

## **Open Ocean TIG Webinar Transcript**

### **Slide 1: *Deepwater Horizon* Open Ocean Restoration Area Webinar for Public Input**

Welcome to the Open Ocean Restoration Area Webinar. Thank you for taking the time to join this discussion today. I understand we have over 180 people registered for the webinar. My name is Aileen Smith. I'm the NOAA Deepwater Horizon Program Manager. On today's webinar we will provide an overview of the Open Ocean Restoration Area and our recent request for restoration project ideas. After we conclude the formal presentation, we will have time to answer questions. Before we start, I'd like to ask Courtney Groeneveld with NOAA to go over the webinar tools that are available for your use today.

### **Slide 2: Webinar Participation**

Hi, everyone. I'd like to quickly run through some webinar logistics with you. Hopefully you are now all logged in to both the call and the webinar. You should be able to see the control panel on the right hand side of your screen. You should all be dialing in using the phone number provided by GoToWebinar—that's the number and access code listed under "Audio" in the control panel. If you are using a computer with a microphone or speakers, please make sure those are turned off or muted so that we don't get feedback.

Please note that only panelists will be able to heard over the phone during the webinar; attendees will be muted. Take a look at the questions box at the bottom of the control panel. If you have questions or comments as we go through the webinar, please enter them here. We will be able to see all these questions as they come in. At the end of the presentation, we will go through as many questions as we can in the time allotted. If we aren't able to get to your question, we will post a Frequently Asked Questions to the Open Ocean Restoration Area page following the webinar. We will also post a recording and transcript of the webinar to that page.

I'll now pass it back to Aileen Smith to go through our agenda for today.

### **Slide 3: Today's Agenda**

Today's agenda will provide an introduction to the Open Ocean Restoration Area and the Trustee Implementation Group for the Restoration Area. We will provide an overview of the April 2016 case settlement and the Trustees programmatic restoration plan. That programmatic plan puts forward a restoration planning cycle and we will describe the cycle generally as well as specifically for the first Open Ocean restoration plan. We will talk about the public notice for restoration project ideas that was published on March 31st and provide an overview of the restoration goals and priorities for the resources included in the notice. Afterwards, we will have time for questions.

### **Slide 4: Welcome to the Open Ocean TIG**

The settlement with BP established a series of Trustee Implementation Groups, referred to as TIGs, for each of seven Gulf of Mexico Restoration Areas. One of these is the Open Ocean Restoration Area. The four federal natural resource damage trustees are the members of this TIG, and we are responsible for planning and implementing restoration for sea turtles, fish, marine mammals, Gulf sturgeon, birds, and deep sea communities injured by the 2010 BP oil spill. The term 'open ocean' is sometimes confusing, and it is important to know that the restoration conducted by this TIG will focus on restoration for

migratory species throughout their geographic range to address the multiple life stages injured by the spill. For example, we will conduct restoration for Gulf Sturgeon in the northern Gulf of Mexico and associated river system, but for highly migratory fish species we may work in the Caribbean Sea or North Atlantic Ocean.

The Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group includes trustee principals and representatives of each of the four federal Deepwater Horizon Natural Resource Damage Assessment Trustees. For the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration this includes Chris Doley and Laurie Rounds; Homer Wilkes and Ron Howard for the US Department of Agriculture; Gale Bonanno and Elizabeth Skane for the US Environmental Protection Agency; and Kevin Reynolds and Ashley Mills for the Department of the Interior. The federal trustees will coordinate with trustees in the five Gulf States, particularly when open restoration priorities overlap state jurisdictions. All of our work will be consistent with the programmatic restoration plan, which we will talk about later in the presentation.

#### **Slide 5: *Deepwater Horizon* BP Settlement and Natural Resource Damage Assessment**

Next I'll provide an overview of the BP Settlement for natural resource damages caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and the programmatic restoration plan developed to address those damages.

#### **Slide 6: A massive spill, a massive response**

Before we discuss the settlement, it is helpful to review the magnitude of the 2010 spill and the massive response and injury assessment required to understand how much damage had been done to the Gulf's natural resources and the ecosystem services provided by those resources. As shown here, oil spread from the deep ocean to the surface and nearshore environment, from Texas to Florida. The oil came into contact with and injured natural resources as diverse as deep-sea coral, fish and shellfish, productive wetland habitats, sandy beaches, birds, endangered sea turtles, dolphins and other protected marine life. Assessing natural resource injuries required more than 20,000 trips to the field for collection of over 100,000 environmental samples, ranging from sediment, air, water and tissue samples to analysis of aerial images and telemetry. All of this effort was conducted in accordance with the Oil Pollution Act, which establishes the role of Federal and state natural resource trustees to respond to and assess injuries caused by oil spills and to seek payment from responsible parties for restoring the resources injured by spills.

