

In The Matter Of:
Notice of Intent & Public Scoping Meetings

April 10, 2012

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1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

LOUISIANA COASTAL AREA
MISSISSIPPI RIVER HYDRODYNAMIC AND DELTA
MANAGEMENT STUDY & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT

Notice of Intent & Public Scoping Meetings
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

The above-entitled cause came in for a meeting at the Department of Natural Resources, laBelle Room, 617 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on Tuesday, April 10, 2012, commencing at 6:30 p.m.

BEFORE:

TIFFENY SUIRE GALLARDO
Certified Court Reporter
In and For the State of
Louisiana

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A P P E A R A N C E S

LEE MUELLER, USACE, MODERATOR
RENEE SANDERS, CPRA OF LA
CHERIE PRICE, USACE
SANDRA STILES, USACE

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12
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14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I N D E X

PAGE

APPEARANCES 2

PROCEEDINGS 4

 Presentation by Renee Sanders 6

 Presentation by Cherie Price 13

 Presentation by Sandra Stiles 18

 Informal Question & Answer Session 22

 Formal Scoping Process 36

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE 60

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 MS. MUELLER:

3 Good evening. Thank you very much
4 for joining us tonight. My name is Lee
5 Mueller. I work with the Public
6 Affairs Office of the Army Corps of
7 Engineers.

8 As you can see, tonight is one of
9 six public scoping meetings we're going
10 to be holding throughout the month of
11 April in partnership with the Coastal
12 Protection and Restoration Authority of
13 Louisiana. We'll be in southeast
14 Louisiana and Mississippi.

15 This is the first large-scale long-
16 term study being conducted under the
17 LCA program. At this time, I would
18 like to take the opportunity to
19 recognize our elected official in the
20 house, Representative Ray Garofalo.
21 Thank you for coming.

22 I want to give you a quick overview
23 of what we'll be covering tonight.
24 We'll start with a general overview of
25 the LCA Program. Then we'll move into,

1 kind of, a look at the foundation for
2 the Mississippi Hydrodynamic & Delta
3 Management Study. This piece of the
4 presentation will be given by Renee
5 Sanders. She's the Study Manager for
6 CPRA.

7 From there, Cherie Price will come
8 on up, and she'll continue a more
9 detailed look at the Hydrodynamic &
10 Delta Management Study. She is the
11 Planner with the Army Corps of
12 Engineers.

13 After that, Sandra Stiles from the
14 Environmental Branch will go ahead and
15 do a presentation on the formal NEPA
16 process and formal scoping process,
17 which is really why we're here tonight.

18 We will move into a kind of
19 informal Q&A session. This is your
20 chance to ask the team any questions
21 you may have on the development of the
22 study. We will give the answers to the
23 best of our ability. The study is
24 still in development. So if we don't
25 know an answer for you, make sure to

1 get your contact information and get an
2 answer to you at a later date. So this
3 is your chance, really, to ask Q&A and
4 get feedback with you guys.

5 So once we're done with Q&A, we'll
6 move into the formal scoping session.
7 This is where you have the opportunity
8 to submit a formal scoping comment.
9 These comments will be included in the
10 scoping report and will be considered
11 in the development of the Environmental
12 Impact Statement.

13 So just to clarify, we have an
14 informal Q&A and a formal scoping. And
15 just to reiterate why we're here
16 tonight, public input is a really
17 important part of this process. And
18 your input is very important in the
19 development of this long-term large-
20 scale study.

21 So with that, I'd like to turn it
22 over to Renee Sanders.

23 (PRESENTATION BY RENEE SANDERS)

24 So you're going to hear a key
25 phrase over and over again about a

1 long-term large-scale restoration
2 project. On behalf of the State, I
3 just want to welcome everybody and just
4 reiterate that we are very excited to
5 be working in conjunction with the
6 Corps of Engineers on this project.

7 The LCA Program stands for the
8 Louisiana Coastal Area Program. It was
9 finalized in 2004 and early 2005. The
10 purpose of this study was to evaluate
11 near-term projects, as well as long-
12 term restoration projects. Near-term
13 projects were things that could be
14 completed within five to ten years.
15 Large-scale long-term projects are
16 things that will be completed
17 afterwards.

18 This project is one of six of the
19 long-term large-scale projects. It
20 combines two of them, a hydrodynamic
21 portion and a delta management portion.
22 And we'll go into that a little bit
23 greater detail on what each individual
24 portion means and what it includes.

25 The map of the LCA projects here

1 are 15 critical near-term projects, two
2 of which have been built. That's
3 Caernarvon and Davis Pond. The other
4 ones are in various stages. Some are
5 in design. Those include: White Ditch,
6 Blind River, Amite, Terrebonne, to name
7 a few. And then there are some that
8 are, as I mentioned, have already been
9 built, Caernarvon and Davis Pond. But
10 they're currently undergoing
11 modifications. So they're still in a
12 study phase. Myrtle Grove is another
13 project that's in the study phase. So
14 we have various projects over different
15 stages of completion.

16 Next slide shows the proposed study
17 area. It begins in the Gulf of Mexico,
18 the Bird's Foot area, extends all the
19 way to Vicksburg. The reason it
20 extends that far north is that part of
21 the model domain that we're going to
22 use for the project needs to extend
23 that far.

24 There's a little area southwest
25 that, kind of, has a little tail on it.

1 And that's to symbolize some of the
2 longshore drift that occurs along the
3 coast. So we wanted to capture as much
4 of the project area as we could all the
5 way up to Vicksburg and including that
6 longshore drift, that sediment and
7 water nutrients that goes along the
8 Gulf of Mexico.

9 The project area will be refined
10 once we know the individual project
11 features. So this area will be
12 condensed, and then we'll do a more
13 intense study and analysis of different
14 locations for features.

15 So some quick facts on the project.
16 It was authorized under WRDA in 2007
17 under Sections 7003. And it will have
18 one Environmental Impact Statement that
19 will be at the end of the project.
20 That's to describe the benefits, as
21 well as the impacts of the project, and
22 be tiered off from the main
23 programmatic report that was completed
24 in 2004.

25 The cost share agreement for the

1 project was signed in August of 2011.
2 It's a 50/50 cost share, meaning the
3 State portion will be 50 percent of the
4 total amount, which is the \$25.3
5 million. And the Corps will have 50
6 percent of that cost as well.

7 The project is expected to take
8 about five years. If we can condense
9 that, that will be very beneficial to
10 everyone involved because this is a
11 very important project. That is the
12 approximate timeline that we have
13 allocated for the project.

14 And then the last thing is, again,
15 this project will have one report, and
16 it combines two of those large-scale
17 studies: the hydrodynamic and the delta
18 management portion.

19 So to look at the hydrodynamic
20 portion of the project a little bit
21 more detail is to evaluate the
22 Mississippi River system. And when I
23 say evaluate, it's looking at what
24 resources are available in the river:
25 the sediment, the nutrients, and the

1 freshwater. Where is it available?
2 Where can we best utilize those
3 resources? How do we implement the
4 best features to utilize those
5 resources? What tools do we need to
6 best study? How to implement these
7 processes. So it's kind of a little
8 bit of where is the resources, how do
9 we utilize it, and how do we move from
10 there.

11 And then the other portion of the
12 study is to assess the operations in
13 the Mississippi River and Tributaries
14 system. And that essentially means
15 we're going to evaluate ecosystem
16 restoration, flood protection,
17 navigation all on the same level.

18 So, traditionally, the river has
19 been focused on navigation and flood
20 protection services. This study will
21 evaluate or elevate the importance of
22 coastal restoration.

23 The delta management portion of
24 this study will look at identifying
25 specific features. So the hydrodynamic

1 part of it is focused on modeling, and
2 where the resources are, and how those
3 resources move around in the system.

4 The delta management side is going
5 to look at, how do we implement those
6 features, how do we evaluate the
7 benefits and the impacts of these
8 features to pick the best plan.

9 What was originally written in the
10 2004 report is that we would evaluate
11 large-scale river diversions, and that
12 would be anything or greater than
13 50,000 cfs. And we also look at
14 alternative navigation alignments. And
15 the third thing is that we would look
16 at restoration features: outfall
17 management, dredging. This also
18 includes implementing features or
19 analyzing features from the Master
20 Plan.

21 Just to touch on the Master Plan,
22 this allows us the opportunity to
23 better implement where the projects
24 would be and what the CFS would be. Is
25 it a diversion? Is it a marsh creation

1 project? So this project is going to
2 allow us to further analyze what was
3 presented in the Master Plan.

4 The study will also help us define
5 the analysis needed that we need to get
6 to the point where we can issue permits
7 for some of these projects, whether
8 it's a diversion, whether it's marsh
9 creation. And it's also going to allow
10 us the information that we need to go
11 to Congress to have these projects
12 authorized.

13 (PRESENTATION BY CHERIE PRICE)

14 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

15 Thank you, Renee. I'm Cherie
16 Price. I am the Planner on the study,
17 along with Danny Weigand, with the
18 Corps of Engineers. I'd like to thank
19 everyone for coming out this evening.
20 We're really excited to hear from the
21 public on this important project.

22 I have a personal vested interest
23 in this study since I was born, raised,
24 and currently reside in coastal
25 Louisiana or near coastal Louisiana.

1 And I'm going to start off with
2 some of the challenges that we're going
3 to face as we proceed on this study.
4 So as Renee said earlier, there are,
5 historically, there have been two
6 primary focus areas or missions on the
7 Mississippi River, which have been
8 navigation and flood control, which the
9 state and nation has benefitted
10 greatly, as far as the navigation
11 component and flood control. It's been
12 very important in providing protection
13 to communities up and down the
14 Mississippi River.

15 And now with this study, we're
16 looking at adding an additional layer
17 of use on the river, looking at coastal
18 restoration and trying to acquire as
19 much of the river's resources,
20 sediment, water, and nutrients, as we
21 can to support restoration.

22 So we're all familiar with the
23 issues that we face, including
24 subsidence or land sinking and the
25 erosional problems that we have in

1 coastal Louisiana. We're also finding
2 that building diversions or trying to
3 do restoration with artificial means,
4 such as diversions or dedicated
5 dredging is a very complex process. We
6 have a lot to learn still. And we're
7 hoping to be able to resolve some of
8 those complexities and issues through
9 this study.

10 Encroachment of the Gulf of Mexico.
11 We all know the Gulf is getting closer
12 and closer to some of our coastal
13 communities and that trend will
14 continue into the future. That is
15 something that we hope to offset in
16 certain areas.

17 So our basic picture, our overall
18 study goal for this project is,
19 basically, reconnect the river's
20 resources to the delta areas
21 surrounding the river and to provide
22 sustainable restoration, not just
23 restoration, but restoration that's
24 going to stay there into the future
25 over the 50-year period of analysis for

1 the study and even beyond that. We
2 want to to that in balance with the
3 current river uses of navigation and
4 flood control.

5 So the study objectives are more
6 specific. They're not as broad.
7 They're really going to focus in on
8 trying to achieve some tangible results
9 from the study. And the first one that
10 we have is to really identify the
11 Mississippi River resources that are
12 available. What's out there. What can
13 we use from the river. Once we get
14 sediment from the river, how can we
15 make it stay in some of the bay areas.

16 The next objective that we have is
17 to provide a decision making framework.
18 So that basically is going to include
19 all the data and models that we will
20 perform on the Mississippi River. It's
21 a comprehensive set of models. I think
22 it's unprecedented. It's beyond
23 anything that's ever been done before
24 on the lower river. And it's really
25 going to help provide that

1 understanding that we've needed for so
2 long.

3 So using those river models and
4 basin models together will provide the
5 understanding and framework for us to
6 make more informed management
7 decisions. And this study is not just
8 specific to hydro delta management.
9 It's a programmatic study that's going
10 to support other LCA near-term studies
11 as well.

12 Opportunities. There's lots of
13 opportunities here. As I mentioned
14 earlier, we want to provide a
15 systemwide data and tools to help make
16 informed decisions to more effectively
17 manage river resources and ways that's
18 never been done previous. We've never
19 looked at all three of these focus
20 areas in unison together to see how
21 they interact together, and what the
22 effects will be doing large-scale
23 dredging and implementing large-scale
24 diversions on the river.

25 Reconnecting Mississippi River

1 resources. That's kind of a repeat of
2 some of what I've mentioned earlier.
3 But that's a big part of the study.

4 Increasing marsh elevation is going
5 to be very important to try to keep up
6 with the current subsidence and sea-
7 level rise rates. We want to prevent
8 marshes from drowning and keep them
9 above water.

10 And adjusting bayside hydrology is
11 basically avoiding waterlogging of the
12 marshes and implementing outfall
13 management measures that institute
14 certain widths and depths in the bay
15 area to help promote sediment retention
16 and land building.

