11 So the goal of NRDA is to restore  
12 injured natural resources, such as wetlands,  
13 fish, birds, and others, to the condition they  
14 would have been had the spill not happened. We  
15 are also responsible for addressing recreational  
16 uses, such as boating, swimming that were  
17 affected by the spill.

18 The Alabama Trustee Implementation  
19 Group works together to restore, conserve  
20 habitat, work to improve water quality, and to  
21 replenish and protect coastal and marine species,  
22 such as sea turtles, marine mammals, birds, and  
23 oysters. Additionally, the TIG worked to enhance  
24 recreational opportunities for the public.

25 The Alabama and Federal trustees will

1 work together to restore natural resources and  
2 natural resources services that were injured by  
3 the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill. In accordance  
4 with the goals of the trustees' comprehensive  
5 restoration plan, we have finalized one  
6 restoration plan and look to discuss the second  
7 restoration plan here with you tonight and look  
8 forward to public review and comment.

9           Upon approval of the plan,  
10 implementation and monitoring of the selected  
11 projects will begin. As part of this ongoing  
12 restoration process, we encourage the public to  
13 continue to submit project suggestions.

14           For the Alabama TIG, the funds are  
15 distributed according to the overarching  
16 restoration goals according to the graphic you  
17 see on the screen. \$30 million has been  
18 allocated to the monitoring and adaptive  
19 management and administrative oversight goal;  
20 \$96 million to restore and conserving habitats;  
21 \$5 million to restoring water quality;  
22 \$54 million to replenish and protect living  
23 coastal and marine resources; \$111 million to  
24 provide and enhance recreational opportunities.

25           Now I would like to welcome Amy Hunter

1 to provide project updates.

2 MS. HUNTER:

3 Thank you, Ron.

4 It's great to see so many of you here  
5 this evening. And I'd like to echo  
6 Mr. Blankenship and Governor Ivey's words of  
7 thanks to our colleagues, especially on the  
8 Alabama TIG. They have worked tirelessly in  
9 making the Alabama Trustee Implementation Group  
10 run smoothly and in producing this Draft  
11 Restoration Plan II, a plan that has -- that  
12 we're very proud of that has 22 projects totaling  
13 \$35 million dollars. And, again, you can see it  
14 there in the printing.

15 But before I talk about Restoration  
16 Plan II, I'd like to provide you with an update  
17 of all the Alabama TIG's restoration activities  
18 so far.

19 In 2011, the Deepwater Horizon trustees  
20 came to a framework agreement with BP that  
21 allowed the states to begin restoration  
22 implementation prior to settlement.

23 Alabama's early restoration projects  
24 are depicted on the map on this side with the  
25 titles. As you can see there, this is the oyster



1 cultch project. They are scattered all over  
2 Mobile and Baldwin Counties.

3 Restoration Plan I, which you see here,  
4 was finalized in 2017 and totals over \$7 million.  
5 And these projects are depicted on the map in the  
6 circles that you see here.

7 So this list of projects encompasses a  
8 suite of recreational improvements, dune  
9 restoration, lighting improvements, trail work,  
10 Osprey restoration, and living shorelines.

11 Of the eleven early restoration  
12 projects funded -- so these are the restoration  
13 projects you just saw on the previous map. Of  
14 those eleven early restoration projects funded,  
15 one is complete -- that's the avian breeding  
16 habitat -- two are being implemented, and the  
17 living shoreline at Point aux Pines is in the  
18 engineering and design phase.

19 Six of these projects are in the  
20 monitoring phase, meaning they have been  
21 implemented and the trustees are monitoring their  
22 performance.

23 One project has been discontinued and  
24 will not move forward for implementation at this  
25 time.

1           Of the projects in Restoration Plan I,  
2 Restoration Plan I was the Alabama TIG's first  
3 restoration plan post-2016 settlement. It  
4 focused on restoring lost recreational use in  
5 coastal Alabama. It contains six projects. Four  
6 are in the planning stage. The Fort Morgan pier  
7 is in the engineering and design stage, and Gulf  
8 State Park is under construction.

9           And for information on any of these  
10 projects, early restoration or Plan I, you can  
11 visit NOAA's Gulf Spill Restoration website or  
12 you can visit Alabama's Coastal Restoration  
13 website. And we'll have those links for you on a  
14 slide at the end of the presentation.

15           Now, on to Plan II. In total, from the  
16 early restoration projects you just saw and from  
17 Restoration Plan I, we have 16 NRDA restoration  
18 projects underway in Alabama. We're pleased to  
19 add the 22 projects in this Plan II to the  
20 Alabama TIG's new slate of restoration projects  
21 going on in our state.

22           The Alabama TIG restoration plan is  
23 focused on seven restoration types: Wetlands,  
24 coastal and nearshore habitats; habitat projects  
25 on federally managed lands; nutrient reduction;

1 sea turtles; marine mammals; birds; and oysters.  
2 The plan also describes the process the TIG used  
3 to evaluate and select the 22 projects proposed  
4 in draft 2.

5 Before we come on to the projects, I'll  
6 briefly describe the steps in the selection  
7 process before going over the activities and  
8 projects the TIG is proposing.

9 This slide is a real high-level  
10 overview of the steps in the TIG screening  
11 process. Step 1 of the process assembled a  
12 comprehensive list of potential restoration  
13 projects, and those lists were assembled from the  
14 Deepwater Horizon project submission portals,  
15 both Alabama's portal and the federal portal.

16 We applied a basic eligibility screen  
17 to the full set of 566 projects, and those 566  
18 projects can be found in Appendix A of the  
19 restoration plan. And I'm not gonna go over  
20 there and pick that thing up. It's there.

21 Step 2 of the screening process  
22 considered criteria developed by the Alabama TIG  
23 for each restoration type to determine whether a  
24 project would likely be an effective way of  
25 addressing injuries from the spill. And those

1 criteria can also be found in Appendix B of the  
2 restoration plan.

3 For projects that reached step 3 of the  
4 process, the Alabama TIG collected more detailed  
5 project information from project proponents to  
6 better understand issues like project design,  
7 cost, and potential ecological benefits.

8 The projects that emerged from this  
9 screening were 26 projects that were analyzed in  
10 this restoration plan with detailed Oil Pollution  
11 Act, or OPA, analysis and National Environmental  
12 Policy Act, NEPA, analysis. From that analysis,  
13 then the Alabama TIG proposes 22 preferred  
14 alternatives totaling over \$35 million.

15 So there are, again, so many projects  
16 in this plan that I'm going to start with an  
17 overview map of the entire slate, and then we can  
18 discuss the projects by restoration type.

19 These are the locations of all 22 of  
20 the projects in the draft restoration plan. This  
21 plan is comprehensive in the geographic area that  
22 it covers and the restoration types that it  
23 covers. Projects cover Mobile and Baldwin  
24 Counties from wetlands to beaches to Mobile Bay  
25 to the Gulf of Mexico. And we feel like this

1 approach supports the trustees' goal to  
2 comprehensively address injuries to Alabama's  
3 natural resources.

4 A number of these projects are  
5 foundational in nature, meaning future  
6 restoration will build on their successes and  
7 lessons learned.

8 Finally, we're proposing a number of  
9 projects that leverage local expertise and  
10 partnerships to maximize available funding. And,  
11 on behalf of the Alabama TIG, we would like to  
12 thank our local partners, many of whom are here  
13 tonight, for their input and their patience in  
14 developing these projects.

15 So on to the restoration types. For  
16 wetlands, coastal, and nearshore habitat, five  
17 projects are proposed totaling approximately  
18 \$13.8 million. Three of those are land  
19 acquisition in the Weeks Bay watershed. One is  
20 engineering and design for habitat restoration on  
21 Coffee Island in Mississippi Sound, and, finally,  
22 Phase 1 restoration in lower Perdido islands.

23 For this restoration type, the Alabama  
24 TIG identified goals that support local  
25 restoration needs. Priority activities to meet

1 those goals include the acquisition of  
2 approximately 486 acres, habitat restoration,  
3 creation, or enhancement, and engineering and  
4 design activities. And these five projects that  
5 you see listed here are the projects that you saw  
6 on the previous map.

7           Moving on to habitat projects proposed  
8 for federally managed lands, the Alabama TIG is  
9 proposing two projects. They are design and  
10 construction of a living shoreline project in  
11 Little Lagoon, which is about here, and the  
12 completion of sea turtle lighting assessment on  
13 federal land. And I know this covers the whole  
14 coast, but this portion of it would really be the  
15 portion associated with Bon Secour National  
16 Wildlife Refuge.

17           So, again, our priority activities are  
18 living shoreline construction and lighting  
19 assessment on federally managed lands. These  
20 projects met the goal for this restoration type.  
21 Those goals are to restore federally managed  
22 habitats that were affected by the Deepwater  
23 Horizon Oil Spill while considering approaches  
24 that provide resiliency and sustainability and  
25 ensure consistency with land management plans.

1                   For nonpoint source nutrient reduction,  
2     the TIG focused project selection on five areas:  
3     Agricultural conservation practices, stormwater  
4     management practices, forestry management  
5     practices, creation and enhancement of wetlands,  
6     and hydrologic restoration.

7                   For nonpoint source nutrient reduction,  
8     the TIG is proposing three projects totaling  
9     \$3.5 million. There's a project here in Fowl  
10    River watershed, here in Weeks Bay watershed, and  
11    here at the top of Toulmins Springs Branch, which  
12    flows into Three Mile Creek.

13                  The primary activities for these  
14    projects include engineering and design for best  
15    management practices and the implementation of  
16    land management activities that will reduce  
17    nutrient and sediment loads to Mobile Bay.

18                  For our suite of sea turtle projects,  
19    the Alabama TIG proposes four projects totaling  
20    more than \$4 million. And those are CAST, or  
21    what we call Coastal Alabama Sea Turtle, the  
22    conservation program; also, as it's been known  
23    for years, as Share the Beach. This is a  
24    continuation and an expansion of that program  
25    that we've been so fortunate to have and that our

1 volunteers have done such a good job with over  
2 the years.

3           Additionally, a Coastal Alabama sea  
4 turtle triage center in Orange Beach, a habitat  
5 use and population dynamics study that's in-water  
6 work out in the Gulf to look at where these  
7 mammals go, how -- how frequently do they nest,  
8 where do they eat, things like that that we don't  
9 know and we need to answer to more effectively  
10 restore sea turtles in Alabama.

11           And, finally, there is an enhancement  
12 and education project that will, we hope,  
13 increase protection of the species by educating  
14 the public and reducing negative interactions.

15           Our goal with all these projects  
16 was -- and each project has a lot of components,  
17 but the primary activities of all the projects  
18 are increasing sea turtle productivity, improving  
19 Alabama's sea turtle stranding response, and  
20 conducting education and outreach to reduce  
21 threats to Alabama's sea turtle population.  
22 These projects, especially the habitat use and  
23 water, also address current knowledge gaps so  
24 that we can identify future restoration  
25 activities.



1           For marine mammals, the Alabama TIG  
2 proposes three marine mammal projects totaling  
3 more than \$6 million. These projects are  
4 enhancing the capacity of the Alabama marine  
5 mammal stranding network that is managed out of  
6 Dr. Ruth Carmichael's lab at Dauphin Island Sea  
7 Lab. The second project is an assessment of  
8 Alabama estuarian bottlenose dolphin population  
9 and health. And, finally, just like the turtle  
10 protection project, a similar project is proposed  
11 for dolphins that's education and enhancement.

12           The priority -- we wanted to -- the  
13 Alabama TIG wanted to select projects that make  
14 direct contributions to reducing mortality or  
15 morbidity on Alabama dolphins, reduce stressors  
16 and increase resilience of Alabama's bottlenose  
17 dolphin populations, or play a significant role  
18 in the collection or analysis of data that would  
19 improve the Alabama TIG's ability to restore  
20 bottlenose dolphin populations in Alabama.

21           Two of these projects, the stranding  
22 network and the education project, are funded  
23 from the marine mammal allocation and settlement.

24           The third project, the bottlenose  
25 dolphin health assessment, is proposed to be

1 funded from the Alabama TIG monitoring and  
2 adaptive management allocation.

3 For birds, the Alabama TIG proposes two  
4 projects from the bird restoration type. Those  
5 total over \$2 million. The first we've already  
6 talked about a little bit is habitat restoration  
7 on Coffee Island, where this project is being  
8 funded partly from the bird restoration type and  
9 partly from the wetlands restoration type.

10 The second project is a telemetry  
11 project looking at colonial nesting wading birds  
12 in Mississippi Sound and up on Gaillard Island  
13 and in Perdido Bay.

14 So the project activities will include  
15 a better understanding of our colonial nesting  
16 wading birds and shore bird populations, in  
17 addition to leading, we think, to more and better  
18 habitat on Coffee Island.

19 And then, last but not least,  
20 certainly, oysters. The Alabama TIG proposes  
21 four restoration projects totaling approximately  
22 \$4.5 million for oysters. The first is oyster  
23 cultch relief and reef configuration, side scan  
24 mapping of Mobile Bay relic oyster reefs, an  
25 oyster hatchery at Claude Peteet Mariculture

1 Center, and an oyster grow-out and reef  
2 replacement project as well.

3           These projects address some of the  
4 goals of the Alabama TIG and restoration. It  
5 will increase spat production and oyster  
6 survivorship. It will conduct side scan mapping  
7 of historic reef locations and it will address  
8 varying oyster reef configurations to understand  
9 the best reef construction methods.

10           Finally, the TIG proposes updating the  
11 oyster management plan for coastal Alabama.

12           And that brings me to the end of the  
13 project-specific slides. I will just add that  
14 there are draft monitoring and adaptive  
15 management plans associated with these projects.  
16 They can be found in the appendix version of the  
17 plan. They're Appendix G. As these projects  
18 grow and mature, those monitoring and adaptive  
19 management plans will grow and mature as well.

20           So, with that, I think I will turn it  
21 back over to Homer, and we'd like to -- we'd like  
22 to hear from you.

23 MR. FRANKLIN:

24           I think Amy put Homer on the spot just  
25 now.

1           So at this time, we'd like to  
2 transition into the portion of this evening's  
3 meeting that you have come for. In addition to  
4 receiving all of this wonderful information, it  
5 is to hear from you. And we have a very dynamic  
6 listening table who will come forward:

7           Mr. Homer Wilkes, USDA; Kevin Reynolds,  
8 DoI; Chris Parker, EPA; Rachel Sweeney, NOAA;  
9 Nick Tew, DSA; and Chris Blankenship, Alabama  
10 Department of Conservation.

11           I'd like to remind each of you in order  
12 to make a comment at this time, you should let us  
13 know in advance before simply going towards the  
14 microphone.

15           Is there anyone who would like to get  
16 their names on the list at this time who did not  
17 check "yes" on the blue card when you first  
18 entered? Is there anyone that we need to just  
19 get on to the list at this time?

20           Okay. We'll go with the individuals  
21 that have done so, and I will ask again at the  
22 conclusion of those who have signed up if anyone  
23 has changed their mind to simply raise their  
24 hand, and we'll get a card to you.

25           I'll call the individuals up. And we

1 have quite a few individuals who are gonna speak,  
2 and, so, we will implement the three-minute timer  
3 this evening. And, so, there's a little monitor  
4 I've just put in front of the listening table,  
5 and it will give you three minutes. The first  
6 two and a half minutes, it will be illuminated  
7 green. At two and a half to three minutes, it  
8 will turn yellow, and at three minutes it will  
9 turn red.

10 If you would go ahead -- if you see  
11 red, that means you need to go ahead and please  
12 begin to wrap up, as we have many individuals who  
13 have come a long distance to speak this evening.

14 I want to thank you in advance for  
15 respecting the three-minute rule. And when you  
16 come forward, if you would state your name very  
17 clearly for the court reporter and, if you are  
18 representing an organization, if you'll also  
19 introduce yourself with that organization if  
20 you're representing that organization.

21 So at this time I'd like to bring up  
22 the first individual, Mr. Brett Gaar, Magnolia  
23 Springs resident.

24 MR. GAAR:

25 I just want to say thank you for the

1 projects you've chosen. I think it's a great  
2 selection, particularly --

3 I just wanted to thank you guys and  
4 Director Powell and Commissioner Blankenship,  
5 Town of Magnolia Springs and the Weeks Bay  
6 Foundation for the acquisition projects. I think  
7 it's a great list.

8 I'm a 50-year resident of Magnolia  
9 Springs. Magnolia River is very important to me  
10 and my family. We've been there for three  
11 generations. And I think particularly the Holmes  
12 tract will do a great job in protecting water  
13 quality in Magnolia River.