#### **Slide 7: Diagram of the BP Civil Settlement**

- On April 4, 2016, as part of a larger settlement and consent decree, the Deepwater Horizon natural resource trustees reached a settlement to resolve BP's liability for natural resource injuries from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. This historic settlement of approximately \$20.8 billion dollars represents the largest civil penalty ever paid under any environmental statute, and the largest recovery of damages for injuries to natural resources.
- Today we will focus on the restoration required to compensate the public for natural resource damages from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.
- The settlement requires BP to pay \$8.8 billion dollars to federal and state trustees for the purposes of restoring natural resources injured by the spill. This amount includes \$1B previously

committed for early restoration projects prior to settlement. The settlement will be paid out incrementally over the course of the next 15 years, with the first post-settlement payment provided just a few weeks ago.

### **Slide 8: Trustees' Programmatic Restoration Plan**

The federal and state trustees were required to develop a restoration plan in advance of final settlement. This programmatic restoration plan was completed in early 2016. The plan provides a detailed description of the injury assessment and the supporting data. The injuries are described for a series of offshore, nearshore, and shoreline resources. The assessment describes the findings on injuries to a wide range of species in the northern Gulf of Mexico, including fish, marine mammals, birds, sea turtles and other marine life, as well as to offshore, nearshore and coastal habitats and ecological functions. Taken together, the assessment concludes that the scale of the injury is so massive that it constitutes an ecosystem-level injury to the Gulf.

The magnitude of restoration needed to address these injuries requires time, detailed planning, and careful restoration project implementation and monitoring. The Trustees integrated ecosystem planning approach is detailed in the plan. The programmatic plan does not select individual restoration projects, rather, it sets the course for more detailed project specific planning, restoration project implementation, and monitoring that will be conducted over the next 15 years of settlement payments.

The plan also establishes a governance structure – basically, how the Trustees will work together and with the public to develop and implement projects over time. We will talk about that in more detail in the next slides.

### **Slide 9: Overview of the Programmatic Restoration Plan**

The massive natural resource damages call restoration for individual resources, as well as ways to look at how individual restoration projects can work together over time to address the ecosystem-level injuries. The programmatic plan establishes a series of broad restoration goals for each of five goal areas, shown in purple, including habitats, water quality, living coastal and marine resources, restoration for lost recreational uses, and two foundational goals for adaptive management and administrative oversight. The plan breaks these goal areas down into 13 restoration types, shown in blue, with defined approaches for restoration for each of these types. The approaches selected for the programmatic plan were subject to rigorous screening and analysis. The Trustees are focusing on a set of these restoration approaches for further development in this first open ocean restoration plan, and we will discuss specific restoration types later in this presentation. The programmatic plan describes specific restoration planning and implementation considerations that must be accounted for in Trustees' planning and implementation decisions to ensure that individual resources are restored over time, and that those individual resource restoration decisions are made with the context of accomplishing ecosystem-level restoration for this unprecedented spill.

### **Slide 10: Open Ocean Restoration Area Funding Allocation**

The programmatic plan specifically allocates funding to each of seven restoration areas and to each of 13 restoration types within those restoration areas, as well as funding for adaptive management and administrative oversight in each restoration area. The funding allocations are a result of the

programmatic restoration planning effort and are defined in the Consent Decree. The allocation amounts account for the restoration needed for each restoration type as well as the role that restoring the resource plays in restoring for the ecosystem-level injuries caused by the spill.

This table shows the restoration allocations for the Open Ocean Restoration Area. The total amounts include approximately \$40 million already being implemented through early restoration. The Open Ocean TIG is now in the early stages of developing the first project-specific restoration plan, focused on restoration for fish, Gulf sturgeon, sea turtles, marine mammals, and birds.

Each TIG will develop project-specific restoration plans for their respective restoration area, consistent with the funding allocations. A series of payments will be available to each TIG over the course of 15 years, proportional to the total amount allocated to each restoration area.

