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Environmental Training & Environmental Justice

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Climate Change is Real

There is now overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is "real" and that it poses a serious global threat that cannot be ignored.

Global Warming

The International Panel on Climate Change Plenary XXVII predicts further warming of the climate system which can induce change in the global climate in this century far greater than what has been observed in previous centuries.

Increase in Impacts

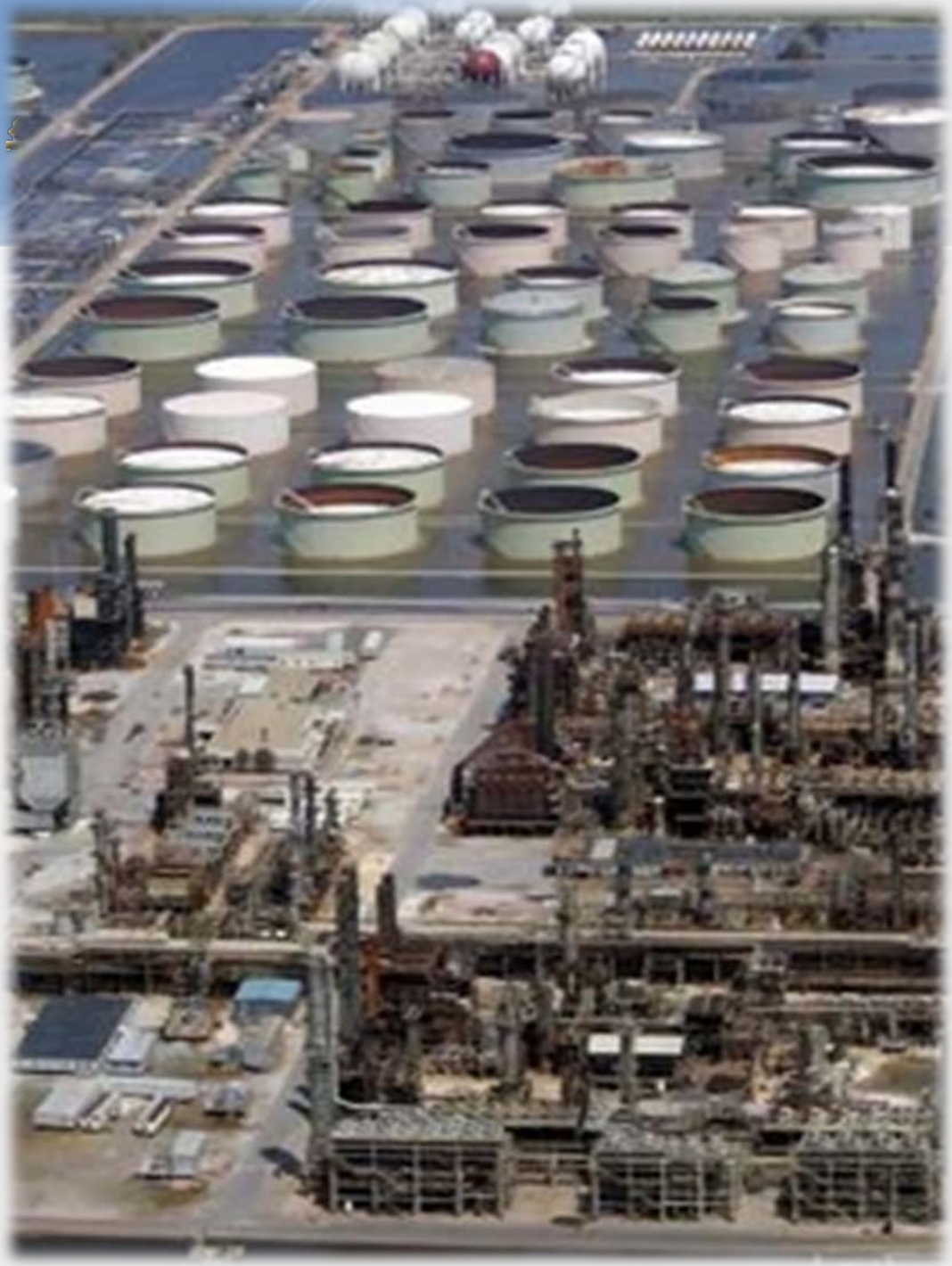
- And we can expect climate change impacts to continue even with the current mitigation policies in place.
- We can expect to see an increase in flooding which typically results in the destruction of property and the transport of environmental contaminants.

