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**Sent:** Fri 20/04/2018 6:33:51 PM (UTC)  
**Subject:** RE: CNBC: BP oil spill still haunts off-shore drilling industry 8 years later  
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## Redacted - First Amendment

**From:** Silva, Arturo  
**Sent:** Friday, April 20, 2018 1:29 PM  
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**Subject:** RE: CNBC: BP oil spill still haunts off-shore drilling industry 8 years later

## Redacted - First Amendment

**Alumna uses her professional experience to defend the Carolina shoreline**  
Oct. 3, 2017

Peg Howell '77 was the first woman petroleum engineer to drill oil wells in the Gulf of Mexico and worked for years in the energy industry before starting a consulting firm geared toward developing senior executives in Fortune 500 companies.

These days, she spends a great deal of time educating legislators on why states along the Atlantic coast should not permit drilling off their shores. Howell is one of the founding members of SODA — Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic — and has testified before the U.S. Congress and across her state to discuss the economic and ecological harm exploration off the South Carolina coast will cause.

She testified in July before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources about the effects of developing the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf.

“Every five years, the Department of Interior is charged with looking at offshore regions to be considered for development,” Howell says. “In 2015, the Bureau of Energy Management, which is part of the Department of Interior, sought out coastal states that wanted to participate in that program. The former governor of South Carolina (Nikki Haley), along with the governors of North Carolina, Virginia and Georgia, put the Mid- and South Atlantic in the mix. It was the first time the Atlantic coast had been considered for decades.”

Howell and other residents on Pawleys Island, which is off the coast of South Carolina, were concerned about what offshore drilling and exploration would do to their community and others along the Atlantic Coast. The group of residents comprising SODA includes a Petroleum Landman, several engineers, an information technologist, a physicist, a former Congressional Chief of Staff, a lawyer, a realtor and a minister, among others.

In May 2016, the Mid- and South Atlantic regions were pulled from consideration for the 2017-22 program. Though the regions were removed from the program, they were not exempted from potential seismic testing — the first step in offshore exploration — until January of this year. In April, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to overturn those previous decisions and expedite seismic testing and drilling permits.

“The issue with seismic testing is the amount of noise it introduces into the ecosystem, which causes tremendous harm to marine mammals,” Howell says, noting that the inescapable noise would impact the most vulnerable species, like the North Atlantic right whale, in their ability to communicate, feed, navigate and mate. “Huge amounts of sound are blasted into the ocean, and all it provides to geologists is an indication that there might be geologic structures that could contain oil and gas. In the ’70s and ’80s, some wells were drilled in the North Atlantic and off the coast of Georgia, but they ended up being dry holes — nothing of commercial interest.”

Like Howell, Jim Watkins, chair of SODA, has worked to protect the Atlantic coastal region from drilling for three years. Like most of the SODA members, Watkins has an eclectic professional background that provides expertise to the group — he is a retired infantry officer, a retired Presbyterian minister and a former District Staff Director for a U.S. Congressman.

“Peg understands that leadership skills are transferable,” he says. “She brought to SODA skills that she has used in other parts of her life. She combines technical knowledge with interpersonal relationships. With her oil drilling background, she brings immense credibility.”

Howell recalls how her undergraduate time at Marietta College helped to prepare her for professional experiences she would have throughout her life.

“I remember (former Petroleum Engineering professor) Elmer Templeton convinced me that whatever I did with my life, petroleum engineering would serve me for my entire life, and it has,” Howell says. “In 1977, this was a great career. Also in ’77, we lived with the expectation that there were only 40 years left in the oil and gas reservoirs. We anticipated that alternative energy sources would become the mainstay.”

Beyond the ecological impact, Howell says the Atlantic coast heavily relies on a flourishing tourism industry. SODA recently conducted a “tourism vs. oil” study that examines the financial tradeoffs that would take place if oil and gas exploration took over the coastal communities. “Our tourism economy alone is more than 20 times more valuable than oil and gas exploration and production off our coast,” she says.

In her congressional testimony, she highlighted that the Atlantic coast economy of 1.4 million jobs and more than \$95 billion in gross domestic product relies on a healthy coast and ocean ecosystems for fishing, tourism and recreation.

“Fighting offshore oil and gas exploration in the Atlantic is not fighting the industry, per se,” Howell says. “It’s fighting decisions that are fool-hardy. Why in the world would we introduce a high-risk, finite industry that is incompatible with and would jeopardize our very successful coastal economy?”

As for the future, Howell finds hope in the fact that so many coastal residents and politicians are united in protecting the Atlantic coastal region.