14 Thank you.

15 MR. FRANKLIN:

16 Thank you, Mr. Gaar.

17 The next individual to come forward,  
18 Mr. Ryan Fikes, Staff Scientist, National  
19 Wildlife Federation.

20 MR. FIKES:

21 Good evening, and thanks so much for  
22 being here this evening and giving us this chance  
23 for comment. As he said, my name's Ryan Fikes.  
24 I'm a scientist with the National Wildlife  
25 Federation's Gulf of Mexico program. And, as a

1 scientist, I wanted to just make a few comments  
2 regarding science and the inclusion in this plan.

3           We're very pleased to see science  
4 remain at the forefront of Alabama's restoration  
5 investments. The inclusion of monitoring and  
6 adaptive management activities in this living  
7 coastal marine resources plan and its projects  
8 very early into this process will help fill  
9 critical gaps and influence future planning and  
10 implementation.

11           So, as an example, much work has been  
12 done in oyster reefs, as we've seen, and it's  
13 gonna be great. We're encouraged to see trustees  
14 focus on the mitigation of key stressors to  
15 support resilient habitats and wildlife  
16 populations. By addressing these underlying  
17 stressors, the trustees are helping to ensure  
18 future success of restoring these natural  
19 resources.

20           Additionally, we support the continued  
21 efforts to fill those science gaps, as I  
22 mentioned, especially for critical species  
23 populations in order to guide future restoration  
24 investments. And, as you know, that's  
25 particularly important for sea turtles and marine

1 mammals.

2 We're also very pleased to see a strong  
3 alignment with existing trustee monitoring,  
4 adaptive management guidance, including the four  
5 strategic frameworks, as well as the recently  
6 released monitoring adaptive manual.

7 This guidance will help ensure projects  
8 are implemented and monitored in a way that  
9 supports coordination across the TIGs as well as  
10 other state planning processes.

11 And, then, just lastly, while we do  
12 support filling data gaps, we do just want to  
13 encourage the trustees to utilize the existing  
14 body of research from both inside and outside the  
15 gulf region to the maximum extent possible in  
16 order to reduce potential for redundancy in  
17 planning effort.

18 So, with that, thank you for giving me  
19 the chance to speak.

20 MR. FRANKLIN:

21 Thank you, Mr. Fikes.

22 Next individual to come forward,  
23 Mr. Bob Holk, Mayor, Magnolia Springs, Alabama.

24 MR. HOLK:

25 Thank you. My name is Bob Holk. I'm



1 Mayor of the Town of Magnolia Springs, and I'm  
2 also a member of the Weeks Bay Foundation board.

3 Tuesday evening, the Town of Magnolia  
4 Springs will adopt a resolution supporting the  
5 Magnolia River Preservation Project, the Holmes  
6 property. This property is located partly in the  
7 Town of Magnolia Springs and wholly in its  
8 planning jurisdiction. This particular piece of  
9 property is a big part of what makes Magnolia  
10 River the beautiful river it is today.

11 As a member of the Weeks Bay  
12 Foundation, there are times when I've worked on  
13 land acquisition that we've been able to conserve  
14 properties, and I've questioned myself afterwards  
15 and said, "Did we really get the most bang for  
16 our buck?" A lot of this was wetland that  
17 probably would have never been developed.

18 The Holmes property is a totally  
19 different piece of property. It is very  
20 developable. With over a mile of waterfront and  
21 a very high center of grav- -- center elevation  
22 in the property, it has availability of water and  
23 sewer. It has no zoning. It is a developer's  
24 dream.

25 And, so, I think my point is that I

1 think this is a real opportunity to really  
2 protect some of the river and its -- its beauty  
3 by not developing it. Not only will we be  
4 protecting nearly a mile of waterfront but we  
5 also -- it seems like whenever those properties  
6 are developed, that they also entail a new house,  
7 a boathouse with a 23-foot Grady White with twin  
8 outboard motors that run up and down Magnolia  
9 River, which is a very narrow river.

10           And we have a lot of undeveloped  
11 wetlands along that river, and, believe me, we  
12 like to go out on the river. And on Friday  
13 afternoon you can go out, and the river will be  
14 crystal clear. On Sunday evening you can go back  
15 out after the traffic for the weekend and you see  
16 all the sediment floating in the river and it  
17 looks like we've had a very hard rain.

18           So, as I say, Tuesday night the Town  
19 of -- because that's when our council meeting  
20 is -- will adopt that resolution, and I will send  
21 it to you, along with a letter further explaining  
22 why we think it's very important that you protect  
23 the Holmes property.

24           Thank you.

25 MR. FRANKLIN:

1 Thank you, Mayor Holk.

2 Next individual, Miss Jessica Bibza,  
3 National Wildlife Federation.

4 MS. BIBZA:

5 Hello. Good evening. I'm Jessica  
6 Bibza, and I'm the Alabama and Florida policy  
7 specialist with National Wildlife Federation.  
8 Ryan speaks to the science, and I kind of speak  
9 more to the general policy and the specific  
10 projects.

11 Really want to applaud you and the  
12 entire crew for an apparent really thorough  
13 review of potential projects. I'm gonna speak to  
14 a couple of them in a little bit more detail,  
15 though we're going to be providing written  
16 comments as well.

17 Since Miss Hunter started -- did the  
18 oysters last, I'm going to do them first. With  
19 regard to all of the oyster projects, really  
20 encourage you to coordinate and consult with your  
21 neighboring states. Numerous oyster restoration  
22 and research projects are underway throughout the  
23 region. In Florida, you know, the FWC and FDACS  
24 and University of Florida are doing a lot of  
25 work.

1           In Mississippi, your neighbor on the  
2 other side, DMR is putting together some science  
3 pieces. As Ryan Fikes mentioned, really  
4 encourage you to look both within the region as  
5 well as outside of the region for lessons learned  
6 and to avoid reinventing the wheel.

7           With regard to some of the specific  
8 projects, really encouraged to see the  
9 development of a comprehensive oyster restoration  
10 plan, including living shoreline projects with  
11 oysters.

12           In the document, you recommend that  
13 oyster restoration experts are going to be  
14 working on that. Really encourage you to  
15 consider including the NGO community, as well as  
16 a partner in that effort, as stakeholder input  
17 can certainly be valuable.

18           Just a little sidebar note on the  
19 oyster grow-out and replacement project. It  
20 didn't look like the numbers and the costs added  
21 up, so just might want to double-check that.  
22 Sorry. That's a weedy comment.

23           As far as the comprehensive oyster  
24 restoration plan, you know, we'd like to see that  
25 guide not just future investments but even steer

1 some of these projects that are being proposed  
2 right now. For instance, information on the  
3 existing structure, spat availability,  
4 environmental conditions, it might be great to  
5 have a better understanding of that before moving  
6 forward with projects; for example, the oyster  
7 hatchery.

8           As far as the other living coastal  
9 marine resources, we support the dolphin, turtle,  
10 and bird projects proposed. As Ryan mentioned,  
11 filling data gaps is a really important step to  
12 guiding future investments. When designing and  
13 implementing the research and the other projects,  
14 keep in mind that these critters, they don't know  
15 state boundaries. They don't know where the open  
16 ocean takes over and what might apply to  
17 Region-Wide. So really --

18           For example, the CAST habitat and  
19 population dynamics mentions Oceanic and neritic  
20 turtles. Makes this project seem like it's a  
21 great opportunity to partner with the Open-Ocean  
22 TIG or Region-Wide TIG. Maybe they could help  
23 fund some additional elements of it.

24           I see that I'm out of time. There was  
25 a couple other things about the birds, maybe

1 looking at bird species that also would use the  
2 entire Gulf Coast and the living lagoon -- Little  
3 Lagoon living shoreline project. Really glad to  
4 see you invest not just in hotshot projects but  
5 ones that will increase the resiliency of the  
6 community and the coastline.

7 MR. FRANKLIN:

8 Thanks, Miss Bibza.

9 Next individual, Richard Odess, Town of  
10 Magnolia Springs.

11 MR. ODESS:

12 Thanks for the opportunity to address  
13 you. My name's Richard Odess, and I represent  
14 the Town of Magnolia Springs.

15 I was part of a core group that made  
16 application to ADEM to obtain OAW status for the  
17 river. I also serve on the Town Council and  
18 chair the Environmental Protection committee from  
19 right before when the oil spill happened through  
20 the duration of it. And really what I want to  
21 talk to you about -- with you is when we applied  
22 for the OAW status, it involved a lot of water  
23 quality testing, and our main site was actually  
24 right across the river from the -- from the  
25 Holmes tract. And I had, for about a

1 two-and-a-half-year period, I would go down there  
2 weekly personally and water quality test. And I  
3 saw bald eagles, otters. There were eagles  
4 nesting somewhere on there. One year there was a  
5 bunch of fledglings around there.

6 Also, about a year and a half ago we  
7 had three manatees that got stuck in the cold  
8 weather up here, and we actually followed them  
9 around so that some folks from the Dauphin Island  
10 Sea Lab, as well as Orlando, could try to capture  
11 them and get them out of there. So I know  
12 personally for a fact that manatee have been all  
13 over this property.

14 And when I found out this was a mile of  
15 waterfront, I was like, this is a home run for  
16 that group.

17 That's all I've got. Thanks.

18 MR. FRANKLIN:

19 Thank you, Mr. Odess.

20 Next individual, Riva Fralick, Citizens  
21 Climate Lobby.

22 MS. FRALICK:

23 Good afternoon. Thank you for having  
24 this wonderful opportunity to address you all.  
25 It's wonderful to have everybody here. Thank you

1 for everybody that showed up.

2 My name is Riva Fralick, and I'm  
3 with -- a member of the Sierra Club Mobile Bay  
4 Chapter and also the Citizens Climate Lobby, a  
5 chapter leader for the Mobile Bay Citizens  
6 Climate Lobby. The website is  
7 [www.citizensclimatelobby.org](http://www.citizensclimatelobby.org).

8 Well, I realize this is a multi-pronged  
9 area, but, basically, I'm up here to speak about  
10 the long-term effects when after the BP money  
11 runs out and what we can do as a local area,  
12 region, state and federal -- on the federal level  
13 as far as speaking about the fisheries and the  
14 ocean management.

15 I'll tell you a little bit about  
16 Citizens Climate Lobby. They're trying to pass a  
17 market-based approach carbon fee and dividend,  
18 and they're trying to pass it at the national  
19 level. It's a bipartisan nonpartisan  
20 organization, and by passing it, putting a fee on  
21 fossil fuels at the source of the well or the  
22 mine starting at \$10.00 a ton, that that money  
23 would be reinvested to households and that money  
24 would, as the price of fossil fuels go up, then  
25 we would start investing in renewable energy.



1 I realize I'm part of the problem.  
2 Every time I buy a tank of gas or buy anything  
3 that's in plastic, our oceans, everybody knows  
4 about climate change. The carbon dioxide in the  
5 atmosphere is causing global warming. And you  
6 addressed the greenhouse gas situation in a  
7 couple of the chapters, 10, 11 and 13, I believe,  
8 so you know what's going on.

9 As far as a funding source, if we  
10 can't -- if Citizens Climate Lobby can't pass a  
11 carbon fee and dividend on a national level,  
12 perhaps we can do it on a state level for  
13 everything that comes upriver and downstream, and  
14 with that money, or even a bottle tax and also  
15 maybe making the Five Rivers Delta National Park,  
16 there's many ways to continue the money stream.

17 And as far as the money stream itself,  
18 I saw that there was only \$5 million for -- I  
19 think it was ocean restoration. Maybe we could  
20 take some more money from the recreational side  
21 of it and put it on the saving our habitat.  
22 Because without oceans, all -- that really will  
23 affect our whole standard of living and our  
24 lifestyle.

25 And I know we all love this place, our

1 planet, and I just thank you for the work you're  
2 doing and thank you for this opportunity.

3 MR. FRANKLIN:

4 Thank you, Miss Fralick.

5 Next individual to give public comment  
6 is Miss Rachel Guillory, Gulf Restoration Program  
7 Manager, Ocean Conservancy.

8 MS. GUILLORY:

9 Hi. My name is Rachel Guillory with  
10 Ocean Conservancy. We want to commend the  
11 Alabama TIG for proposing such a large suite of  
12 projects that address a wide variety of wildlife  
13 and habitats. Our mission being what it is,  
14 we're especially grateful for the projects that  
15 restore sea turtle and marine mammal populations,  
16 and not just one or two projects but eight  
17 individual projects for this species is terrific.  
18 We like that the projects for sea turtles and  
19 marine mammals approach those species from  
20 multiple angles, so nesting beaches, light  
21 pollution, population studies, it's -- it's  
22 really important that we take that multi-prong  
23 approach. So that's terrific.

24 We also appreciate the TIG's efforts to  
25 comply with the new monitoring and adaptive

1 management manual that the Trustee Council  
2 recently put out earlier this year. The man  
3 plans that are included in this draft plan have a  
4 good amount of detail from monitoring parameters  
5 to how to deal with uncertainty.

6 As you know, monitoring and adaptive  
7 management are so important to make sure that  
8 these projects are successful. And, so, we look  
9 forward to, like Amy said, future iterations of  
10 these monitoring and adaptive management plans.

11 So it's clear with this plan that  
12 Alabama really values its marine species, so  
13 thank you, again, for your leadership.

14 MR. FRANKLIN:

15 Thank you, Miss Guillory.

16 Next individual to come forward to give  
17 public comment is Yael Girard, Weeks Bay  
18 Foundation.

19 MS. GIRARD:

20 Hi. Good evening. My name is Yael  
21 Girard, Y-A-E-L, Girard, and I'm the Executive  
22 Director of the Weeks Bay Foundation.

23 First let me say thank you to the  
24 trustees for taking the time out of your busy  
25 schedules to be here this evening for some

1 thoughts from the community.

2           In addition, I'd like to thank the  
3 amazing team that put this list of 22 projects  
4 together. I know that there were representatives  
5 at every level -- local, state, and federal --  
6 who worked very hard to select these proposals,  
7 and the Weeks Bay Foundation sees this as a  
8 strong list of projects which tackles many of the  
9 issues affecting our coastal resources.

10           We're especially glad to see nutrient  
11 reduction projects for several watersheds and  
12 strategic land acquisition as priorities on this  
13 list.

14           As Governor Ivey, Mr. Blankenship, and  
15 several others have noted, waterways are the  
16 lifeblood of coastal Alabama. Recreation,  
17 industry, and our wildlife biodiversity depend on  
18 the waters, inlets and bays that weave through  
19 our coast. With a seafood industry that brought  
20 in over \$500 million in the 2011 NOAA Gulf of  
21 Mexico report, we must protect the marsh habitats  
22 where many of these important species spend key  
23 periods of their lives.

24           With the Alabama SCORP, the State  
25 Comprehensive Outdoor Recreational Plan, for

1 2013-2018 listing, over 75 percent of the  
2 population frequenting freshwater sites for  
3 either fishing or swimming and nearly 50 percent  
4 of the population visiting saltwater fishing and  
5 swimming sites, we need these clean places for  
6 our families to play.

7           With the most species diversity in the  
8 entire United States for turtles, freshwater  
9 fish, snails, mussels and crawfish, we must  
10 ensure that our waterways can sustain these  
11 unique creatures.

12           The nutrient reduction plans for Weeks  
13 Bay, Fowl River and Toulmins Creek will help  
14 address some of the root causes of water quality  
15 issues and give us a better understanding of how  
16 to tackle these problems.

17           I applaud the USDA and NRCS for  
18 continuing to work with farmers to address the  
19 challenge of stream impairment due to  
20 agricultural runoff. The protection of  
21 undeveloped lands adjacent to our waterways is  
22 critical to the economic, recreational, and  
23 biological functions and ecosystem services we  
24 described earlier. In addition, we believe that  
25 the preservation of intact habitat is always a

1 better option than the creation of new artificial  
2 habitat. No matter how skilled the engineers and  
3 the biologists, nature just does it better.

4           The three tracts selected are already  
5 home to numerous terrestrial and aquatic species,  
6 including documented cases of endangered species.  
7 They already shelter the shores of Weeks Bay,  
8 Fish River and Magnolia River from flooding and  
9 storm surge. There are already beautiful views  
10 for kayakers, anglers, and river recreationists.  
11 The Magnolia River land acquisition, Holmes  
12 Tract, the Weeks Bay land acquisition, East  
13 Gateway Tract, and the Weeks Bay land  
14 acquisition, Harrod Tract, will protect nearly  
15 500 acres of land and over three miles of water  
16 frontage. These are some of the last large  
17 privately-owned undeveloped waterfront properties  
18 in the watershed.

19           In a county that is projected to grow  
20 by 65 percent between 2010 and 2040, conserving  
21 large swaths of bay and riverfront habitat is a  
22 wise investment in our future water quality.

23           We hope that the future projects list  
24 will continue to consider how important this is  
25 to our coastal resiliency, economy, and

1 lifestyle.

