

# Mitigation of the Human Dimensions of Spills in Coastal Louisiana: Collaboration Between NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration and Louisiana Sea Grant

Collaborative Meeting CRRC/Sea Grant/OR&R/USCG  
Portland, ME  
January 25, 2010



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# Human Dimensions

- What are human dimensions?
  - subsistence
  - natural resource valuation
  - risk communication
  - social impacts
  - coordination in response and restoration
  - environmental ethics



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# History of Human Dimensions

- 2003 Research and Development Priorities: Oil Spill Workshop
- 2006 Human Dimensions of Oil Spill Response Workshop
- Pilot Project



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# Problem

- Often spill response is judged a “success” by responders, but public does not perceive it that way.
- Projected increase in frequency and severity of oil spills
  - Natural disasters (e.g., hurricanes)
  - Subsidence
  - Aging infrastructure
- Need for greater focus on human dimensions in state and national response process



# NOAA

- Stovepipes within NOAA
  - Little cross communication between operating branches
- OR&R
  - National Ocean Service
  - Environmental protection from spills
  - National level
- Sea Grant
  - Ocean and Atmospheric Research



# Sea Grant

- Established 1966 by Congress (1968 in Louisiana)
- Natural resources (e.g., fisheries)
- Research, education and outreach to work towards coastal stewardship and sustainability
- Tourism and recreation
- Cultural ties to community



# OR&R in Louisiana

- Structured response
  - Large amount of ship traffic
  - Natural disasters
  - High frequency of spills; ~3,000/yr
  - Experienced responders
- Housed in Sea Grant building on LSU campus



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# Pilot Project Objective

- Enhance communications between NOAA OR&R and Sea Grant.
  - Link national, state, and local levels
  - Intra-agency communication before (planning/drills), during (response), and after (restoration)
- Pilot for nation-wide Sea Grant/OR&R cooperation





# LSU Project Team

- Don Davis, Research and Development, Louisiana Oil Spill Coordinators Office (LOSCO) Human Dimensions 2006
- Chuck Wilson, Executive Director, Louisiana Sea Grant
- Mike Liffmann, Associate Executive Director, Louisiana Sea Grant