“We have to ask ourselves, ‘What are we leaving for our children and our grandchildren?’” she says. “And then we have to act.”

*\* This story originally appeared in the Fall 2017 Marietta magazine*

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**From:** Ryan, Jason

**Sent:** Friday, April 20, 2018 1:16 PM

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**Subject:** RE: CNBC: BP oil spill still haunts off-shore drilling industry 8 years later

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<https://www.cnn.com/2018/04/20/off-shore-drilling-is-still-a-terrible-idea-8-years-after-bp-oil-spill.html>

**From:** Morrell, Geoff

**Sent:** Friday, April 20, 2018 1:12 PM

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**Subject:** Re: CNBC: BP oil spill still haunts off-shore drilling industry 8 years later

Redacted - First Amendment

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On Apr 20, 2018, at 6:37 PM, Emily Erdmier <[REDACTED]@brunswickgroup.com> wrote:

## **BP oil spill still haunts off-shore drilling industry 8 years later**

By Peg Howell  
CNBC  
April 20, 2018

- Less than a decade after the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, the Trump administration wants to expand offshore drilling.
- Worse still, it's calling for the repeal of the few offshore drilling safety rules that were put in place in response to Deepwater Horizon.
- It's time to admit off-shore drilling is not worth the risk.

Eight years ago, on April 20, 2010, BP's exploratory well located just 41 miles off the coast of Louisiana, blew out. The explosion killed 11 people, pumped 210 million gallons of oil into the waters off Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, and contaminated over 1,100 miles of coastal marshes and beaches.

It took 87 days to finally cap the well that we all saw on underwater cameras pumping seemingly endless amounts of crude oil into the Gulf the entire time. It was, as it has since been named, a disaster.

In deeply painful and long-lasting ways, the Deepwater Horizon spill showed the industry and the whole country the risks inherent in drilling, just days before the annual Earth Day celebration. Now, less than a decade later, the Trump administration is suggesting we expand the oil industry's access to pristine waters from coast to coast, including opening the Atlantic Ocean to offshore drilling.

Worse still, the administration is proposing this offshore drilling free-for-all while also calling for the repeal of the few offshore drilling safety rules that were put in place in response to Deepwater Horizon.

As a veteran of the oil industry, the first woman to supervise offshore drilling rigs in the Gulf of Mexico, and a South

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Carolinian, I cannot help but be baffled by this decision.

Communities across the Southeast have boldly rejected drilling off our shores. When the Obama administration first suggested opening the Atlantic to oil and gas development in 2015, the people who live and work here came out overwhelmingly against the plan and called on their elected leaders and the administration to protect our coastal communities and economies from risky offshore drilling.

We were able to stop Atlantic drilling in 2016, but once again find ourselves fighting to protect our coast. However, this time, the opposition is even stronger.

Now, more than 190 East Coast communities, and tens of thousands of businesses, fishing and trade groups, and tourism associations have come out opposing Atlantic drilling and seismic air gun surveys. In my own state of South Carolina, every mayor in every coastal city and our state capital, as well as our Governor, oppose seismic surveys and drilling.

They are Republican and Democrat alike because protecting our coast is not a partisan issue – it's about protecting our livelihood, our health, our ocean, and everything that makes our state and coastal communities special.

We know that it doesn't take a catastrophic spill like what we saw in the Gulf of Mexico to ruin our pristine coast. Offshore drilling is a dirty and dangerous industry. There were 2,440 oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico between 1964 and 2015 resulting in a total of over 12 million gallons of oil dumped into the Gulf – excluding the disastrous Deepwater Horizon spill of over 200 million gallons.

We have seen this movie before

In 2016 alone, 497 accidents (damages, injuries and spills) involving offshore oil rigs were reported. Human error and hurricane damage to oil and gas infrastructure are leading causes of spills. If the Atlantic Ocean is opened to offshore drilling, it is not a matter of if but when there will be a spill. We cannot afford to let that happen.

A recent study by the non-partisan grassroots organization, Stop Offshore Drilling in the Atlantic (SODA), highlighted that over \$16 billion was spent by tourists visiting South Carolina's coast in 2017.

The analysis determined that the cumulative economic value of coastal tourism direct-spending from 2022 (when the first wells could be drilled) through 2041 could amount to more than \$602 billion. This is roughly 25 times the API's best-case estimate of oil industry revenues to South Carolina over the same period.

Based on my first-hand experience in this industry, I know there is no way to make offshore drilling work for the Southeast. The onshore infrastructure, pipelines, vessel traffic and pollution that accompanies offshore drilling would devastate our beautiful beaches, healthy marshes and rivers.