17 With that, I'll turn it over to
18 Sandy Stiles, who will talk about the
19 NEPA process. Thank you.

20 PRESENTATION BY SANDRA STILES)

21 MS. SANDRA STILES:

22 Good evening. I am actually a
23 stand-in for Bill Klein, who is the
24 Environmental Manager of this study.
25 He's not feeling well; so I gladly

1 volunteered to attend. And then I
2 learned that I was speaking. So here I
3 am.

4 So the National Environmental
5 Policy Act of '69, basically, ensures
6 that environmental information is
7 available to the public and to
8 decision-makers prior to any decisions
9 being made.

10 Scoping is part of the NEPA
11 process. Out of the National
12 Environmental Policy Act of 1969, CEQ,
13 the Council of Environmental Quality
14 was set up. And they in turn developed
15 regulations, 40:CFR:1500, which spelled
16 out how Environmental Impact Statements
17 would be done. And part of that was
18 the scoping process in which it gives
19 the public an opportunity right from
20 the beginning of the study to have a
21 forum for focusing what they'd like to
22 see happen with a project and get their
23 issues out there and addressed and get
24 them involved in the project from the
25 beginning all the way to the end.

1 So the Environmental Impact
2 Statement is what we're going to be
3 developing for this project. Any time
4 there's a major federal action, there's
5 the requirement to develop some kind of
6 Environmental Assessment. It can be an
7 EA, which is a smaller document or
8 Environmental Impact Statement, which
9 is far more complicated and goes into
10 more detail. And EIS is what we'll be
11 developing for this study.

12 The schedule of the EIS, the Notice
13 of Intent was published in the Federal
14 Register March 23, 2012, of this year.
15 The scoping process is -- the Notice of
16 Intent is part of the scoping process.
17 And we're in the scoping process at
18 this time.

19 And what will come out of the
20 public meetings that we have scheduled
21 over the next couple weeks, we'll
22 develop a scoping report. And to get
23 your comment into that scoping report,
24 we ask that you submit, send to us,
25 whether you do it here tonight, or you

1 fill out a card and send it in within
2 30 days so that we can develop the
3 scoping report. And we'll mail that
4 scoping report out to anybody that
5 makes comments or requests a copy of
6 the scoping report.

7 The draft EIS will be ready around
8 November of 2015. Then the final EIS
9 in January of 2016. And that will end
10 with a record of decision.

11 So as I stated, the scoping
12 includes the publication of the Notice
13 of Intent in the Federal Register, and
14 that was March 23; the public meetings
15 inviting the public to participate, and
16 we want to hear what you have to say
17 about the study, the issues that you
18 have, what resources you think are
19 important are going to be affected,
20 what should we be looking at. That
21 really helps guide the study and tells
22 us what we need to put into our
23 environmental evaluation, what do we
24 need to focus on, and what is maybe not
25 so important we don't have to focus on

1 it in quite so much detail.

2 This is your opportunity to help
3 guide the study, and we really value
4 that. As I stated, there will be a
5 public scoping report that will be
6 developed once all of these six or so
7 public meetings occur, and we gather
8 everybody's input and develop it into a
9 report. And we'll provide that out to
10 everybody that's provided comments or
11 that requests to see that.

12 Then Lee is going to lead us in a
13 question and answer session.

14 (QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION)

15 MS. MEULLER:

16 As I described earlier, this is
17 really your opportunity to ask the team
18 members any questions you may have.
19 They are sitting in the front two rows
20 here.

21 So with that, we just ask you to
22 approach the mic, state your name so
23 that we can capture it with the
24 transcription service. And as I said,
25 we'll do the best to answer your

1 questions. If you don't feel like we
2 adequately answered it, we'll go ahead
3 and make sure we get your contact
4 information before we leave. We just
5 ask that you raise your hand.

6 MR. WILLIAM FONTENOT:

7 My name is William Fontenot. I
8 live here in Baton Rouge. And I served
9 on several citizen advisory committees
10 for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
11 the NOBRA Study, which is the New
12 Orleans Baton Rouge Wildlife Resource
13 Study.

14 And I think part of - it's really
15 exciting that you're doing this
16 project, and it is being done. I think
17 part of the problem is that it's not a
18 big enough area. This should include
19 the Atchafalaya River Basin, Bayou
20 Teche, Vermilion River. So this is not
21 including a major part of the delta
22 system of the Mississippi River.

23 You're also missing a major part of
24 the upper river basin. I'm trying to
25 think how to illustrate. You're

1 looking between the Gulf of Mexico and
2 Vicksburg. And it would be kind of
3 like if you went into a doctor's
4 office, and the only thing the doctor
5 was allowed to look at would be your
6 foot. And you'd have to diagnose
7 what's wrong with the patient by only
8 looking at the foot.

9 There are about a million
10 structures that have been built in the
11 Mississippi River Basin. There are at
12 least 43,000 major dams. And some of
13 those have caused dramatic losses of
14 sediment. There's an article written
15 by the Associated Press writer just a
16 few years called "Missouri River
17 Sinking." And in it -- he was up in
18 Kansas. And he said, the Missouri
19 River, the lower part of the river
20 below the last dams on the Missouri
21 River has been scouring out the river.
22 The whole river has dropped 8 to 12
23 feet. It's not less water. It's just
24 the whole river is scouring out because
25 no sediment is coming across the last

1 big dams. And so the river water gets
2 up in those dams, and it needs to do
3 something. So it's picking up the
4 sediment out of the river. And it's
5 bringing (inaudible) down.

6 That scouring of the Missouri River
7 is making up for all the sediment which
8 is probably now behind thousands of
9 dams in the Missouri.

10 If you don't consider that as part
11 of the whole system, you're only
12 considering a tiny part of it. So I
13 have the problem with the lack of
14 information that's been provided and
15 the lack of information that's being
16 considered by the U.S. Army Corps of
17 Engineers in this project. I got a lot
18 of -- WRDA and a few other things.

19 I would certainly think that the
20 seven members of Congress from
21 Louisiana would have talked about this
22 and the two U.S. Senators.

23 I was in Congress. I think all the
24 Congressional delegation from the Gulf
25 Coast states were talking to us. I

1 don't think that happened.

2 MS. MEULLER:

3 Would you like Cherie Price to
4 address your question about the
5 Atchafalaya?

6 MR. WILLIAM FONTENOT:

7 Sure, yes. And I apologize for
8 being so negative, but it's been a big
9 concern of mine. I worked in the
10 Attorney General's Office for 27 years
11 in my job. What I did was try and help
12 people understand how to deal with
13 environmental problems. I think that
14 it's impossible to solve the coastal
15 problems in Louisiana without looking
16 at the entire Mississippi River Basin.
17 That's seven major rivers that drain
18 the Mississippi, parts of 30 states.

19 MS. MUELLER:

20 It sounds like this would be
21 appropriate for us to capture in the
22 formal scoping period as well. So if
23 you have any questions for Cherie, she
24 can answer them. But then, once again,
25 you have the formal scoping period.

1 MR. WILLIAM FONTENOT:

2 I'll be glad to.

3 MS. MUELLER:

4 Do you have any questions now?

5 MR. WILLIAM FONTENOT:

6 Is there a process where I need to
7 go meet with my members of Congress
8 the two Senators? Is this all put in
9 stone that we're only going to look at
10 the main channel in the Mississippi
11 River and not include the Atchafalaya?

12 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

13 The Atchafalaya River,
14 specifically, looking at operation of
15 the Old River Control Structure and the
16 7030 split is actually also listed as
17 an LCA large-term, large-term, I'm
18 sorry, large-scale long-term study.
19 For this particular study, the decision
20 was made to focus primarily on the
21 Mississippi River just because of the
22 sheer magnitude of the work that's
23 involved and the date that's required.
24 There's data that we needed
25 historically on the lower river that

1 we've been missing for decades. And
2 this is our first opportunity to be
3 able to go in and collect data below
4 Baton Rouge to support the study.

5 And because of that, because of the
6 extensive nature of the data collection
7 and the modeling on the river, a
8 decision was made to focus primarily on
9 the Mississippi River at this time so
10 that we would have a great product and
11 science-based tools to make informed
12 decisions off of on the Mississippi
13 River. I don't know if that answered
14 your question.

15 If we look at the Atchafalaya, it
16 will take away from the Mississippi
17 River effort that we're undertaking,
18 and we would have to look at the
19 effects of the entire Atchafalaya Basin
20 and the effects on the Old River
21 Control Structure as well.

22 MS. MUELLER:

23 Do you have another question?

24 MR. STEVEN PEYRONNIN:

25 This is an awfully formal informal

1 Q&A. I better state my name, Steven
2 Peyronnin. In thinking about the
3 context of the EIS, I guess I'm
4 curious, especially for anybody in this
5 room, the dynamic nature of, not only
6 the delta but coastal Louisiana, the
7 rate we're experiencing coastal land
8 loss and coastal change.

9 How is the EIS going to be
10 captured, not aesthetic current
11 condition of the landscape, to judge
12 impacts it gets but in fact a time
13 frame under which we would see
14 continued degradation of that landscape
15 and measure the potential impacts of
16 this type of project against a future
17 scenario without any additional action?

18 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

19 On all four studies, we're required
20 to make comparisons between a future,
21 it's called, a future without project
22 scenario to a future with project
23 scenario, which basically means, if no
24 action were taken at year 50, then what
25 would the landscape look like versus

1 different alternative scenarios that we
2 would analyze through the study.

3 So we'll be required on both the
4 Mississippi River modeling and on the
5 bayside modeling to complete that
6 analysis. And the future without
7 project analysis will include the
8 landscape change analysis.

9 And that's something we're going to
10 work together with CPRA on, using
11 methodologies that were applied in the
12 State Master Plan to the study.

13 MR. SHERWOOD GAGLIANO:

14 Good evening. My name is Sherwood
15 Gagliano. I've been involved in this
16 process since the birth of NEPA in 1969
17 when I became project director for a
18 contract between the Coastal Studies
19 Institute and the New Orleans District
20 Corps of Engineers to initially
21 evaluate the effects of the proposed
22 diversion of the flow of the river to
23 Texas and New Mexico. That evolved
24 into a five-year contract in which 25
25 technical reports were produced.

1 Toward the end of that, I believe we
2 produced the first coastal restoration
3 master plan for the state for the
4 coastal zone that has virtually all of
5 the elements of the current state's
6 master plan.

7 I wish you good luck. I'm worn
8 out. It's really encouraging to see
9 bright, shiny faces because you've got
10 a real challenge. Initially, the
11 challenge was even getting the citizens
12 of this state to recognize that the
13 delta system was something beautiful
14 and important and dynamic. And that
15 was a long process, all of the things
16 we kind of take for granted, all
17 required, literally, years of debate
18 and discussion.

19 One thing that I would urge is that
20 you don't forget the body of knowledge
21 that is the platform for what you're
22 doing now. My biggest fear is that
23 we're going to go back and recreate the
24 same method and theory only to find
25 that maybe it's not as good as the

1 first one. And I urge you to take
2 advantage of a few old heads like
3 myself, who are still able to
4 contribute something and are interested
5 in the outcome and don't blow us off.
6 We've got something to say.

7 And I know that the NEPA process
8 has a mechanism for taking that into
9 consideration. But public scoping
10 meetings are a great device but they're
11 not the only device. It's important
12 that you get some of this historic
13 knowledge into the basic planning
14 sessions where the wording is not and
15 the debates take place.

16 One thing that I'll just been
17 appalled by in all the years that I've
18 been involved in this is that the
19 tendency of agencies, when given a
20 charge by Congress, to go into a black
21 box atmosphere and to, basically,
22 sequester a team that they're isolated
23 from the public until the draft is put
24 on the table. And here it is, take it
25 or leave it, you have 30 days to

1 comment on something that costs
2 billions of dollars sometimes to do and
3 took years to do. And the public just
4 doesn't have the resources or ability
5 to respond in that fashion. You got to
6 get involved early on.

7 I wish you the best of luck. This
8 is a great project. It's been long in
9 coming. And we all citizens of this
10 state applaud the effort. Thank you.

11 MS. MUELLER:

12 Thank you. Thank you for your
13 comment.

14 MR. DARRYL PAUL WARD:

15 Darryl Paul Ward, Garden of Eden.
16 What I was wondering about is the
17 freshwater diversion and the sediment
18 of the plant life. Is there anything
19 in there for plant life for fuel and
20 for food? Because this is going to be
21 the new world of plants. And I want to
22 know want to know if the Army Corps of
23 Engineers are planning on anything of
24 this nature, plants?

25 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

1 Let me see if I understand your
2 question. Are you wondering what the
3 effect will be on sediment diversions
4 and freshwater diversion on the
5 vegetation and marsh areas?

