

The Perilous Consequences of Public Policy Decisions: On Vulnerable Communities An Analysis of Two Gulf Coast Disasters

NEW JERSEY CLIMATE
ADAPTATION CONFERENCE
REDUCING RISKS TO VULNERABLE
POPULATIONS
MAY 22, 2013



RUTGERS
THE STATE UNIVERSITY
OF NEW JERSEY

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Deep South Center for
Environmental Justice



New Orleans, LA

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.



2010 Statistics

- The year 2010 was projected to be a worse Atlantic hurricane season than was 2005.



In 2010 14 to 23 named storms are projected, with 3 to 7 major storms predicted.

Earthquake in Haiti

A massive earthquake struck Haiti on Jan. 12, 2010, killing more than **200,000 people** and **leveling 38%** of the capital of Port-au-Prince. The magnitude 7.0 quake, the most powerful to hit Haiti in a century, was felt strongly in eastern Cuba, more than **200 miles** away.

http://articles.cnn.com/2010-01-12/world/haiti.earthquake_1_earthquake-haiti-2010-peacekeeping-mission-president-rene-preval-haiti?_s=PM:WORLD

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2010/02/27/chi-le-earthquake.html>



Earthquake in Chile

On February 27, 2010 a powerful 8.8-magnitude earthquake one of the largest ever recorded, tore apart houses, bridges and highways in central Chile and sent a tsunami racing halfway around the world.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2010/02/27/chile-earthquake.html>



Flooding in France

- On June 16, 2010, an Atlantic storm that killed at least 47 people on the western coast of France was declared a national disaster.

- According to Meteo France, the national forecaster, the region had not seen such floods since 1827.



The storm also hit the western coasts of Portugal and Spain, then moved towards Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/7833492/Deadly-flash-floods-hit-southern-France.html>

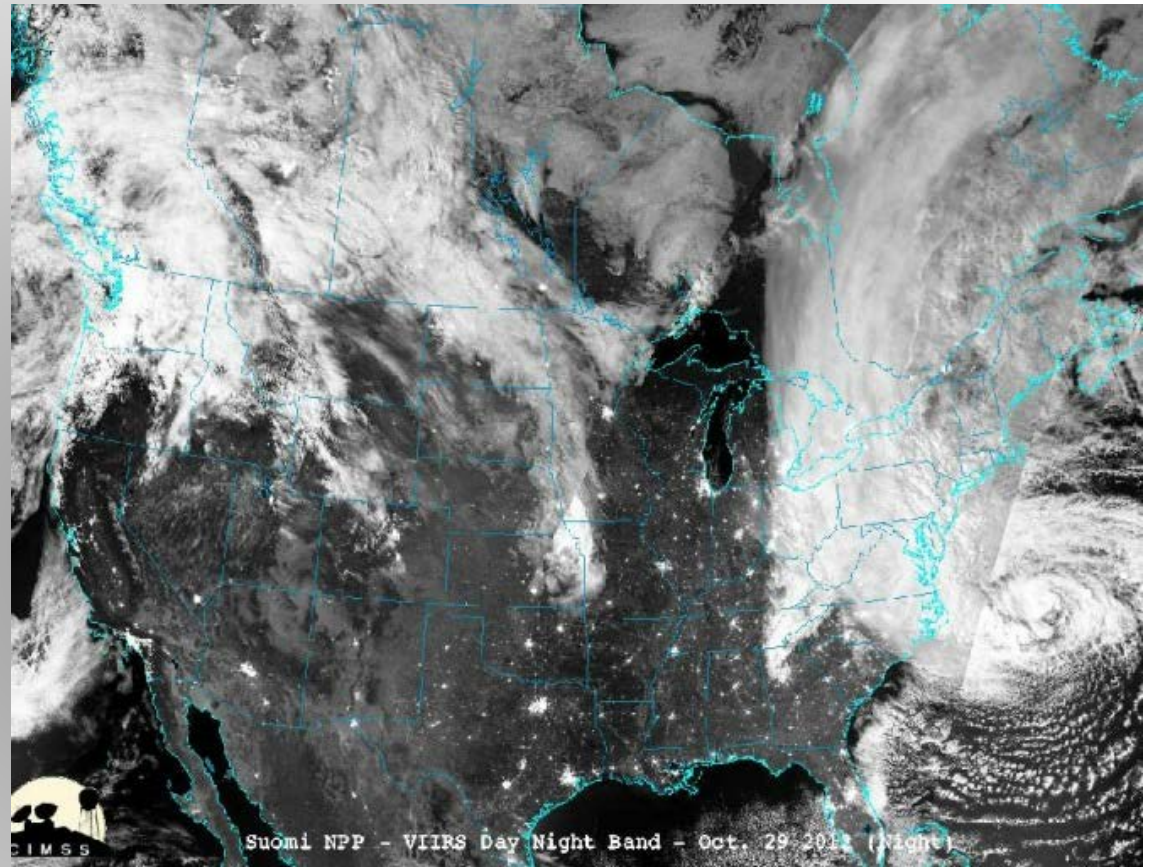
2012 Statistics



- The 2012 Atlantic hurricane season **produced a total of 19 tropical storms**
 - 10 became hurricanes,
 - Well above the average of 6
 - 1 of which were major hurricanes
 - Below the average of 2
- This level of activity matched NOAA's **predictions and continues the trend of active hurricane seasons that began in 1995.**
- **The 19 tropical storms represent the third-highest total (tied with 1887, 1995, 2010 and 2011) since records began in 1851**
 - Above the average of 11

Hurricane Sandy

As Hurricane Sandy made a historic landfall on the New Jersey coast during the night of Oct. 29, the Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) on NASA/NOAA's Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership (NPP) satellite captured this night-time view of the storm.



This image provided by University of Wisconsin-Madison is a composite of several satellite passes over North America taken 16 to 18 hours before Sandy's landfall.