2005 Statistics

- The year 2005 saw the worst Atlantic hurricane season since record keeping began in 1851

An average season produces 10 named hurricanes with 2 or 3 becoming major storms. In 2005 there were 27 named storms topping the previous record of 21 in 1933.

After Katrina



Katrina Left Behind… Toxic Contamination & Health Threats

- Six storm-caused oil spills released 7.4 million gallons of oil, or 61 percent as much as the 11 million gallons that leaked into Alaska's Prince William Sound from the Exxon Valdez in 1989.
- 60 underground storage tanks, five Superfund sites, 466 industrial facilities that stored highly dangerous chemicals were hit
- More than 1,000 drinking-water systems were disabled, leaving e. coli in floodwaters far exceeding EPA's safe levels.

Katrina Left Behind… Debris & Hazardous Wastes

- 22 million tons of debris; more than half, 12 million tons in Orleans Parish.
- 60,000 boats, 300,000 underground fuel tanks and 42,000 tons of hazardous waste for collection and proper disposal at licensed facilities.
- 350,000 automobiles to be drained of oil and gasoline and then recycled, 145,000 in New Orleans alone

Flooded homes containing over one million pieces of "white goods," such as refrigerators, stoves & freezers required disposal.

Inequities

Impact on Poor & Minorities

- It was a largely African-American and often the poor population that lived in the areas most vulnerable to the collapse of the levees that was unable to secure transportation for evacuation and who scrambled in frightening conditions to secure scarce resources and aid for their families and themselves.

Both the impacts and the response to disasters it seemed were compounded by income and race

Adaptation & Recovery

- A May 2008 progress report from the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps found a wide disparity in adaptation and recovery between black and white storm victims.
- There is great disparity in the progress towards recovery disruption from the storms and levels of progress between black and white households, even for those with similar incomes.

IMPACTS AND ISSUES FOR LOUISIANA
A COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