It would permanently alter dozens of National Wildlife Refuges, National Seashores, state-protected areas, and ecologically important marine areas. And according to the U.S. Navy, offshore drilling would disrupt training and put military readiness at risk.

Most importantly, opening our coast to offshore drilling is a forever decision. Once oil companies obtain leases and find commercial quantities of oil and gas, by law, they are entitled to produce from those leases, drill more wells, or sell the property to another operator - forever.

We have seen this movie before, off California's coast, where oil companies have produced – and spilled - from Federal leases for over 50 years. The citizens of California began fighting the Federal government after the first Santa Barbara spill in 1969 and are still fighting to stop drilling off their coast. When the oil industry comes to town, it is impossible to make them leave.

For our economies, for our communities, for our tourism and fishing industries, for our environment, and most importantly, for our children and future generations, it's simply not worth the risk.

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**From:** Emily Erdmier

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Subject: Overnight 8th Anniversary Coverage

1. **The Washington Post:** The bloody history of April 20: Mass murders, a 'fake news' war and environmental disaster
2. **National Public Radio:** 8 Years After Deepwater Horizon Explosion, Is Another Disaster Waiting To Happen?
3. **Pensacola News Journal:** Locals stand against drilling on eighth anniversary of BP oil spill

### **The bloody history of April 20: Mass murders, a 'fake news' war and environmental disaster**

By Kyle Swenson  
The Washington Post  
April 20, 2018

April 20, 2010 marked the start of one of the largest ecological disasters in U.S. history. On that date, an explosion tore through the Deepwater Horizon exploration rig in the Gulf of Mexico, killing 11 crew members. The blast caused 3.19 million barrels of crude oil to spill into the gulf over the next 87 days, the Post reported. The spill and cleanup would eventually cost BP \$61.6 billion.

### **8 Years After Deepwater Horizon Explosion, Is Another Disaster Waiting To Happen?**

National Public Radio  
April 20, 2018

Within seconds, a bright, white flash erupted on the lower deck of West Delta 105 E, an oil-production platform positioned a dozen miles off the Louisiana coast. Disoriented, one crew member found himself 10 feet away from where he had been working before he blacked out. Another likened the impact to a sledgehammer blow to his head. A third told investigators he felt like he'd been hit by an 18-wheeler, his hard hat, glasses and earplugs knocked off in the blast.

For a fourth, death came instantly. Jerrel "Bubba" Hancock, a 24-year-old father of two, was the closest to the hatch of a large metal tank when flammable vapors ignited, unleashing a fireball the afternoon of Nov. 20, 2014. He died of blunt-force trauma to the head and chest.

Hancock's death during a maintenance job could have been avoided, federal investigators concluded in late 2016. Safety lapses leading up to the accident were laid bare in a 73-page report by the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), a little-known agency within the U.S. Department of the Interior responsible for policing the sprawling offshore industry.

It was the sort of comprehensive post-mortem for which BSEE had been designed. But the agency has faced crippling challenges on several fronts, from staffing to its ability to hold companies accountable. Born in the wake of 2010's Deepwater Horizon explosion — which killed 11 workers and dumped millions of barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico — BSEE has struggled to implement safety regulations that are now under threat of being rolled back.

The agency's team of roughly 130 inspectors is responsible for conducting 20,000 inspections annually across 2,000-plus facilities from the Gulf to the Alaska coast. Its annual budget of \$204 million is about a third of the cost of the sunken Deepwater rig. Under the Trump administration, the very fate of the small bureau — and its roughly 800 employees — is also in doubt.

As the White House and the Interior Department pursue "energy dominance," opening more federal lands and waters to drilling than ever before, BSEE's status — along with the safety reforms that helped empower it — has become increasingly tenuous. Concerns over the agency's potential demise have swirled on Capitol Hill for months, buoyed by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's calls for deregulation, restructuring and his controversial pick to lead BSEE: Louisiana native and longtime oil-industry ally Scott Angelle, who has pledged to take the bureau "from an era of isolation to an era of cooperation."

Companies have welcomed the change. Randall Luthi, head of the National Ocean Industries Association, which represents the offshore sector, is a fan of the agency's "better dialogue" with businesses. "No company wants to have an accident," said Luthi. "Safety and good economics go hand in hand."

The bureau has always strived to take a collaborative approach with industry, but critics worry BSEE is going too far. "I do have a problem when the relationship becomes so cozy that it's not an arm's length relationship anymore," Michael

Bromwich, BSEE's first director, said in an interview with the Center for Public Integrity and NPR. "I'm concerned that that's what's happening now."