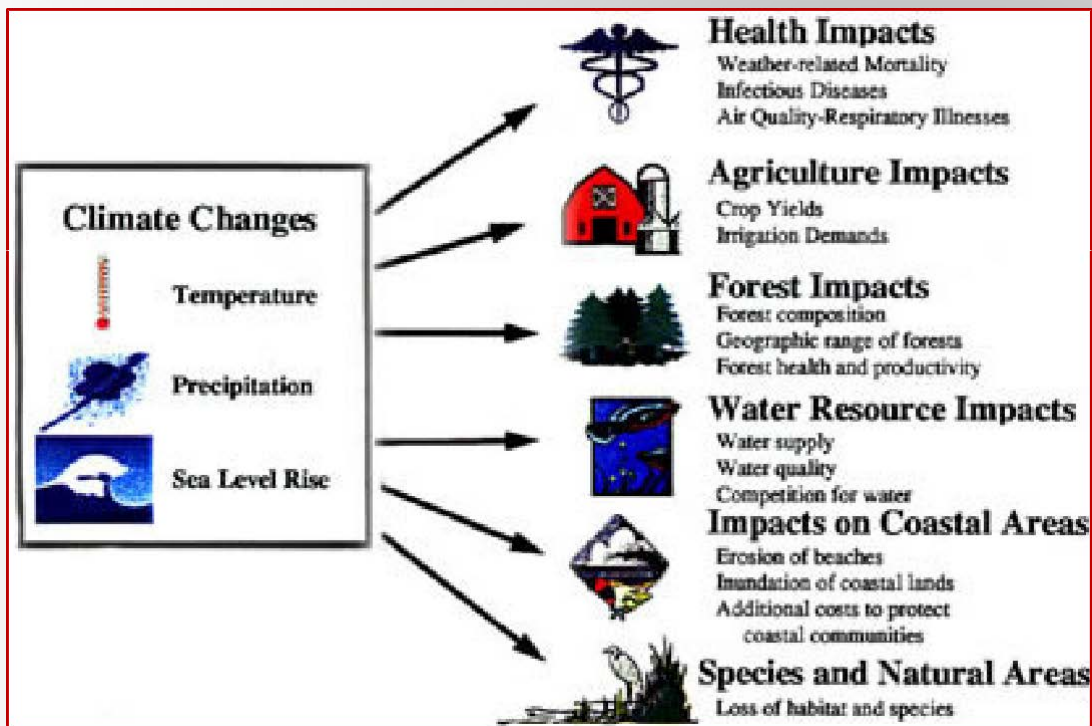


Hurricane Sandy's Impacts

On Staten Island:

- Nineteen bodies were found in Staten Island in the days immediately following Hurricane Sandy alone. Staten Island residents were outraged by what they describe as the slow response from relief organizations.
- This echoed the experiences of residents of poor communities in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina.

Managing Weather Impacts



- Societies have always had to manage the impacts of weather and climate related events.



A Question of Equity

- Disadvantaged populations around the world already bear inequitable environmental burdens



- There is inadequate knowledge of what new disproportionate impacts will emerge under climate change



The Differential Effects of Weather Disasters



The differential effects of catastrophic weather disasters are consistent with a pervasive continuum in which low-income and minority communities suffer from both higher socio-economic stress and greater environmental exposure to toxins, hazardous wastes and other environmental burdens.

Such was the case in New Orleans after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and the BP Oil Spill.



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

Anticipating Katrina

- Residents of New Orleans lined the I-10 in a desperate effort to leave the city in anticipation of the impending hurricane.
- The contraflow plan was implemented resulting in standstill traffic leading out of the city.













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.



WHO RECOVERS



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.



THE PERILOUS CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY DECISIONS



Disaster Capitalism

THE BUILDING PLAN...

The Big Land Grab

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

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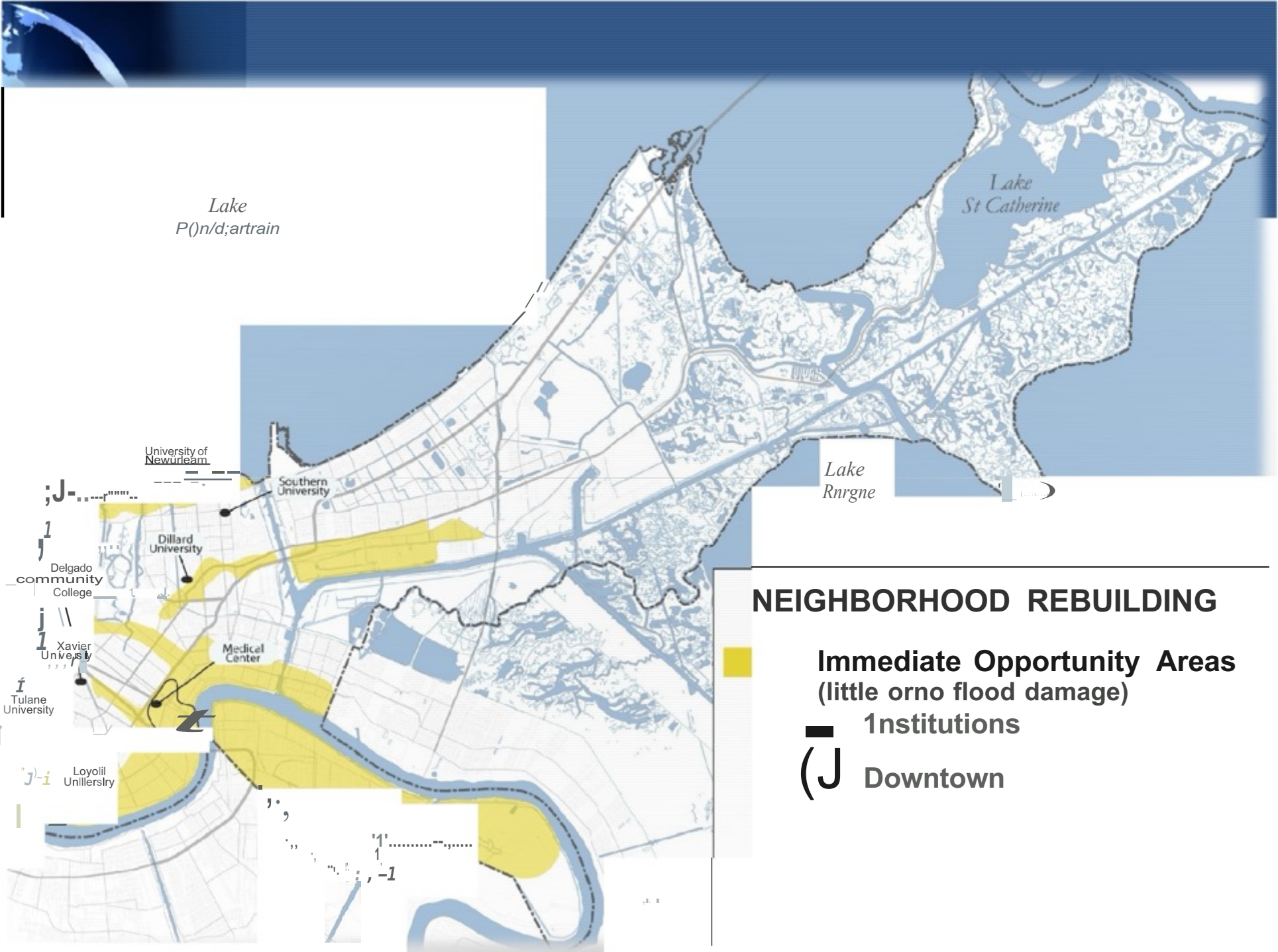
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Lake Poydras

Lake St Catherine

Lake Rongne

University of New Orleans

Southern University

Dillard University

Delgado Community College

Xavier University

Tulane University

Loyola University

Medical Center

NEIGHBORHOOD REBUILDING

- Immediate Opportunity Areas (little or no flood damage)
- Institutions
- (J Downtown



JUST FOLLOW THE MONEY...