6 MR. DARRYL PAUL WARD:

7 Yes. That and will anything be
8 added to, in forms of plants for food
9 or for fuel?

10 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

11 Well, let me handle the first part
12 of your question first. So sediment
13 diversions, generally, provide mineral
14 sediments from the river which have
15 nutritive value or biomass in marshes
16 for below ground biomass and above
17 ground biomass. So there will be a
18 benefit to vegetation.

19 But there is a balance between how
20 much water was put into the marshes and
21 the effects that it will have on some
22 of the vegetation that's there. And we
23 also have Sandy, our environmental
24 planner, provide more information on
25 that, also, if you need more

1 information.

2 As far as plantings go, generally,
3 when dredged material is placed for
4 restoration purposes, it vegetates
5 itself very quickly within six months
6 to a year time frame. If there is a
7 need for plantings for erosional
8 purposes or something, that's some
9 thing we would evaluate as part of the
10 study?

11 MR. DARRYL PAUL WARD:

12 So y'all will evaluate that and put
13 that into consideration?

14 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

15 But as far as using it for food,
16 that's not going to be part of the
17 study process. It would be more to
18 maintain a balanced ecosystem, marsh
19 health, and marsh integrity, that would
20 be more of the purpose of vegetative
21 plantings.

22 MR. DARRYL PAUL WARD:

23 Well, when y'all build a barrier
24 island, something to stop the waves
25 from coming, is there any vegetation

1 going to be on it?

2 MS. CHERIE PRICE:

3 Well, one example is the island
4 that was created as part of the West
5 Bay Diversion. That island, in
6 particular, was one that vegetated very
7 quickly within six months to a year.
8 It was completely covered with
9 vegetation there. But if there's a
10 need for it, that's something we'll be
11 evaluating.

12 MR. DARRYL PAUL WARD:

13 Good. I wanted to bring this to
14 your attention.

15 MS. MUELLER:

16 Do we have any more questions?
17 Well, if we have something that
18 triggers your thoughts during scoping,
19 the team will be around afterwards, and
20 you can talk to them one-on-one if you
21 have any further questions.

22 But now, we're going to go into the
23 more formal scoping process.

24 (FORMAL SCOPING PROCESS)

25 MS. SANDRA STILES:

1 So this is the part where we get to
2 hear what you have to say in form of
3 comments. We won't address any
4 questions or answer your questions.
5 But this is your opportunity to tell us
6 what you'd like to see in the study,
7 look at what you think the important
8 resources are. Here's some sample
9 questions up here on the screen to help
10 guide your thought process and some of
11 the things we'd like to know.

12 There's a lot of things we can
13 cover in the Environmental Impact
14 Statement. We use the scoping process
15 to help us narrow down what's important
16 to the community and the public. So
17 this is your opportunity. So feel free
18 to come on up.

19 Does anybody have a comment?

20 MR. RICHARD GOYER:

21 My name is Richard Goyer. My
22 comment would be to involve private
23 landowners in the process up front,
24 instead of trying to get support later
25 on after a decision has been made on

1 projected outcomes. 83 percent of our
2 coastal land is owned by private
3 landowners. And often times, they're
4 left completely out of the box and are
5 not involved until somebody says, well,
6 we're going to do this with your land.

7 What are their rights to manage the
8 land after it has been restored? So
9 that is a very prime consideration.
10 These people own tens of thousands of
11 acres of land. They're not just Joe's
12 Hunting Camp. They are large concerns
13 owning thousands of acres. And they
14 have the power of our state
15 representatives, our parish presidents,
16 Congress. And they're often left out
17 of this mix in the process.

18 So my advice, if you want to call
19 out that or comment, would be to involve
20 landowners up-front so that they know
21 what their benefits are and maybe what
22 their constraints are. And are there
23 chances for easement potentially, for
24 instance, to utilize their land. This
25 has to be done, these studies.

1 And I conducted research for years.
2 The biggest problem is to find the
3 landowner that would allow me to study
4 on their land without just going out
5 there and being a trespasser. And that
6 will become very important, as Dr.
7 Gagliano mentioned, in your study
8 objective --

9 MS. SANDRA STILES:

10 How do you --

11 MR. RICHARD GOYER:

12 -- and don't get them up-front.
13 You can call them in meetings, other
14 than just scoping process required by
15 NEPA.

16 MS. SANDRA STILES:

17 What is your vision for
18 involvement? What do you think that
19 would look like?

20 MR. RICHARD GOYER:

21 I would think that you would try to
22 identify the organizations that are
23 represented. For instance, there are
24 many foundations, non-profit
25 organizations, that are conducting

1 restoration projects of their own. I
2 work for one, just as an example, St.
3 Bernard Wetland Foundation as one of
4 their board of directors. We are
5 constantly doing restoration work
6 within the geographic areas in the
7 parish.

8 But we don't necessarily have an
9 option to visit with Mr. Klein,
10 personally, and say, okay, this is
11 where we think we can do this, that, or
12 the other thing, and what are my
13 benefits, or what are my cons of this
14 project. Are you going to dig a hole
15 in my land? What resources do I have
16 to do that? Somebody points a finger
17 and says, this will happen. And yet,
18 it's often without any provided input
19 from the landowners.

20 MS. SANDRA STILES:

21 So, maybe, like a workshop forum or
22 something that we invite the people to
23 come a day, and we can talk about -

24 MR. RICHARD GOYER:

25 A less formal version of the

1 scoping process. But begin with the
2 people that are planning, you for
3 instance. We don't need Colonel so and
4 so or General so and so. We need the
5 person who's planning the study to
6 specifically find out what their
7 interests are.

8 MS. SANDRA STILES;

9 Okay. Appreciate your comments.

10 MS. MAURA WOOD:

11 Hi. I'm Maura Wood with the
12 National Wildlife Federation. I'm very
13 happy to hear you say that restoration
14 and navigation and flood control will
15 be equal in the study. That's a very
16 important part of what needs to happen
17 here.

18 I also should come up and ask a
19 question about the data collection that
20 you're planning as part of this study.
21 Hopefully, you're out there gathering
22 data now. I know it takes a while.
23 But we need to use this as an
24 opportunity to fill some of the data
25 gaps that, surprisingly, we have quite

1 large data gaps, even with this river
2 that's so closely watched.

3 And we need this information to be
4 able to make these informed decisions
5 that you're talking about on how we can
6 create a system of management that
7 includes all of the restoration
8 features as well. And they can be part
9 of the flood control system and the
10 navigation maintenance as well.

11 I encourage you to look to the
12 State and the State Master Plan as the
13 model of how you can involve
14 stakeholders over time in the formation
15 of a plan in the framework development
16 team and in the focus groups.

17 You have an example there of how,
18 what you've heard at least twice now
19 tonight, you know, requested. And
20 those requests come from the heart from
21 people who care about the coast, who
22 work on the coast, who depend on the
23 coast, who grew up there like you, who
24 have a tremendous amount of knowledge
25 that is also a piece of what you need

1 to pull together in this study.

2 MS. SANDRA STILES:

3 What do you see as data gaps? You
4 mentioned data gaps, data collection.
5 What kind of things do you think need
6 to be captured?

7 MS. MAURA WOOD:

8 Well, for instance, one of the
9 things on the Myrtle Grove Diversion
10 that our NGO partnership and the State
11 was able to do was a very site specific
12 data collection looking at all of the
13 parameters of the river right in that
14 section where we want to put a
15 diversion, not at Torbert's Landing, or
16 not an annual average ratings curve,
17 but right here at these times of year,
18 what's happening, where's the current,
19 where's the sediment, what does the
20 river look like, how can we grab that
21 sediment.

22 So we need very -- so where we're
23 planning diversions, we need very
24 specific information in those reaches
25 of the river in particular.

1 MS. SANDRA STILES:

2 Thank you for your comments.

3 Anybody else have some comments?

4 Anything you'd like us to look at?

5 MR. WILLIAM FONTENOT:

6 William Fontenot, again, Baton
7 Rouge. I think what would be very
8 important in your Environmental Impact
9 Study is to identify what information
10 processes are missing. If a project is
11 focusing on a part of the country which
12 has been adversely impacted or greatly
13 altered by thousands of other projects
14 in other parts of the country. And I
15 think in some way of connecting those
16 things together leaves a tremendous
17 hole or void in your Environmental
18 Impact Statement.

19 Because you're not really
20 identifying what the environment is
21 that is impacting what's going on in
22 coastal Louisiana. So it's only a
23 partial Environmental Impact Statement
24 is what you're proposing. And that's
25 not bad that you're doing this project.

1 But I think it's important to identify
2 what is not included. So if somebody
3 reads it, they will understand or,
4 hopefully, be able to understand it, a
5 member of Congress from Ohio will be
6 able to, or Montana, or New York would
7 be able to look at this and say, oh,
8 these are some of the things we should
9 of included in the statute. And next
10 time look at this, identifying
11 something like this. We should be
12 looking at something more
13 comprehensive.

14 I think if you say this is the
15 Environmental Impact Statement on
16 restoration in coastal Louisiana
17 without including part, a major part of
18 the Delta where some land building has
19 actually occurred one of the few places
20 in the world that land building is
21 occurring in the Delta. And you don't
22 include information about all of the
23 other 43,000 structures, major dams
24 that built in this system, then the
25 person reading it won't be able to

1 understand what information is not
2 there. So I think that's part of
3 what's missing in just about every
4 environmental impact statement I've
5 ever looked at, and I've looked at a
6 lot of them.

7 It's hard for people to make an
8 informed, get their thought process
9 working. Dr. Gagliana is somebody, and
10 people who have gotten up and spoken,
11 are people you ought to be sitting
12 around a table with saying, okay, what
13 is it we ought to be trying to do, and
14 how can we have a much better outcome,
15 a more complete document that will be
16 useful that will use the work the
17 individual groups that work on for
18 decades. We've got in this room lots
19 of people who worked on lots of things.

20 We need to find some way to get
21 them and other folks, who have worked
22 on these issues and studies to be able
23 to bring their information to you and
24 include their information in what
25 they're looking at. Otherwise, you're

1 only doing a one percent environmental
2 impact statement.

3 MR. STEVEN PEYRONNIN:

4 Steven Peyronnin for Coalition to
5 Restore Coastal Louisiana. I guess to
6 follow-up on the informal portion. I
7 was very encouraged to hear that the
8 environmental impact will look at a
9 future without action. We've been
10 looking at what's happening in coastal
11 area of Louisiana. That's just one
12 small component of our future without
13 action.

14 Restoration of our cost is going to
15 require bold action. We believe that
16 this is the type of effort that is
17 going to start that bold action. And
18 given the level of collapse that we're
19 experiencing, it's reasonable to expect
20 there are going to be large-scale
21 changes if ultimately the decision is
22 made to move forward with a complete
23 rethinking of how the river is managed.
24 And from the Environmental Impact
25 Statement, that can often be something

1 that sets the project back. But
2 measuring it for future without action,
3 what's happening in our coast, it's
4 clearly important that that be given
5 some contents.

6 And I bring that up, not just for
7 the purpose of talking about habit or
8 wetlands, but we're talking about the
9 radical changes we might expect to see
10 from a project of this nature to
11 fisheries to communities to economies
12 to navigation and flood control.

13 I say that, not from the
14 perspective of trying to simply
15 maintain the things the way they are,
16 primarily, flood control and
17 navigation. Because, as I think many
18 people are beginning to understand,
19 highest levels of the Corps, highest
20 levels of Congress, people who use
21 those resources, that those current
22 uses of the river are unsustainable in
23 their current operation. Sea-level
24 rise changes are shifting the epicenter
25 of the river. Dredging costs are

1 rising. Fuel costs aren't coming down
2 any time soon. Expansion of the Panama
3 Canal is going to mean increased
4 pressure in economic incentives for
5 maintaining depths of the river.

6 Those are all critical context-
7 sensitive pieces that need to be
8 considered. When we look at the
9 challenge of re-engaging and
10 reconnecting this river to a delta,
11 that it's going to mean bold change
12 with the environment and our coast.
13 But that has to be measured against the
14 consequences, not just to the
15 environment, but to the very principles
16 of the MRNT (phonetic) if we do
17 nothing. Thank you.

18 MS. SANDRA STILES:

19 Thank you for your comment.

20 MR. DANIEL BECKER:

21 Daniel Becker. I wanted to know
22 what you would do with the oilfield
23 canals? Because most of this land that
24 the projects takes place are in private
25 land. And the oil canals are still

1 there. They're all dredged by dredge
2 boats. And most of these projects that
3 you propose have dredge boats as the
4 source of the material that they're
5 going to put back in there. And what
6 are you going to do with all the
7 spoilbanks that are just sitting there
8 and you've already created a problem
9 with the dredge boats by dredging
10 canals once? How do you think more
11 canals are going to be a solution?