Safety advocates agree that conditions offshore have improved under BSEE's watch. But the agency has faced hurdles over the years, troubles that predate the Trump administration. Reports by the Government Accountability Office in 2016 and 2017 detailed how the bureau suffered from poor leadership, relying on a series of pricey outside consultants to determine priorities and strategic goals. Auditors also found a key program aimed at improving the bureau's inspections had been beset with delays over several years and the agency had missed a critical opportunity to staff up. The bureau has had difficulty attracting employees, competing directly with higher-paying oil and gas companies for technical experts.

Weeks after the 2016 election, the agency was dealt a blow in the courts, which sided with industry and ruled that BSEE had no authority to hold contractors — like the companies working on West Delta 105 E in 2014 — liable for violations that could lead to spills, injuries or deaths. By early 2017, the agency appeared to have abandoned what was once a priority: getting industry to report near-misses with the aim of averting catastrophes.

The consequences of an ineffective regulator ripple far from Washington. Oil workers are seven times more likely than the average U.S. worker to die on the job, according to a 2013 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Deepwater and a sex-and-drugs ethics scandal force change

The first explosion on Transocean's Deepwater Horizon rig hit at 9:50 p.m. on April 20, 2010. Video captured 4,800 feet below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico showed grayish-orange oil gushing so fast from BP's Macondo well it looked like steam from a locomotive. Desperate to contain the leak caused by the blast, scientists and engineers shot tires and golf balls underwater in a failed attempt to plug the well.

Researchers initially estimated crude oil was spilling at a rate of 5,000 barrels per day; the actual number was closer to 50,000. After 86 days, the well was temporarily capped on July 15, 2010, ending the first chapter of what would become the largest and most expensive environmental disaster the U.S. petroleum industry had ever seen. But the Interior Department was also reckoning with a debacle of its own.

A high-profile ethics scandal uncovered in 2008 continued to cast a shadow on the agency's Minerals Management Service, which, awkwardly, oversaw both offshore leasing and enforcement. Investigations uncovered coziness between MMS employees and the companies they regulated, ranging from lavish gifts and self-dealing to cocaine-and-sex-fueled industry events.

With Deepwater making national headlines, Interior officials could no longer ignore MMS's fundamental conflict: generating revenue from offshore drilling while simultaneously regulating the industry. Oversight had taken a back seat to leasing and it showed. MMS had fewer than 60 inspectors to cover 3,000-plus offshore facilities and had never established an environmental enforcement program.

In October 2011, MMS was dissolved and three separate agencies — including BSEE — were formed to take its place.

'We kiss our families goodbye'

The man now running BSEE delivered a rallying cry following the Deepwater disaster that led to the agency's creation. Just days after the well was capped, Angelle took to the Cajundome stage in Lafayette, Louisiana, and bellowed, "Enough is enough! And it's time to quit punishing innocent American workers to achieve some unrealistic political agenda." He wasn't talking about safety problems. He meant the moratorium on deep-water drilling imposed by the Obama administration in response to the spill.

"We proudly do what few other states are willing to do," Angelle, the state's then-lieutenant governor, told the cheering crowd in the 13,500-seat arena. "We put on our hard hats and our steel-toe boots. We kiss our families goodbye, and we begin the tough work of exploring, producing, processing, storing, refining and transporting the fuel to energize the great United States of America."

Handpicked by the Louisiana Oil and Gas Association to headline the "Rally for Economic Survival," Angelle was key to helping overturn the moratorium. After the rally, Angelle spearheaded the "Back to Work Coalition," coordinating with lobby groups like the American Petroleum Institute to reverse the ban that same year. His efforts elevated his profile within the Republican party, though he subsequently failed in bids for governor and U.S. Congress.

BSEE declined requests by the Center and NPR to interview Angelle, or others, about BSEE's safety mission and how it comports with the Trump administration's "energy dominance." An agency spokesman wrote in an email that he was "told not to respond" to written questions sent by the Center for Public Integrity.

In a written statement to NPR, the agency says Angelle is "laser focused on safety," and that this is not at odds with also focusing on robust production. BSEE says starting this month, it is increasing the time its inspectors spend on offshore oil and gas facilities.

In a March press release, Angelle also said he wanted "BSEE's programs and processes to be the best in the world, and I'm not afraid to subject them to scrutiny to determine where improvements are needed."

Not 'just a strange and unprecedented event'

To this day, Angelle — like many hardline industry voices — casts the BP disaster as a fluke. But safety experts have argued since 2011 that the problems that doomed Deepwater — like faulty equipment and disregard for safety protocols — are far more common than companies admit.