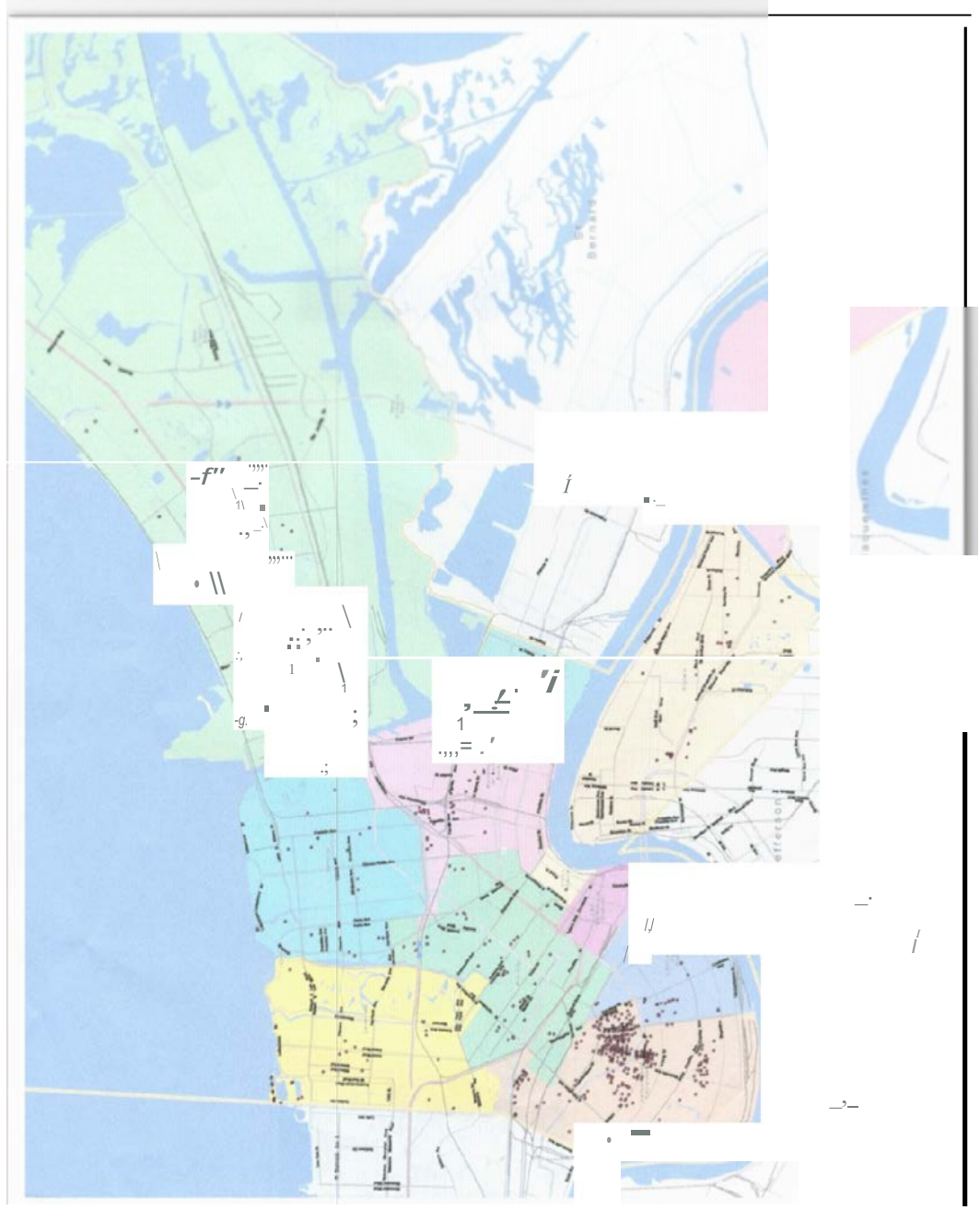
TO SEE THE UNWRITTEN PLAN



Hazard Mitigation Funds

- The majority of these funds were concentrated in the Broadmoore area of the city.
- Review of data on the hard hit Lower Ninth Ward and New Orleans East shows little if any funds distributed in these areas.