Each TIG has flexibility to determine a project specific restoration plan development schedule that most appropriately benefits the restoration types under its purview.

### **Slide 11: Restoration Planning**

Thank you, Aileen. As Aileen mentioned, my name is Ashley Mills. I'm the Department of the Interior representative on the Open Ocean TIG. Thank you all for joining us today.

For the next few minutes, we would like to provide an overview of the restoration planning process and how to submit restoration project ideas.

### **Slide 12: TIG Restoration Planning Cycle**

The process for Restoration Planning will generally follow the familiar planning cycle: plan, do, monitor, and adjust. The public will be involved at specific steps in the process. We will start this cycle at Project Identification there in the top left of this slide. This is where we are currently, calling for project ideas from the public and agency staff. Everyone enters project ideas into the restoration database portal, just like we did during Early Restoration. We'll show you how to enter project ideas a little bit later in this presentation.

Restoration Planning begins with organizing the project ideas in the portal. We will then apply screening criteria to evaluate the restoration project ideas. The trustees will evaluate factors such as benefits to injured resources and technical feasibility.

The project ideas that rise to the top after screening will then be further developed and included as alternatives proposed in a Draft Restoration Plan. This is where NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, comes in. We will seek public review and input on the Draft Restoration Plan. If the TIG determines an environmental impact statement is appropriate there will be a public scoping period before a Draft Restoration Plan is released for public review and comment.

So, there are multiple opportunities for public engagement during the restoration planning process. After considering and incorporating public input on the Draft Restoration Plan, we will finalize the Restoration Plan and begin to implement it. During that time, the outcomes and progress of the restoration projects will be Monitored and Reported to the public. We will use this information to update the status of our restoration goals and it may influence our restoration planning priorities. As

these priorities evolve, the public and TIG will explore new project ideas that reflect the monitoring information we've collected, and this continues the Restoration Planning Cycle, which will keep going until we've fully invested our allocation from the settlement.

### **Slide 13: Open Ocean TIG Call for Project Ideas**

So, as I just mentioned, the Open Ocean TIG is now inviting the public to submit restoration project ideas through the online project portal. You may submit a new project idea or revise a previously-submitted idea. If you have entered project ideas previously, they are still there, we do see them, and we will consider them.

Project ideas will be accepted through May 15th. Any project ideas that come in after this deadline will be considered for future restoration planning.

We are currently considering projects for all of the restoration types allocated to the Open Ocean restoration area.

The initial restoration plan may allocate approximately three years of Open Ocean Restoration Area settlement funding.

The web notice provides our initial priorities and we'll provide an overview of those today.

### **Slide 14: Trustee Council Website**

So, how can you submit project ideas? The project submission database is located on The Deepwater Horizon Trustee Council website, which is [gullspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://gullspillrestoration.noaa.gov). To submit a project idea, scroll down towards the bottom of the Home Page, where you will find these three green boxes, as shown here in the image on the right side of the slide. Click on the box here in the center that says "Suggest a restoration project for consideration". This takes you to the online form where you share your project ideas with the Trustees.

### **Slide 15: Suggesting Project Ideas**

The project submission form looks like this. Again, you may submit a new project idea, or revise a project idea you previously submitted.

Please note this is a different process than submitting a project idea under the RESTORE Act or other grant programs. The information you provide to the Trustees is a "get started" type of submittal. It is not a grant proposal process or a request for proposal (RFP) process.

OK, so that gives you an idea of how to submit project ideas. Let's talk next about restoration goals and priorities in the Open Ocean Restoration Area.

### **Slide 16: Restoration Priorities Identified in Notice**

We'll start with an overview of the goals for each open ocean restoration type and our priorities for the first restoration plan.

There are 6 restoration types in the Open Ocean Restoration Area: Birds, Sturgeon, Sea Turtles, Marine Mammals, Fish and Water Column Invertebrates, and Mesophotic and Deep Benthic Communities.

We will start with Birds today.

### **Slide 17: Restoration Goals for Birds**

More than 120 species of birds live in waters and wetlands of the northern Gulf of Mexico for at least a portion of their lives. Nearly 300 species use either the coast itself or coastal upland habitats directly adjacent to the Gulf. Depending on the species, birds use the northern Gulf of Mexico for their entire life cycle, as a breeding ground, as a migratory stopover as they continue farther north or south, or as a wintering ground following their fall migration. The yellowish, circular area on this image represents Gulf bird residents.