"It's just not accurate to point to Deepwater Horizon and say, 'Well, this is just a strange and unprecedented event unlikely to recur,'" says Bromwich, a former Justice Department inspector general who oversaw the bureau's formation in 2011 and now runs a Washington-based public affairs firm. He points to a special presidential commission that investigated the disaster and found the Macondo blowout was not an isolated incident. Previous close calls could have been just as catastrophic had it not been for luck.

The commission's report in 2011 found that regulators hadn't kept pace with the offshore industry, which was increasingly outsourcing work to contractors while drilling deeper and deeper. Although the U.S. had the highest rate of offshore fatalities globally, it had the lowest rate of reported injuries, a "striking contrast" suggesting significant underreporting by industry, according to the commission.

Among the report's recommendations was the creation of an offshore safety group similar to a watchdog formed by the nuclear power sector after Pennsylvania's Three Mile Island reactor partially melted down in 1979. Within months of the report's release, the American Petroleum Institute — a lobbying powerhouse representing more than 650 corporate members — founded the Center for Offshore Safety in Houston.

"We quite specifically in our report said, 'We recommend this not be done within the American Petroleum Institute,'" says Don Boesch, a University of Maryland professor of marine science and a commission member. "Even though it's long been dealing with safety, it's lobbying, it's doing politics instead. So, who would believe it?"

API has long opposed offshore reforms, arguing that industry should be allowed to self-regulate. Over nearly a century, the trade group has developed a plethora of voluntary industry standards covering everything from drilling liquids to refining. But when BSEE tried to revamp its workplace safety rules and make some of these API standards mandatory, the process took the agency six years. Boesch says the hope was that API's offshore center would help build consensus and speed adoption of regulations. It didn't work out that way.

In 2016, API opposed the bureau's well-control rule, which standardized measures such as blowout preventers, claiming it would saddle the industry with \$30 billion in unnecessary costs. The regulation — which also took several years to develop — was ultimately criticized by safety advocates for being too weak. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board, which investigates industrial accidents, urged revisions that would "give BSEE more explicit authority." Neither API or its Center for Offshore Safety responded to requests for comment.

API's offshore center was enlisted early on to help develop the bureau's near-miss reporting system, a confidential program that tracks close-call incidents like equipment failures. Launched in 2015, SafeOCS (for "outer continental shelf") was modeled on a similar program used by commercial airlines. Despite guarantees of anonymity for companies that file reports, SafeOCS languished.

Just before the 2016 presidential election, Doug Morris, BSEE's chief of offshore regulatory programs, described industry response to the program as "lukewarm." During a conference in May 2017, Morris again lamented lackluster participation in SafeOCS. "We built it, and nobody came," he said. As of last November, only three of 88 companies operating offshore had signed on.

BSEE refused to make Morris — who previously worked for API as a managing attorney — available for an interview. It also declined to answer any questions about SafeOCS.

Activity in the Gulf has drawn down in recent years due to low oil prices and a surge in onshore production, but experts predict it will pick up soon. Amid the downturn, offshore accidents continue to make headlines.

In October, a broken pipeline from a platform leaked roughly 672,000 gallons of oil in the largest Gulf spill since Deepwater. In December, a worker off the coast of Louisiana died after getting pinned against a bar known as a stanchion. BSEE is investigating the February death of an offshore contract worker killed while handling fire-fighting equipment.



In media interviews last year, Angelle faulted the Obama administration for not doing enough to bolster near-miss reporting. He pledged to better promote the program and formed a special team to figure out why it hasn't caught on.

#### A legal setback to holding contractors liable

The agency has also faced setbacks in its attempts to hold contractors liable. When Michael Bromwich was brought on to overhaul offshore regulation in June 2010, he was surprised to learn that violations historically had not been issued to contractors — even when it was clear that they, not platform owners, had engaged in misconduct.

Interior's authority, he was told, stopped at leaseholders, despite the ubiquity of contractors and the inherent dangers of deep-water drilling. Eighty percent of offshore workers killed from 2003 to 2010 were contracted employees, according to CDC data. So was Bubba Hancock, killed in 2014.

"The fact that we had unilaterally decided to grant immunity to all non-operators was a misguided act of administrative grace," Bromwich told an industry crowd in 2011, vowing to continue BSEE's new policy of holding contractors liable. The first violations the agency issued to contractors went to Transocean and Halliburton, two companies involved in the BP spill.

The point of the speech, Bromwich said in a recent interview, was to tell industry it could no longer "get away with murder."

"It was really kind of going into the lion's den and telling them, 'We're coming after you,'" he says.