12 And I don't think you have enough
13 river sediment and that you can get it
14 far enough away from the river to make
15 that bit of good where you can just
16 look on any map and google, and you'll
17 see how many oilfield canals are there,
18 canals on top of canals, turnaround
19 canals.

20 So you can't dredge and fill over a
21 pipeline. I once proposed a project to
22 look at how many flow lines were in the
23 state and to use some space shuttle
24 data, ground penetrating radar. And I
25 think it would be an interesting study

1 to know how many flow lines are in the
2 state. And they're full of naturally
3 occurring radioactive material.
4 They're supposed to replace those flow
5 lines. So how are they going to
6 replace the flow line if you build
7 wetlands there?

8 And I think what they want to do is
9 play in their sandbox. They bought up
10 a bunch of oyster leases to go play in,
11 and they're letting the oil companies
12 do whatever they want.

13 MS. SANDRA STILES:

14 What would you like to see happen
15 with those oil canals? Do you have
16 ideas?

17 MR. DANIEL BECKER:

18 I'm full of ideas.

19 MS. SANDRA STILES:

20 This is the forum for them.

21 MR. DANIEL BECKER:

22 Well, I'll submit a project at the
23 proper time. And I've already
24 submitted a project for one of the
25 early CWPPRAS for demonstration. But I

1 just wanted to hear from you. Aren't
2 most of these projects taking place
3 away from the oil and gas production
4 areas because you can't bury a
5 pipeline, you can't dredge over a
6 buried pipeline?

7 Pipeline canals are always going to
8 be over open water conduits. It would
9 be like having a pie that's running,
10 and you cut holes off through it. The
11 pie leaks out. Well, you can do
12 whatever you want with the river
13 sediment. As long as these canals are
14 there, the saltwater is going to
15 continuously invade.

16 The No. 1 problem we have is
17 saltwater invasion. Then you have
18 freshwater plants die. And I'd like to
19 say, most of these islands that you
20 build are just vegetating by whatever
21 grows there. They dredge these things
22 4 feet high. So you have a 4-foot high
23 pile of sand. Anything will grow on
24 it. First flood, saltwater takes over
25 and kills all those plants.

1 So until you stop the saltwater
2 from coming up all these millions of
3 oilfield canals that we have, anything
4 you do is going to be, just to preserve
5 land can be a land building event.

6 So I'll tell you what you did was
7 that you changed the definition of what
8 a wetland was first. You had a
9 proposed amendment. You voted on it.
10 You changed the definition from wetland
11 to coastal, which included roads,
12 bridges.

13 The guy from CWPPRA just said he
14 wanted more navigation. They can't
15 bring supertankers up the Mississippi
16 River anymore. The supertankers are
17 going to go to Houston. They're
18 closing the Port of New Orleans.
19 They're going to build a millennium or
20 some sort of port down by Fouchon.
21 That's the main plan. The hardened
22 loop is the offshore oil platform is
23 the soft target. They're going to
24 build that as a hardened
25 infrastructure.

1 Billy Nungesser already has his
2 dredge boat waiting at the mouth of the
3 river to build the berm around Grand
4 Isle. The Dutch want to build it
5 better berm around Grand Isle. I think
6 that's a waste of funds. And I think
7 your project is going to not help the
8 average fisherman that lives in the
9 area.

10 And I mean you can study how much
11 river sediment is there. It's going to
12 change every year. They already have
13 them, I'm sure, sediment gages and
14 structures like that in place. This is
15 the Corps of Engineers. They've been
16 watching the river since I was born.
17 Thank you.

18 MS. SANDRA STILES:

19 Thank you for your comment.

20 Anybody else? Come on up.

21 MR. SHERWOOD GAGLIANO:

22 Since some of the other speakers
23 have already set the precedent, I'll do
24 the same too. I have a prime
25 suggestion. Louisiana has a federally

1 approved coastal management program
2 that's been authorized since the 1970s.
3 Most of our coastal parishes have been
4 in the effected area here have approved
5 local government programs. And those
6 are extremely effective as a forum for
7 collecting ideas.

8 First of all, NEPA, as you well
9 know, is a three-legged stool, social,
10 economic, and environmental benefits
11 have to be considered. And one of the
12 big economic benefits is this coastal
13 restoration effort, including the
14 proponents that you're working on, is
15 without a doubt the largest new
16 industry is this state. It should
17 employ people.

18 An important part of this should be
19 to look ahead at what kind of jobs
20 we're going to create to reach
21 sustainability, not just put these
22 things out and walk away. We put them
23 out and manage them and make sure
24 they're operating properly, functioning
25 properly. That requires a whole array

1 of skills.

2 We've got some indication of this,
3 the BP Oil Spill. We had fishermen go
4 out and apply oil booms and do tasks.
5 And we really didn't have a trained
6 workforce for it. It worked, but it
7 wasn't very efficient.

8 So what I'm suggesting is that we
9 incorporate the local government
10 coastal management programs, which are
11 legally in place and have considerable
12 weight because they make
13 recommendations to local public
14 officials. And local public officials
15 can act on that, as the primary way of
16 exchanging data and getting public
17 input into this process.

18 And to forever demonstrate the
19 importance of that, President Obama, a
20 year or so ago, several years ago now,
21 developed, made a strong commitment for
22 restoration of hurricane damage to the
23 Gulf Coast. And if you read the white
24 paper documents that came out of these
25 committees, they all say that what the

1 President says and those documents
2 reflect is that we need vision plans
3 that develop at local levels. And
4 those vision plans in my view need to
5 incorporate social, economic, and
6 environmental benefits.

7 For example, St. Bernard Parish has
8 been working -- first of all, they had
9 the first coastal management program in
10 the State of Louisiana that's been
11 approved. That was in the 1970s. And
12 they sill meet religiously at least
13 once a month and look at permits to
14 develop recommendations. And they are
15 active. It was the efforts of that
16 board and the citizens of that parish
17 that recognized the danger of MRGO and,
18 ultimately, resulted in having it
19 closed.

20 So it is a platform, framework, for
21 collecting information. And instead of
22 waiting until the draft EIS is put in
23 the public library, before you start
24 working with the local folks, that's
25 the (inaudible). Again, I really like

1 this forum. This is great, and you're
2 on the right path. My name is Sherwood
3 Gagliano.

4 MS. SANDRA STILES:

5 Anybody else like to come up and
6 give a comment? I guess we're done
7 with the comment portion then.

8 We have on the slide - they have
9 cards that you can fill out to put your
10 comments on and mail into us at a later
11 time. You can do it by email, as noted
12 up here on the slide. And then Bill
13 Klein, he is the environmental manager.
14 That's his contact information. And
15 then the address on how you can mail in
16 your comments to Bill.

17 And looks like we need to have them
18 by May 4 in order to make it into the
19 official scoping report. Although, I'd
20 just like to note that scoping is
21 occurring with the study throughout the
22 study until the draft EIS goes out for
23 public comment, and then in cases can
24 go even beyond towards the final.

25 So while we're asking you to get

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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	12:13	19:23	analyze (2)	attend (1)
§	50/50 (1)	adequately (1)	13:2;30:2	19:1
\$25.3 (1)	10:2	adjusting (1)	analyzing (1)	attention (1)
10:4	50-year (1)	18:10	12:19	36:14
1	15:25	advantage (1)	annual (1)	Attorney (1)
	6	32:2	43:16	26:10
1 (1)	69 (1)	adversely (1)	answered (2)	August (1)
52:16	19:5	44:12	23:2;28:13	10:1
12 (1)		advice (1)	anymore (1)	Authority (1)
24:22	7	38:18	53:16	4:12
15 (1)		advisory (1)	apologize (1)	authorized (3)
8:1	7:32 (1)	23:9	26:7	9:16;13:12;55:2
1969 (2)	59:25	aesthetic (1)	appalled (1)	available (7)
19:12;30:16	7003 (1)	29:10	32:17	10:24;11:1;16:12;
1970s (2)	9:17	Affairs (1)	applaud (1)	19:7;59:16,20,22
55:2;57:11	7030 (1)	4:6	33:10	average (2)
	27:16	affected (1)	applied (1)	43:16;54:8
2		21:19	30:11	avoiding (1)
	8	afterwards (2)	apply (1)	18:11
2004 (3)		7:17;36:19	56:4	away (4)
7:9;9:24;12:10	8 (1)	again (5)	Appreciate (3)	28:16;50:14;52:3;
2005 (1)	24:22	6:25;10:14;26:24;	41:9;59:6,23	55:22
7:9	83 (1)	44:6;57:25	approach (1)	awfully (1)
2007 (1)	38:1	against (2)	22:22	28:25
9:16		29:16;49:13	appropriate (1)	
2011 (1)	A	agencies (1)	26:21	B
10:1		32:19	approved (3)	
2012 (1)	ability (2)	ago (2)	55:1,4;57:11	back (3)
20:14	5:23;33:4	56:20,20	approximate (1)	31:23;48:1;50:5
2015 (2)	able (10)	agreement (1)	10:12	bad (1)
21:8;59:16	15:7;28:3;32:3;	9:25	4:11	44:25
2016 (1)	42:4;43:11;45:4,6,7,	ahead (3)	Area (12)	balance (2)
21:9	25;46:22	5:14;23:2;55:19	7:8;8:17,18,24;9:4,	16:2;34:19
23 (2)	above (2)	alignments (1)	9,11;18:15;23:18;	balanced (1)
20:14;21:14	18:9;34:16	12:14	47:11;54:9;55:4	35:18
25 (1)	achieve (1)	allocated (1)	areas (8)	barrier (1)
30:24	16:8	10:13	14:6;15:16,20;	35:23
27 (1)	acquire (1)	allow (3)	16:15;17:20;34:5;	basic (2)
26:10	14:18	13:2,9;39:3	40:6;52:4	15:17;32:13
	acres (2)	allowed (1)	Army (5)	basically (6)
	38:11,13	24:5	4:6;5:11;23:10;	15:19;16:18;
	across (1)	allows (1)	25:16;33:22	18:11;19:5;29:23;
	24:25	12:22	around (6)	32:21
30 (3)	Act (3)	along (3)	12:3;21:7;36:19;	basin (6)
21:2;26:18;32:25	19:5,12;56:15	9:2,7;13:17	46:12;54:3,5	17:4;23:19,24;
	action (8)	altered (1)	array (1)	24:11;26:16;28:19
	20:4;29:17,24;	44:13	55:25	Baton (4)
	47:9,13,15,17;48:2	alternative (2)	article (1)	23:8,12;28:4;44:6
4 (2)	active (1)	12:14;30:1	24:14	bay (3)
52:22;58:18	57:15	Although (1)	artificial (1)	16:15;18:14;36:5
40CFR1500 (1)	actually (3)	58:19	15:3	Bayou (1)
19:15	18:22;27:16;45:19	always (1)	assess (1)	23:19
43,000 (2)	added (1)	52:7	11:12	bayside (2)
24:12;45:23	34:8	amendment (1)	Assessment (1)	18:10;30:5
4-foot (1)	adding (1)	53:9	20:6	beautiful (1)
52:22	14:16	Amite (1)	Associated (1)	31:13
	additional (3)	8:6	24:15	became (1)
	14:16;29:17;59:19	amount (2)	Atchafalaya (6)	30:17
50 (3)	address (3)	10:4;42:24	23:19;26:5;27:11,	BECKER (4)
10:3,5;29:24	26:4;37:3;58:15	analysis (6)	13;28:15,19	49:20,21;51:17,21
50,000 (1)	addressed (1)	9:13;13:5;15:25;	atmosphere (1)	become (1)
		30:6,7,8	32:21	39:6
				begin (1)