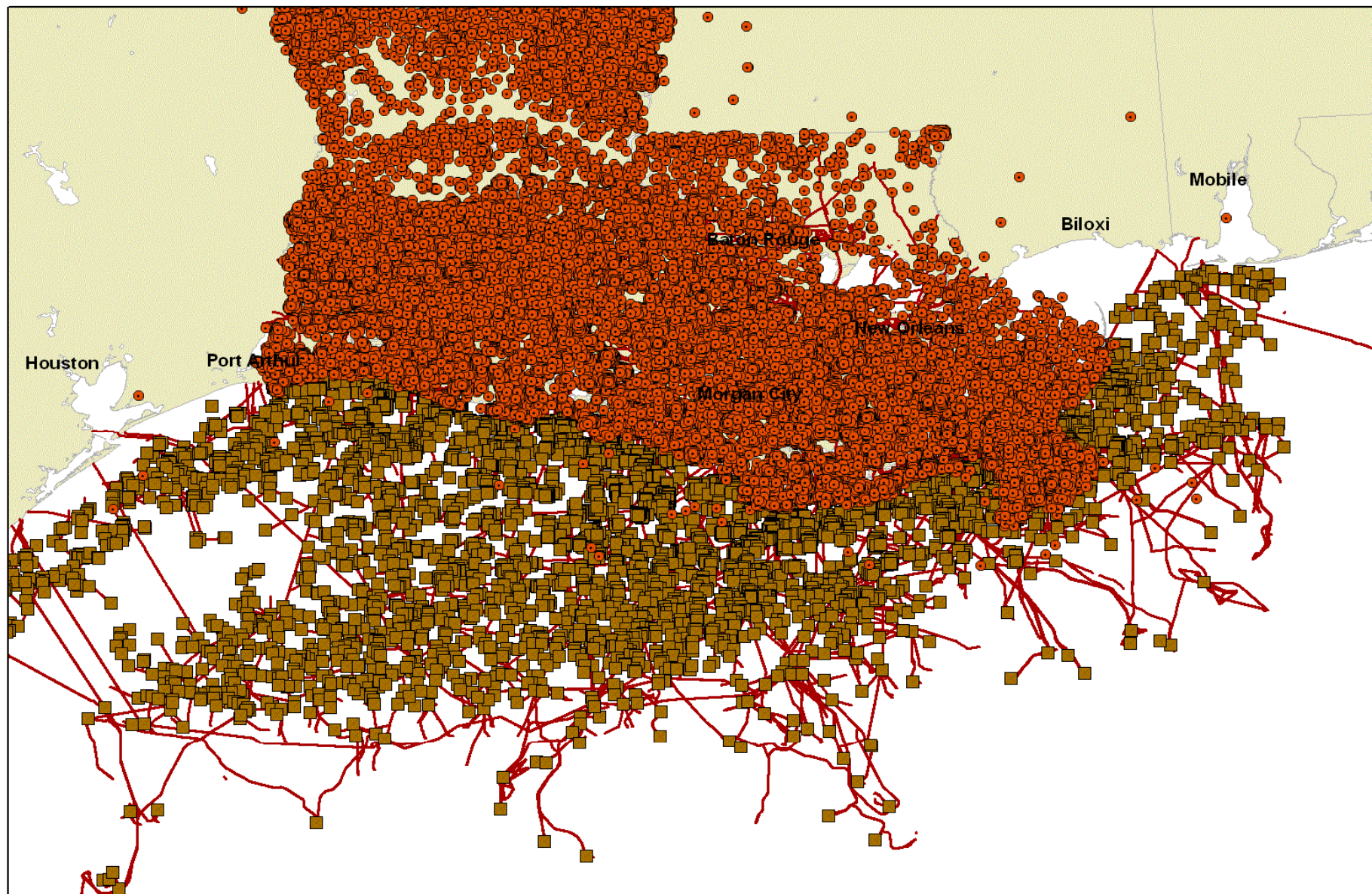
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# Pilot Location

- High probability of spill during study
- Well established spill response
- Need to work with community



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Louisiana Infrastructure – Wells, Platforms, Pipelines

# Methodology Phase 1

- Institutional Review Board for the use of human subjects
- Met with Coastal LA Sea Grant agents and LA-based OR&R spill response and restoration employees (July-Dec 2007)
  - Visited each agent in his/her parish
  - Gathered information on resources (e.g., species of economic importance)
  - Synthesis report of feedback on project
  - Follow up and projections for where project was headed in near future



# Questions For Agents

- **Natural Resources**
  - What natural resources are valued in the parishes where you operate?
  - Who is involved with these natural resources?
- **Economics**
  - Are there any residual economic effects that trickle down to employees?
  - How might major employers be affected by oil spills?
- **Oil Spill information**
  - How are people in this parish potentially affected during and after an oil spill?