Hazardous Mitigation Project Map





GIS Analysis: Use of Recovery Dollars

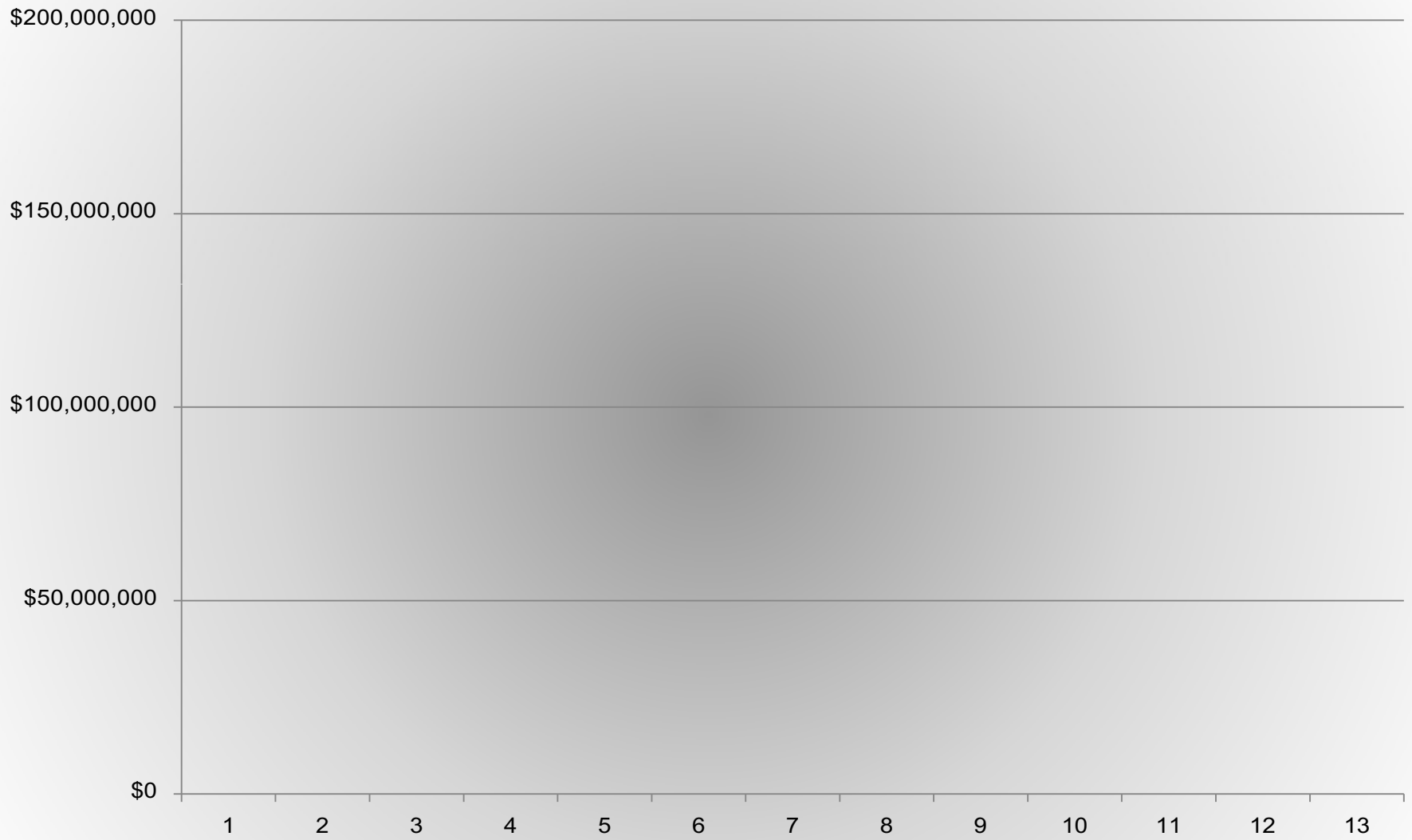
for Rebuilding Projects with Implications for Race and Class

- Preliminary analysis of estimated recovery and rebuilding project costs for each of New Orleans' 13 Planning Districts
- Based on information provided in the *Unified New Orleans Plan: Citywide Strategic Recovery and Rebuilding Plan*
- Substantially greater allocation estimated for Planning **Districts 1 and 2**, than for the other Planning Districts

Estimated Project Costs

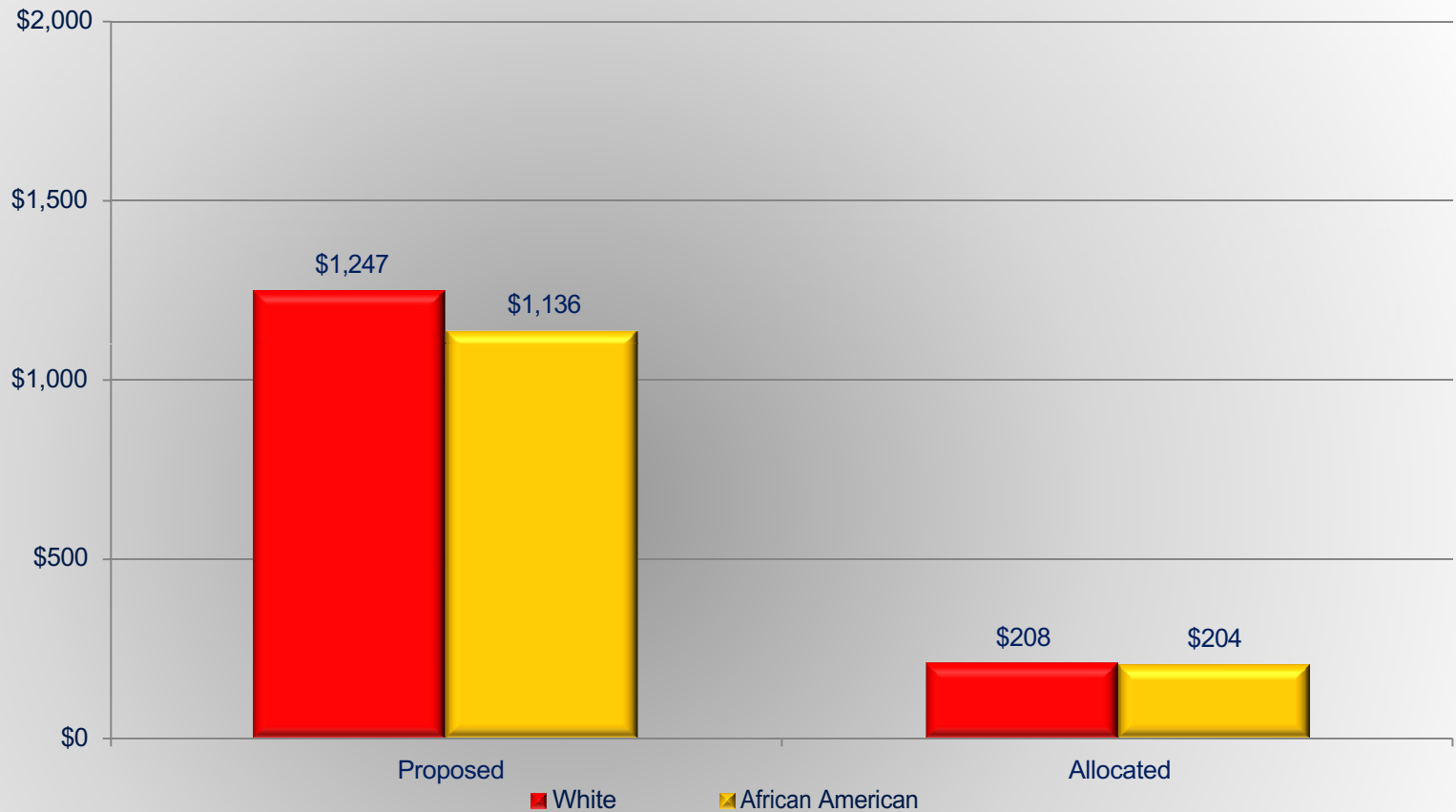
- By Planning District





Resource Allocations by District

Proposed and actual resource allocations per district (in \$millions) for white majority and African American majority planning districts



Note: There are four (1, 5, 11, and 13) white-majority planning districts whereas there are eight (2,4,6,7,8,9,10,and 12) African American-majority planning districts.