41:1 beginning (3) 19:20,25;48:18 begins (1) 8:17 behalf (1) 7:2 behind (1) 25:8 below (3) 24:20;28:3;34:16 beneficial (1) 10:9 benefit (1) 34:18 benefits (7) 9:20;12:7;38:21; 40:13;55:10,12;57:6 benefitted (1) 14:9 berm (2) 54:3,5 Bernard (2) 40:3;57:7 best (7) 5:23;11:2,4,6; 12:8;22:25;33:7 better (4) 12:23;29:1;46:14; 54:5 beyond (3) 16:1,22;58:24 big (5) 18:3;23:18;25:1; 26:8;55:12 biggest (2) 31:22;39:2 Bill (3) 18:23;58:12,16 billions (1) 33:2 Billy (1) 54:1 biomass (3) 34:15,16,17 Bird's (1) 8:18 birth (1) 30:16 bit (4) 7:22;10:20;11:8; 50:15 black (2) 32:20;59:10 Blind (1) 8:6 blow (1) 32:5 board (2) 40:4;57:16 boat (1) 54:2 boats (3)	50:2,3,9 body (1) 31:20 bold (3) 47:15,17;49:11 booms (1) 56:4 born (2) 13:23;54:16 both (1) 30:3 bought (1) 51:9 box (3) 32:21;38:4;59:10 BP (1) 56:3 Branch (1) 5:14 bridges (1) 53:12 bright (1) 31:9 bring (4) 36:13;46:23;48:6; 53:15 bringing (1) 25:5 broad (1) 16:6 build (8) 35:23;51:6;52:20; 53:19,24;54:3,4;59:9 building (5) 15:2;18:16;45:18, 20;53:5 built (4) 8:2,9;24:10;45:24 bunch (1) 51:10 buried (1) 52:6 bury (1) 52:4	8,13;43:20;46:14; 47:25;50:13,15; 52:11;53:5;54:10; 56:15;58:9,11,15,23; 59:1 Canal (1) 49:3 canals (12) 49:23,25;50:10,11, 17,18,18,19;51:15; 52:7,13;53:3 captured (3) 9:3;22:23;26:21 captured (2) 29:10;43:6 card (1) 21:1 cards (1) 58:9 care (1) 42:21 cases (1) 58:23 caused (1) 24:13 CEQ (1) 19:12 certain (2) 15:16;18:14 certainly (2) 25:19;59:4 cfs (2) 12:13,24 challenge (3) 31:10,11;49:9 challenges (1) 14:2 chance (2) 5:20;6:3 chances (1) 38:23 change (4) 29:8;30:8;49:11; 54:12 changed (2) 53:7,10 changes (3) 47:21;48:9,24 channel (1) 27:10 charge (1) 32:20 Cherie (12) 5:7;13:13,14,15; 26:3,23;27:12;29:18; 33:25;34:10;35:14; 36:2 citizen (1) 23:9 citizens (3) 31:11;33:9;57:16 clarify (1) 6:13	clearly (1) 48:4 closed (1) 57:19 closely (1) 42:2 closer (2) 15:11,12 closing (1) 53:18 Coalition (1) 47:4 coast (8) 9:3;25:25;42:21, 22,23;48:3;49:12; 56:23 Coastal (26) 4:11;7:8;11:22; 13:24,25;14:17;15:1, 12;26:14;29:6,7,8; 30:18;31:2,4;38:2; 44:22;45:16;47:5,10; 53:11;55:1,3,12; 56:10;57:9 collapse (1) 47:18 collect (1) 28:3 collecting (2) 55:7;57:21 collection (4) 28:6;41:19;43:4, 12 Colonel (1) 41:3 combines (2) 7:20;10:16 coming (9) 4:21;13:19;24:25; 33:9;35:25;49:1; 53:2;59:6,23 comment (12) 6:8;20:23;33:1,13; 37:19,22;38:19; 49:19;54:19;58:6,7, 23 comments (10) 6:9;21:5;22:10; 37:3;41:9;44:2,3; 58:10,16;59:1 commitment (1) 56:21 committees (2) 23:9;56:25 communities (3) 14:13;15:13;48:11 community (1) 37:16 companies (1) 51:11 comparisons (1) 29:20 complete (3)	30:5;46:15;47:22 completed (3) 7:14,16;9:23 completely (2) 36:8;38:4 completion (1) 8:15 complex (1) 15:5 complexities (1) 15:8 complicated (1) 20:9 component (2) 14:11;47:12 comprehensive (2) 16:21;45:13 concern (1) 26:9 concerns (1) 38:12 condense (1) 10:8 condensed (1) 9:12 condition (1) 29:11 conducted (2) 4:16;39:1 conducting (1) 39:25 conduits (1) 52:8 Congress (7) 13:11;25:20,23; 32:20;38:16;45:5; 48:20 Congressional (1) 25:24 Congressm (1) 27:7 conjunction (1) 7:5 connecting (1) 44:15 cons (1) 40:13 consequences (1) 49:14 consider (1) 25:10 considerable (1) 56:11 consideration (3) 32:9;35:13;38:9 considered (4) 6:10;25:16;49:8; 55:11 considering (1) 25:12 constantly (1) 40:5 constraints (1)
	C			
	Caernarvon (2) 8:3,9 call (2) 38:18;39:13 called (2) 24:16;29:21 came (1) 56:24 Camp (1) 38:12 can (33) 4:8;10:8;11:2; 13:6;14:21;16:12,14; 20:6;21:2;22:23; 26:24;36:20;37:12; 39:13;40:11,23;42:5,			

<p>38:22 contact (3) 6:1;23:3;58:14 contents (1) 48:5 context (1) 29:3 context- (1) 49:6 continue (2) 5:8;15:14 continued (2) 29:14;59:11 continuously (1) 52:15 contract (2) 30:18,24 contribute (1) 32:4 control (9) 14:8,11;16:4; 27:15;28:21;41:14; 42:9;48:12,16 copy (1) 21:5 Corps (11) 4:6;5:11;7:6;10:5; 13:18;23:10;25:16; 30:20;33:22;48:19; 54:15 cost (4) 9:25;10:2,6;47:14 costs (3) 33:1;48:25;49:1 Council (1) 19:13 country (2) 44:11,14 couple (1) 20:21 cover (1) 37:13 covered (1) 36:8 covering (1) 4:23 CPRA (2) 5:6;30:10 create (2) 42:6;55:20 created (2) 36:4;50:8 creation (2) 12:25;13:9 critical (2) 8:1;49:6 curious (1) 29:4 current (7) 16:3;18:6;29:10; 31:5;43:18;48:21,23 currently (2) 8:10;13:24</p>	<p>curve (1) 43:16 cut (1) 52:10 CWPPRA (1) 53:13 CWPPRAs (1) 51:25</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <hr/> <p>damage (1) 56:22 dams (6) 24:12,20;25:1,2,9; 45:23 danger (1) 57:17 DANIEL (4) 49:20,21;51:17,21 Danny (1) 13:17 DARRYL (6) 33:14,15;34:6; 35:11,22;36:12 data (15) 16:19;17:15; 27:24;28:3,6;41:19; 22,24;42:1;43:3,4,4, 12;50:24;56:16 date (2) 6:2;27:23 Davis (2) 8:3,9 day (1) 40:23 days (2) 21:2;32:25 deal (1) 26:12 debate (1) 31:17 debates (1) 32:15 decades (2) 28:1;46:18 decision (6) 16:17;21:10; 27:19;28:8;37:25; 47:21 decision-makers (1) 19:8 decisions (5) 17:7,16;19:8; 28:12;42:4 dedicated (1) 15:4 define (1) 13:4 definition (2) 53:7,10 degradation (1) 29:14</p>	<p>delegation (1) 25:24 Delta (14) 5:2,10;7:21;10:17; 11:23;12:4;15:20; 17:8;23:21;29:6; 31:13;45:18,21; 49:10 demonstrate (1) 56:18 demonstration (1) 51:25 depend (1) 42:22 depths (2) 18:14;49:5 describe (1) 9:20 described (1) 22:16 design (1) 8:5 detail (4) 7:23;10:21;20:10; 22:1 detailed (1) 5:9 develop (6) 20:5,22;21:2;22:8; 57:3,14 developed (3) 19:14;22:6;56:21 developing (2) 20:3,11 development (5) 5:21,24;6:11,19; 42:15 device (2) 32:10,11 diagnose (1) 24:6 die (1) 52:18 different (3) 8:14;9:13;30:1 dig (1) 40:14 director (1) 30:17 directors (1) 40:4 discussion (1) 31:18 District (1) 30:19 Ditch (1) 8:5 diversion (8) 12:25;13:8;30:22; 33:17;34:4;36:5; 43:9,15 diversions (7) 12:11;15:2,4;</p>	<p>17:24;34:3,13;43:23 doctor (1) 24:4 doctor's (1) 24:3 document (2) 20:7;46:15 documents (2) 56:24;57:1 dollars (1) 33:2 domain (1) 8:21 done (7) 6:5;16:23;17:18; 19:17;23:16;38:25; 58:6 doubt (1) 55:15 down (5) 14:13;25:5;37:15; 49:1;53:20 Dr (2) 39:6;46:9 draft (5) 21:7;32:23;57:22; 58:22;59:15 drain (1) 26:17 dramatic (1) 24:13 dredge (7) 50:1,3,9,20;52:5, 21;54:2 dredged (2) 35:3;50:1 dredging (5) 12:17;15:5;17:23; 48:25;50:9 drift (2) 9:2,6 dropped (1) 24:22 drowning (1) 18:8 during (1) 36:18 Dutch (1) 54:4 dynamic (2) 29:5;31:14</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <hr/> <p>EA (1) 20:7 earlier (4) 14:4;17:14;18:2; 22:16 early (3) 7:9;33:6;51:25 easement (1) 38:23</p>	<p>economic (4) 49:4;55:10,12; 57:5 economies (1) 48:11 ecosystem (2) 11:15;35:18 Eden (1) 33:15 effect (1) 34:3 effected (1) 55:4 effective (1) 55:6 effectively (1) 17:16 effects (5) 17:22;28:19,20; 30:21;34:21 efficient (1) 56:7 effort (4) 28:17;33:10; 47:16;55:13 efforts (1) 57:15 EIS (8) 20:10,12;21:7,8; 29:3,9;57:22;58:22 elected (1) 4:19 elements (1) 31:5 elevate (1) 11:21 elevation (1) 18:4 else (3) 44:3;54:20;58:5 email (1) 58:11 employ (1) 55:17 encourage (1) 42:11 encouraged (1) 47:7 encouraging (1) 31:8 Encroachment (1) 15:10 end (4) 9:19;19:25;21:9; 31:1 ENDED (1) 59:25 Engineers (9) 4:7;5:12;7:6; 13:18;23:10;25:17; 30:20;33:23;54:15 enough (3) 23:18;50:12,14</p>
---	---	---	--	---