But industry fought back and won. In *USA v. Black Elk Energy Offshore*, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled the government had no authority to bring criminal sanctions against contractors for their role in a 2012 explosion that killed three workers and left an oil sheen in the Gulf.

In *Island Operating Co., Inc. v. Jewell*, the Interior Department fined Island for its role in a 2012 near-miss in which two workers dived 40 feet off a platform to escape a chemical fire. But a trial court agreed with the company that the government also lacked authority to bring civil sanctions and Interior did not pursue an appeal. Island had especially strong backing for its case. Joining in support was the U.S. Oil and Gas Association and the National Ocean Industries Association, the group headed by Luthi, the former Wyoming legislator who served as MMS director from 2007 to 2009 and investigated the sex and drugs scandal. Representing Island was Bracewell LLP, a top-dollar law firm known for vigorously defending the oil industry.

Island did not respond to multiple requests for comment. In an interview, Luthi said that it's up to companies to ensure the contractors they hire are safe. "As a leaseholder you're the one who is ultimately primarily responsible for what goes on," says Luthi. "The leaseholder becomes the regulator to ensure all the standards are met."

#### 'Not adhering to basic tenets of a safety culture'

Contractor safety was one area BSEE officials asked the National Academy of Sciences to study in 2016 as part of a review of the bureau's inspection program. But in December, Secretary Zinke abruptly suspended the study, drawing the ire of environmentalists and safety advocates. In March, Zinke announced several initiatives to ensure "responsible energy development," such as increasing the time BSEE inspectors spend offshore.

The explosion that killed Hancock in 2014 is proof that "not adhering to the basic tenets of a safety culture can lead to tragic results," then-BSEE director Brian Salerno wrote in a 2016 memo. According to the agency's report, a switch powering a unit called a heater-treater hadn't been turned off, despite assurances by an employee of Island Operating Company, a firm contracted by platform owner Fieldwood Energy LLC to handle daily operations. Hancock worked for a cleaning company hired by Fieldwood to wash down the unit. At the time of the accident, Island was a contractor for 625 structures in the Gulf.

Island did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Fieldwood CEO Matt McCarroll wrote in an email to the Center for Public Integrity, "We have no higher mission or responsibility than the safety of our operations, employees and contractors." The company also provided documents in which it asserted that Hancock and the company he worked for, Turnkey Cleaning Services, were responsible for safety failures that led to the accident.

While BSEE found that Turnkey did not effectively follow safety procedures, the agency concluded that power flowing through the unit was the "probable cause of the ignition" that led to the explosion.

Dale P. Martin Jr., who is listed as the principal of Turnkey, did not respond to calls for comment. Fieldwood, which filed

for bankruptcy protection in February, is currently appealing several safety citations BSEE issued to the company as a result of the 2014 explosion.

The night of his death, Hancock's body was airlifted to New Orleans and transported 150 miles west to Abbeville — the city where he and his wife, Kayler, fell in love and raised their children. Three days before Thanksgiving 2014, she laid her husband to rest.

"I was mad at everyone on that platform," Kayler said by telephone. She settled a wrongful-death case against Island and Fieldwood last year for an undisclosed amount. "I needed justice for my children," she said. "I felt like they owed me the world, because they took the world away from me."

### **Locals stand against drilling on eighth anniversary of BP oil spill**

By Kevin Robinson  
Pensacola News Journal  
April 20, 2018

A coalition of businesses, residents, elected officials and environmental organizations will mark the anniversary of the BP oil spill by taking a stand against drilling on Florida's coast.

The coalition is holding a press conference on Pensacola Beach at 9:56 a.m. today, eight years to the minute after an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil rig killed 11 people.

Coalition members will speak in honor of the lives lost in the disaster and the spill's environmental, economic and social impacts to our area. The group will also announce its organized opposition to proposals to allow drilling off the Florida coast and to eliminate well safety rules put in place after the 2010 disaster.

Currently, the confirmed speakers are Grover Robinson, Escambia County Commissioner for District 4; Benjamin Stevenson, an attorney and a member Pensacola Beach Advocates; Mike Pinzone, a beach business owner and operator of the Gulf Pier;

JJ Waters, of the Surfrider Foundation Emerald Coast Chapter; and Christian Wagley, of the Gulf Restoration Network.

At the press conference, the group will also unveil a new report from the Gulf Restoration Network outlining ongoing spills and safety issues with current Gulf drilling operations, along with the latest information on proposed drilling and rollback of well safety rules.

Earlier this year, the federal government announced a proposal that could open more than 98 percent of the nation's continental shelf to oil and natural gas leasing. The agency received more than 10,000 responses from citizens, most of whom opposed new offshore drilling.