Our Response to Hurricane Katrina

**THE SAFEWAY BACK HOME
PROJECT:
ONE SOLUTION**

Steelworkers at Work



*A Safe Way
Back Home
The Gang*





In Class

**Suiting
Up**



Picking Up Debris



Removing Top Soil





The Sod Arrives



Volunteers at Work

During



Before

After



Aberdeen Road...



Clean and Green

Healthy Rebuilding in New Orleans



- A project funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation
- To increase awareness of ways to reduce unhealthy, toxic living conditions
- Focus on remediating indoor and outdoor environmental issues Post-Katrina

Healthy Homes Rebuilding Project



- A project funded by a grant from HUD in conjunction with Howard University in partnership with Dillard University



Public Policy Inequities

O Housing

O Public Education

O Recreational
Infrastructure

O Food Security

O Medical Facilities



Inequities

- Unequal protection and unequal treatment of African Americans over decades in New Orleans are factors that have made them more vulnerable to devastating impacts of a disaster.
- These factors include:
 - **Physical location**
 - Socio-economic status
 - Race
- Lingering institutional constraints created and perpetuated by racialized place have hindered progress towards equitable recovery

Children are
directly affected
by inequities in
recovery

INEQUITIES

In Housing



The Road Home Program: Fighting Inequity

- A lawsuit was filed in November 2008 in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia on behalf of five individual plaintiffs representing a class of more than 20,000 African-American homeowners and two fair housing organizations, the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center and the National Fair Housing Alliance alleging discrimination.





What is the Discrimination?

- The discrimination is the result of the formula used to determine Road Home grants. Grant awards are based on the lower of two-values:
 - The pre-storm value of the home,
 - or the cost of damage.
- Home values in most predominantly African-American neighborhoods are lower than the values of similar homes in white neighborhoods although costs for rebuilding are the same.

What is the Discrimination

As a result, the grants for African-American homeowners are more likely to be based upon the pre-storm value of their homes, leaving them without enough money to rebuild. In contrast, white homeowners are more likely to receive grants based on the actual cost of repairs. The lawsuit seeks to eliminate this disparity.



A Light at the End of the Tunnel



- On September 22, 2010, the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia issued an injunction protecting remaining funds from the Road Home Program.
- The injunction prevented the State from expending funds while the plaintiffs put on evidence that the formula used by Louisiana and HUD has had a discriminatory effect.



The Results of Flawed Housing Policy



ALL THAT GLITTERS....



The Results Are...

- The destruction of Public Housing without one to one housing replacement, as was required by law for low-income housing
- **Affordable housing shortage has resulted in a long waiting list for the HUD Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (HCVP)**
 - Approximately 20,000 families
 - The waiting list is closed
- HANO currently serves more than 17,000 families **on the HCVP program.**

(A Long) Road Home


- In July of 2011 a settlement was reached,
- Also, in response to the plaintiffs' housing discrimination lawsuit,
- HUD and the State of Louisiana changed the Road Home program grant formula to provide full relief to more than 13,000 homeowners.
- All eligible low- and moderate-income homeowners **received supplemental grant awards totaling \$473 million** based upon the estimated cost of damage to their homes, rather than the original grants based merely upon the much lower pre-storm market value of their homes.



A Settlement



- By virtue of the settlement agreement...
- HUD and the State of Louisiana have agreed to amend the Road Home program to offer **additional large supplemental rebuilding grants at an estimated value of over \$60 million**
- to several thousand homeowners whose **initial Road Home Option 1 grant awards were based on the pre-storm market value** of their homes and who have been unable to rebuild their homes.

The image features a dark blue background. In the top left corner, there is a white, stylized globe showing the outlines of continents. The rest of the background is a solid, dark blue color.

In Recreational Infrastructure

INEQUITIES

All Parks Are NOT Created Equal



Laurence Playspot
Napoleon Avenue
Uptown New Orleans.



Taylor Playground
South Roman Street
pales in comparison.



Lyons
Playground
was rebuilt
after Hurricane
Katrina with
the help of a
\$75,000 grant
for playground
equipment and
\$30,000 from
NORD



In Public School Education

IU  UNIQUÉ



The New Orleans Public School System: Pre-Katrina

- The OSPB operated under a single district **system 128 of the 130 public schools in New Orleans**
- The remaining 2 were charter schools operated by the Louisiana Board of **Secondary and Elementary Education (BESE)**
- **Our single district system was labeled a failure.**



Post-Katrina Actions

Before thousands of New Orleanians returned home ...

1. LA Legislators approve Act 35 – changing the rules to make it easier for the state to take over local schools.
2. LA Governor signs executive orders – parents' and teachers' approval is no longer needed to convert a traditional public school to a charter school. The vast majority of New Orleans public schools are taken over by the state.




As a Result...

- State policy-makers dismantled and replaced the public school system with a **patchwork of:**
 - state-run public schools,
 - locally run public schools and
 - charter schools.
- Post-Katrina, 57% of public school students in New Orleans attend traditional **public schools.**

Following the Takeover

- Thousands of teachers, principals and support workers were fired from the NOPS system
- WITHOUT:
 - Notice
 - Cause
- THEY LOST:
 1. Their jobs
 2. Retirement pay
 3. Days of accrued leave
 4. Their honor





Our Children... the Canary in the Mine...