<p>ensures (1) 19:5 entire (2) 26:16;28:19 environment (3) 44:20;49:12,15 Environmental (27) 5:14;6:11;9:18; 18:24;19:4,6,12,13, 16;20:1,6,8;21:23; 26:13;34:23;37:13; 44:8,17,23;45:15; 46:4;47:1,8,24; 55:10;57:6;58:13 epicenter (1) 48:24 equal (1) 41:15 erosional (2) 14:25;35:7 especially (1) 29:4 essentially (1) 11:14 evaluate (10) 7:10;10:21,23; 11:15,21;12:6,10; 30:21;35:9,12 evaluating (1) 36:11 evaluation (1) 21:23 even (4) 16:1;31:11;42:1; 58:24 evening (4) 4:3;13:19;18:22; 30:14 event (1) 53:5 everybody (3) 7:3;22:10;59:6 everybody's (1) 22:8 everyone (2) 10:10;13:19 evolved (1) 30:23 example (4) 36:3;40:2;42:17; 57:7 exchanging (1) 56:16 excited (2) 7:4;13:20 exciting (1) 23:15 Expansion (1) 49:2 expect (2) 47:19;48:9 expected (1) 10:7</p>	<p>experiencing (2) 29:7;47:19 extend (1) 8:22 extends (2) 8:18,20 extensive (1) 28:6 extremely (1) 55:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <p>face (2) 14:3,23 faces (1) 31:9 fact (1) 29:12 facts (1) 9:15 familiar (1) 14:22 far (7) 8:20,23;14:10; 20:9;35:2,15;50:14 fashion (1) 33:5 fear (1) 31:22 features (10) 9:11,14;11:4,25; 12:6,8,16,18,19;42:8 federal (3) 20:4,13;21:13 federally (1) 54:25 Federation (1) 41:12 feedback (1) 6:4 feel (2) 23:1;37:17 feeling (1) 18:25 feet (2) 24:23;52:22 few (5) 8:7;24:16;25:18; 32:2;45:19 fill (4) 21:1;41:24;50:20; 58:9 final (2) 21:8;58:24 finalized (1) 7:9 find (4) 31:24;39:2;41:6; 46:20 finding (1) 15:1 finger (1)</p>	<p>40:16 first (12) 4:15;16:9;28:2; 31:2;32:1;34:11,12; 52:24;53:8;55:8; 57:8,9 fisheries (1) 48:11 fisherman (1) 54:8 fishermen (1) 56:3 five (2) 7:14;10:8 five-year (1) 30:24 flood (9) 11:16,19;14:8,11; 16:4;41:14;42:9; 48:16;52:24 floor (1) 48:12 flow (5) 30:22;50:22;51:1, 4,6 focus (8) 14:6;16:7;17:19; 21:24,25;27:20;28:8; 42:16 focused (2) 11:19;12:1 focusing (2) 19:21;44:11 folks (2) 46:21;57:24 follow-up (1) 47:6 FONTENOT (7) 23:6,7;26:6;27:1, 5;44:5,6 food (3) 33:20;34:8;35:15 Foot (3) 8:18;24:6,8 forever (1) 56:18 forget (1) 31:20 form (1) 37:2 formal (12) 5:15,16;6:6,8,14; 26:22,25;28:25; 36:23,24;40:25; 59:15 formation (1) 42:14 forms (1) 34:8 forum (5) 19:21;40:21; 51:20;55:6;58:1 forward (1)</p>	<p>47:22 Fouchon (1) 53:20 foundation (2) 5:1;40:3 foundations (1) 39:24 four (1) 29:19 frame (2) 29:13;35:6 framework (4) 16:17;17:5;42:15; 57:20 free (1) 37:17 freshwater (4) 11:1;33:17;34:4; 52:18 front (2) 22:19;37:23 fuel (3) 33:19;34:9;49:1 full (2) 51:2,18 functioning (1) 55:24 funds (1) 54:6 further (2) 13:2;36:21 future (10) 15:14,24;29:16,20, 21,22;30:6;47:9,12; 48:2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>gages (1) 54:13 Gagliana (1) 46:9 GAGLIANO (5) 30:13,15;39:7; 54:21;58:3 gaps (4) 41:25;42:1;43:3,4 Garden (1) 33:15 Garofalo (1) 4:20 gas (1) 52:3 gather (1) 22:7 gathering (1) 41:21 general (2) 4:24;41:4 generally (2) 34:13;35:2 General's (1) 26:10</p>	<p>geographic (1) 40:6 gets (2) 25:1;29:12 given (4) 5:4;32:19;47:18; 48:4 gives (1) 19:18 glad (1) 27:2 gladly (1) 18:25 goal (1) 15:18 goes (3) 9:7;20:9;58:22 Good (8) 4:3;18:22;30:14; 31:7,25;36:13;50:15; 59:14 google (1) 50:16 government (2) 55:5;56:9 GOYER (5) 37:20,21;39:11,20; 40:24 grab (1) 43:20 Grand (2) 54:3,5 granted (1) 31:16 great (4) 28:10;32:10;33:8; 58:1 greater (2) 7:23;12:12 greatly (2) 14:10;44:12 grew (1) 42:23 ground (3) 34:16,17;50:24 groups (2) 42:16;46:17 Grove (2) 8:12;43:9 grow (1) 52:23 grows (1) 52:21 guess (3) 29:3;47:5;58:6 guide (3) 21:21;22:3;37:10 Gulf (7) 8:17;9:8;15:10,11; 24:1;25:24;56:23 guy (1) 53:13 guys (2)</p>
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6:4;59:18	hoping (1) 15:7	27:11;30:7;45:22; 46:24	interesting (1) 50:25	6:24
H	house (1) 4:20	included (4) 6:9;45:2,9;53:11	interests (1) 41:7	kills (1) 52:25
habit (1) 48:7	Houston (1) 53:17	includes (4) 7:24;12:18;21:12; 42:7	into (22) 4:25;5:18;6:6; 7:22;15:14,24;20:9; 23;21:22;22:8;24:3; 30:24;32:8,13,20; 34:20;35:13;36:22; 56:17;58:10,18;59:2	kind (10) 5:1,18;8:25;11:7; 18:1;20:5;24:2; 31:16;43:5;55:19
hand (1) 23:5	Hunting (1) 38:12	including (5) 9:5;14:23;23:21; 45:17;55:13	invade (1) 52:15	Klein (3) 18:23;40:9;58:13
handle (1) 34:11	hurricane (1) 56:22	incorporate (2) 56:9;57:5	invasion (1) 52:17	knowledge (3) 31:20;32:13;42:24
happen (4) 19:22;40:17; 41:16;51:14	hydro (1) 17:8	increased (1) 49:3	invite (1) 40:22	L
happened (1) 26:1	Hydrodynamic (6) 5:2,9;7:20;10:17, 19;11:25	Increasing (1) 18:4	inviting (1) 21:15	lack (2) 25:13,15
happening (3) 43:18;47:10;48:3	hydrology (1) 18:10	indication (1) 56:2	involve (3) 37:22;38:19;42:13	land (16) 14:24;18:16;29:7; 38:2,6,8,11,24;39:4; 40:15;45:18,20; 49:23,25;53:5,5
happy (1) 41:13	I	individual (3) 7:23;9:10;46:17	involved (7) 10:10;19:24; 27:23;30:15;32:18; 33:6;38:5	Landing (1) 43:15
hard (1) 46:7	ideas (4) 51:16,18;55:7; 59:5	industry (1) 55:16	involvement (1) 39:18	landowner (1) 39:3
hardened (2) 53:21,24	identify (4) 16:10;39:22;44:9; 45:1	informal (4) 5:19;6:14;28:25; 47:6	island (3) 35:24;36:3,5	landowners (4) 37:23;38:3,20; 40:19
heads (1) 32:2	identifying (3) 11:24;44:20;45:10	information (18) 6:1;13:10;19:6; 23:4;25:14,15;34:24; 35:1;42:3;43:24; 44:9;45:22;46:1,23, 24;57:21;58:14; 59:14	islands (1) 52:19	landscape (4) 29:11,14,25;30:8
health (1) 35:19	illustrate (1) 23:25	informed (5) 17:6,16;28:11; 42:4;46:8	Isle (2) 54:4,5	large (2) 38:12;42:1
hear (7) 6:24;13:20;21:16; 37:2;41:13;47:7; 52:1	Impact (14) 6:12;9:18;19:16; 20:1,8;37:13;44:8, 18,23;45:15;46:4; 47:2,8,24	infrastructure (1) 53:25	isolated (1) 32:22	large- (1) 6:19
heard (1) 42:18	impacted (1) 44:12	initially (2) 30:20;31:10	issue (1) 13:6	large-scale (10) 4:15;7:1,15,19; 10:16;12:11;17:22, 23;27:18;47:20
heart (1) 42:20	impacting (1) 44:21	input (6) 6:16,18;22:8; 40:18;56:17;59:24	issues (5) 14:23;15:8;19:23; 21:17;46:22	largest (1) 55:15
help (9) 13:4;16:25;17:15; 18:15;22:2;26:11; 37:9,15;54:7	impacts (4) 9:21;12:7;29:12, 15	instance (4) 38:24;39:23;41:3; 43:8	J	large-term (2) 27:17,17
helps (1) 21:21	implement (4) 11:3,6;12:5,23	instead (2) 37:24;57:21	January (1) 21:9	last (3) 10:14;24:20,25
Here's (1) 37:8	implementing (3) 12:18;17:23;18:12	institute (2) 18:13;30:19	job (1) 26:11	later (3) 6:2;37:24;58:10
Hi (1) 41:11	importance (2) 11:21;56:19	integrity (1) 35:19	jobs (1) 55:19	layer (1) 14:16
high (2) 52:22,22	important (19) 6:17,18;10:11; 13:21;14:12;18:5; 21:19,25;31:14; 32:11;37:7,15;39:6; 41:16;44:8;45:1; 48:4;55:18;59:12	intense (1) 9:13	Joe's (1) 38:11	LCA (6) 4:17,25;7:7,25; 17:10;27:17
highest (2) 48:19,19	impossible (1) 26:14	Intent (3) 20:13,16;21:13	joining (1) 4:4	lcagov (1) 59:12
historic (1) 32:12	inaudible (2) 25:5;57:25	intention (1) 59:9	judge (1) 29:11	lead (1) 22:12
historically (2) 14:5;27:25	incentives (1) 49:4	interact (1) 17:21	K	leaks (1) 52:11
holding (1) 4:10	include (7) 8:5;16:18;23:18;	interest (1) 13:22	Kansas (1) 24:18	learn (1) 15:6
hole (2) 40:14;44:17		interested (1) 32:4	keep (2) 18:5,8	learned (1) 19:2
holes (1) 52:10			key (1)	leases (1) 51:10
hope (1) 15:15				
Hopefully (2) 41:21;45:4				

<p>least (3) 24:12;42:18;57:12</p> <p>leave (2) 23:4;32:25</p> <p>leaves (1) 44:16</p> <p>Lee (3) 4:4;22:12;59:8</p> <p>left (2) 38:4,16</p> <p>legally (1) 56:11</p> <p>less (2) 24:23;40:25</p> <p>letting (1) 51:11</p> <p>level (3) 11:17;18:7;47:18</p> <p>levels (3) 48:19,20;57:3</p> <p>library (1) 57:23</p> <p>life (2) 33:18,19</p> <p>line (1) 51:6</p> <p>lines (3) 50:22;51:1,5</p> <p>listed (1) 27:16</p> <p>literally (1) 31:17</p> <p>little (5) 7:22;8:24,25; 10:20;11:7</p> <p>live (1) 23:8</p> <p>lives (1) 54:8</p> <p>local (6) 55:5;56:9,13,14; 57:3,24</p> <p>locations (1) 9:14</p> <p>long (4) 17:2;31:15;33:8; 52:13</p> <p>long- (2) 4:15;7:11</p> <p>longshore (2) 9:2,6</p> <p>long-term (5) 6:19;7:1,15,19; 27:18</p> <p>look (25) 5:1,9;10:19;11:24; 12:5,13,15;24:5; 27:9;28:15,18;29:25; 37:7;39:19;42:11; 43:20;44:4;45:7,10; 47:8;49:8;50:16,22; 55:19;57:13</p> <p>looked (3)</p>	<p>17:19;46:5,5</p> <p>looking (12) 10:23;14:16,17; 21:20;24:1,8;26:15; 27:14;43:12;45:12; 46:25;47:10</p> <p>looks (1) 58:17</p> <p>loop (1) 53:22</p> <p>loss (1) 29:8</p> <p>losses (1) 24:13</p> <p>lot (5) 15:6;25:17;37:12; 46:6;59:13</p> <p>lots (3) 17:12;46:18,19</p> <p>Louisiana (15) 4:13,14;7:8;13:25, 25;15:1;25:21; 26:15;29:6;44:22; 45:16;47:5,11;54:25; 57:10</p> <p>lower (3) 16:24;24:19;27:25</p> <p>luck (2) 31:7;33:7</p>	<p>many (5) 39:24;48:17; 50:17,22;51:1</p> <p>map (2) 7:25;50:16</p> <p>March (2) 20:14;21:14</p> <p>marsh (6) 12:25;13:8;18:4; 34:5;35:18,19</p> <p>marshes (4) 18:8,12;34:15,20</p> <p>Master (7) 12:19,21;13:3; 30:12;31:3,6;42:12</p> <p>material (3) 35:3;50:4;51:3</p> <p>MAURA (3) 41:10,11;43:7</p> <p>may (3) 5:21;22:18;58:18</p> <p>maybe (4) 21:24;31:25; 38:21;40:21</p> <p>mean (3) 49:3,11;54:10</p> <p>meaning (1) 10:2</p> <p>means (4) 7:24;11:14;15:3; 29:23</p> <p>measure (1) 29:15</p> <p>measured (1) 49:13</p> <p>measures (1) 18:13</p> <p>measuring (1) 48:2</p> <p>mechanism (1) 32:8</p> <p>meet (2) 27:7;57:12</p> <p>meetings (6) 4:9;20:20;21:14; 22:7;32:10;39:13</p> <p>member (1) 45:5</p> <p>members (4) 22:18;25:20;27:7; 59:20</p> <p>mentioned (5) 8:8;17:13;18:2; 39:7;43:4</p> <p>method (1) 31:24</p> <p>methodologies (1) 30:11</p> <p>MEULLER (2) 22:15;26:2</p> <p>Mexico (5) 8:17;9:8;15:10; 24:1;30:23</p>	<p>mic (1) 22:22</p> <p>might (1) 48:9</p> <p>millennium (1) 53:19</p> <p>million (2) 10:5;24:9</p> <p>millions (1) 53:2</p> <p>mine (1) 26:9</p> <p>mineral (1) 34:13</p> <p>missing (4) 23:23;28:1;44:10; 46:3</p> <p>missions (1) 14:6</p> <p>Mississippi (20) 4:14;5:2;10:22; 11:13;14:7,14;16:11, 20;17:25;23:22; 24:11;26:16,18; 27:10,21;28:9,12,16; 30:4;53:15</p> <p>Missouri (5) 24:16,18,20;25:6,9</p> <p>mix (1) 38:17</p> <p>model (2) 8:21;42:13</p> <p>modeling (4) 12:1;28:7;30:4,5</p> <p>models (4) 16:19,21;17:3,4</p> <p>modifications (1) 8:11</p> <p>Montana (1) 45:6</p> <p>month (2) 4:10;57:13</p> <p>months (2) 35:5;36:7</p> <p>more (18) 5:8;9:12;10:21; 16:5;17:6,16;20:9, 10;34:24,25;35:17, 20;36:16,23;45:12; 46:15;50:10;53:14</p> <p>most (5) 49:23;50:2;52:2, 19;55:3</p> <p>mot (1) 55:21</p> <p>mouth (1) 54:2</p> <p>move (6) 4:25;5:18;6:6; 11:9;12:3;47:22</p> <p>MRGO (1) 57:17</p> <p>MRNT (1)</p>	<p>49:16</p> <p>much (8) 4:3;9:3;14:19; 22:1;34:20;46:14; 54:10;59:23</p> <p>MUELLER (8) 4:2,5;26:19;27:3; 28:22;33:11;36:15; 59:8</p> <p>Myrtle (2) 8:12;43:9</p> <p>myself (1) 32:3</p>
N				
<p>name (8) 4:4;8:6;22:22; 23:7;29:1;30:14; 37:21;58:2</p> <p>narrow (1) 37:15</p> <p>nation (1) 14:9</p> <p>National (3) 19:4,11;41:12</p> <p>naturally (1) 51:2</p> <p>nature (4) 28:6;29:5;33:24; 48:10</p> <p>navigation (11) 11:17,19;12:14; 14:8,10;16:3;41:14; 42:10;48:12,17; 53:14</p> <p>near (1) 13:25</p> <p>near-term (4) 7:11,12;8:1;17:10</p> <p>necessarily (1) 40:8</p> <p>need (22) 11:5;13:5,10; 21:22,24;27:6;34:25; 35:7;36:10;41:3,4, 23;42:3,25;43:5,22, 23;46:20;49:7;57:2, 4;58:17</p> <p>needed (3) 13:5;17:1;27:24</p> <p>needs (3) 8:22;25:2;41:16</p> <p>negative (1) 26:8</p> <p>NEPA (7) 5:15;18:19;19:10; 30:16;32:7;39:15; 55:8</p> <p>New (7) 23:11;30:19,23; 33:21;45:6;53:18; 55:15</p>				