2 Thank you very much for your time.

3 MR. FRANKLIN:

4 Thank you, Miss Girard.

5 Next individual to give public comment,

6 Mr. Rick Wallace.

7 MR. WALLACE:

8 My name's Rick Wallace. I'm a  
9 landowner on the Fish River, and I enjoy fishing,  
10 boating, and sometimes a little swimming when  
11 it's warm enough.

12 Right, Chris?

13 I also served on the Weeks Bay  
14 Management Plan on the stakeholders group, and  
15 I'm just here to say how much I support the land  
16 acquisition parts of the plan for the Weeks Bay  
17 watershed on the properties that y'all just  
18 mentioned, Magnolia River land acquisition, the  
19 East Gateway Tract and the Harrod Tract. These  
20 are really important pieces of land, and this is  
21 really wise use of the NRDA money as far as  
22 protecting our resources.

23 I will say that in the management plan,  
24 land acquisition was important, and so this  
25 supports that 500-page one-year management plan.

1           Of course, another aspect of the plan  
2 was water quality. And, so, the project Weeks  
3 Bay Nutrient Reduction is an important project  
4 also that will help our farmers in the watershed  
5 reduce runoff and I think will be a great, great  
6 positive step forward.

7           Lastly, I just want to thank the group  
8 for considering land acquisition to the degree  
9 that it has. Land acquisition wasn't necessarily  
10 a high priority at the beginning of these  
11 processes, and we've fought for that to be  
12 included and we're very happy, and we hope you'll  
13 continue to consider land acquisition. This is  
14 really one of the best ways to use this money.

15           Thank you for your time.

16 MR. FRANKLIN:

17           Thank you, Mr. Wallace.

18           Next individual to come forward, Miss  
19 Casi Callaway, Mobile Baykeeper.

20 MS. CALLAWAY:

21           Thank you. I'm Casi Callaway. I'm the  
22 Director of Mobile Baykeeper, and I want to echo  
23 what they've said before about thank you --  
24 thanking all of you for being here, for your  
25 leadership, for your drive, for the multiple



1 hours you probably didn't get to spend time with  
2 your baby boys to do these critical crazy  
3 documents. It's a great -- it is a great list of  
4 projects.

5 I want to start by saying that because  
6 I do have a little -- few things we want to see  
7 next time, I guess is a better way to put it, we  
8 are absolutely -- Mobile Baykeeper, our 4500-plus  
9 members and our reach throughout the community  
10 strongly supports land acquisition projects. We  
11 strongly support the nutrient reduction projects.  
12 The species projects all fit the world that we  
13 need, and especially a big focus on the oyster  
14 restoration projects.

15 I think the thing I also want to say  
16 that I think you went above and beyond on,  
17 especially with the nutrient reduction projects  
18 that are agricultural based, you've gone and  
19 chosen those projects because they have match  
20 opportunities with USFDA funding or other funding  
21 that exists.

22 I love what you've done with selecting  
23 the mammal projects and using local Dauphin  
24 Island Sea Lab, Ruth Carmichael and her team.  
25 They've led the charge for Alabama. They've done

1 a phenomenal job for us. So all of those  
2 pieces -- and that's where I think we really need  
3 to stick is use the resources that we have here  
4 in our community. So that's one thing I do want  
5 to comment on.

6 The projects all seem to have a good  
7 component of education, but it's hard to tell  
8 where that education is gonna come from. You  
9 again, to repeat what was said here earlier, you  
10 have great resources in the nonprofit  
11 organizations here, in the community  
12 organizations here, and in the people here. You  
13 also do have great resources across the state  
14 lines.

15 So when it comes to some of these,  
16 consider whether or not ADCNR, who is wonderful,  
17 is the best organization to do an education  
18 project or if it would be better to outsource  
19 that. So I think that, again, staying local,  
20 stay within this community. We were the ones who  
21 were impacted and we're the ones who have lived  
22 with it now for -- April 20th will be eight solid  
23 years. So we're -- so we know what we need in  
24 this community.

25 The other thing I will say, too, is --

1 and this was repeated earlier, and I think Amy  
2 said it really well, is we have data gaps. And I  
3 think all of us know that we do not want to show  
4 up to the next disaster, natural or manmade,  
5 not -- knowing the same amount of information we  
6 knew on April 19th, 2010.

7 We applaud you for putting in the  
8 monitoring, for making sure that component is  
9 healthy and hearty, science-based and  
10 comprehensive, again, keeping and making sure  
11 that you're using the existing organizations who  
12 are collecting this data. We've got to figure  
13 out how to put it all in one pile.

14 The National Shrimp program does a  
15 phenomenal job of pulling it together. There are  
16 more of us who are collecting data, and we need  
17 to keep making sure that all of those tools and  
18 resources are connected well.

19 There is one -- on your map on the  
20 turtle lighting projects, you had -- sorry -- you  
21 had the -- you've done the western end of Dauphin  
22 Island, and that's not federally owned. So I  
23 want to make sure that's either something you're  
24 gonna do in the future or see how that works out.  
25 Sorry.

1 Thank you so much.

2 MR. FRANKLIN:

3 Thank you, Miss Callaway.

4 Next individual is Mr. Mark Berte,  
5 Executive Director, Alabama Coastal Foundation.

6 MR. BERTE:

7 Good evening. My name is Mark Berte,  
8 and I'm the Executive Director with the Alabama  
9 Coastal Foundation. That's the statewide  
10 nonprofit organization that we're celebrating our  
11 25th anniversary of service. Our mission is to  
12 improve and protect Alabama's coastal environment  
13 through cooperation, education and participation.

14 And I'll just open my remarks by  
15 thanking everybody for actually having this open  
16 house and listening, the public meeting. I know  
17 you're required to do it, but it's really  
18 important that y'all have gotten the word out. I  
19 know that there are many nonprofit organizations  
20 in here helping y'all do that, not only to get  
21 people here but also to do their comments online.  
22 And I do hope the presentation file will be put  
23 on y'all's website in the near future so we can  
24 help to continue that education.

25 I'll begin my feedback for this Plan II

1 by just saying how very impressed Alabama Coastal  
2 Foundation was with this very comprehensive plan.  
3 We, too, echo the, you know, science-based nature  
4 of this development of this plan, and I know many  
5 hours went into that and also using the adaptive  
6 management approach as well.

7 We read through the 500-plus -- at  
8 least the online version. Very happy with all  
9 the 22 projects and the seven restoration types.  
10 Since I don't have, you know, 20 minutes, I'll  
11 stick with the oysters in particular.

12 At Coastal Foundation, we just started  
13 an Alabama oyster shell recycling program. So if  
14 your hatchery is ever needing some shells, you  
15 can let us know. We'll try to get a reduced rate  
16 for you.

17 But, also, the bird species, we  
18 appreciate y'all doing that. We hope that that  
19 can be more in the future. We partner with  
20 Audubon Society in helping recruit volunteers for  
21 some of the coastal bird monitoring that happens,  
22 and we'd like to see that effort increased all  
23 throughout.

24 But, in particular, the turtles, we are  
25 the new home of the Share The Beach sea turtle

1 program. It is 100 percent volunteers, and, so,  
2 that particular project would be very beneficial  
3 for the State of Alabama.

4           And my only recommendation for your  
5 consideration is that when you do the education  
6 and outreach -- you know, you have birds, you  
7 have turtles, you have mammals -- try to think  
8 holistically so that when you're educating  
9 somebody here at a dock or a -- you know, a  
10 launch, boat launch, that you're thinking about  
11 all the different species so you can really think  
12 about the comprehensive nature about what these  
13 plans really are doing and impacting for the  
14 positive impact for the environment so that  
15 people can educate themselves about not only  
16 what's happening now but for the future as well.

17           Thank you for your time.

18 MR. FRANKLIN:

19           Thank you, Mr. Berte.

20           Next individual is Mr. Walter Ernest.

21 MR. ERNEST:

22           My name is Walter Ernest. I'm the  
23 Director of Operations for the Pelican Coast  
24 Conservancy. We're a land trust in Mobile.

25           I want to commend you for your work on

1 this plan, diligent work. You put a lot of  
2 effort and time and got a lot of public input.  
3 One of the things you did is you listened to the  
4 public and you each took notice.

5           When the oil spill first occurred,  
6 first began in the process, land conservation was  
7 not at the table. And the land conservation  
8 community and others went -- attended your  
9 meetings, and you heard it at every meeting about  
10 how important land conservation is and how it is  
11 a part of restoration. You recognize that.  
12 Thank you for that.

13           I also want to commend you for the  
14 project in Weeks Bay. It's one of the fastest  
15 growing watersheds in the state, brand new  
16 watershed plan just completed. And I can't think  
17 of a better place to conserve property. However,  
18 there are important properties in Mobile County  
19 as well. So I hope if you have future funding  
20 opportunities, you will look at Mobile County,  
21 whether it's south Mobile County or portions of  
22 Dauphin Island. There's some wonderful parcels  
23 that could be conserved.

24           I also want to reiterate the  
25 utilization of conservation easements. If you

1 can't buy it, use a conservation easement, which  
2 is a permanent restriction on the property.  
3 That's another tool maybe to use in future  
4 rounds. Or if you acquire property, you can  
5 place a conservation easement on the property and  
6 you have an additional layer of protection.

7           So, you know, not only is it protecting  
8 the requirements set forth through the Natural  
9 Resource Damage Assessment funds that were  
10 utilized; it's being done correctly.

11           Thank you for what you do, and I look  
12 forward to the completion of these projects.

13 MR. FRANKLIN:

14           Thank you, Mr. Ernest.

15           Mr. Ernest was the last individual who  
16 had signed up to give public comment tonight.  
17 Are there any others who would like to get their  
18 names on the list so that we can call you  
19 forward?

20           I want to commend all of the  
21 individuals for abiding by the three-minute  
22 timekeeping. Thank you very much.

23           I also want to remind you that for  
24 those of you who may not have had a public  
25 comment tonight but one comes into your thoughts,



1 May 7th is the date that you need to remember.  
2 May 7th, you can either go online, which is  
3 probably the most efficient way to put your  
4 public comment into the record, or you can mail  
5 it. And just remember it needs to be received by  
6 May 7th if you mail it. So give yourself a few  
7 moments there to do that.

8 I also want to remind you that there's  
9 some great documents out in the lobby when you  
10 walked in. If there was a project that you  
11 wanted to get more information about, we invite  
12 you to pick up one of the documents outside.  
13 Also, that subject matter expert will be here to  
14 answer any questions that you may have one on  
15 one. And, so, all of these individuals and  
16 subject matter experts also will remain until the  
17 last individual has their question answered  
18 following tonight's proceedings.

19 So before we close, I just want to ask  
20 again, are there any individuals who would like  
21 to make a verbal public comment this evening?

22 (No response.)

23 MR. FRANKLIN:

24 Okay. Well, thank you very much.

25 At this time, I'd like to ask the

1 Commissioner, Mr. Blankenship, to come forward  
2 and formally close us.

3 MR. BLANKENSHIP:

4 Thank you, Perry.

5 I am gonna go off script because I'm  
6 probably more comfortable there than I am on the  
7 script anyway.

8 Whenever we have a plan like this --  
9 and I do appreciate your comments for the work  
10 that's been done on the plan. But a plan of this  
11 size, you know, we've set here at the table and  
12 listened, but there were so many people that  
13 worked on this plan to put this together. So at  
14 this time I'd like to ask anybody who's done any  
15 work on the plan, including people that suggested  
16 projects through the project portal that were  
17 included in this, to please stand.

18 All right. Not all at once, but let's  
19 go. Come on.

20 That was at least half the room. But I  
21 think that does show very importantly that  
22 there's a lot of work that goes into these  
23 restoration plans, but they really start with the  
24 public and with your project suggestion ideas and  
25 the projects that have been put in the portal

1 that have been suggested to us, comments that  
2 have been made at meetings just like this, that  
3 those are very relevant and are very important to  
4 the entire process. And we do thank you so much  
5 for your participation.

6 Now, back on script. We hope that  
7 you've found this meeting tonight informative. I  
8 will put this back up in a minute in case you  
9 didn't get a chance to write that down. But I do  
10 want to talk about Alabama's Restoration Summit.  
11 I'll put those links back up there if anybody  
12 needs a little bit more time to write them down.

13 But we -- tonight we've talked  
14 primarily about NRDA restoration projects, but we  
15 also have the Alabama RESTORE Council projects,  
16 the Federal RESTORE Council projects, NFWF  
17 projects.

18 And, so, I think it's very important  
19 for us, and, in talking with the Governor, she  
20 thought it was very important for us to have an  
21 Alabama Governor's Restoration Summit this fall  
22 where we look at all the projects that have been  
23 approved in Alabama and look at those all  
24 together. We're in the planning stages of that,  
25 but I do want to ask you to save the date of

1 October the 11th on your calendar for a  
2 Governor's Restoration Summit here in the State  
3 of Alabama. And we'll follow up with a date and  
4 location -- I mean a time and location sometime  
5 between now and October the 11th.

6 More than likely going to have the  
7 meeting in Spanish Fort at the facility there.  
8 They've graciously offered to allow us to meet at  
9 the Spanish Fort Town Hall. It's a little bit  
10 larger than this facility. So there will be more  
11 information to follow.

12 I will put the slide -- there are the  
13 restoration websites. If you would like to go  
14 visit those to look at other projects that have  
15 been done, I'll put back up the slide on your  
16 comments.

17 At this time, we'll finish up our  
18 formal meeting. But all of the trustees will be  
19 around, hang around for a few minutes. If you  
20 have any questions or you just didn't feel like  
21 asking a question at the microphone, please feel  
22 free to approach any of the trustees. We'll be  
23 glad to answer any questions you have and listen  
24 to any comments that you have.

25 Thank you so much for coming out

1 tonight. Y'all have a good evening.

2 (Meeting adjourned at 7:43 p.m.)

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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

STATE OF ALABAMA)  
COUNTY OF MOBILE)

I do hereby certify that the above and foregoing transcript of proceedings in the matter aforementioned was taken down by me in machine shorthand and transcribed under my personal supervision, and that the foregoing represents a true and correct transcript of the proceedings had upon said hearing.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the action, nor am I in anywise interested in the result of said cause.

LOIS ANNE ROBINSON, RDR  
COURT REPORTER, NOTARY PUBLIC  
STATE OF ALABAMA AT LARGE  
ACCR #352

A		
<b>abiding</b> 56:21	<b>Additionally</b> 14:23 24:3 31:20	6:15 7:5 9:4,7 10:23,24,25 11:6,10,12 12:11,18,22,23
<b>ability</b> 25:19	<b>address</b> 21:2 24:23 27:3,7 38:12 39:24 42:12 45:14,18	13:1,3,11,16 14:2,18,25 15:14 16:8,9,17 18:2,5,18,20 18:22 19:22 20:4,13 21:11
<b>able</b> 9:15,18 33:13	<b>addressed</b> 41:6	21:23 22:8 23:19,21 24:3,10 25:1,4,8,13,15,19,20 26:1,3
<b>abounds</b> 7:16	<b>addressing</b> 14:15 19:25 31:16	26:20 27:4,11 28:9 32:23 35:6 42:11 43:12 44:16,24
<b>absolutely</b> 49:8	<b>ADEM</b> 38:16	49:25 52:5,8 53:1,13 54:3 59:15,21,23 60:3 62:3,21
<b>ACCR</b> 62:22	<b>adjacent</b> 45:21	<b>Alabama's</b> 7:8,12 8:22 16:23 18:12 19:15
<b>acquire</b> 56:4	<b>adjourned</b> 61:2	21:2 24:19,21 25:16 31:4 52:12 59:10
<b>acquisition</b> 21:19 22:1 30:6 33:13 44:12 46:11,12,14 47:16,18,24 48:8,9,13 49:10	<b>Administration</b> 10:21	<b>alignment</b> 32:3
<b>acres</b> 7:18 22:2 46:15	<b>administrative</b> 15:19	<b>allocated</b> 12:10,18 15:18
<b>acronym</b> 2:8 3:4	<b>adopt</b> 33:4 34:20	<b>allocation</b> 25:23 26:2
<b>Act</b> 12:17,24 13:8 20:11,12	<b>advance</b> 2:13 28:13 29:14	<b>allow</b> 4:12 60:8
<b>action</b> 62:14	<b>affect</b> 41:23	<b>allowed</b> 16:21
<b>activities</b> 2:23 9:19 11:11 16:17 19:7 21:25 22:4,17 23:13,16 24:17,25 26:14 31:6	<b>aforementioned</b> 62:8	<b>allows</b> 4:4
<b>adaptive</b> 13:21 15:18 26:2 27:14,18 31:6 32:4,6 42:25 43:6,10 53:5	<b>afternoon</b> 6:8 7:2 34:13 39:23	<b>alternatives</b> 20:14
<b>ADCNR</b> 50:16	<b>agencies</b> 13:13	<b>amazing</b> 44:3
<b>add</b> 18:19 27:13	<b>Agency</b> 10:19	<b>American</b> 3:24
<b>added</b> 36:20	<b>agenda</b> 10:4 11:24	<b>amount</b> 43:4 51:5
<b>addition</b> 26:17 28:3 44:2 45:24	<b>ago</b> 13:3 39:6	<b>Amy</b> 15:25 27:24 43:9 51:1
<b>additional</b> 37:23 56:6	<b>agreement</b> 16:20	<b>analysis</b> 20:11,12,12 25:18
	<b>agricultural</b> 23:3 45:20 49:18	<b>analyzed</b> 20:9
	<b>ahead</b> 5:15 29:10,11	<b>anglers</b> 46:10
	<b>Alabama</b> 1:2,15 2:6,21,23 5:18,20 6:4,7	<b>angles</b> 42:20