THE BIG EXPERIMENT

Charter

BESE

School Types

RSD

NOPS

Type 5 Charters

Type 2 Charters

Type 1 Charters

Type 3 Charters

Type 4 Charters

Have charter with BESE

Have Charter with BESE

Have charter with NOPS

Charter with NOPS

Have charter with BESE and NOPS

No admissions requirements

Admissions Requirements

Admissions Requirements

Admissions Requirements

Admissions Requirements

Conversion School

Conversion or Start up

New Start Up School

Conversion School

Conversion or Start up

Non-profit entity operation only

Non-profit entity operation only

Non-profit entity operation only

Non-profit entity operation only

For-profit entity operation permissible

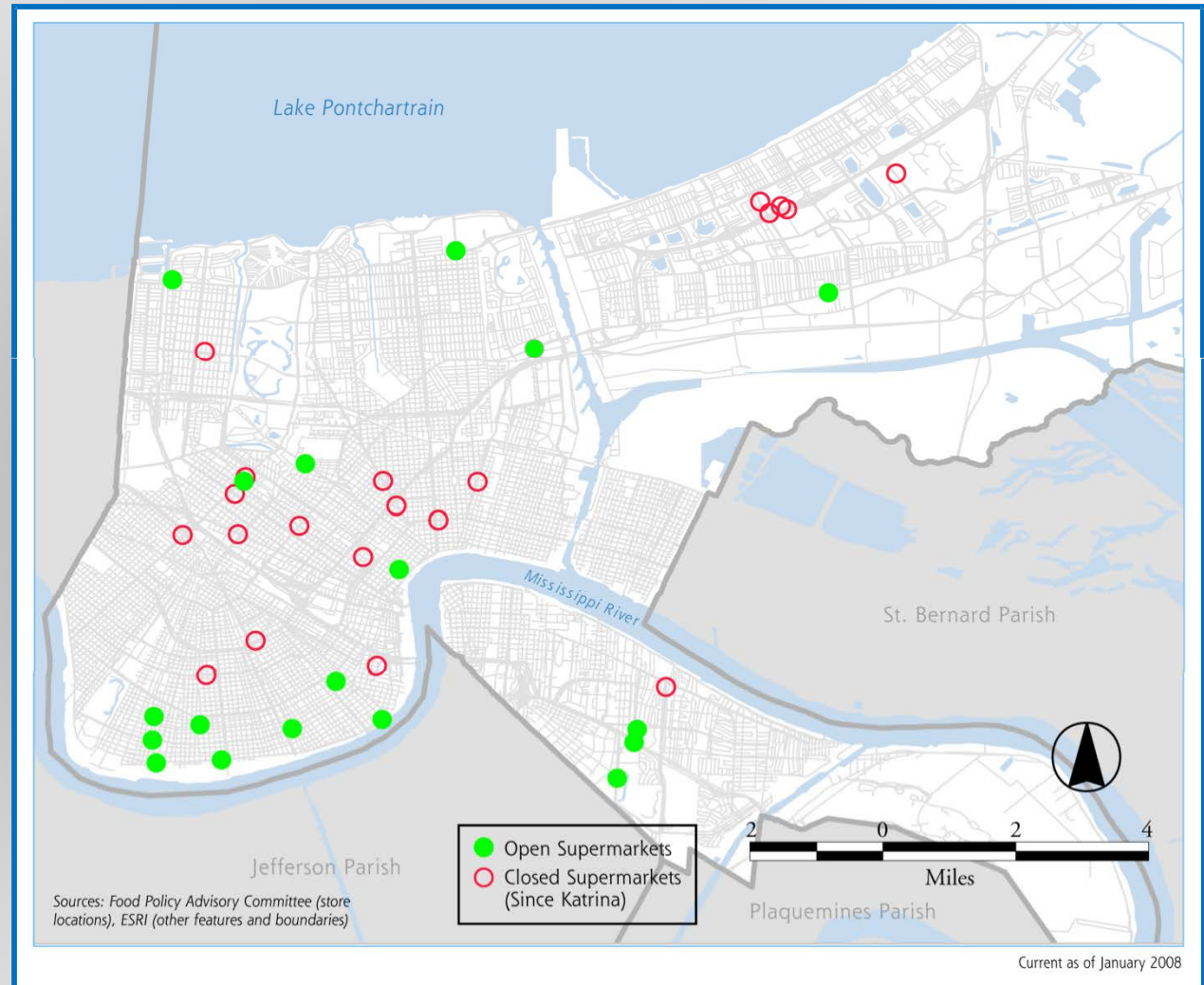


In Food Security

IUAVNIQES

Supermarkets: Pre & Post Katrina

Map created by the Louisiana Public Health Institute for the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee. (January 2008). Originally published in: The Prevention Research Center at Tulane University and The Food Trust. (2008, March). Building Healthy Communities: Expanding Access to Fresh Food Retail. A Report by the New Orleans Food Policy Advisory Committee. New Orleans, LA: Authors.