The northern Gulf of Mexico intersects with three of the four major migration flyways in North America, including the Central, Mississippi, and Atlantic flyways, indicated by the three north-south arrows on this image. The Caribbean represents the closest breeding area for certain bird species affected by the spill that frequent the Gulf of Mexico to feed. This is shown as the green, more east-west arrow on the image.

At least 93 species of birds, including both resident and migratory species and across all five Gulf Coast states, were exposed to Deepwater Horizon oil in multiple northern Gulf of Mexico habitats, including open water, islands, beaches, bays, and marshes.

The trustees' restoration goals for birds are to:

- Facilitate additional production and/or reduced mortality of injured bird species.
- Restore or protect habitats on which injured birds rely, and
- Restore injured bird species where actions would provide the greatest benefits within geographic ranges that include the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Slide 18: Initial Priorities for Birds**

For our first restoration plan, we are prioritizing restoration that will:

- Restore and conserve bird nesting and foraging habitat
- Establish or re-establish breeding colonies, and
- Prevent incidental bird mortality

We are also considering monitoring and adaptive management activities to address relevant data gaps to inform restoration.

Restoration will occur where the greatest benefit can be achieved in Gulf of Mexico as well as outside the Gulf of Mexico.

### **Slide 19: Restoration Goals for Sturgeon**

The next restoration type is Gulf Sturgeon. The Gulf sturgeon is a federally threatened fish species that inhabits coastal waters and rivers in the northern Gulf of Mexico from Lake Pontchartrain in Louisiana to the Suwannee River in Florida. After spending the first 2 to 3 years in the river in which it hatched, a Gulf sturgeon becomes migratory, spending fall and winter in the Gulf of Mexico and spring and summer in the rivers where it spawns. Large numbers of this federally protected species from most Gulf sturgeon river populations were exposed to Deepwater Horizon oil, and a substantial number of these fish were affected by this exposure.

To address impacts to sturgeon, our restoration goals are to:

- Restore and protect Gulf sturgeon through improving access to spawning areas, and
- Increase the reproductive success of Gulf sturgeon.

### **Slide 20: Initial Priorities for Sturgeon**

For our first restoration plan, we are prioritizing restoration actions that will identify, restore, protect and provide access to spawning habitat, juvenile winter foraging habitat, and adult and subadult foraging habitat.

We are also prioritizing monitoring and adaptive management activities that are necessary to fill essential data gaps for restoration success.

Our initial efforts will be conducted in the Gulf of Mexico and associated watersheds.

### **Slide 21: Restoration Goals for Sea Turtles**

There are five species of sea turtles found in the Gulf of Mexico. All 5 are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, and are Federally managed by both DOI and NOAA. All sea turtles are highly migratory and thus have a wide geographic range. In the Gulf of Mexico, sea turtles are also a shared resource, crossing state, federal, and international boundaries and they rely on a system of interconnected beach, nearshore, and offshore habitats.

The Trustees determined that four of the five species of sea turtles that inhabit the Gulf of Mexico were quantifiably injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. These four species are: loggerhead, Kemp's ridley, green, and hawksbill sea turtles. Leatherbacks were also exposed to oil, but injury could not be quantified to a specific number of injured animals.

Our restoration goals for sea turtles are to:

- Implement an integrated portfolio of restoration approaches to address all injured life stages and species of sea turtles. Life stages are hatchling, juvenile, and adult.
- Restore injuries by addressing primary threats to sea turtles in the marine and terrestrial environment. Threats include bycatch in commercial and recreational fisheries, acute environmental changes (for example, cold water temperatures), loss or degradation of nesting beach habitat (for example, from coastal armoring and artificial lighting), and other human-caused threats.

- Restore sea turtles in the various geographic and temporal areas within the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean that are relevant to injured species and life stages, and
- Support existing conservation efforts by ensuring consistency with recovery plans and recovery goals for each of the sea turtle species.

### **Slide 22: Initial Priorities for Sea Turtles**

For our first restoration plan, the Trustees propose to prioritize actions to:

Reduce sea turtle bycatch in commercial fisheries through development and implementation of conservation actions

Enhance sea turtle hatchling production and restore and conserve nesting beach habitat, and

Reduce sea turtle bycatch in recreational fisheries (specifically pier and shore-based) through development and implementation of conservation actions

To address relevant data gaps and inform restoration, the trustees will also prioritize monitoring and adaptive management activities such as

- monitoring habitat use, species distribution, and threats;
- actions to standardize and integrate data; and
- actions to develop restoration planning, training, and management tools to reduce threats.