<p>Next (4) 8:16;16:16;20:21; 45:9</p> <p>NGO (1) 43:10</p> <p>NOBRA (1) 23:11</p> <p>non-profit (1) 39:24</p> <p>north (1) 8:20</p> <p>note (1) 58:20</p> <p>noted (1) 58:11</p> <p>Notice (3) 20:12,15;21:12</p> <p>November (1) 21:8</p> <p>Nungesser (1) 54:1</p> <p>nutrients (3) 9:7;10:25;14:20</p> <p>nutritive (1) 34:15</p>	<p>oilfield (3) 49:22;50:17;53:3</p> <p>Old (3) 27:15;28:20;32:2</p> <p>once (8) 6:5;9:10;16:13; 22:6;26:24;50:10,21; 57:13</p> <p>one (18) 4:8;7:18;9:18; 10:15;16:9;31:19; 32:1,16;36:3,6;40:2, 3;43:8;45:19;47:1, 11;51:24;55:11</p> <p>one-on-one (1) 36:20</p> <p>ones (1) 8:4</p> <p>only (9) 24:4,7;25:11;27:9; 29:5;31:24;32:11; 44:22;47:1</p> <p>open (1) 52:8</p> <p>operating (1) 55:24</p> <p>operation (2) 27:14;48:23</p> <p>operations (1) 11:12</p> <p>Opportunities (2) 17:12,13</p> <p>opportunity (10) 4:18;6:7;12:22; 19:19;22:2,17;28:2; 37:5,17;41:24</p> <p>option (1) 40:9</p> <p>order (1) 58:18</p> <p>organizations (2) 39:22,25</p> <p>originally (1) 12:9</p> <p>Orleans (3) 23:12;30:19;53:18</p> <p>Otherwise (1) 46:25</p> <p>ought (1) 46:11</p> <p>oughth (1) 46:13</p> <p>out (26) 13:19;16:12; 19:11,16,23;20:19; 21:1,4;22:9;24:21, 24;25:4;31:8;38:4, 16;39:4;41:6,21; 52:11;55:22,23;56:4, 24;58:9,22;59:7</p> <p>outcome (2) 32:5;46:14</p> <p>outcomes (1)</p>	<p>38:1</p> <p>outfall (2) 12:16;18:12</p> <p>over (12) 6:22,25,25;8:14; 15:25;18:17;20:21; 42:14;50:20;52:5,8, 24</p> <p>overall (1) 15:17</p> <p>overview (2) 4:22,24</p> <p>own (2) 38:10;40:1</p> <p>owned (1) 38:2</p> <p>owning (1) 38:13</p> <p>oyster (1) 51:10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">P</p> <p>Panama (1) 49:2</p> <p>paper (1) 56:24</p> <p>parameters (1) 43:13</p> <p>parish (4) 38:15;40:7;57:7, 16</p> <p>parishes (1) 55:3</p> <p>part (28) 6:17;8:20;12:1; 18:3;19:10,17;20:16; 23:14,17,21,23; 24:19;25:10,12; 34:11;35:9,16;36:4; 37:1;41:16,20;42:8; 44:11;45:17,17;46:2; 55:18;59:15</p> <p>partial (1) 44:23</p> <p>participate (1) 21:15</p> <p>participation (1) 59:11</p> <p>particular (3) 27:19;36:6;43:25</p> <p>partnership (2) 4:11;43:10</p> <p>parts (2) 26:18;44:14</p> <p>path (1) 58:2</p> <p>patient (1) 24:7</p> <p>PAUL (6) 33:14,15;34:6; 35:11,22;36:12</p> <p>penetrating (1)</p>	<p>50:24</p> <p>people (12) 26:12;38:10; 40:22;41:2;42:21; 46:7,10,11,19;48:18, 20;55:17</p> <p>percent (4) 10:3,6;38:1;47:1</p> <p>perform (1) 16:20</p> <p>period (3) 15:25;26:22,25</p> <p>permits (2) 13:6;57:13</p> <p>person (2) 41:5;45:25</p> <p>personal (1) 13:22</p> <p>personally (1) 40:10</p> <p>perspective (1) 48:14</p> <p>PEYRONNIN (4) 28:24;29:2;47:3,4</p> <p>phase (2) 8:12,13</p> <p>phonetic (1) 49:16</p> <p>phrase (1) 6:25</p> <p>pick (1) 12:8</p> <p>picking (1) 25:3</p> <p>picture (1) 15:17</p> <p>pie (2) 52:9,11</p> <p>piece (2) 5:3;42:25</p> <p>pieces (1) 49:7</p> <p>pile (1) 52:23</p> <p>pipeline (4) 50:21;52:5,6,7</p> <p>place (5) 32:15;49:24;52:2; 54:14;56:11</p> <p>placed (1) 35:3</p> <p>places (1) 45:19</p> <p>plan (10) 12:8,20,21;13:3; 30:12;31:3,6;42:12, 15;53:21</p> <p>Planner (3) 5:11;13:16;34:24</p> <p>planning (6) 32:13;33:23;41:2, 5,20;43:23</p> <p>plans (2)</p>	<p>57:2,4</p> <p>plant (2) 33:18,19</p> <p>plantings (3) 35:2,7,21</p> <p>plants (5) 33:21,24;34:8; 52:18,25</p> <p>platform (3) 31:21;53:22;57:20</p> <p>play (2) 51:9,10</p> <p>Please (1) 59:12</p> <p>PM (1) 59:25</p> <p>point (1) 13:6</p> <p>points (1) 40:16</p> <p>Policy (2) 19:5,12</p> <p>Pond (2) 8:3,9</p> <p>Port (2) 53:18,20</p> <p>portion (10) 7:21,21,24;10:3, 18,20;11:11,23;47:6; 58:7</p> <p>potential (1) 29:15</p> <p>potentially (1) 38:23</p> <p>power (1) 38:14</p> <p>precedent (1) 54:23</p> <p>presentation (5) 5:4,15;6:23;13:13; 18:20</p> <p>presented (1) 13:3</p> <p>preserve (1) 53:4</p> <p>President (2) 56:19;57:1</p> <p>presidents (1) 38:15</p> <p>Press (1) 24:15</p> <p>pressure (1) 49:4</p> <p>prevent (1) 18:7</p> <p>previous (1) 17:18</p> <p>Price (11) 5:7;13:13,14,16; 26:3;27:12;29:18; 33:25;34:10;35:14; 36:2</p> <p>primarily (3)</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">O</p> <p>Obama (1) 56:19</p> <p>objective (2) 16:16;39:8</p> <p>objectives (1) 16:5</p> <p>occur (1) 22:7</p> <p>occurred (1) 45:19</p> <p>occurring (3) 45:21;51:3;58:21</p> <p>occurs (2) 9:2;59:3</p> <p>off (5) 9:22;14:1;28:12; 32:5;52:10</p> <p>Office (3) 4:6;24:4;26:10</p> <p>official (2) 4:19;58:19</p> <p>officials (2) 56:14,14</p> <p>offset (1) 15:15</p> <p>offshore (1) 53:22</p> <p>often (4) 38:3,16;40:18; 47:25</p> <p>Ohio (1) 45:5</p> <p>oil (7) 49:25;51:11,15; 52:3;53:22;56:3,4</p>					