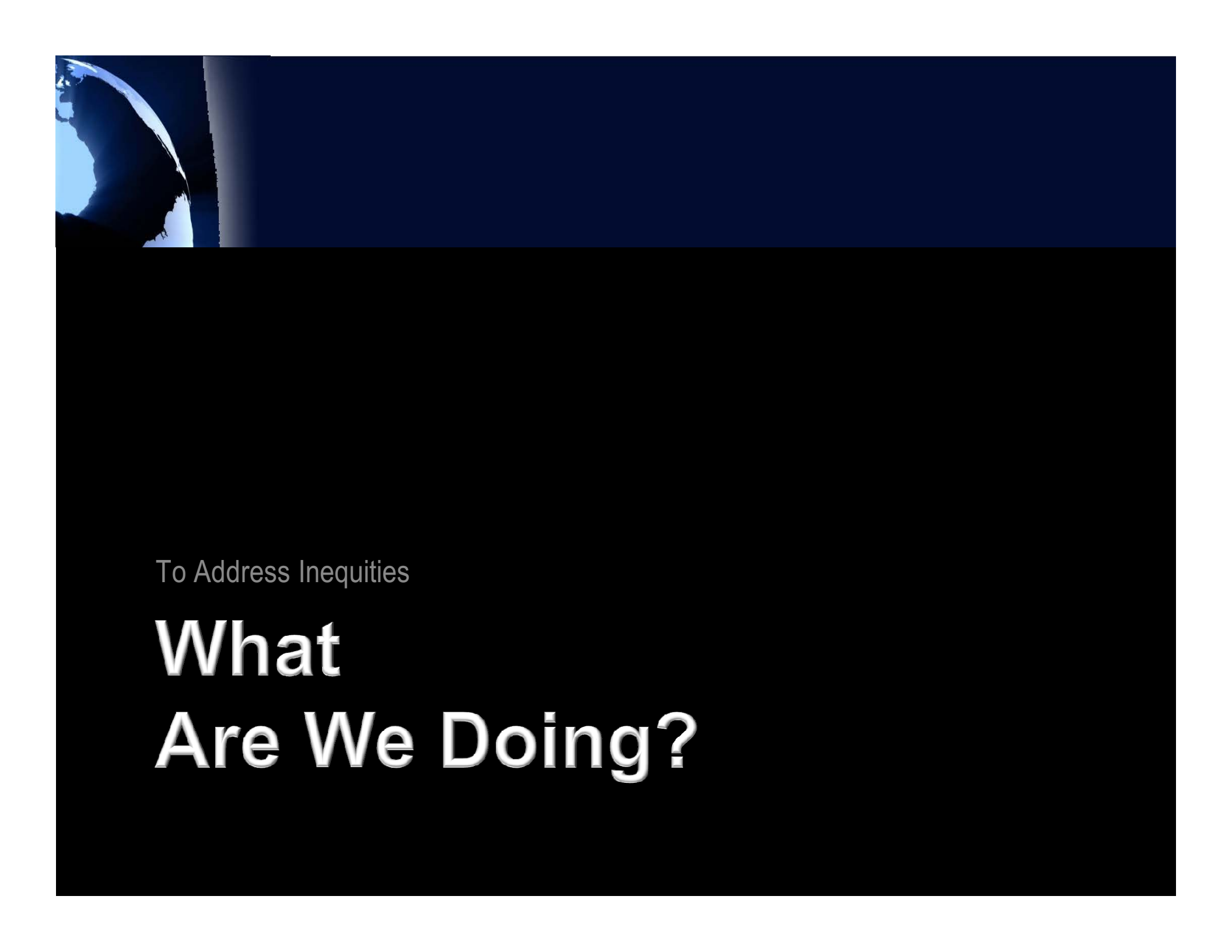


Food Security

- **New Orleans East has one supermarket to service approximately 70,000 residents.**



OUR RESPONSE TO INEQUITIES



To Address Inequities

**What
Are We Doing?**



Public Policy Taskforce

The Task Force monitors the **recovery and rebuilding efforts in the region for fairness as it relates to health and the environment.** It is composed of DSCEJ staff, other **invited experts and key community partners and residents.**



The Purpose

- The purpose of the Policy Task Force is to advocate for equitable **policies and practices**
- **to establish healthy and safe communities in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.**

The Goal

- To create a model to engage city government in an effort to develop an accountability strategy for working with communities throughout the Gulf Coast.





To Bolster Our Economy



Are We Hiring^{We}?

Creating a Workforce for Green Jobs



Green Jobs Workforce

- Training workers to clean up hazardous waste sites is **essential in the effort to rebuild sustainably**



Worker Training Programs

THE DSCEJ SOLUTION

Worker Training Programs



DSCEJ Minority Worker Training Program

Previous Training Sites

- Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
- Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- West Dallas and Houston, Texas
- Hattiesburg, Mississippi
- Shreveport, Louisiana
- Biloxi/Gulfport, Mississippi
- Atlanta, Georgia

Current Training Sites





THE LATEST DISASTER

THE BP OIL

SPILL



The BP Oil Spill...

- Killed 11 workers
- Leaked approximately 200 million gallons of oil into the Gulf before capped
- Contaminated 120 miles of United States coastline
- Imperiled multi-billion dollar fishing and tourism industries
- Killed birds, sea turtles, dolphins and other marine life





Environmental Impacts

The oil spill will have profound impacts on:

Marine life

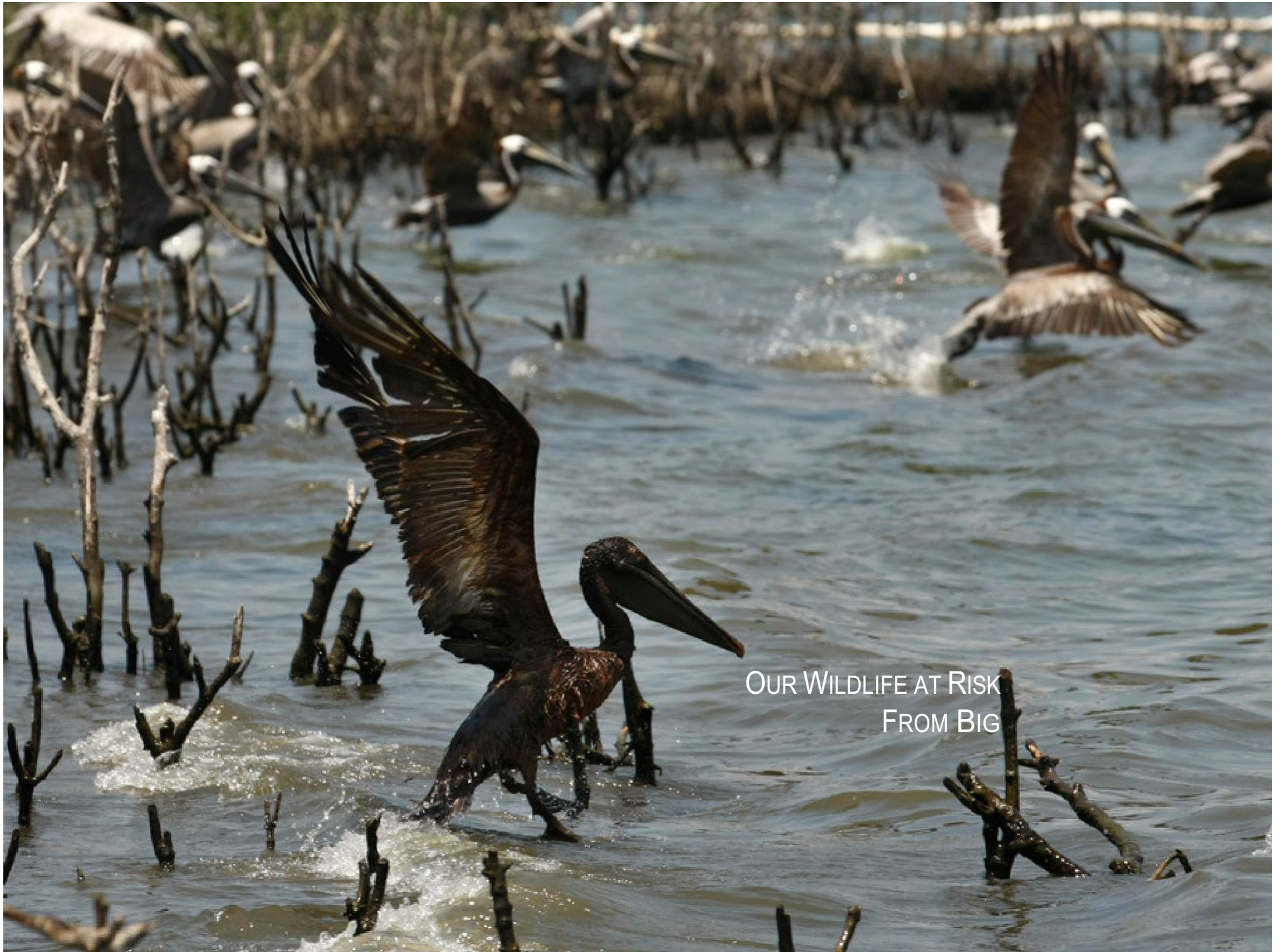
Wildlife

Marshes

Coastline

- For years to come...