<p><b>animals</b> 7:11</p> <p><b>ANNE</b> 62:20</p> <p><b>anniversary</b> 52:11</p> <p><b>announce</b> 12:21</p> <p><b>annual</b> 1:3 2:21</p> <p><b>answer</b> 12:3 24:9 57:14 60:23</p> <p><b>answered</b> 57:17</p> <p><b>anybody</b> 58:14 59:11</p> <p><b>anyway</b> 58:7</p> <p><b>anywise</b> 62:15</p> <p><b>Apalachee</b> 7:20</p> <p><b>Appalachian</b> 7:7</p> <p><b>apparent</b> 35:12</p> <p><b>appendix</b> 5:11 19:18 20:1 27:16,17</p> <p><b>applaud</b> 35:11 45:17 51:7</p> <p><b>application</b> 38:16</p> <p><b>applied</b> 19:16 38:21</p> <p><b>apply</b> 37:16</p> <p><b>appreciate</b> 42:24 53:18 58:9</p> <p><b>appreciated</b> 2:12</p> <p><b>approach</b> 21:1 40:17 42:19,23 53:6 60:22</p> <p><b>approaches</b> 22:23</p>	<p><b>approval</b> 15:9</p> <p><b>approved</b> 13:4,19 59:23</p> <p><b>approximately</b> 21:17 22:2 26:21</p> <p><b>April</b> 1:8 7:25 50:22 51:6</p> <p><b>aquatic</b> 7:9 46:5</p> <p><b>area</b> 6:12 20:21 40:9,11</p> <p><b>areas</b> 13:23 23:2</p> <p><b>artificial</b> 46:1</p> <p><b>asked</b> 4:2</p> <p><b>asking</b> 60:21</p> <p><b>aspect</b> 48:1</p> <p><b>assembled</b> 19:11,13</p> <p><b>assessment</b> 3:3,5 4:24 12:9 22:12,19 25:7 25:25 56:9</p> <p><b>assessments</b> 11:19</p> <p><b>associated</b> 22:15 27:15</p> <p><b>atmosphere</b> 41:5</p> <p><b>Atmospheric</b> 10:21</p> <p><b>attendance</b> 4:4 6:6</p> <p><b>attended</b> 55:8</p> <p><b>Audubon</b> 53:20</p> <p><b>aux</b> 17:17</p> <p><b>availability</b> 33:22 37:3</p>	<p><b>available</b> 5:2 11:25 21:10</p> <p><b>avian</b> 17:15</p> <p><b>avoid</b> 36:6</p> <p><b>aware</b> 13:2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>B</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>B</b> 20:1</p> <p><b>baby</b> 49:2</p> <p><b>back</b> 27:21 34:14 59:6,8,11 60:15</p> <p><b>bald</b> 39:3</p> <p><b>Baldwin</b> 17:2 20:23</p> <p><b>bang</b> 33:15</p> <p><b>based</b> 49:18</p> <p><b>basic</b> 19:16</p> <p><b>basically</b> 40:9</p> <p><b>bay</b> 7:21 20:24 21:19 23:10,17 26:13,24 30:5 33:2,11 40:3,5 43:17,22 44:7 45:13 46:7,12 46:13,21 47:13,16 48:3 55:14</p> <p><b>Baykeeper</b> 48:19,22 49:8</p> <p><b>bays</b> 44:18</p> <p><b>Beach</b> 23:23 24:4 53:25</p> <p><b>beaches</b> 7:23 8:4 20:24 42:20</p> <p><b>beautiful</b> 6:2 7:6 9:4 33:10 46:9</p> <p><b>beauty</b></p>
---	---	---



7:25 34:2	59:12 60:9	17:15
<b>began</b>	<b>Blakeley</b>	<b>Brett</b>
55:6	7:20	29:22
<b>beginning</b>	<b>Blankenship</b>	<b>briefly</b>
48:10	5:17,22 6:25 9:8,9 11:4 16:6	19:6
<b>behalf</b>	28:9 30:4 44:14 58:1,3	<b>bring</b>
14:7 21:11	<b>Blankenship's</b>	4:17 29:21
<b>believe</b>	8:11	<b>brings</b>
34:11 41:7 45:24	<b>bles</b>	27:12
<b>beloved</b>	9:6	<b>brought</b>
7:22	<b>blessed</b>	44:19
<b>bench</b>	7:5,23	<b>buck</b>
5:10	<b>blue</b>	33:16
<b>beneficial</b>	4:3,11,14,18 28:17	<b>buckets</b>
54:2	<b>board</b>	12:6 13:4,5
<b>benefits</b>	33:2	<b>build</b>
20:7	<b>boat</b>	21:6
<b>Berte</b>	54:10	<b>bunch</b>
52:4,6,7 54:19	<b>boathouse</b>	39:5
<b>best</b>	34:7	<b>busy</b>
23:14 27:9 48:14 50:17	<b>boating</b>	43:24
<b>better</b>	14:16 47:10	<b>buy</b>
20:6 26:15,17 37:5 45:15 46:1	<b>Bob</b>	41:2,2 56:1
46:3 49:7 50:18 55:17	9:23 32:23,25	
<b>beyond</b>	<b>body</b>	<b>C</b>
49:16	32:14	<b>C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E</b>
<b>Bibza</b>	<b>Bon</b>	62:1
35:2,4,6 38:8	22:15	<b>calendar</b>
<b>big</b>	<b>bottle</b>	60:1
33:9 49:13	41:14	<b>call</b>
<b>biodiversity</b>	<b>bottlenose</b>	4:5,12 10:10 23:21 28:25
44:17	8:10 25:8,16,20,24	56:18
<b>biological</b>	<b>Boulevard</b>	<b>Callaway</b>
45:23	1:14	48:19,20,21 52:3
<b>biologists</b>	<b>boundaries</b>	<b>called</b>
46:3	37:15	12:24
<b>bipartisan</b>	<b>boys</b>	<b>capacity</b>
40:19	49:2	25:4
<b>bird</b>	<b>BP</b>	<b>capture</b>
26:4,8,16 37:10 38:1 53:17,21	16:20 40:10	39:10
<b>birds</b>	<b>Branch</b>	<b>captured</b>
8:10 14:13,22 19:1 26:3,11,16	23:11	3:19
37:25 54:6	<b>brand</b>	<b>capturing</b>
<b>bit</b>	55:15	3:16
10:5 11:9 26:6 35:14 40:15	<b>breeding</b>	<b>carbon</b>

40:17 41:4,11	<b>chapters</b>	<b>colleagues</b>
<b>card</b>	41:7	16:7
4:3,11,14 28:17,24	<b>charge</b>	<b>collected</b>
<b>cards</b>	49:25	20:4
4:18	<b>check</b>	<b>collecting</b>
<b>Carmichael</b>	28:17	51:12,16
49:24	<b>chosen</b>	<b>collection</b>
<b>Carmichael's</b>	30:1 49:19	25:18
25:6	<b>Chris</b>	<b>colonial</b>
<b>case</b>	10:18 11:3 14:6 28:8,9 47:12	26:11,15
59:8	<b>Christopher</b>	<b>come</b>
<b>cases</b>	5:17	6:17 19:5 28:3,6 29:13,16
46:6	<b>circles</b>	30:17 32:22 43:16 48:18
<b>Casi</b>	17:6	50:8 58:1,19
48:19,21	<b>Citizens</b>	<b>comes</b>
<b>CAST</b>	39:20 40:4,5,16 41:10	41:13 50:15 56:25
23:20 37:18	<b>civil</b>	<b>comfortable</b>
<b>cause</b>	12:24 13:9	12:2 58:6
62:16	<b>Claude</b>	<b>coming</b>
<b>causes</b>	26:25	2:3 60:25
45:14	<b>clean</b>	<b>commend</b>
<b>causing</b>	12:17,24 13:8 45:5	42:10 54:25 55:13 56:20
8:2 41:5	<b>clear</b>	<b>comment</b>
<b>celebrating</b>	34:14 43:11	4:6,10 10:7 11:23 15:8 28:12
52:10	<b>clearly</b>	30:23 36:22 42:5 43:17 47:5
<b>center</b>	29:17	50:5 56:16,25 57:4,21
1:13 24:4 27:1 33:21,21	<b>climate</b>	<b>comments</b>
<b>certainly</b>	39:21 40:4,6,16 41:4,10	4:19,20,21 31:1 35:16 52:21
8:14 26:20 36:17	<b>close</b>	58:9 59:1 60:16,24
<b>certify</b>	57:19 58:2	<b>Commissioner</b>
62:6,13	<b>Club</b>	5:17,18,21 6:25 8:11 9:12
<b>chair</b>	40:3	11:4 30:4 58:1
38:18	<b>coast</b>	<b>commitment</b>
<b>chairing</b>	12:22 22:14 38:2 44:19 54:23	8:21
6:7	<b>coastal</b>	<b>committee</b>
<b>challenge</b>	3:6 6:11,15 14:21 15:23 18:5	38:18
45:19	18:12,24 21:16 23:21 24:3	<b>community</b>
<b>chance</b>	27:11 31:7 37:8 44:9,16	36:15 38:6 44:1 49:9 50:4,11
5:4 30:22 32:19 59:9	46:25 52:5,9,12 53:1,12,21	50:20,24 55:8
<b>change</b>	<b>coastline</b>	<b>complete</b>
4:8 41:4	38:6	17:15
<b>changed</b>	<b>Coffee</b>	<b>completed</b>
28:23	21:21 26:7,18	55:16
<b>chapter</b>	<b>cold</b>	<b>completion</b>
40:4,5	39:7	22:12 56:12

<p><b>comply</b> 42:25</p> <p><b>component</b> 50:7 51:8</p> <p><b>components</b> 24:16</p> <p><b>comprehensive</b> 15:4 19:12 20:21 36:9,23 44:25 51:10 53:2 54:12</p> <p><b>comprehensively</b> 21:2</p> <p><b>conclusion</b> 28:22</p> <p><b>condition</b> 14:13</p> <p><b>conditions</b> 37:4</p> <p><b>conduct</b> 27:6</p> <p><b>conducting</b> 24:20</p> <p><b>configuration</b> 26:23</p> <p><b>configurations</b> 27:8</p> <p><b>connected</b> 51:18</p> <p><b>Conservancy</b> 42:7,10 54:24</p> <p><b>conservation</b> 5:19 9:12 11:5 13:18 23:3,22 28:10 55:6,7,10,25 56:1,5</p> <p><b>conserve</b> 14:19 33:13 55:17</p> <p><b>conserved</b> 55:23</p> <p><b>conserving</b> 15:20 46:20</p> <p><b>consider</b> 36:15 46:24 48:13 50:16</p> <p><b>consideration</b> 54:5</p> <p><b>considered</b> 4:23 19:22</p> <p><b>considering</b></p>	<p>22:23 48:8</p> <p><b>consistency</b> 22:25</p> <p><b>construction</b> 18:8 22:10,18 27:9</p> <p><b>consult</b> 35:20</p> <p><b>contain</b> 7:10</p> <p><b>contains</b> 18:5</p> <p><b>continuation</b> 23:24</p> <p><b>continue</b> 9:6 15:13 41:16 46:24 48:13 52:24</p> <p><b>continued</b> 31:20</p> <p><b>continues</b> 8:7</p> <p><b>continuing</b> 9:2 45:18</p> <p><b>contributions</b> 25:14</p> <p><b>conversation</b> 11:25</p> <p><b>conversations</b> 2:15</p> <p><b>cooperation</b> 52:13</p> <p><b>coordinate</b> 35:20</p> <p><b>coordination</b> 32:9</p> <p><b>copies</b> 5:8</p> <p><b>copy</b> 5:10</p> <p><b>core</b> 38:15</p> <p><b>correct</b> 62:11</p> <p><b>correctly</b> 56:10</p> <p><b>cost</b></p>	<p>20:7</p> <p><b>costs</b> 36:20</p> <p><b>council</b> 6:8 12:23,23 13:3,8,10,14 34:19 38:17 43:1 59:15,16</p> <p><b>counsel</b> 62:14</p> <p><b>Counties</b> 17:2 20:24</p> <p><b>country</b> 7:7</p> <p><b>county</b> 46:19 55:18,20,21 62:4</p> <p><b>couple</b> 35:14 37:25 41:7</p> <p><b>course</b> 48:1</p> <p><b>court</b> 3:14 29:17 62:21</p> <p><b>cover</b> 20:23</p> <p><b>covers</b> 7:18 8:13 20:22,23 22:13</p> <p><b>crawfish</b> 45:9</p> <p><b>crazy</b> 49:2</p> <p><b>creates</b> 7:14</p> <p><b>creation</b> 22:3 23:5 46:1</p> <p><b>creatures</b> 45:11</p> <p><b>Creek</b> 23:12 45:13</p> <p><b>crew</b> 35:12</p> <p><b>criminal</b> 12:17</p> <p><b>criteria</b> 19:22 20:1</p> <p><b>critical</b> 31:9,22 45:22 49:2</p> <p><b>critters</b></p>
---	---	---

<p>37:14  <b>CRR</b>  1:24  <b>crystal</b>  34:14  <b>cultch</b>  17:1 26:23  <b>current</b>  24:23</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>D</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Damage</b>  12:9 56:9  <b>data</b>  25:18 32:12 37:11 51:2,12,16  <b>date</b>  13:15 57:1 59:25 60:3  <b>Dauphin</b>  25:6 39:9 49:23 51:21 55:22  <b>deal</b>  43:5  <b>dealing</b>  13:23  <b>dedicated</b>  13:15  <b>dedication</b>  9:1  <b>Deepwater</b>  1:1 3:7 8:1 11:10 12:7 15:3  16:19 19:14 22:22  <b>degree</b>  48:8  <b>delayed</b>  10:14  <b>delighted</b>  8:19  <b>Delta</b>  1:13 7:4,17 41:15  <b>demonstrates</b>  8:22  <b>department</b>  5:18 9:12,15 10:16 11:4,17  28:10  <b>depend</b>  44:17</p>	<p><b>depicted</b>  16:24 17:5  <b>describe</b>  19:6  <b>described</b>  45:24  <b>describes</b>  19:2  <b>design</b>  17:18 18:7 20:6 21:20 22:4,9  23:14  <b>designee</b>  13:11  <b>designing</b>  37:12  <b>detail</b>  35:14 43:4  <b>detailed</b>  20:4,10  <b>details</b>  3:2  <b>determine</b>  19:23  <b>developable</b>  33:20  <b>developed</b>  19:22 33:17 34:6  <b>developer's</b>  33:23  <b>developing</b>  21:14 34:3  <b>development</b>  36:9 53:4  <b>different</b>  5:8 33:19 54:11  <b>diligence</b>  8:25  <b>diligent</b>  55:1  <b>dioxide</b>  41:4  <b>direct</b>  25:14  <b>direction</b>  8:16</p>	<p><b>Director</b>  6:1 30:4 43:22 48:22 52:5,8  54:23  <b>disaster</b>  51:4  <b>discontinued</b>  17:23  <b>discuss</b>  15:6 20:18  <b>discussing</b>  12:13  <b>distance</b>  29:13  <b>distributed</b>  15:15  <b>diversity</b>  7:9 45:7  <b>dividend</b>  40:17 41:11  <b>DMR</b>  36:2  <b>dock</b>  54:9  <b>document</b>  11:15 36:12  <b>documented</b>  46:6  <b>documents</b>  49:3 57:9,12  <b>DoI</b>  28:8  <b>doing</b>  35:24 42:2 53:18 54:13  <b>dollars</b>  16:13  <b>dolphin</b>  25:8,17,20,25 37:9  <b>dolphins</b>  8:10 25:11,15  <b>double-check</b>  36:21  <b>downstream</b>  41:13  <b>Dr</b>  10:24,25 25:6</p>
--	--	---