<p>27:20;28:8;48:16 primary (2) 14:6;56:15 prime (2) 38:9;54:24 principles (1) 49:15 prior (1) 19:8 private (3) 37:22;38:2;49:24 probably (1) 25:8 problem (5) 23:17;25:13;39:2; 50:8;52:16 problems (3) 14:25;26:13,15 proceed (1) 14:3 PROCEEDINGS (1) 59:25 process (25) 5:16,16;6:17;15:5; 18:19;19:11,18; 20:15,16,17;27:6; 30:16;31:15;32:7; 35:17;36:23,24; 37:10,14,23;38:17; 39:14;41:1;46:8; 56:17 processes (2) 11:7;44:10 produced (2) 30:25;31:2 product (1) 28:10 production (1) 52:3 program (6) 4:17,25;7:7,8; 55:1;57:9 programmatic (2) 9:23;17:9 programs (2) 55:5;56:10 project (42) 7:2,6,18;8:13,22; 9:4,9,10,15,19,21; 10:1,7,11,13,15,20; 13:1,1,21;15:18; 19:22,24;20:3;23:16; 25:17;29:16,21,22; 30:7,17;33:8;40:14; 44:10,25;48:1,10; 50:21;51:22,24;54:7; 59:13 projected (1) 38:1 projects (16) 7:11,12,13,15,19, 25;8:1,14;12:23; 13:7,11;40:1;44:13;</p>	<p>49:24;50:2;52:2 promote (1) 18:15 proper (1) 51:23 properly (2) 55:24,25 proponents (1) 55:14 propose (1) 50:3 proposed (4) 8:16;30:21;50:21; 53:9 proposing (1) 44:24 Protection (4) 4:12;11:16,20; 14:12 provide (8) 15:21;16:17,25; 17:4,14;22:9;34:13, 24 provided (3) 22:10;25:14;40:18 providing (1) 14:12 Public (20) 4:5,9;6:16;13:21; 19:7,19;20:20;21:14, 15;22:5,7;32:9,23; 33:3;37:16;56:13,14, 16;57:23;58:23 publication (1) 21:12 published (1) 20:13 pull (1) 43:1 purpose (3) 7:10;35:20;48:7 purposes (2) 35:4,8 put (12) 21:22;27:8;32:23; 34:20;35:12;43:14; 50:5;55:21,22;57:22; 58:9;59:14</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">R</p> <p>radar (1) 50:24 radical (1) 48:9 radioactive (1) 51:3 raise (1) 23:5 raised (1) 13:23 rate (1) 29:7 rates (1) 18:7 ratings (1) 43:16 Ray (1) 4:20 reach (1) 55:20 reaches (1) 43:24 read (1) 56:23 reading (1) 45:25 reads (1) 45:3 ready (1) 21:7 real (1) 31:10 really (15) 5:17;6:3,16;13:20; 16:7,10,24;21:21; 22:3,17;23:14;31:8; 44:19;56:5;57:25 reason (1) 8:19 reasonable (1) 47:19 recognize (2) 4:19;31:12 recognized (1) 57:17 recommendations (2) 56:13;57:14 reconnect (1) 15:19 Reconnecting (2) 17:25;49:10 record (1) 21:10 recreate (1) 31:23 re-engaging (1) 49:9 refined (1) 9:9 reflect (1)</p>	<p>57:2 Register (2) 20:14;21:13 regulations (1) 19:15 reiterate (2) 6:15;7:4 religiously (1) 57:12 Renee (5) 5:4;6:22,23;13:15; 14:4 repeat (1) 18:1 replace (2) 51:4,6 report (13) 6:10;9:23;10:15; 12:10;20:22,23;21:3, 4,6;22:5,9;58:19; 59:2 reports (1) 30:25 Representative (1) 4:20 representatives (1) 38:15 represented (1) 39:23 requested (1) 42:19 requests (3) 21:5;22:11;42:20 require (1) 47:15 required (5) 27:23;29:19;30:3; 31:17;39:14 requirement (1) 20:5 requires (1) 55:25 research (1) 39:1 reside (1) 13:24 resolve (1) 15:7 Resource (1) 23:12 resources (16) 10:24;11:3,5,8; 12:2,3;14:19;15:20; 16:11;17:17;18:1; 21:18;33:4;37:8; 40:15;48:21 respond (1) 33:5 Restoration (22) 4:12;7:1,12;11:16, 22;12:16;14:18,21; 15:3,22,23,23;31:2; 35:4;40:1,5;41:13;</p>	<p>42:7;45:16;47:14; 55:13;56:22 Restore (1) 47:5 restored (1) 38:8 resulted (1) 57:18 results (1) 16:8 retention (1) 18:15 rethinking (1) 47:23 RICHARD (5) 37:20,21;39:11,20; 40:24 right (4) 19:19;43:13,17; 58:2 rights (1) 38:7 rise (2) 18:7;48:24 rising (1) 49:1 River (65) 8:6;10:22,24; 11:13,18;12:11;14:7, 14,17;15:21;16:3,11, 13,14,20,24;17:3,17, 24,25;23:19,20,22, 24;24:11,16,19,19, 21,21,22,24;25:1,4,6; 26:16;27:11,13,15, 21,25;28:7,9,13,17, 20;30:4,22;34:14; 42:1;43:13,20,25; 47:23;48:22,25;49:5, 10;50:13,14;52:12; 53:16;54:3,11,16 rivers (1) 26:17 river's (2) 14:19;15:19 roads (1) 53:11 room (2) 29:5;46:18 Rouge (4) 23:8,12;28:4;44:7 rows (1) 22:19 running (1) 52:9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S</p> <p>saltwater (4) 52:14,17,24;53:1 same (3) 11:17;31:24;54:24 sample (1)</p>
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<p>37:8 sand (1) 52:23 sandbox (1) 51:9 Sanders (3) 5:5;6:22,23 Sandra (15) 5:13;18:20,21; 36:25;39:9,16;40:20; 41:8;43:2;44:1; 49:18;51:13,19; 54:18;58:4 Sandy (2) 18:18;34:23 saying (1) 46:12 scale (1) 6:20 scenario (3) 29:17,22,23 scenarios (1) 30:1 schedule (1) 20:12 scheduled (1) 20:20 science-based (1) 28:11 scoping (30) 4:9;5:16;6:6,8,10, 14;19:10,18;20:15, 16,17,22,23;21:3,4,6, 11;22:5;26:22,25; 32:9;36:18,23,24; 37:14;39:14;41:1; 58:19,20;59:2 scouring (3) 24:21,24;25:6 screen (2) 37:9;59:17 sea- (1) 18:6 Sea-level (1) 48:23 section (1) 43:14 Sections (1) 9:17 sediment (18) 9:6;10:25;14:20; 16:14;18:15;24:14, 25;25:4,7;33:17; 34:3,12;43:19,21; 50:13;52:13;54:11, 13 sediments (1) 34:14 Senators (2) 25:22;27:8 send (2) 20:24;21:1 sensitive (1)</p>	<p>49:7 sequester (1) 32:22 served (1) 23:8 service (1) 22:24 services (1) 11:20 session (4) 5:19;6:6;22:13,14 sessions (1) 32:14 set (3) 16:21;19:14;54:23 sets (1) 48:1 seven (2) 25:20;26:17 several (2) 23:9;56:20 share (2) 9:25;10:2 sheer (1) 27:22 SHERWOOD (4) 30:13,14;54:21; 58:2 shifting (1) 48:24 shiny (1) 31:9 shot (1) 59:17 shows (1) 8:16 shuttle (1) 50:23 side (1) 12:4 signed (1) 10:1 sill (1) 57:12 simply (1) 48:14 sinking (2) 14:24;24:17 site (1) 43:11 sitting (3) 22:19;46:11;50:7 six (5) 4:9;7:18;22:6; 35:5;36:7 skills (1) 56:1 slide (3) 8:16;58:8,12 small (1) 47:12 smaller (1) 20:7</p>	<p>social (2) 55:9;57:5 soft (1) 53:23 solution (1) 50:11 solve (1) 26:14 somebody (4) 38:5;40:16;45:2; 46:9 sometimes (1) 33:2 soon (1) 49:2 sorry (1) 27:18 sort (1) 53:20 sounds (1) 26:20 source (1) 50:4 southeast (1) 4:13 southwest (1) 8:24 space (1) 50:23 speakers (1) 54:22 speaking (1) 19:2 specific (5) 11:25;16:6;17:8; 43:11,24 specifically (2) 27:14;41:6 spelled (1) 19:15 Spill (1) 56:3 split (1) 27:16 spoilbanks (1) 50:7 spoken (1) 46:10 St (2) 40:2;57:7 stages (2) 8:4,15 stakeholders (1) 42:14 stand-in (1) 18:23 stands (1) 7:7 start (4) 4:24;14:1;47:17; 57:23 State (17) 7:2;10:3;14:9;</p>	<p>22:22;29:1;30:12; 31:3,12;33:10;38:14; 42:12,12;43:10; 50:23;51:2;55:16; 57:10 stated (2) 21:11;22:4 Statement (11) 6:12;9:18;20:2,8; 37:14;44:18,23; 45:15;46:4;47:2,25 Statements (1) 19:16 states (2) 25:25;26:18 state's (1) 31:5 statute (1) 45:9 stay (2) 15:24;16:15 STEVEN (4) 28:24;29:1;47:3,4 Stiles (16) 5:13;18:18,20,21; 36:25;39:9,16;40:20; 41:8;43:2;44:1; 49:18;51:13,19; 54:18;58:4 still (5) 5:24;8:11;15:6; 32:3;49:25 stone (1) 27:9 stool (1) 55:9 stop (2) 35:24;53:1 strong (1) 56:21 Structure (2) 27:15;28:21 structures (3) 24:10;45:23;54:14 studies (6) 10:17;17:10; 29:19;30:18;38:25; 46:22 study (60) 4:16;5:3,5,10,22, 23;6:20;7:10;8:12, 13,16;9:13;11:6,12, 20,24;13:4,16,23; 14:3,15;15:9,18; 16:1,5,9;17:7,9;18:3, 24;19:20;20:11; 21:17,21;22:3;23:11, 13;27:18,19;28:4; 30:2,12;35:10,17; 37:6;39:3,7;41:5,15, 20;43:1;44:9;50:25; 54:10;58:21,22;59:4, 6,10,16</p>	<p>submit (3) 6:8;20:24;51:22 submitted (1) 51:24 subsidence (2) 14:24;18:6 suggesting (1) 56:8 suggestion (1) 54:25 supertankers (2) 53:15,16 support (4) 14:21;17:10;28:4; 37:24 supposed (1) 51:4 sure (5) 5:25;23:3;26:7; 54:13;55:23 surprisingly (1) 41:25 surrounding (1) 15:21 sustainability (1) 55:21 sustainable (1) 15:22 symbolize (1) 9:1 system (9) 10:22;11:14;12:3; 23:22;25:11;31:13; 42:6,9;45:24 systemwide (1) 17:15</p>
T				
				<p>table (2) 32:24;46:12 tail (1) 8:25 talk (3) 18:18;36:20;40:23 talked (1) 25:21 talking (4) 25:25;42:5;48:7,8 tangible (1) 16:8 target (1) 53:23 tasks (1) 56:4 team (6) 5:20;22:17;32:22; 36:19;42:16;59:20 Teche (1) 23:20 technical (1) 30:25 tells (1)</p>

<p>21:21 ten (1) 7:14 tendency (1) 32:19 tens (1) 38:10 term (2) 4:16;7:12 Terrebonne (1) 8:6 Texas (1) 30:23 theory (1) 31:24 thinking (1) 29:2 third (1) 12:15 thought (2) 37:10;46:8 thoughts (1) 36:18 thousands (4) 25:8;38:10,13; 44:13 three (1) 17:19 three-legged (1) 55:9 throughout (4) 4:10;58:21;59:3,5 tiered (1) 9:22 timeline (1) 10:12 times (2) 38:3;43:17 tiny (1) 25:12 together (6) 17:4,20,21;30:10; 43:1;44:16 tonight (9) 4:4,8,23;5:17; 6:16;20:25;42:19; 59:7,22 took (1) 33:3 tools (3) 11:5;17:15;28:11 top (1) 50:18 Torbert's (1) 43:15 total (1) 10:4 touch (1) 12:21 Toward (1) 31:1 towards (1) 58:24</p>	<p>traditionally (1) 11:18 trained (1) 56:5 transcription (1) 22:24 tremendous (2) 42:24;44:16 trend (1) 15:13 trespasser (1) 39:5 Tributaries (1) 11:13 triggers (1) 36:18 try (3) 18:5;26:11;39:21 trying (7) 14:18;15:2;16:8; 23:24;37:24;46:13; 48:14 turn (3) 6:21;18:17;19:14 turnaround (1) 50:18 twice (1) 42:18 two (7) 7:20;8:1;10:16; 14:5;22:19;25:22; 27:8 type (2) 29:16;47:16</p>	<p>urge (2) 31:19;32:1 use (8) 8:22;14:17;16:13; 37:14;41:23;46:16; 48:20;50:23 useful (1) 46:16 uses (2) 16:3;48:22 using (3) 17:3;30:10;35:15 ut (1) 38:19 utilize (4) 11:2,4,9;38:24</p>	<p>walk (1) 55:22 WARD (6) 33:14,15;34:6; 35:11,22;36:12 waste (1) 54:6 watched (1) 42:2 watching (1) 54:16 water (7) 9:7;14:20;18:9; 24:23;25:1;34:20; 52:8 waterlogging (1) 18:11 waves (1) 35:24 way (7) 8:19;9:5;19:25; 44:15;46:20;48:15; 56:15 ways (1) 17:17 webpage (1) 59:18 website (1) 59:13 weeks (1) 20:21 Weigand (1) 13:17 weight (1) 56:12 welcome (2) 7:3;59:4 West (1) 36:4 Wetland (3) 40:3;53:8,10 wetlands (2) 48:8;51:7 What's (8) 16:12;24:7;37:15; 43:18;44:21;46:3; 47:10;48:3 where's (2) 43:18,19 White (2) 8:5;56:23 whole (4) 24:22,24;25:11; 55:25 who's (1) 41:5 widths (1) 18:14 Wildlife (2) 23:12;41:12 WILLIAM (7) 23:6,7;26:6;27:1, 5;44:5,6</p>	<p>wish (2) 31:7;33:7 within (5) 7:14;21:1;35:5; 36:7;40:6 without (11) 26:15;29:17,21; 30:6;39:4;40:18; 45:17;47:9,12;48:2; 55:15 wondering (2) 33:16;34:2 WOOD (3) 41:10,11;43:7 wording (1) 32:14 work (8) 4:5;27:22;30:10; 40:2,5;42:22;46:16, 17 worked (4) 26:9;46:19,21; 56:6 workforce (1) 56:6 working (5) 7:5;46:9;55:14; 57:8,24 workshop (1) 40:21 world (2) 33:21;45:20 worn (1) 31:7 WRDA (2) 9:16;25:18 writer (1) 24:15 written (2) 12:9;24:14 wrong (1) 24:7</p>	
	U		V		
	<p>ultimately (2) 47:21;57:18 under (4) 4:16;9:16,17; 29:13 undergoing (1) 8:10 undertaking (1) 28:17 unison (1) 17:20 unprecedented (1) 16:22 unsustainable (1) 48:22 up (23) 5:8;9:5;14:13; 18:5;19:14;24:17; 25:2,3,7;37:9,18,23; 41:18;42:23;46:10; 48:6;51:9;53:2,15; 54:20;58:5,12;59:13 up-front (2) 38:20;39:12 upper (1) 23:24</p>	<p>value (2) 22:3;34:15 various (2) 8:4,14 vegetated (1) 36:6 vegetates (1) 35:4 vegetating (1) 52:20 vegetation (5) 34:5,18,22;35:25; 36:9 vegetative (1) 35:20 Vermilion (1) 23:20 version (1) 40:25 versus (1) 29:25 vested (1) 13:22 Vicksburg (3) 8:19;9:5;24:2 view (1) 57:4 virtually (1) 31:4 vision (3) 39:17;57:2,4 visit (2) 40:9;59:12 void (1) 44:17 volunteered (1) 19:1 voted (1) 53:9</p>		W	
				Y	
				<p>y'all (2) 35:12,23 year (7) 20:14;29:24;35:6; 36:7;43:17;54:12; 56:20 years (9) 7:14;10:8;24:16; 26:10;31:17;32:17; 33:3;39:1;56:20 York (1) 45:6</p>	
				Z	
				<p>zone (1) 31:4</p>	