And because sea turtles have a large geographic range, the trustees will prioritize restoration in Gulf of Mexico and northwest Atlantic waters.

Let me pause here and mention that if you have any questions, please submit those into the webinar chat box if you have not done so already. We will address questions at the end of the presentation. Thanks. Now I will turn it over to Laurie Rounds with NOAA to walk through goals and priorities for the 3 other restoration types in the Open Ocean restoration area. Laurie?

### **Slide 23: Restoration Goals for Marine Mammals**

Marine Mammals in the Gulf of Mexico inhabit a broad range of habitats, from offshore (including continental shelf) to coastal waters and bays, sounds, and estuaries. All marine mammals are federally protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. The Trustees determined that exposure to chemical contaminants resulted in death, reproductive failure, and adverse health effects in northern Gulf of Mexico populations. In addition to injuries from direct exposure to DWH oil, marine mammal habitat was degraded. The diverse number of species and geographic range of marine mammals affected by the spill is unprecedented. Nearly all of the marine mammal stocks that overlap with the oil spill footprint were injured and this contributed to the largest and longest marine mammal unusual mortality event on record in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

Marine mammals are long-lived species, so it may take decades to recover without active restoration. The trustees' restoration goals are to:

- Implement an integrated portfolio of restoration approaches to restore injured marine mammal species across their diverse habitats and geographic ranges.
- To identify and implement restoration activities that mitigate key stressors in order to support resilient populations.
- And collect and use monitoring information, such as population and health assessments and distribution information.
- The Trustees will also identify and implement actions that support ecological needs of the stocks; improve resilience to natural stressors; and address direct threats caused by human activity, such as bycatch in commercial fisheries, vessel collisions, noise, industrial activities, illegal feeding and harassment, and hook-and-line fishery interactions.

#### **Slide 24: Initial Priorities for Marine Mammals**

For our first restoration plan, we will prioritize the following restoration approaches:

- Increase marine mammal survival through better understanding of causes of illness and death as well as early detection and intervention for anthropogenic and natural threats
- Measure noise to improve knowledge and reduce impacts of human-caused noise on marine mammals
- Reduce injury and mortality of marine mammals from vessel collisions
- Protect and conserve marine, coastal, estuarine, and riparian habitats

We are also considering monitoring and adaptive management activities to address relevant data gaps. These activities may include population characterization such as habitat use and exposure to stressors; development of tools and technology to support restoration planning, and development of protocols, training and infrastructure to support standardized and integrated data collection and analysis.

Our initial priorities will focus on continental shelf and oceanic stocks of marine mammals in the Gulf of Mexico.

#### **Slide 25: Restoration Goals for Fish and Water Column Invertebrates**

The next restoration type includes Fish and Water Column Invertebrates. A wide variety of organisms inhabit the water column, including numerous fish species and invertebrates such as shrimp, juvenile crabs, and squid. Many of these species spend their entire life in the water column, while others may only use the water column for part of their lives. These organisms inhabit all parts of the ocean, from estuaries to the deep sea, and play important ecological roles by cycling and transporting nutrients and energy between the nearshore and offshore and between the surface and the deep sea. They also form, in large part, the marine food web with other injured resources, such as birds, sea turtles, and marine mammals.

The large and continuous release of Deepwater Horizon oil resulted in impacts to many species throughout the water column. The surface slick alone covered a cumulative area of at least over 43 thousand square miles across 113 days. Water-column resources injured by the spill include species from all levels in the food chain, from bacteria; to estuarine-dependent species such as red drum,

shrimp, and sea trout; to large predatory fish, such as bluefin tuna, which can migrate from the Gulf of Mexico into the Atlantic and as far as the Mediterranean Sea.

Given the ecosystem-wide extent of the injury, restoration needs to address injuries to fish and invertebrate species at different life stages and across their geographic ranges. Therefore our restoration goals are to restore injured species across the range of coastal and oceanic zones by reducing direct sources of mortality and to increase the health of fisheries by providing fishing communities with methods and incentives to reduce impacts.

#### **Slide 26: Initial Priorities for Fish and Water Column Invertebrates**

For our first restoration plan, we propose to prioritize actions that reduce bycatch and bycatch mortality using technology and innovations such as quota banks, barotrauma mitigation tools, circle hooks, and shrimp trawl bycatch reduction devices.