<p><b>draft</b> 3:2 5:6 11:13 16:10 19:4 20:20 27:14 43:3</p> <p><b>dream</b> 33:24</p> <p><b>drive</b> 48:25</p> <p><b>DSA</b> 28:9</p> <p><b>due</b> 45:19</p> <p><b>dune</b> 17:8</p> <p><b>duration</b> 38:20</p> <p><b>dynamic</b> 28:5</p> <p><b>dynamics</b> 24:5 37:19</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>E</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>EA</b> 3:4</p> <p><b>eagles</b> 39:3,3</p> <p><b>earlier</b> 43:2 45:24 50:9 51:1</p> <p><b>early</b> 2:24 16:23 17:11,14 18:10,16 31:8</p> <p><b>easement</b> 56:1,5</p> <p><b>easements</b> 55:25</p> <p><b>East</b> 46:12 47:19</p> <p><b>eat</b> 24:8</p> <p><b>echo</b> 16:5 48:22 53:3</p> <p><b>ecological</b> 20:7</p> <p><b>economic</b> 45:22</p> <p><b>economy</b></p>	<p>46:25</p> <p><b>ecosystem</b> 45:23</p> <p><b>edge</b> 7:4</p> <p><b>educate</b> 54:15</p> <p><b>educating</b> 24:13 54:8</p> <p><b>education</b> 24:12,20 25:11,22 50:7,8,17 52:13,24 54:5</p> <p><b>effective</b> 19:24</p> <p><b>effectively</b> 24:9</p> <p><b>effects</b> 40:10</p> <p><b>efficient</b> 57:3</p> <p><b>effort</b> 9:2 32:17 36:16 53:22 55:2</p> <p><b>efforts</b> 8:7 31:21 42:24</p> <p><b>eight</b> 42:16 50:22</p> <p><b>either</b> 45:3 51:23 57:2</p> <p><b>elected</b> 9:22,25</p> <p><b>elements</b> 37:23</p> <p><b>elevation</b> 33:21</p> <p><b>eleven</b> 8:2 17:11,14</p> <p><b>eligibility</b> 19:16</p> <p><b>emerged</b> 20:8</p> <p><b>emptying</b> 7:21</p> <p><b>encompasses</b> 17:7</p> <p><b>encourage</b></p>	<p>15:12 32:13 35:20 36:4,14</p> <p><b>encouraged</b> 31:13 36:8</p> <p><b>endangered</b> 46:6</p> <p><b>ends</b> 11:24</p> <p><b>energy</b> 40:25</p> <p><b>engineering</b> 17:18 18:7 21:20 22:3 23:14</p> <p><b>engineers</b> 46:2</p> <p><b>enhance</b> 14:23 15:24</p> <p><b>enhancement</b> 22:3 23:5 24:11 25:11</p> <p><b>enhancing</b> 25:4</p> <p><b>enjoy</b> 9:14,15 47:9</p> <p><b>ensure</b> 22:25 31:17 32:7 45:10</p> <p><b>entail</b> 34:6</p> <p><b>entered</b> 28:18</p> <p><b>entire</b> 4:1 20:17 35:12 38:2 45:8 59:4</p> <p><b>environment</b> 52:12 54:14</p> <p><b>environmental</b> 3:3,4 4:24 10:18 11:19 20:11 37:4 38:18</p> <p><b>EPA</b> 28:8</p> <p><b>Ernest</b> 54:20,21,22 56:14,15</p> <p><b>especially</b> 16:7 24:22 31:22 42:14 44:10 49:13,17</p> <p><b>estuarian</b> 25:8</p> <p><b>evaluate</b></p>
--	--	---

<p>19:3  <b>evening</b>                  2:2 3:10 16:5 29:3,13 30:21                  30:22 33:3 34:14 35:5 43:20                  43:25 52:7 57:21 61:1  <b>evening's</b>                  28:2  <b>event</b>                  8:7  <b>everybody</b>                  6:20 12:2 39:25 40:1 41:3                  52:15  <b>example</b>                  31:11 37:6,18  <b>excited</b>                  6:5  <b>Executive</b>                  43:21 52:5,8  <b>existing</b>                  32:3,13 37:3 51:11  <b>exists</b>                  49:21  <b>expansion</b>                  23:24  <b>expert</b>                  57:13  <b>expertise</b>                  21:9  <b>experts</b>                  36:13 57:16  <b>explained</b>                  11:3  <b>explaining</b>                  34:21  <b>exploded</b>                  8:1  <b>extent</b>                  32:15</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>F</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>facilitate</b>                  11:23  <b>facilitator</b>                  2:6  <b>facility</b></p>	<p>6:2 60:7,10  <b>fact</b>                  5:1,1 39:12  <b>fall</b>                  8:4 59:21  <b>familiar</b>                  12:6  <b>families</b>                  45:6  <b>family</b>                  30:10  <b>far</b>                  16:18 36:23 37:8 40:13 41:9                  41:17 47:21  <b>farmers</b>                  45:18 48:4  <b>fastest</b>                  55:14  <b>favorite</b>                  8:11  <b>FDACS</b>                  35:23  <b>federal</b>                  8:24 10:12 13:7,10,13,14,25                  14:7,25 19:15 22:13 40:12                  40:12 44:5 59:16  <b>federally</b>                  18:25 22:8,19,21 51:22  <b>Federation</b>                  30:19 35:3,7  <b>Federation's</b>                  30:25  <b>fee</b>                  40:17,20 41:11  <b>feedback</b>                  3:12 52:25  <b>feel</b>                  4:9 12:2 20:25 60:20,21  <b>figure</b>                  51:12  <b>Fikes</b>                  30:18,20,23 32:21 36:3  <b>file</b>                  52:22  <b>fill</b></p>	<p>4:2,14 31:8,21  <b>filling</b>                  32:12 37:11  <b>final</b>                  4:23  <b>finalized</b>                  15:5 17:4  <b>finally</b>                  21:8,21 24:11 25:9 27:10  <b>fines</b>                  12:17,25 13:9  <b>finish</b>                  60:17  <b>first</b>                  10:4 18:2 26:5,22 28:17 29:5                  29:22 35:18 43:23 55:5,6  <b>fish</b>                  12:16 14:13 45:9 46:8 47:9  <b>fisheries</b>                  40:13  <b>fishing</b>                  45:3,4 47:9  <b>fit</b>                  49:12  <b>five</b>                  1:14 7:19 21:16 22:4 23:2                  41:15  <b>fledglings</b>                  39:5  <b>floating</b>                  34:16  <b>flooding</b>                  46:8  <b>Florida</b>                  35:6,23,24  <b>flowing</b>                  7:21  <b>flows</b>                  23:12  <b>focus</b>                  3:6 31:14 49:13  <b>focused</b>                  18:4,23 23:2  <b>folks</b>                  39:9</p>
--	--	---

<p><b>follow</b> 60:3,11 <b>followed</b> 11:12 39:8 <b>following</b> 3:22 57:18 <b>forefront</b> 31:4 <b>foregoing</b> 62:7,10 <b>forestry</b> 23:4 <b>formal</b> 60:18 <b>formally</b> 4:5 58:2 <b>Fort</b> 1:15 18:6 60:7,9 <b>forth</b> 56:8 <b>fortunate</b> 7:6 23:25 <b>forward</b> 4:5 9:2,17 15:8 17:24 28:6 29:16 30:17 32:22 37:6 43:9 43:16 48:6,18 56:12,19 58:1 <b>fossil</b> 40:21,24 <b>fought</b> 48:11 <b>found</b> 19:18 20:1 27:16 39:14 59:7 <b>Foundation</b> 12:16 30:6 33:2,12 43:18,22 44:7 52:5,9 53:2,12 <b>foundational</b> 21:5 <b>four</b> 12:6,7 13:12 18:5 23:19 26:21 32:4 <b>Fowl</b> 23:9 45:13 <b>foyer</b> 4:25 <b>Fralick</b></p>	<p>39:20,22 40:2 42:4 <b>framework</b> 16:20 <b>frameworks</b> 32:5 <b>Franklin</b> 2:1,5 27:23 30:15 32:20 34:25 38:7 39:18 42:3 43:14 47:3 48:16 52:2 54:18 56:13 57:23 <b>free</b> 60:22 <b>frequenting</b> 45:2 <b>frequently</b> 24:7 <b>freshwater</b> 45:2,8 <b>Friday</b> 34:12 <b>front</b> 3:17 10:9 12:2 29:4 <b>frontage</b> 46:16 <b>fuels</b> 40:21,24 <b>full</b> 5:6 19:17 <b>functions</b> 45:23 <b>fund</b> 37:23 <b>funded</b> 17:12,14 25:22 26:1,8 <b>funding</b> 12:7,15 13:19 21:10 41:9 49:20,20 55:19 <b>funds</b> 15:14 56:9 <b>further</b> 11:25 34:21 62:13 <b>future</b> 21:5 24:24 31:9,18,23 36:25 37:12 43:9 46:22,23 51:24 52:23 53:19 54:16 55:19</p>	<p>56:3 <b>FWC</b> 35:23 <hr/><b>G</b><hr/><b>G</b> 27:17 <b>Gaar</b> 29:22,24 30:16 <b>Gaillard</b> 26:12 <b>gaps</b> 24:23 31:9,21 32:12 37:11 51:2 <b>gas</b> 41:2,6 <b>Gateway</b> 46:13 47:19 <b>gather</b> 7:3 <b>general</b> 35:9 <b>generations</b> 30:11 <b>geographic</b> 20:21 <b>Geological</b> 10:25 11:2 <b>getting</b> 10:15 12:2 <b>Girard</b> 43:17,19,21,21 47:4 <b>give</b> 3:11,23 11:9 29:5 42:5 43:16 45:15 47:5 56:16 57:6 <b>giving</b> 30:22 32:18 <b>glad</b> 6:20,20 38:3 44:10 60:23 <b>global</b> 41:5 <b>go</b> 2:18 5:11,15 10:3 11:8 19:19 24:7 28:20 29:10,11 34:12 34:13,14 39:1 40:24 57:2</p>
--	---	---

58:5,19 60:13	<b>group</b>	<b>happened</b>
<b>goal</b>	1:2 2:9 11:7 14:3,19 16:9	14:14 38:19
14:11 15:19 21:1 22:20 24:15	38:15 39:16 47:14 48:7	<b>happening</b>
<b>goals</b>	<b>Group's</b>	54:16
15:4,16 21:24 22:1,21 27:4	2:7	<b>happens</b>
<b>God</b>	<b>grow</b>	6:14 53:21
9:5	27:18,19 46:19	<b>happy</b>
<b>goes</b>	<b>grow-out</b>	48:12 53:8
58:22	27:1 36:19	<b>hard</b>
<b>going</b>	<b>growing</b>	34:17 44:6 50:7
11:8 18:21 19:7 20:16 28:13	55:15	<b>Harrod</b>
35:15,18 36:13 41:8 60:6	<b>guess</b>	46:14 47:19
<b>gonna</b>	49:7	<b>hatchery</b>
10:13 19:19 29:1 31:13 35:13	<b>guidance</b>	26:25 37:7 53:14
50:8 51:24 58:5	32:4,7	<b>health</b>
<b>good</b>	<b>guide</b>	25:9,25
2:2 8:15 24:1 30:21 35:5	31:23 36:25	<b>healthy</b>
39:23 43:4,20 50:6 52:7 61:1	<b>guiding</b>	51:9
<b>gotten</b>	37:12	<b>hear</b>
52:18	<b>Guillory</b>	2:8 3:3 5:3 11:11,22 27:22
<b>governor</b>	42:6,8,9 43:15	28:5
6:6,6,12,16,18 9:10 13:9 16:6	<b>gulf</b>	<b>heard</b>
44:14 59:19	7:8,21 12:22 13:12 18:7,11	55:9
<b>Governor's</b>	20:25 24:6 30:25 32:15 38:2	<b>hearing</b>
59:21 60:2	42:6 44:20	62:12
<b>graciously</b>	<b>guys</b>	<b>hearty</b>
60:8	30:3	51:9
<b>Grady</b>		<b>Hello</b>
34:7	<b>H</b>	35:5
<b>graphic</b>	<b>habitat</b>	<b>help</b>
15:16	3:6 13:17 14:20 17:16 18:24	31:8 32:7 37:22 45:13 48:4
<b>grateful</b>	21:16,20 22:2,7 24:4,22 26:6	52:24
42:14	26:18 37:18 41:21 45:25	<b>helpful</b>
<b>grav-</b>	46:2,21	2:19
33:21	<b>habitats</b>	<b>helping</b>
<b>great</b>	7:9,14 15:20 18:24 22:22	31:17 52:20 53:20
6:23 9:6 16:4 30:1,7,12 31:13	31:15 42:13 44:21	<b>helps</b>
37:4,21 48:5,5 49:3,3 50:10	<b>half</b>	4:3
50:13 57:9	29:6,7 39:6 58:20	<b>Hi</b>
<b>greatly</b>	<b>Hall</b>	42:9 43:20
2:11	60:9	<b>high</b>
<b>green</b>	<b>hand</b>	33:21 48:10
29:7	4:11,17 28:24	<b>high-level</b>
<b>greenhouse</b>	<b>hang</b>	19:9
41:6	60:19	<b>historic</b>



<p>27:7  <b>holistically</b>                      54:8  <b>Holk</b>                      9:23 32:23,24,25 35:1  <b>Holmes</b>                      30:11 33:5,18 34:23 38:25                      46:11  <b>home</b>                      39:15 46:5 53:25  <b>Homer</b>                      10:13 27:21,24 28:7  <b>hope</b>                      24:12 46:23 48:12 52:22                      53:18 55:19 59:6  <b>Horizon</b>                      1:1 3:8 8:1 11:10 12:7 15:3                      16:19 19:14 22:23  <b>hotshot</b>                      38:4  <b>hours</b>                      49:1 53:5  <b>house</b>                      34:6 52:16  <b>households</b>                      40:23  <b>Howard</b>                      10:11 13:24 14:5  <b>Hunter</b>                      15:25 16:2 35:17  <b>hydrologic</b>                      23:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>I</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>ideas</b>                      58:24  <b>identified</b>                      21:24  <b>identify</b>                      24:24  <b>II</b>                      3:2 5:7 11:13,15 12:14 14:1                      16:11,16 18:15,19 52:25  <b>illuminated</b>                      29:6</p>	<p><b>immediately</b>                      7:17  <b>impact</b>                      54:14  <b>impacted</b>                      50:21  <b>impacting</b>                      54:13  <b>impairment</b>                      45:19  <b>implement</b>                      29:2  <b>implementation</b>                      1:2 2:7,9 11:6 14:2,18 15:10                      16:9,22 17:24 23:15 31:10  <b>implemented</b>                      17:16,21 32:8  <b>implementing</b>                      37:13  <b>important</b>                      2:3 3:12 6:8,11 30:9 31:25                      34:22 37:11 42:22 43:7                      44:22 46:24 47:20,24 48:3                      52:18 55:10,18 59:3,18,20  <b>importantly</b>                      58:21  <b>impressed</b>                      53:1  <b>improve</b>                      8:9 14:20 25:19 52:12  <b>improvements</b>                      17:8,9  <b>improving</b>                      24:18  <b>in-water</b>                      24:5  <b>include</b>                      22:1 23:14 26:14  <b>included</b>                      43:3 48:12 58:17  <b>including</b>                      2:23 32:4 36:10,15 46:6 58:15  <b>inclusion</b>                      31:2,5  <b>increase</b></p>	<p>24:13 25:16 27:5 38:5  <b>increased</b>                      53:22  <b>increasing</b>                      24:18  <b>individual</b>                      29:22 30:17 32:22 35:2 38:9                      39:20 42:5,17 43:16 47:5                      48:18 52:4 54:20 56:15                      57:17  <b>individuals</b>                      4:17 28:20,25 29:1,12 56:21                      57:15,20  <b>industry</b>                      44:17,19  <b>influence</b>                      31:9  <b>information</b>                      3:10 6:4 11:20,21 18:9 20:5                      28:4 37:2 51:5 57:11 60:11  <b>informative</b>                      59:7  <b>injured</b>                      14:12 15:2  <b>injuries</b>                      19:25 21:2  <b>injury</b>                      8:2 13:23  <b>inlets</b>                      44:18  <b>input</b>                      21:13 36:16 55:2  <b>inside</b>                      32:14  <b>instance</b>                      37:2  <b>intact</b>                      45:25  <b>interactions</b>                      24:14  <b>interest</b>                      6:14 8:18,20  <b>interested</b>                      8:20 62:15  <b>interfere</b></p>
---	---	---