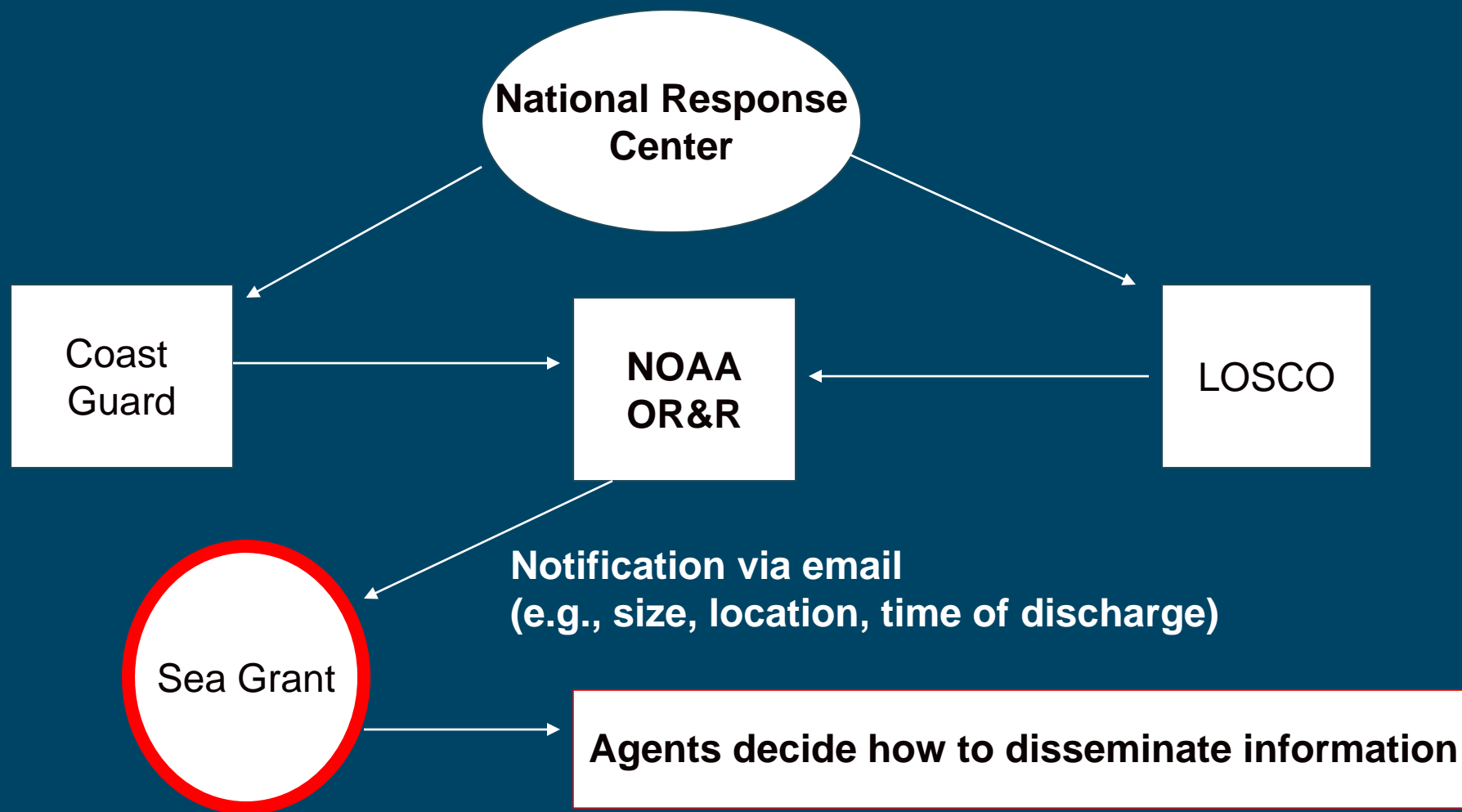


## Methodology Phase 2

- Collaborative meeting (June 2008)
- Discuss prospective interactions between Sea Grant and OR&R
- Port Fourchon
- Sea Grant quarterly meeting
- Meet and greet
- Discussion of protocol