We may also prioritize monitoring and adaptive management activities to fill data gaps and information needs relevant to restoration, as well as outreach and education efforts.

We propose to focus restoration on a few species including: Reef fish such as snappers and groupers, highly migratory species other than sharks such as tunas, billfish, swordfish, and coastal migratory pelagic species such as mahi-mahi, cobia, mackerels

The Trustees will implement restoration in both nearshore and offshore waters in the Gulf of Mexico or outside the Gulf in U.S. or international waters to maximize benefit to injured species.

#### **Slide 27: Restoration Goals for Mesophotic & Deep Benthic Communities**

The final restoration type that we will discuss is mesophotic and deep benthic communities. This includes hard and soft ground habitats, as well as associated fish and invertebrates. Rare corals, fish, crabs, and other small animals and microbes live in these habitats on the sea floor and are part of the foundation of life and food webs in the northern Gulf of Mexico. In addition, mesophotic reef habitats are important for a variety of fish species of commercial and recreational importance such as snapper, grouper, and amberjack.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill severely affected mesophotic and deep benthic communities. The Trustees documented a footprint of over 2,000 square kilometers of injury to benthic habitat surrounding the wellhead. There were significant losses to resident corals and fish across approximately 10 square kilometers of mesophotic reef habitat on the continental shelf edge. Because these species are long-lived and slow growing, some live for hundreds of years, recovery is slow. Restoration is also complicated by several factors, including a limited understanding of key biological functions, limited experience with restoration at depth or with these species, and remote locations that limit accessibility.

The trustees' restoration goals are to:

- Restore invertebrate and fish abundance and biomass for injured species, focusing on high-density mesophotic and deep water coral sites and other priority hard-ground areas to provide a continuum of healthy habitats from the coast to offshore.

- To actively manage valuable deep-sea communities to protect against multiple threats and provide a framework for monitoring, education, and outreach.
- And to improve our understanding of these communities to better inform management and ensure resiliency.

### **Slide 28: Initial Priorities for Mesophotic & Deep Benthic Communities**

For our first restoration plan, we are prioritizing restoration to

- Protect and manage mesophotic and deep benthic communities and
- To place hard ground substrate and transplant coral

We are also considering monitoring and adaptive management activities to improve understanding of mesophotic and deep-sea communities to better inform management and ensure resiliency.

Our focus areas will be in the Northern Gulf of Mexico.

### **Slide 29: Next Steps**

Before we take questions, I'll talk briefly about our next steps for restoration planning.

### **Slide 30: Restoration Planning Next Steps**

Our responsibility to restore the Gulf of Mexico on behalf of the public is very important to us. We are committed to keeping the public informed as we progress to specific restoration plans and projects. The public notice was just the first step in the development of the open ocean restoration plan. Following May 15th, the trustees will review project ideas. We will then apply screening criteria to evaluate the restoration project ideas. The trustees will evaluate factors such as benefits to injured resources and technical feasibility. We will look for project ideas or combinations of ideas that can be further developed into restoration project alternatives.

We will also provide opportunities for public input during our restoration planning process and seek opportunities to continue to reach out to stakeholders and the public. The trustees will identify preferred projects from a range of restoration alternatives to be included in a draft restoration plan for public comment. Although this can be a lengthy process to ensure a rigorous and comprehensive approach, we will continue to provide information through our website and public meetings.

We look forward to seeing the project ideas being submitted and hearing from those of you with questions today.

### **Slide 31: Questions?**

Courtney will review how to submit questions.

As a reminder, you should be able to see the control panel on the right hand side of your screen. You should all be dialing in using the phone number provided by GoToWebinar—that's the number and

access code listed under “Audio” in the control panel. If you are using a computer with a microphone or speakers, please make sure those are turned off or muted so that we don’t get feedback.

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Now we will take a few minutes to give you time to enter any additional questions before we begin reading the questions received and providing responses.

**Slide 32: Questions and Contacts**

Thank you for those that have submitted comments or questions, this is Jamey Redding with NOAA’s restoration center and I am going to paraphrase some of the questions that we have received and pass it on to the person that I think can best respond to your question. We may not get to all of the comments and or questions, so for those that we do not get to, we will respond to in a follow up Frequently Asked Questions document that we will post to the website.