This week, the Florida Constitution Revision Commission announced a proposed amendment to the state Constitution that would ban drilling in Florida state waters — a change proposed by commission member and former Pensacola Beach resident Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch — would appear on the general election ballot this November.

The local press conference begins at 9:56 a.m. just south of the Casino Beach pavilion on Pensacola Beach.

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**Sent:** Thursday, April 19, 2018 11:07 AM

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**Subject:** [Phys.org](http://Phys.org): Deepwater horizon—the lasting impact of America's largest oil spill

### **Deepwater horizon—the lasting impact of America's largest oil spill**

By Benjamin Prueitt  
[Phys.org](http://Phys.org)  
April 19, 2018

On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil platform operated by BP, was disconnecting from a recently discovered oil reservoir 50 miles south of Louisiana when a cascade of equipment malfunctions caused a high-pressure explosion, killing 11 rig workers. For two days the rig burned then sank. As response crews worked to extinguish surface fires, oil and gas from the broken drill pipe was spewing a mile deep in the Gulf of Mexico.

This underwater geyser of oil and gas lasted 87 days as remotely operated vehicles tried several methods to stop the flow. Success eventually came with a "top-kill" effort in August, but not before nearly 210 million gallons of oil and almost 2 million gallons of dispersants contaminated the Gulf of Mexico. Shortly following the capping of the wellhead, breaking news of the spill's events stopped as the national attention moved onto other headlines.

This media vacuum is common following environmental disasters (Fukushima, Zika virus, the Exxon Valdez oil spill) as a crisis is considered "over" once news headlines turn elsewhere. But this mindset ignores the efforts of dedicated individuals looking for solutions to the causes, and consequences of such disasters years after they occur. In the case of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill – which is remembered eight years ago this week – scores of USF researchers and students have dedicated their studies to the causes and environmental consequences of marine oil blowouts so that society is more prepared in the event of the next mega spill, even without national media attention.

The University of South Florida and the Florida Institute of Oceanography took emergency action in the weeks following the 2010 spill, dispatching researchers to areas of the Gulf not yet touched by the millions of gallons of spilled oil. USF collected samples of nearly everything: water, sediment cores from the seafloor, fish bile, liver, as well as muscle and plankton samples. These samples were used as evidence during litigation against BP, resulting in the energy giant paying \$18.7 billion to federal, state, county and municipal governments in 2015 as penalties for the spill; including \$1 billion for Tampa Bay governments.

These were the last of BP's connected payments to the spill. Their first occurred In May 2010 when BP volunteered \$500 million dedicated to establishing a 10-year research program. These funds were distributed through the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI) which independently funds peer-reviewed proposals from research consortia and projects, including the C-IMAGE consortium (the Center for Integrated Modeling and Analysis of Gulf Ecosystems) hosted at the USF-College of Marine Science (CMS) in St. Petersburg, FL.

Establishing GoMRI brought a different focus to the aftermath of a major environmental disaster by continuing significant funding to understand what was learned from the blowout to improve recovery, response and restoration, not if, but when the next spill occurs.

Beginning in 2011, C-IMAGE and USF have facilitated the research of over 200 international marine biologists, chemists, engineers and computer modelers to understand the effects of oil spills throughout marine environments, the effects of dispersants and recovery across the Gulf of Mexico. Directing the C-IMAGE consortium is Steven Murawski, PhD, a professor at the USF-College of Marine Science, who knows how unique a decade of funding is for marine scientists.

"This is rare," said Murawski. "Having a dedicated \$500 million to long-term scientific research doesn't happen every day, or in this case, every decade. The opportunities GoMRI provides allows science to expand naturally – we find something new with oil spills, we explore its causes, impacts and how it might happen again."

For example, during the emergency research cruises weeks following the spill, seafloor sediments had traces of oil in them. Chemical analysis showed that some of this oil included dispersants and burned oil from the surface that sank along with dying plankton to the seafloor. This previously unknown phenomenon, known as marine oiled snow, is now accepted as a considerable component to the fate of oil during marine oil blowouts. Future research within C-IMAGE will use computer models to predict the occurrence and intensity of marine oiled snow and what impacts it may have on the seafloor.

Of the \$500 million, USF-CMS received \$36 million since 2011 to direct the research of USF and 18 other universities and research agencies each exploring the causes and impacts of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. C-IMAGE collaborates locally with Eckerd College and Mote Marine Laboratory, and internationally with the Technical University of Hamburg-Harburg, Germany, and the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, to name a few.