THE BP OIL SPILL

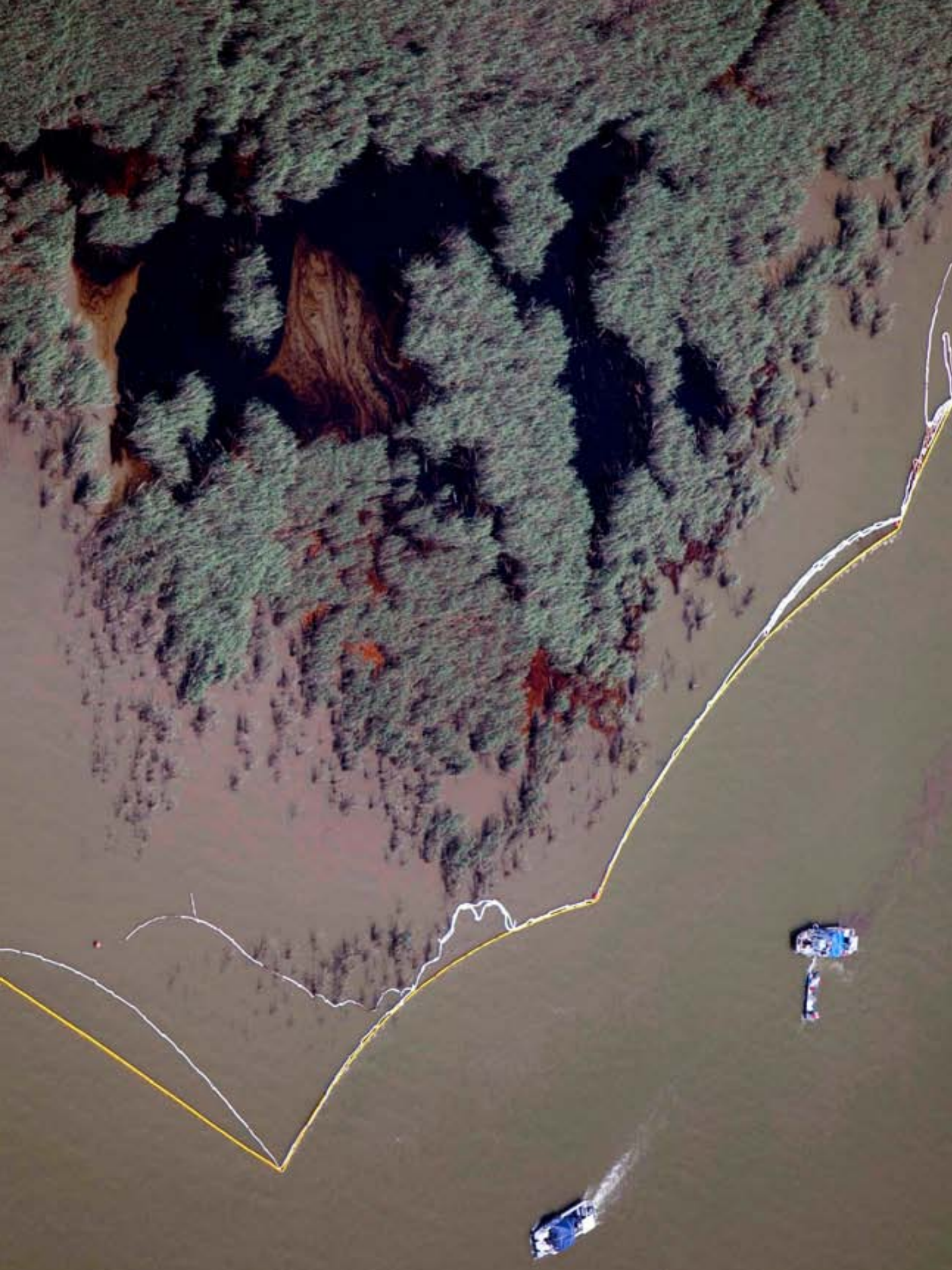
Health Impacts

- Respiratory Problems
- Consumption of Contaminated Marine life
- Long-term Negative Health Effects

Environmental Impacts

The oil spill will have profound impacts on:

- Marine life
- Wildlife
- Marshes
- Coastline
  - For years to come…



Economic Impacts

The oil spill will have profound impacts on:

- Fishermen
- Shrimpers
- Oystermen
- The Food Industry
- Support Industries
- Our Cultural Heritage

Oystermen Losing Their Livelihood

Oysterman Ameal Wilson (Shawn Escoffery)

Photo by Shawn Escoffery (Judge Williams,67)

Shawn Lockery Photography

Lost in Translation

The language barrier was significant as workers discovered in the field.

Worker Training Needs

- Translators for workers speaking:
  - Spanish
  - Vietnamese
  - Creole/Cajun Dialects
- 40 Hour HAZMAT Training
- Culturally Sensitive Curriculum for Training African American and Bayou Fishermen

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SAINTS

Worker Safety Issues

- Some workers found themselves working without adequate protective gear.
- Some workers are being treated for problems due to contact with chemical dispersants and oil fumes.
- These factors could lead to long-term negative health effects.

Environmental Refugees

- Scholars are predicting that 50 million people worldwide will be displaced by 2010 because of:
  - rising sea levels,
  - desertification,
  - dried up aquifers,
  - weather-induced flooding and
  - other serious environmental changes.

Moving forward… What we should know

Community Training

Residents of affected communities will require training in the following areas:

The Environment

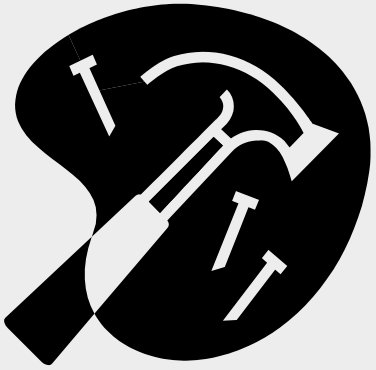
- We should know our environment and the potential for disasters such as:
  - Earthquakes
  - Floods
  - Mud slides
  - Hurricanes
  - Tornados
  - Oil spills

TRAINING

- We must know our training capacities and the training needs of affected communities.
  - Mayor Mitch Landrieu of New Orleans predicted that there would be a need for 2500 workers trained in HazMat workers, specifically for oil spills
  - Organizations should have the capacity to address the training needs in anticipation of disasters.

Build Better Tools

- We must use our experience to prepare for and respond to the training needs surrounding anticipated disasters.
- What did we learn from
  - Hurricane Katrina
  - Exxon Valdez
  - BP Oil Spill



Adaptation Strategies

- We must focus on EJ communities:
  - The most vulnerable populations
- Expand green jobs training to include:
  - Training in Alternative Energy Fields
    - Hydro-electric power
    - Geothermal energy
    - Phytoremediation
    - Solar panels and shingles
    - Marine Health & Safety Training (Inland Boatman)
- We must also expand to include:
  - Additional supervisor training in HAZWOPER
  - Entrepreneurship training in the EH&S and jobs for the green economy