<p>2:12  <b>Interior</b>                  10:17  <b>interpret</b>                  4:1  <b>interpreters</b>                  3:25  <b>intimate</b>                  2:15  <b>introduce</b>                  5:17 29:19  <b>invest</b>                  38:4  <b>investing</b>                  40:25  <b>investment</b>                  46:22  <b>investments</b>                  31:5,24 36:25 37:12  <b>invite</b>                  5:4 57:11  <b>involved</b>                  38:22  <b>Island</b>                  21:21 25:6 26:7,12,18 39:9                  49:24 51:22 55:22  <b>islands</b>                  21:22  <b>issues</b>                  20:6 44:9 45:15  <b>iterations</b>                  43:9  <b>Ivey</b>                  6:6,7,17,18 13:9 44:14  <b>Ivey's</b>                  16:6</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>J</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Jessica</b>                  35:2,5  <b>job</b>                  24:1 30:12 50:1 51:15  <b>join</b>                  10:13 14:8  <b>joining</b></p>	<p>14:9  <b>journey</b>                  9:3  <b>jurisdiction</b>                  33:8</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>K</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Kay</b>                  6:6,16  <b>kayakers</b>                  46:10  <b>keep</b>                  4:3 37:14 51:17  <b>keeping</b>                  51:10  <b>Kevin</b>                  10:16 28:7  <b>key</b>                  31:14 44:22  <b>killing</b>                  8:1  <b>kin</b>                  62:14  <b>kind</b>                  35:8  <b>kindly</b>                  2:18  <b>knew</b>                  51:6  <b>know</b>                  22:13 24:9 28:13 31:24 35:23                  36:24 37:14,15 39:11 41:8                  41:25 43:6 44:4 50:23 51:3                  52:16,19 53:3,4,10,15 54:6,9                  56:7 58:11  <b>knowing</b>                  51:5  <b>knowledge</b>                  24:23  <b>known</b>                  23:22  <b>knows</b>                  41:3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>L</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>lab</b></p>	<p>25:6,7 39:10 49:24  <b>lagoon</b>                  22:11 38:2,3  <b>land</b>                  7:13 21:18 22:13,25 23:16                  33:13 44:12 46:11,12,13,15                  47:15,18,20,24 48:8,9,13                  49:10 54:24 55:6,7,10  <b>landowner</b>                  47:9  <b>lands</b>                  6:1 18:25 22:8,19 45:21  <b>Language</b>                  3:25  <b>large</b>                  42:11 46:16,21 62:21  <b>larger</b>                  60:10  <b>lastly</b>                  32:11 48:7  <b>launch</b>                  54:10,10  <b>layer</b>                  56:6  <b>lead</b>                  5:19 10:11 11:5,5 13:25  <b>leader</b>                  40:5  <b>leadership</b>                  43:13 48:25  <b>leading</b>                  26:17  <b>learned</b>                  21:7 36:5  <b>led</b>                  49:25  <b>lessons</b>                  21:7 36:5  <b>let's</b>                  5:15 58:18  <b>letter</b>                  34:21  <b>level</b>                  40:12,19 41:11,12 44:5  <b>leverage</b></p>
---	--	---

21:9	<b>loads</b>	<b>Magnolia</b>
<b>libraries</b>	23:17	9:23 29:22 30:5,8,9,13 32:23
5:8	<b>lobby</b>	33:1,3,5,7,9 34:8 38:10,14
<b>life</b>	2:18 39:21 40:4,6,16 41:10	46:8,11 47:18
7:16 8:3	57:9	<b>mail</b>
<b>lifeblood</b>	<b>local</b>	4:21 57:4,6
44:16	8:24 21:9,12,24 40:11 44:5	<b>main</b>
<b>lifestyle</b>	49:23 50:19	38:23
41:24 47:1	<b>located</b>	<b>making</b>
<b>light</b>	33:6	7:1 16:9 41:15 51:8,10,17
42:20	<b>location</b>	<b>mammal</b>
<b>lighting</b>	60:4,4	25:2,5,23 42:15 49:23
17:9 22:12,18 51:20	<b>locations</b>	<b>mammals</b>
<b>lines</b>	20:19 27:7	14:22 19:1 24:7 25:1 32:1
50:14	<b>loggerhead</b>	42:19 54:7
<b>link</b>	8:9	<b>man</b>
5:14	<b>Lois</b>	43:2
<b>links</b>	1:24 62:20	<b>managed</b>
18:13 59:11	<b>long</b>	18:25 22:8,19,21 25:5
<b>list</b>	12:4 29:13	<b>management</b>
17:7 19:12 28:16,19 30:7 44:3	<b>long-term</b>	13:21 15:19 22:25 23:4,4,15
44:8,13 46:23 49:3 56:18	40:10	23:16 26:2 27:11,15,19 31:6
<b>listed</b>	<b>look</b>	32:4 40:14 43:1,7,10 47:14
22:5	9:2,17 15:6,7 24:6 36:4,20	47:23,25 53:6
<b>listen</b>	43:8 55:20 56:11 59:22,23	<b>Manager</b>
60:23	60:14	42:7
<b>listened</b>	<b>looking</b>	<b>manatee</b>
55:3 58:12	26:11 38:1	39:12
<b>listening</b>	<b>looks</b>	<b>manatees</b>
10:9 28:6 29:4 52:16	34:17	39:7
<b>listing</b>	<b>lost</b>	<b>manmade</b>
45:1	18:4	51:4
<b>lists</b>	<b>lot</b>	<b>manual</b>
19:13	8:14 24:16 33:16 34:10 35:24	32:6 43:1
<b>little</b>	38:22 55:1,2 58:22	<b>map</b>
10:5,14,14 11:9 14:1 22:11	<b>lots</b>	16:24 17:5,13 20:17 22:6
26:6 29:3 35:14 36:18 38:2	3:10 7:23	51:19
40:15 47:10 49:6 59:12 60:9	<b>love</b>	<b>mapping</b>
<b>lived</b>	41:25 49:22	26:24 27:6
50:21	<b>lower</b>	<b>Mariculture</b>
<b>lives</b>	21:22	26:25
44:23		<b>marine</b>
<b>living</b>	<b>M</b>	3:7 13:20 14:21,22 15:23 19:1
3:6 15:22 17:10,17 22:10,18	<b>machine</b>	25:1,2,4,23 31:7,25 37:9
31:6 36:10 37:8 38:2,3 41:23	62:8	42:15,19 43:12

<b>Mark</b> 52:4,7	<b>methods</b> 27:9	29:3
<b>market-based</b> 40:17	<b>Mexico</b> 7:8,22 20:25 30:25 44:21	<b>monitored</b> 32:8
<b>marred</b> 7:25	<b>microphone</b> 28:14 60:21	<b>monitoring</b> 13:21 15:10,18 17:20,21 26:1 27:14,18 31:5 32:3,6 42:25 43:4,6,10 51:8 53:21
<b>marsh</b> 44:21	<b>mile</b> 23:12 33:20 34:4 39:14	<b>morbidity</b> 25:15
<b>match</b> 49:19	<b>miles</b> 46:15	<b>Morgan</b> 18:6
<b>matter</b> 46:2 57:13,16 62:7	<b>million</b> 12:10,17,25 13:5,16,17 15:17 15:20,21,22,23 16:13 17:4 20:14 21:18 23:9,20 25:3 26:5,22 41:18 44:20	<b>mortality</b> 25:14
<b>mature</b> 27:18,19	<b>mind</b> 4:8 28:23 37:14	<b>motors</b> 34:8
<b>maximize</b> 21:10	<b>mine</b> 40:22	<b>mountains</b> 7:7
<b>maximum</b> 32:15	<b>minute</b> 59:8	<b>move</b> 17:24
<b>Mayor</b> 9:23 32:23 33:1 35:1	<b>minutes</b> 29:5,6,7,8 53:10 60:19	<b>moving</b> 22:7 37:5
<b>mean</b> 60:4	<b>missed</b> 10:1	<b>multi-prong</b> 42:22
<b>meaning</b> 17:20 21:5	<b>mission</b> 42:13 52:11	<b>multi-pronged</b> 40:8
<b>means</b> 29:11	<b>Mississippi</b> 21:21 26:12 36:1	<b>multiple</b> 42:20 48:25
<b>meet</b> 6:2 21:25 60:8	<b>mitigation</b> 31:14	<b>mussels</b> 45:9
<b>meeting</b> 1:3,7 2:4,7,20,22 3:1,13,16,22 4:1 5:16 6:8,10,22 10:8 11:24 13:3 14:10 28:3 34:19 52:16 55:9 59:7 60:7,18 61:2	<b>Mobile</b> 7:19,21 17:2 20:23,24 23:17 26:24 40:3,5 48:19,22 49:8 54:24 55:18,20,21 62:4	<hr/> <b>N</b> <hr/>
<b>meetings</b> 55:9 59:2	<b>Mobile-Tensaw</b> 7:4,17	<b>name</b> 2:5 10:10 29:16 32:25 40:2 42:9 43:20 52:7 54:22
<b>member</b> 33:2,11 40:3	<b>moment</b> 2:11	<b>name's</b> 30:23 38:13 47:8
<b>members</b> 11:18 49:9	<b>moments</b> 57:7	<b>names</b> 28:16 56:18
<b>mentioned</b> 31:22 36:3 37:10 47:18	<b>money</b> 40:10,22,23 41:14,16,17,20 47:21 48:14	<b>narrow</b> 34:9
<b>mentions</b> 37:19	<b>monitor</b>	<b>national</b> 7:8 10:20 12:16 20:11 22:15 30:18,24 35:3,7 40:18 41:11 41:15 51:14
<b>met</b> 22:20		<b>natural</b>

8:2,21 9:13 12:9 14:12 15:1 15:2 21:3 31:18 51:4 56:8	<b>NFWF</b> 12:20 59:16	<b>OAW</b> 38:16,22
<b>nature</b> 21:5 46:3 53:3 54:12	<b>NGO</b> 36:15	<b>obtain</b> 38:16
<b>near</b> 52:23	<b>Nick</b> 10:24 28:9	<b>occur</b> 7:12
<b>nearly</b> 34:4 45:3 46:14	<b>night</b> 34:18	<b>occurred</b> 55:5
<b>nearshore</b> 18:24 21:16	<b>NOAA</b> 28:8 44:20	<b>ocean</b> 37:16 40:14 41:19 42:7,10
<b>necessarily</b> 48:9	<b>NOAA's</b> 18:11	<b>Oceanic</b> 10:20 37:19
<b>need</b> 2:16 8:15 24:9 28:18 29:11 45:5 49:13 50:2,23 51:16 57:1	<b>nonpartisan</b> 40:19	<b>oceans</b> 41:3,22
<b>needing</b> 53:14	<b>nonpoint</b> 13:21 23:1,7	<b>October</b> 60:1,5
<b>needs</b> 21:25 57:5 59:12	<b>nonprofit</b> 50:10 52:10,19	<b>Odess</b> 38:9,11,13 39:19
<b>negative</b> 24:14	<b>north</b> 7:17	<b>offered</b> 60:8
<b>neighbor</b> 2:17 36:1	<b>NOTARY</b> 62:21	<b>officials</b> 9:22,25
<b>neighboring</b> 35:21	<b>note</b> 36:18	<b>oil</b> 1:1 3:8 8:3 15:3 20:10 22:23 38:19 55:5
<b>neither</b> 62:13	<b>noted</b> 44:15	<b>Okay</b> 4:19 28:20 57:24
<b>NEPA</b> 20:12	<b>notice</b> 55:4	<b>once</b> 58:18
<b>neritic</b> 37:19	<b>NRCS</b> 45:17	<b>one-year</b> 47:25
<b>nest</b> 24:7	<b>NRDA</b> 6:10,25 9:16 10:6 12:8,12 13:23 14:2,11 18:17 47:21 59:14	<b>ones</b> 38:5 50:20,21
<b>nesting</b> 26:11,15 39:4 42:20	<b>number</b> 21:4,8	<b>ongoing</b> 15:11
<b>network</b> 25:5,22	<b>numbers</b> 36:20	<b>online</b> 4:20 52:21 53:8 57:2
<b>never</b> 33:17	<b>numerous</b> 35:21 46:5	<b>OPA</b> 20:11
<b>new</b> 18:20 34:6 42:25 46:1 53:25 55:15	<b>nutrient</b> 13:22 18:25 23:1,7,17 44:10 45:12 48:3 49:11,17	<b>open</b> 37:15 52:14,15
<b>Newton</b> 11:1		<b>Open-Ocean</b> 37:21
	<hr/> <b>O</b> <hr/>	<b>Operations</b> 54:23

<p><b>opportunities</b> 14:24 15:24 49:20 55:20</p> <p><b>opportunity</b> 3:11 6:3 34:1 37:21 38:12 39:24 42:2</p> <p><b>option</b> 46:1</p> <p><b>Orange</b> 24:4</p> <p><b>order</b> 28:11 31:23 32:16</p> <p><b>organization</b> 29:18,19,20 40:20 50:17 52:10</p> <p><b>organizations</b> 50:11,12 51:11 52:19</p> <p><b>Orlando</b> 39:10</p> <p><b>Osprey</b> 17:10</p> <p><b>otters</b> 39:3</p> <p><b>outboard</b> 34:8</p> <p><b>Outdoor</b> 44:25</p> <p><b>outreach</b> 24:20 54:6</p> <p><b>outside</b> 4:25 32:14 36:5 57:12</p> <p><b>outsourcing</b> 50:18</p> <p><b>overarching</b> 15:15</p> <p><b>oversight</b> 15:19</p> <p><b>overview</b> 11:9,12 19:10 20:17</p> <p><b>owned</b> 51:22</p> <p><b>oyster</b> 16:25 26:22,24,25 27:1,5,8,11 31:12 35:19,21 36:9,13,19 36:23 37:6 49:13 53:13</p> <p><b>oysters</b></p>	<p>8:11 14:23 19:1 26:20,22 35:18 36:11 53:11</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>P</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>p.m</b> 1:16 61:2</p> <p><b>PA</b> 2:12</p> <p><b>pages</b> 11:16</p> <p><b>parameters</b> 43:4</p> <p><b>parcels</b> 55:22</p> <p><b>Park</b> 18:8 41:15</p> <p><b>Parker</b> 10:18 28:8</p> <p><b>part</b> 3:12 7:2 15:11 33:9 38:15 41:1 55:11</p> <p><b>participate</b> 6:13</p> <p><b>participation</b> 8:19 52:13 59:5</p> <p><b>particular</b> 33:8 53:11,24 54:2</p> <p><b>particularly</b> 30:2,11 31:25</p> <p><b>parties</b> 62:14</p> <p><b>partly</b> 26:8,9 33:6</p> <p><b>partner</b> 36:16 37:21 53:19</p> <p><b>partners</b> 8:24 21:12</p> <p><b>partnerships</b> 21:10</p> <p><b>parts</b> 47:16</p> <p><b>pass</b> 40:16,18 41:10</p> <p><b>passing</b> 40:20</p>	<p><b>patience</b> 21:13</p> <p><b>Patty</b> 5:25</p> <p><b>Pelican</b> 54:23</p> <p><b>penalty</b> 12:24</p> <p><b>people</b> 8:2,23 50:12 52:21 54:15 58:12,15</p> <p><b>percent</b> 45:1,3 46:20 54:1</p> <p><b>Perdido</b> 21:22 26:13</p> <p><b>performance</b> 17:22</p> <p><b>period</b> 10:7 39:1</p> <p><b>periods</b> 44:23</p> <p><b>permanent</b> 56:2</p> <p><b>Perry</b> 2:5 5:23 11:23 58:4</p> <p><b>person</b> 3:15 4:15</p> <p><b>personal</b> 2:14 62:9</p> <p><b>personally</b> 39:2,12</p> <p><b>Peteet</b> 26:25</p> <p><b>phase</b> 17:18,20 21:22</p> <p><b>phenomenal</b> 50:1 51:15</p> <p><b>phones</b> 2:11</p> <p><b>pick</b> 5:4,5 19:20 57:12</p> <p><b>piece</b> 33:8,19</p> <p><b>pieces</b> 36:3 47:20 50:2</p>
--	---	---