"The strength of our research is our partners and collaborators," said Murawski. "Looking at a problem through several perspectives – biologists, engineers, aquaculturists – helps us ask what our next questions should be and what's important to different fields."

Through the work of C-IMAGE, a 7-year timeline of the northern Gulf recovery was continued, a Gulf-wide baseline of seafloor and fish health from U.S., Mexican and Cuban waters was completed, and Germany's only high-pressure experimental facility – studying the effects of dispersants and biodegradation – was developed.

Recently, collaboration between the USF College of Marine Science and the University of Miami predict a missing generation of fish in the Gulf of Mexico, nearly ten years following the spill. Predictive tools like these oil spill and ecosystem models are the emphasis as C-IMAGE reaches the end of its 10-year plan in 2020.

"Giving first-responders a better understanding of where oil is heading, or what the ecosystem damage might be is our goal," said Murawski. "If we don't give the responders who fight the fires or protect the beaches and marshes something to work with, we'd ask ourselves what we really learned in 10-years of research. We will also summarize our scientific findings in a two-volume book series to be published in 2019."

GoMRI distributed the last of its funds in fall of 2017. USF and C-IMAGE is one of only four universities to complete a full ten-year research program (University of Miami, University of Texas at Austin, and Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium).

Even with the Deepwater Horizon disaster as a memory for some, USF continues to engage international partners to improve societal understanding of major oil spills.

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**Subject:** Audubon Society: Audubon Remembers Deepwater Horizon: Accountability Matters

### **Audubon Remembers Deepwater Horizon: Accountability Matters**

By National Audubon Society

[Audubon.org](http://Audubon.org)

April 19, 2018

*Audubon remains deeply committed to Gulf restoration and to protecting the laws that held BP accountable.*

WASHINGTON—In advance of the eighth anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on April 20, National Audubon Society President and CEO David Yarnold (@david\_yarnold) issued the following statement:

"Eight years ago 11 people died in the worst environmental tragedy the U.S. has ever seen. Restoration has just begun in earnest, and the passage of time won't erase BP's recklessness. In fact, we're more concerned than ever about the rollback of laws and regulations that are helping to rebuild the Gulf.

"Thanks to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, BP paid \$100 million in fines for causing the deaths of one million birds. But we're alarmed by efforts in Congress and the Department of the Interior to weaken this law and give BP or others a free pass for killing birds in future spills.

"It's ridiculous to try and make the case after 100 years that this law can't coexist with best industry practices when we have a century of proof to the contrary.

"Audubon will oppose these bird-killing moves—we will engage our 1.2 million members who represent America's political spectrum. We will bring 113 years of commitment to bird protection to safeguard one of the most important bird conservation laws in America."

Over the course of 87 days, 130 million gallons of oil were dumped into the Gulf of Mexico killing a million birds and other marine life. To date, as a result of the MBTA, over \$64 million of BP settlement funds have been paid out to help birds and the places they need. These funds have protected or restored more than 350,000 acres benefitting birds and people.

Brian Moore, vice president of Gulf policy echoed these sentiments, saying: "The Migratory Bird Treaty Act upholds the simple premise that if you break it, you buy it. As a result of this law, BP has been held criminally accountable for the unparalleled damage it wrought on birds across the Gulf.

"Through fines directly tied to this law, we are seeing dollars turn into acres across the Gulf to begin to repair the

damage done to birds and the environment. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act must be upheld to ensure accountability for future oil spills and other environmental disasters.”

Congress passed the MBTA in 1918 in response to public outcry over the mass slaughter of birds, which threatened egrets and other species with extirpation. The law prohibits killing or harming America’s birds except under certain conditions, including managed hunting seasons for game species. The law protects more than 1,000 bird species (including iconic Gulf birds such as the Roseate Spoonbill, Snowy Egret and Great Blue Heron) in part because industries implement commonsense best management practices like covering tar pits and marking transmission lines.

Read the infographic summarizing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Facts and figures on industrial causes of bird mortality in the United States:

- Power lines: Up to 64 million birds per year (Source: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0101565>)
- Communication towers: Up to 7 million birds per year (Source: <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0034025>)
- Oil waste pits: 500,000 to 1 million birds per year (Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16988870>)
- Oil spills: The 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill is estimated to have killed more than 1 million birds (<http://www.audubon.org/news/more-one-million-birds-died-during-deepwater-horizon-disaster>)

To learn more about Audubon and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, please visit [www.audubon.org/mbta](http://www.audubon.org/mbta).

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**Subject:** Pensacola News Journal: On BP oil spill anniversary, Pensacola residents take stand against drilling

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**Emily Erdmier**  
Executive

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