# Protocol



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# Feedback

**Spill Protocol**

**Education**  
**Sea Grant** ↔ **OR&R**  
↔ **Stakeholders**

**Planning and  
follow up  
Quarterly  
Meetings**

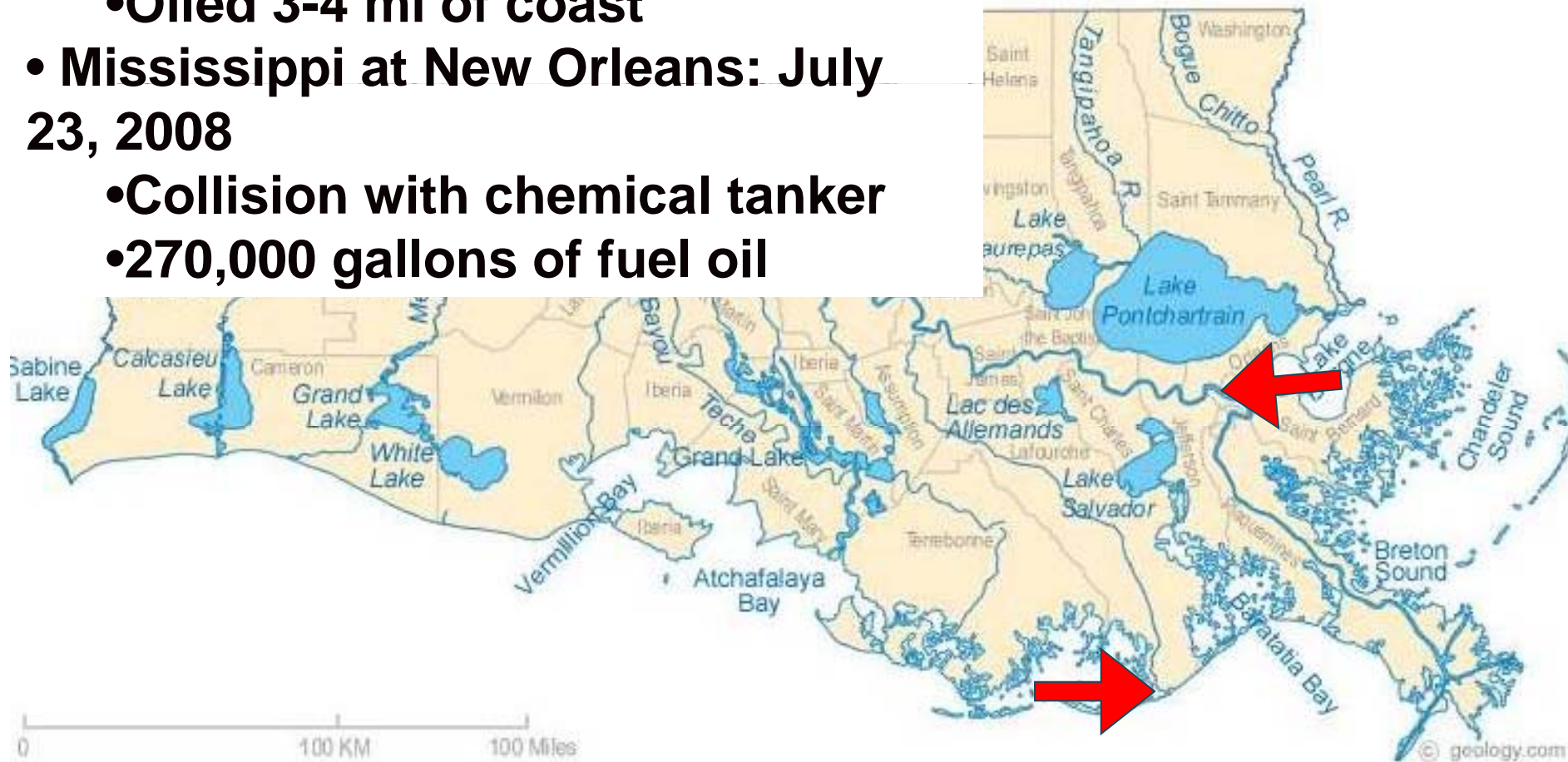


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# Applications: Two Spills

- **Grand Isle: June 29, 2008**  
(observed)
  - Crude Oil; unknown source
  - Oiled 3-4 mi of coast
- **Mississippi at New Orleans: July 23, 2008**
  - Collision with chemical tanker
  - 270,000 gallons of fuel oil



# Notification System in Action

## Grand Isle

- Size, discharge from what
- Notifications sent to agents
- Information passed on to Port Commissioners in Grand Isle and Port Fourchon
- Mississippi at New Orleans
  - Notifications sent on to agents
  - High media attention
  - Economic impacts due to channel closure, but low environmental impacts



# Conclusions

- 50% of Population Lives in Coastal Regions
- Sea Grant and OR&R are Active in All Coastal Communities
- Apply OR&R and Sea Grant Partnership to All Coastal regions
- Will Help Decrease Human Dimension Issues Before, During and After Spill Events.



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[www.crrc.unh.edu](http://www.crrc.unh.edu)

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