<p><b>pier</b> 18:6</p> <p><b>pile</b> 51:13</p> <p><b>Pines</b> 17:17</p> <p><b>place</b> 6:21 41:25 55:17 56:5</p> <p><b>places</b> 45:5</p> <p><b>plan</b> 2:25 3:2 4:24 5:7,11 8:6,8,12 11:13,15 12:14 13:19 14:1 15:5,6,7,9 16:11,11,16 17:3 18:1,2,3,10,15,17,19,22 19:2 19:19 20:2,10,16,20,21 27:11,17 31:2,7 36:10,24 43:3,11 44:25 47:14,16,23 47:25 48:1 52:25 53:2,4 55:1 55:16 58:8,10,10,13,15</p> <p><b>planet</b> 42:1</p> <p><b>planning</b> 18:6 31:9 32:10,17 33:8 59:24</p> <p><b>plans</b> 8:8 22:25 27:15,19 43:3,10 45:12 54:13 58:23</p> <p><b>plants</b> 7:10</p> <p><b>plastic</b> 41:3</p> <p><b>play</b> 25:17 45:6</p> <p><b>please</b> 29:11 58:17 60:21</p> <p><b>pleased</b> 18:18 31:3 32:2</p> <p><b>point</b> 17:17 33:25</p> <p><b>pointed</b> 11:14</p> <p><b>policy</b> 20:12 35:6,9</p> <p><b>pollution</b> 20:10 42:21</p>	<p><b>population</b> 24:5,21 25:8 37:19 42:21 45:2 45:4</p> <p><b>populations</b> 25:17,20 26:16 31:16,23 42:15</p> <p><b>portal</b> 19:15,15 58:16,25</p> <p><b>portals</b> 19:14</p> <p><b>portion</b> 11:23 22:14,15 28:2</p> <p><b>portions</b> 55:21</p> <p><b>positive</b> 48:6 54:14</p> <p><b>possible</b> 7:1 32:15</p> <p><b>post-2016</b> 18:3</p> <p><b>posted</b> 3:21</p> <p><b>potential</b> 19:12 20:7 32:16 35:13</p> <p><b>Powell</b> 5:25 30:4</p> <p><b>PowerPoint</b> 3:20</p> <p><b>practices</b> 23:3,4,5,15</p> <p><b>prefer</b> 4:20</p> <p><b>preferred</b> 20:13</p> <p><b>preparing</b> 4:23</p> <p><b>present</b> 3:10</p> <p><b>presentation</b> 3:20 4:9 18:14 52:22</p> <p><b>presented</b> 5:14 8:6</p> <p><b>preservation</b> 33:5 45:25</p> <p><b>previous</b></p>	<p>17:13 22:6</p> <p><b>price</b> 40:24</p> <p><b>primarily</b> 59:14</p> <p><b>primary</b> 23:13 24:17</p> <p><b>printing</b> 16:14</p> <p><b>prior</b> 16:22</p> <p><b>priorities</b> 44:12</p> <p><b>priority</b> 21:25 22:17 25:12 48:10</p> <p><b>privately-owned</b> 46:17</p> <p><b>probably</b> 12:5 33:17 49:1 57:3 58:6</p> <p><b>problem</b> 41:1</p> <p><b>problems</b> 45:16</p> <p><b>proceedings</b> 2:19 3:18 57:18 62:7,11</p> <p><b>process</b> 9:16 12:12 15:12 19:2,7,11,11 19:21 20:4 31:8 55:6 59:4</p> <p><b>processes</b> 32:10 48:11</p> <p><b>producing</b> 16:10</p> <p><b>production</b> 27:5</p> <p><b>productivity</b> 24:18</p> <p><b>program</b> 7:2 23:22,24 30:25 42:6 51:14 53:13 54:1</p> <p><b>project</b> 6:23 15:13 16:1 17:1,23 19:14 19:24 20:5,5,6 22:10 23:2,9 24:12,16 25:7,10,10,22,24 26:7,10,11,14 27:2 33:5 36:19 37:20 38:3 48:2,3</p>
--	---	---

<p>50:18 54:2 55:14 57:10 58:16,24</p> <p><b>project-specific</b> 27:13</p> <p><b>projected</b> 46:19</p> <p><b>projects</b> 2:25 5:2 8:13,25 9:18 12:12 12:19 13:4,6 15:11 16:12,23 17:5,7,12,13,14,19 18:1,5,10 18:16,18,19,20,24 19:3,5,8 19:13,17,18 20:3,8,9,15,18 20:20,23 21:4,9,14,17 22:4,5 22:7,9,20 23:8,14,18,19 24:15,17,22 25:2,3,13,21 26:4,21 27:3,15,17 30:1,6 31:7 32:7 35:10,13,19,22 36:8,10 37:1,6,10,13 38:4 42:12,14,16,17,18 43:8 44:3 44:8,11 46:23 49:4,10,11,12 49:14,17,19,23 50:6 51:20 53:9 56:12 58:16,25 59:14 59:15,16,17,22 60:14</p> <p><b>properly</b> 4:12</p> <p><b>properties</b> 33:14 34:5 46:17 47:17 55:18</p> <p><b>property</b> 33:6,6,9,18,19,22 34:23 39:13 55:17 56:2,4,5</p> <p><b>proponents</b> 20:5</p> <p><b>proposals</b> 44:6</p> <p><b>proposed</b> 8:5 13:18 19:3 21:17 22:7 25:10,25 37:1,10</p> <p><b>proposes</b> 8:8 20:13 23:19 25:2 26:3,20 27:10</p> <p><b>proposing</b> 19:8 21:8 22:9 23:8 42:11</p> <p><b>protect</b> 14:21 15:22 34:2,22 44:21 46:14 52:12</p>	<p><b>protecting</b> 30:12 34:4 47:22 56:7</p> <p><b>protection</b> 10:19 24:13 25:10 38:18 45:20 56:6</p> <p><b>proud</b> 16:12</p> <p><b>provide</b> 3:1 15:24 16:1,16 22:24</p> <p><b>providing</b> 35:15</p> <p><b>public</b> 1:7 4:6,10 5:8,9 6:10 11:23 13:2 14:10,24 15:8,12 24:14 42:5 43:17 47:5 52:16 55:2,4 56:16,24 57:4,21 58:24 62:21</p> <p><b>pulling</b> 51:15</p> <p><b>purpose</b> 2:20</p> <p><b>put</b> 11:20 27:24 29:4 41:21 43:2 44:3 49:7 51:13 52:22 55:1 57:3 58:13,25 59:8,11 60:12 60:15</p> <p><b>putting</b> 36:2 40:20 51:7</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Q</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>quality</b> 8:9 14:20 15:21 30:13 38:23 39:2 45:14 46:22 48:2</p> <p><b>question</b> 57:17 60:21</p> <p><b>questioned</b> 33:14</p> <p><b>questions</b> 12:4 57:14 60:20,23</p> <p><b>quite</b> 2:8 29:1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>R</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>Rachel</b> 10:20 28:8 42:6,9</p> <p><b>rain</b></p>	<p>34:17</p> <p><b>raise</b> 4:10,16 28:23</p> <p><b>rate</b> 53:15</p> <p><b>RDR</b> 1:24 62:20</p> <p><b>reach</b> 49:9</p> <p><b>reached</b> 20:3</p> <p><b>read</b> 5:6 53:7</p> <p><b>real</b> 19:9 34:1</p> <p><b>realize</b> 40:8 41:1</p> <p><b>really</b> 2:16 9:17 22:14 33:15 34:1 35:11,12,19 36:3,8,14 37:11 37:17 38:3,20 41:22 42:22 43:12 47:20,21 48:14 50:2 51:2 52:17 54:11,13 58:23</p> <p><b>received</b> 4:21 57:5</p> <p><b>receiving</b> 28:4</p> <p><b>recognize</b> 9:21 55:11</p> <p><b>recommend</b> 36:12</p> <p><b>recommendation</b> 54:4</p> <p><b>record</b> 57:4</p> <p><b>recovery</b> 8:7 12:22</p> <p><b>Recreation</b> 44:16</p> <p><b>recreational</b> 13:20 14:15,24 15:24 17:8 18:4 41:20 44:25 45:22</p> <p><b>recreationists</b> 46:10</p> <p><b>recruit</b></p>
--	--	---



<p>53:20  <b>recycling</b>  53:13  <b>red</b>  29:9,11  <b>reduce</b>  23:16 24:20 25:15 32:16 48:5  <b>reduced</b>  53:15  <b>reducing</b>  24:14 25:14  <b>reduction</b>  13:22 18:25 23:1,7 44:11  45:12 48:3 49:11,17  <b>redundancy</b>  32:16  <b>reef</b>  26:23 27:1,7,8,9  <b>reefs</b>  26:24 31:12  <b>Refuge</b>  22:16  <b>regard</b>  35:19 36:7  <b>regarding</b>  31:2  <b>region</b>  32:15 35:23 36:4,5 40:12  <b>Region-Wide</b>  37:17,22  <b>reinventing</b>  36:6  <b>reinvested</b>  40:23  <b>reiterate</b>  55:24  <b>relate</b>  3:7  <b>released</b>  32:6  <b>relevant</b>  59:3  <b>relic</b>  26:24  <b>relief</b></p>	<p>26:23  <b>remain</b>  31:4 57:16  <b>remarks</b>  6:10 52:14  <b>remember</b>  57:1,5  <b>remind</b>  28:11 56:23 57:8  <b>reminded</b>  7:5  <b>renewable</b>  40:25  <b>repeat</b>  50:9  <b>repeated</b>  51:1  <b>replacement</b>  27:2 36:19  <b>replenish</b>  14:21 15:22  <b>report</b>  44:21  <b>REPORTED</b>  1:23  <b>reporter</b>  3:15 29:17 62:21  <b>represent</b>  38:13  <b>representative</b>  13:10  <b>representatives</b>  10:8 44:4  <b>represented</b>  11:1  <b>representing</b>  29:18,20  <b>represents</b>  62:10  <b>required</b>  52:17  <b>requirements</b>  56:8  <b>research</b>  32:14 35:22 37:13</p>	<p><b>resident</b>  29:23 30:8  <b>resilience</b>  25:16  <b>resiliency</b>  22:24 38:5 46:25  <b>resilient</b>  31:15  <b>resolution</b>  33:4 34:20  <b>resource</b>  1:13 8:23 12:9 56:9  <b>resources</b>  3:7 8:3,21 9:13 13:20 14:12  15:1,2,23 21:3 31:7,19 37:9  44:9 47:22 50:3,10,13 51:18  <b>respecting</b>  29:15  <b>response</b>  24:19 57:22  <b>responsible</b>  14:15  <b>restoration</b>  2:24,24 3:2 4:23 5:7 6:15 8:6  8:8,12 9:17,19 11:10,13,15  12:8,11,13 13:13,16,18 14:1  15:5,6,7,12,16 16:11,15,17  16:21,23 17:3,9,10,11,12,14  18:1,2,3,10,11,12,16,17,17  18:20,22,23 19:12,19,23  20:2,10,18,20,22 21:6,15,20  21:22,23,25 22:2,20 23:6  24:24 26:4,6,8,9,21 27:4  31:4,23 35:21 36:9,13,24  41:19 42:6 49:14 53:9 55:11  58:23 59:10,14,21 60:2,13  <b>restore</b>  6:7 13:4,7,10,14 14:11,19  15:1,20 22:21 24:10 25:19  42:15 59:15,16  <b>restoring</b>  3:6 15:21 18:4 31:18  <b>restriction</b>  56:2  <b>result</b></p>
--	---	---

<p>62:15  <b>review</b>  15:8 35:13  <b>reviewed</b>  4:22  <b>Reynolds</b>  10:16 28:7  <b>Richard</b>  38:9,13  <b>Rick</b>  47:6,8  <b>right</b>  8:16 10:2 37:2 38:19,24 47:12  58:18  <b>Riva</b>  39:20 40:2  <b>river</b>  23:10 30:9,13 33:5,10,10 34:2  34:9,9,11,12,13,16 38:17,24  45:13 46:8,8,10,11 47:9,18  <b>riverfront</b>  46:21  <b>rivers</b>  1:13,14 7:19 41:15  <b>RMR</b>  1:24  <b>Robinson</b>  1:24 62:20  <b>rock</b>  7:13  <b>role</b>  25:17  <b>rolled</b>  8:3  <b>Ron</b>  10:11 13:24 14:4 16:3  <b>room</b>  2:16 58:20  <b>root</b>  45:14  <b>rounds</b>  56:4  <b>RPR</b>  1:24  <b>rule</b></p>	<p>29:15  <b>run</b>  16:10 34:8 39:15  <b>runoff</b>  45:20 48:5  <b>runs</b>  40:11  <b>Ruth</b>  25:6 49:24  <b>Ryan</b>  30:18,23 35:8 36:3 37:10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>S</b></p> <hr/> <p><b>saltwater</b>  45:4  <b>sand</b>  7:22  <b>save</b>  59:25  <b>saving</b>  41:21  <b>saw</b>  17:13 18:16 22:5 39:3 41:18  <b>saying</b>  49:5 53:1  <b>scan</b>  26:23 27:6  <b>scattered</b>  17:1  <b>schedules</b>  43:25  <b>science</b>  31:2,3,21 35:8 36:2  <b>science-based</b>  51:9 53:3  <b>scientist</b>  30:18,24 31:1  <b>SCORP</b>  44:24  <b>screen</b>  15:17 19:16  <b>screening</b>  19:10,21 20:9  <b>script</b>  58:5,7 59:6</p>	<p><b>sea</b>  8:9 14:22 19:1 22:12 23:18,21  24:3,10,18,19,21 25:6 31:25  39:10 42:15,18 49:24 53:25  <b>seafood</b>  44:19  <b>second</b>  3:1,16 15:6 25:7 26:10  <b>Secour</b>  22:15  <b>sediment</b>  23:17 34:16  <b>see</b>  3:14,24 5:14 6:21 8:19 10:8  15:17 16:4,13,25 17:3,6 22:5  29:10 31:3,13 32:2 34:15  36:8,24 37:24 38:4 44:10  49:6 51:24 53:22  <b>seen</b>  31:12  <b>sees</b>  44:7  <b>select</b>  19:3 25:13 44:6  <b>selected</b>  15:10 46:4  <b>selecting</b>  49:22  <b>selection</b>  19:6 23:2 30:2  <b>send</b>  34:20  <b>serve</b>  9:3 38:17  <b>served</b>  47:13  <b>serves</b>  2:21  <b>service</b>  52:11  <b>services</b>  15:2 45:23  <b>serving</b>  2:6  <b>set</b></p>
---	--	--

19:17 56:8 58:11	<b>Sign</b>	50:22
<b>Seth</b>	3:25	<b>somebody</b>
11:1	<b>signed</b>	54:9
<b>settlement</b>	28:22 56:16	<b>someone's</b>
16:22 18:3 25:23	<b>significant</b>	3:17
<b>seven</b>	25:17	<b>sorry</b>
18:23 53:9	<b>silence</b>	36:22 51:20,25
<b>sewer</b>	2:10	<b>Sound</b>
33:23	<b>similar</b>	21:21 26:12
<b>share</b>	25:10	<b>source</b>
6:3 9:18 23:23 53:25	<b>simply</b>	13:22 23:1,7 40:21 41:9
<b>sheets</b>	4:10,16 28:13,23	<b>sources</b>
5:1,1	<b>sir</b>	12:7
<b>shell</b>	9:24	<b>south</b>
53:13	<b>sit</b>	55:21
<b>shells</b>	7:18	<b>southern</b>
53:14	<b>site</b>	7:3
<b>shelter</b>	38:23	<b>spaces</b>
46:7	<b>sites</b>	5:9
<b>shore</b>	45:2,5	<b>Spanish</b>
26:16	<b>situation</b>	1:15 7:19 60:7,9
<b>shoreline</b>	41:6	<b>spans</b>
17:17 22:10,18 36:10 38:3	<b>six</b>	7:9
<b>shorelines</b>	13:13 17:19 18:5	<b>spat</b>
17:10	<b>size</b>	27:5 37:3
<b>shores</b>	58:11	<b>speak</b>
46:7	<b>skilled</b>	2:17 4:16,16 29:1,13 32:19
<b>shorthand</b>	46:2	35:8,13 40:9
62:9	<b>slate</b>	<b>speaking</b>
<b>shortly</b>	18:20 20:17	40:13
3:23	<b>slide</b>	<b>speaks</b>
<b>show</b>	12:5 18:14 19:9 60:12,15	35:8
51:3 58:21	<b>slides</b>	<b>specialist</b>
<b>showed</b>	11:8 27:13	35:7
40:1	<b>small</b>	<b>species</b>
<b>shows</b>	2:15	7:10,11,15 14:21 24:13 31:22
6:11	<b>smoothly</b>	38:1 42:17,19 43:12 44:22
<b>Shrimp</b>	16:10	45:7 46:5,6 49:12 53:17
51:14	<b>snails</b>	54:11
<b>side</b>	45:9	<b>specific</b>
16:24 26:23 27:6 36:2 41:20	<b>Society</b>	3:5 35:9 36:7
<b>sidebar</b>	53:20	<b>spend</b>
36:18	<b>soil</b>	10:5 44:22 49:1
<b>Sierra</b>	7:13	<b>spill</b>
40:3	<b>solid</b>	1:1 3:8 14:14,17 15:3 18:11

<p>19:25 22:23 38:19 55:5</p> <p><b>spot</b> 27:24</p> <p><b>Springs</b> 9:23 23:11 29:23 30:5,9 32:23 33:1,4,7 38:10,14</p> <p><b>staff</b> 3:9 6:1 11:17,18 30:18</p> <p><b>stage</b> 18:6,7</p> <p><b>stages</b> 59:24</p> <p><b>stakeholder</b> 36:16</p> <p><b>stakeholders</b> 47:14</p> <p><b>stand</b> 10:10 58:17</p> <p><b>standard</b> 41:23</p> <p><b>Stands</b> 2:9</p> <p><b>start</b> 20:16 40:25 49:5 58:23</p> <p><b>started</b> 5:16 10:3 35:17 53:12</p> <p><b>starting</b> 40:22</p> <p><b>state</b> 5:20 6:1 7:6,12,16,23 9:4,6,20 10:23,24 11:5 12:11,18 13:1 13:11 14:8 18:8,21 29:16 32:10 37:15 40:12 41:12 44:5,24 50:13 54:3 55:15 60:2 62:3,21</p> <p><b>state's</b> 8:21</p> <p><b>states</b> 13:12 16:21 35:21 45:8</p> <p><b>statewide</b> 52:9</p> <p><b>status</b> 2:24 38:16,22</p> <p><b>stay</b> 50:20</p>	<p><b>staying</b> 50:19</p> <p><b>steer</b> 36:25</p> <p><b>step</b> 8:15 19:11,21 20:3 37:11 48:6</p> <p><b>steps</b> 19:6,10</p> <p><b>stick</b> 50:3 53:11</p> <p><b>storm</b> 46:9</p> <p><b>stormwater</b> 23:3</p> <p><b>stranding</b> 24:19 25:5,21</p> <p><b>strategic</b> 32:5 44:12</p> <p><b>stream</b> 41:16,17 45:19</p> <p><b>stressors</b> 25:15 31:14,17</p> <p><b>strong</b> 32:2 44:8</p> <p><b>strongly</b> 49:10,11</p> <p><b>structure</b> 37:3</p> <p><b>stuck</b> 39:7</p> <p><b>studies</b> 42:21</p> <p><b>study</b> 24:5</p> <p><b>subject</b> 57:13,16</p> <p><b>submission</b> 19:14</p> <p><b>submit</b> 4:20 15:13</p> <p><b>success</b> 31:18</p> <p><b>successes</b> 21:6</p> <p><b>successful</b></p>	<p>43:8</p> <p><b>suggested</b> 58:15 59:1</p> <p><b>suggestion</b> 58:24</p> <p><b>suggestions</b> 15:13</p> <p><b>suite</b> 17:8 23:18 42:11</p> <p><b>summer</b> 8:4</p> <p><b>Summit</b> 59:10,21 60:2</p> <p><b>Sunday</b> 34:14</p> <p><b>sunlight</b> 7:13</p> <p><b>supervision</b> 62:10</p> <p><b>support</b> 7:14 21:24 31:15,20 32:12 37:9 47:15 49:11</p> <p><b>supporting</b> 33:4</p> <p><b>supports</b> 21:1 32:9 47:25 49:10</p> <p><b>sure</b> 8:15 43:7 51:8,10,17,23</p> <p><b>surge</b> 46:9</p> <p><b>Survey</b> 10:25 11:2</p> <p><b>survivorship</b> 27:6</p> <p><b>sustain</b> 45:10</p> <p><b>sustainability</b> 22:24</p> <p><b>swaths</b> 46:21</p> <p><b>Sweeney</b> 10:20 28:8</p> <p><b>swimming</b> 14:16 45:3,5 47:10</p> <p><b>system</b></p>
--	--	---

2:13	<b>testing</b> 38:23	24:21
<b>T</b>	<b>Tew</b> 10:24,25 28:9	<b>three</b> 21:18 23:8,12 25:2 29:5,7,8 30:10 39:7 46:4,15
<b>T-I-G</b>	<b>thank</b> 2:2,13 5:23,24,25 6:19,22,24 8:17,18,24 9:5,10,11,23 10:2 14:6 16:3 21:12 29:14,25 30:3,14,16 32:18,21,25 34:24 35:1 39:19,23,25 42:1 42:2,4 43:13,15,23 44:2 47:2 47:4 48:7,15,17,21,23 52:1,3 54:17,19 55:12 56:11,14,22 57:24 58:4 59:4 60:25	<b>three-minute</b> 29:2,15 56:21
2:8	<b>thank</b> 14:9 48:24 52:15	<b>TIG</b> 2:7,8,23 6:4 10:8 11:12 14:23 15:14 16:8 18:22 19:2,8,10 19:22 20:4,13 21:11,24 22:8 23:2,8,19 25:1,13 26:1,3,20 27:4,10 37:22,22 42:11
<b>table</b> 10:9,9 28:6 29:4 55:7 58:11	<b>thanks</b> 16:7 30:21 38:8,12 39:17	<b>TIG's</b> 2:21 16:17 18:2,20 25:19 42:24
<b>tackle</b> 45:16	<b>Theater</b> 1:12	<b>TIGs</b> 32:9
<b>tackles</b> 44:8	<b>thing</b> 19:20 49:15 50:4,25	<b>time</b> 3:5,5 4:13 5:15 6:12,16 8:22 8:22 9:21 10:5 17:25 28:1,12 28:16,19 29:21 37:24 41:2 43:24 47:2 48:15 49:1,7 54:17 55:2 57:25 58:14 59:12 60:4,17
<b>take</b> 6:12 41:20 42:22	<b>things</b> 24:8 37:25 49:6 55:3	<b>timekeeping</b> 56:22
<b>taken</b> 62:8	<b>think</b> 3:17 6:11 10:13,23 26:17 27:20,24 30:1,6,11 33:25 34:1,22 41:19 48:5 49:15,16 50:2,19 51:1,3 54:7,11 55:16 58:21 59:18	<b>timer</b> 29:2
<b>takes</b> 37:16	<b>thinking</b> 54:10	<b>times</b> 33:12
<b>talk</b> 9:19 16:15 38:21 59:10	<b>third</b> 25:24	<b>tirelessly</b> 16:8
<b>talked</b> 26:6 59:13	<b>thorough</b> 35:12	<b>titles</b> 16:25
<b>talking</b> 10:5 59:19	<b>thoroughly</b> 9:14	<b>today</b> 6:6,7 33:10
<b>talks</b> 12:6	<b>thought</b> 59:20	<b>ton</b> 40:22
<b>tank</b> 41:2	<b>thoughts</b> 44:1 56:25	<b>tonight</b> 3:15 4:1,4,7,10,20 5:3,14,24 6:9,13,23 8:6,13,18 9:18 10:6,14 11:1,21 12:8,13 14:9 15:7 21:13 56:16,25 59:7,13 61:1
<b>tax</b> 41:14	<b>thousand</b> 11:16	<b>tonight's</b>
<b>team</b> 9:1 44:3 49:24	<b>threats</b>	
<b>telemetry</b> 26:10		
<b>tell</b> 14:1 40:15 50:7		
<b>temperature</b> 7:14		
<b>Tensaw</b> 1:12 7:20		
<b>terrestrial</b> 7:9 46:5		
<b>terrific</b> 42:17,23		
<b>test</b> 39:2		

2:3,20 3:13,21 4:8 5:16 10:4 57:18	<b>Truly</b> 9:1	9:17 13:23 18:23 20:22 21:15 53:9
<b>tool</b> 56:3	<b>trust</b> 54:24	<hr/> <b>U</b> <hr/>
<b>tools</b> 51:17	<b>trustee</b> 1:2 2:7,9 5:19 10:12,22,23 11:6,6 13:25 14:2,8,18 16:9 32:3 43:1	<b>uncertainty</b> 43:5
<b>top</b> 23:11	<b>trustee's</b> 3:22	<b>underlying</b> 31:16
<b>total</b> 18:15 26:5	<b>trustees</b> 3:9 7:1 10:6 11:17 12:3 14:8 14:25 16:19 17:21 31:13,17 32:13 43:24 60:18,22	<b>understand</b> 20:6 27:8
<b>totaling</b> 16:12 20:14 21:17 23:8,19 25:2 26:21	<b>trustees'</b> 15:4 21:1	<b>understanding</b> 26:15 37:5 45:15
<b>totally</b> 33:18	<b>trusting</b> 9:11	<b>undertaken</b> 11:11
<b>totals</b> 17:4	<b>try</b> 39:10 53:15 54:7	<b>underway</b> 18:18 35:22
<b>Toulmins</b> 23:11 45:13	<b>trying</b> 40:16,18	<b>undeveloped</b> 34:10 45:21 46:17
<b>Town</b> 30:5 33:1,3,7 34:18 38:9,14 38:17 60:9	<b>Tuesday</b> 33:3 34:18	<b>unique</b> 7:11,13 45:11
<b>track</b> 4:4	<b>turn</b> 27:20 29:8,9	<b>United</b> 45:8
<b>tract</b> 30:12 38:25 46:12,13,14 47:19,19	<b>turtle</b> 22:12 23:18,21 24:4,18,19,21 25:9 37:9 42:15 51:20 53:25	<b>University</b> 35:24
<b>tracts</b> 46:4	<b>turtles</b> 8:10 14:22 19:1 24:10 31:25 37:20 42:18 45:8 53:24 54:7	<b>update</b> 2:22 16:16
<b>traffic</b> 34:15	<b>twin</b> 34:7	<b>updates</b> 16:1
<b>trail</b> 17:9	<b>two</b> 17:16 22:9 25:21 26:3 29:6,7 42:16	<b>updating</b> 27:10
<b>transcribed</b> 62:9	<b>two-and-a-half-year</b> 39:1	<b>upriver</b> 41:13
<b>transcript</b> 3:21 62:7,11	<b>twofold</b> 2:21	<b>URL</b> 3:23
<b>transition</b> 28:2	<b>type</b> 19:23 20:18 21:23 22:20 26:4 26:8,9	<b>USDA</b> 10:11 13:25 28:7 45:17
<b>tremendous</b> 7:8	<b>types</b>	<b>use</b> 6:1 13:20 18:4 24:5,22 38:1 47:21 48:14 50:3 56:1,3
<b>triage</b> 24:4		<b>useful</b> 3:10
<b>true</b> 62:11		<b>uses</b> 14:16
		<b>USFDA</b> 49:20

<b>usually</b> 12:23	59:10,25	44:18
<b>utilization</b> 55:25	<b>wanted</b> 4:15 12:1 25:12,13 30:3 31:1 57:11	<b>website</b> 3:22 5:12 18:11,13 40:6 52:23
<b>utilize</b> 32:13	<b>warm</b> 47:11	<b>websites</b> 60:13
<b>utilized</b> 56:10	<b>warming</b> 41:5	<b>weedy</b> 36:22
<hr/>	<b>wasn't</b> 48:9	<b>weekend</b> 34:15
<hr/> V <hr/>	<b>water</b> 7:13,24 8:9 12:17,24 13:8 14:20 15:21 24:23 30:12 33:22 38:22 39:2 45:14 46:15,22 48:2	<b>weekly</b> 39:2
<b>valuable</b> 8:23 36:17	<b>waterfront</b> 33:20 34:4 39:15 46:17	<b>weeks</b> 13:3 21:19 23:10 30:5 33:2,11 43:17,22 44:7 45:12 46:7,12 46:13 47:13,16 48:2 55:14
<b>values</b> 43:12	<b>waters</b> 44:18	<b>welcome</b> 6:9,19 13:24 15:25
<b>variety</b> 42:12	<b>watershed</b> 21:19 23:10,10 46:18 47:17 48:4 55:16	<b>welcoming</b> 14:8
<b>varying</b> 27:8	<b>watersheds</b> 44:11 55:15	<b>went</b> 49:16 53:5 55:8
<b>verbal</b> 57:21	<b>waterways</b> 44:15 45:10,21	<b>western</b> 51:21
<b>version</b> 27:16 53:8	<b>way</b> 5:5 8:3 19:24 32:8 49:7 57:3	<b>wetland</b> 33:16
<b>views</b> 46:9	<b>ways</b> 41:16 48:14	<b>wetlands</b> 8:9 14:12 18:23 20:24 21:16 23:5 26:9 34:11
<b>visit</b> 18:11,12 60:14	<b>we'll</b> 4:11 11:24 12:13,20,20 18:13 28:20,24 53:15 60:3,17,22	<b>wheel</b> 36:6
<b>visiting</b> 45:4	<b>we're</b> 2:15 6:22 12:8 16:12 18:18 21:8 31:3,13 32:2 35:15 42:14 44:10 48:12 50:21,23 52:10 54:24 59:24	<b>white</b> 7:22 34:7
<b>volunteers</b> 24:1 53:20 54:1	<b>we've</b> 9:15 12:19 13:15 23:25 26:5 30:10 31:12 33:13 34:17 48:11 51:12 58:11 59:13	<b>wholly</b> 33:7
<hr/>	<b>weather</b> 39:8	<b>wide</b> 42:12
<hr/> W <hr/>	<b>weave</b>	<b>wildlife</b> 12:16 22:16 30:19,24 31:15 35:3,7 42:12 44:17
<b>wading</b> 26:11,16		<b>Wilkes</b> 10:13 28:7
<b>walked</b> 57:10		<b>wise</b> 46:22 47:21
<b>Wallace</b> 47:6,7,8 48:17		<b>wonderful</b> 5:1 6:21 28:4 39:24,25 50:16
<b>Walter</b> 54:20,22		
<b>want</b> 5:6 6:24 8:15 10:3 11:22 29:14,25 32:12 35:11 36:21 38:20 42:10 48:7,22 49:5,6 49:15 50:4 51:3,23 54:25 55:13,24 56:20,23 57:8,19		

55:22	12:21 39:4,6 43:2	53:10
<b>word</b>	<b>years</b>	<b>2010</b>
52:18	23:23 24:2 50:23	7:25 8:5 46:20 51:6
<b>words</b>	<b>yellow</b>	<b>2011</b>
16:6	29:8	16:19 44:20
<b>work</b>		<b>2013-2018</b>
8:5 9:3,15 11:16 13:12 14:20	<hr/> <b>Z</b> <hr/>	45:1
15:1 17:9 24:6 31:11 35:25	<b>zoning</b>	<b>2017</b>
42:1 45:18 54:25 55:1 58:9	33:23	17:4
58:15,22		<b>2018</b>
<b>worked</b>	<hr/> <b>0</b> <hr/>	1:3,8 4:22
11:19 14:23 16:8 33:12 44:6	<hr/> <b>1</b> <hr/>	<b>2040</b>
58:13	<b>1</b>	46:20
<b>working</b>	13:4 19:11 21:22	<b>20th</b>
36:14	<b>10</b>	50:22
<b>works</b>	41:7	<b>22</b>
14:19 51:24	<b>10.00</b>	8:13,25 9:18 16:12 18:19 19:3
<b>world</b>	40:22	20:13,19 44:3 53:9
49:12	<b>100</b>	<b>23-foot</b>
<b>worth</b>	54:1	34:7
13:5	<b>11</b>	<b>250,000</b>
<b>wrap</b>	41:7	7:18
29:12	<b>111</b>	<b>25th</b>
<b>write</b>	15:23	52:11
59:9,12	<b>11th</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>writing</b>	60:1,5	20:9
3:17	<b>13</b>	<b>296</b>
<b>written</b>	41:7	12:10
35:15	<b>13.8</b>	<hr/> <b>3</b> <hr/>
<b>www.citizensclimatelobby.o...</b>	21:18	<b>3</b>
40:7	<b>144</b>	13:5 20:3
<b>www.gulfspillrestoration.n...</b>	7:11	<b>3.5</b>
5:13	<b>16</b>	23:9
<hr/> <b>X</b> <hr/>	18:17	<b>30</b>
<hr/> <b>Y</b> <hr/>	<b>160</b>	15:17
<b>y'all</b>	13:17	<b>300</b>
7:3 47:17 52:18,20 53:18 61:1	<b>18</b>	13:5
<b>y'all's</b>	1:8	<b>31115</b>
52:23	<b>19th</b>	1:14
<b>Y-A-E-L</b>	51:6	<b>35</b>
43:21	<hr/> <b>2</b> <hr/>	16:13 20:14
<b>Yael</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>352</b>
43:17,20	19:4,21 26:5	62:22
<b>year</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>356</b>



12:17	61:2	
<hr/>	<b>725</b>	
<b>4</b>	12:25	
<hr/>	<b>75</b>	
<b>4</b>	45:1	
23:20	<b>7th</b>	
<b>4.5</b>	4:22 57:1,2,6	
26:22	<hr/>	
<b>4500</b>	<b>8</b>	
7:10	<hr/>	
<b>4500-plus</b>	<b>9</b>	
49:8	<hr/>	
<b>486</b>	<b>96</b>	
22:2	15:20	
<hr/>		
<b>5</b>		
<hr/>		
<b>5</b>		
1:13 15:21 41:18		
<b>50</b>		
45:3		
<b>50-year</b>		
30:8		
<b>500</b>		
44:20 46:15		
<b>500-page</b>		
47:25		
<b>500-plus</b>		
53:7		
<b>54</b>		
15:22		
<b>566</b>		
19:17,17		
<hr/>		
<b>6</b>		
<hr/>		
<b>6</b>		
25:3		
<b>6:30</b>		
1:16		
<b>648</b>		
13:15		
<b>65</b>		
46:20		
<hr/>		
<b>7</b>		
<hr/>		
<b>7</b>		
17:4		
<b>7:43</b>		