OUR WILDLIFE AT RISK
FROM BIG



Economic Impacts

The oil spill will have profound impacts on:

Fishermen

Shrimpers

Oystermen

The Food Industry

Support Industries

Our Cultural Heritage



Oysterman Ameal Wilson (Shawn Escoffery)



Photo by [Shawn Coffey](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Health Impacts

Respiratory Problems

Consumption of Contaminated
Marine life

Exposure to Dispersants

Mental Health Effects



TRAINING AND CLEAN UP EFFORTS

THE BP OIL SPILL



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**

Exhausting Work



Terrance Castle of Houma, La., wipes perspiration soon after beginning a cleanup effort on a beach near Grand Isle. *(Carolyn Cole / Los Angeles Times / May 22, 2010)*



DCSEJ BP Oil Spill Response Training Statistics

21 Trained under the New Orleans MWTP

23 Trained in the DOL Technology-based Learning Worker Training Program

71 Trained in 40-Hr Hazwoper through training partners of DSCEJ

TOTAL TRAINED 115 Cleanup Workers



SUPERVISORS ON DUTY



CLEAN UP EFFORTS



DOING WHAT WE CAN SAFELY

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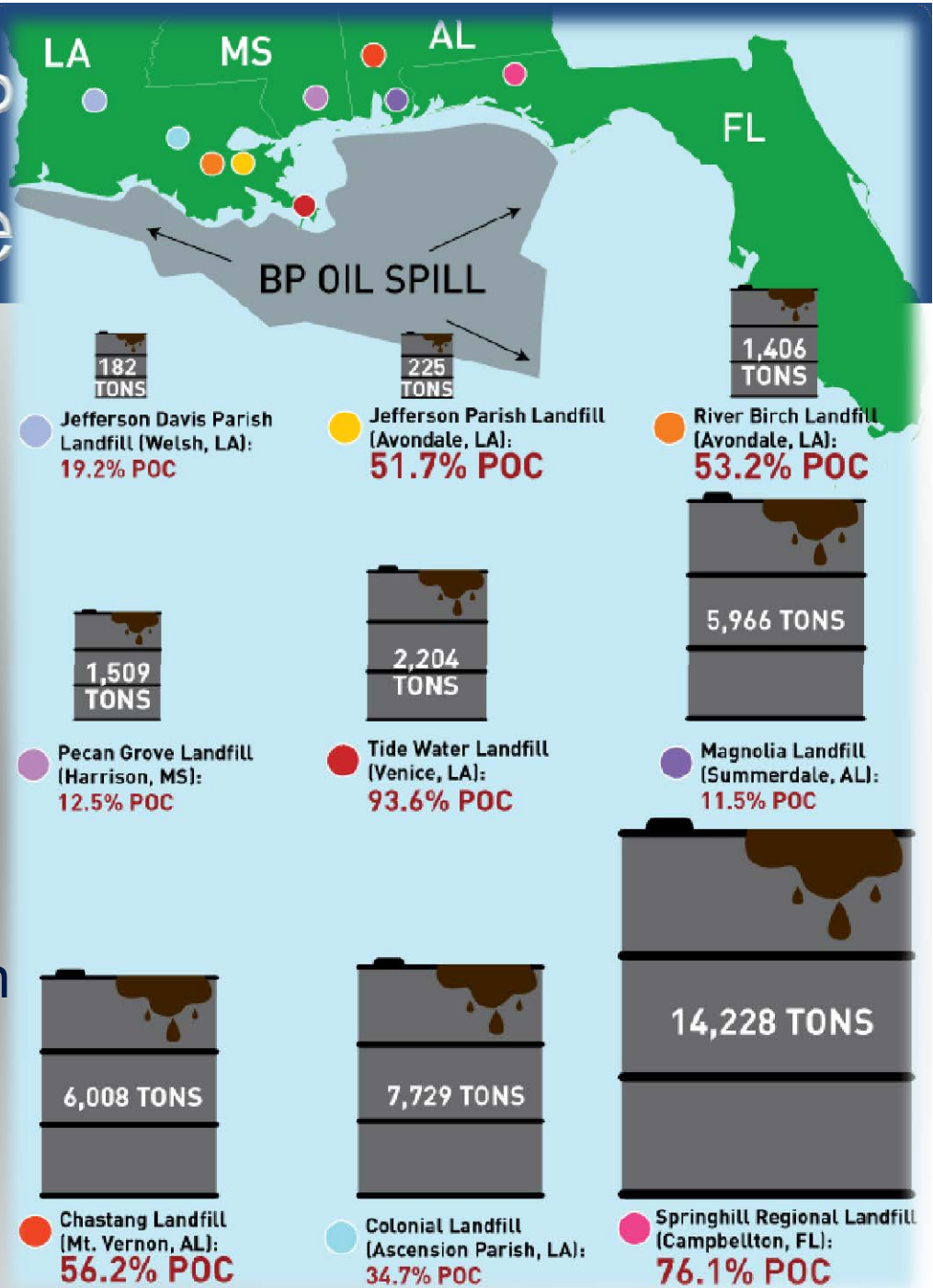
**WHAT ABOUT THE BP OIL
SPILL WASTES?**



Where is the BP Oil Spill Waste Now?

- Landfills selected for BP Waste disposal are located in four Gulf Coast states.
 - Alabama
 - Florida
 - Louisiana
 - Mississippi

Distribution of BP Oil Spill Waste



- Not much attention has been given to the communities selected as disposal sites for the oil spill waste.
- All but one of the chosen landfill is in close proximity to People of Color communities.

Our Response: The BP Waste Tracker Project

The major goals of this project are to train impacted communities in :

- the understanding of scientific data;
- the understanding health impacts;
- ways to protect their health;
- how to track amounts of wastes disposed;
- how to track the transport of wastes disposed via diesel trucks.





AFFECTING PUBLIC POLICY

Community Action and Advocacy

DSCEJ Discusses Fishers Needs with HHS Secretary Katherine Sebelius



Mayor Mitchell J. Landrieu talks to
members of the Vietnamese
Fisher Community

Meeting with Katherine Sebelius



Congressman Ahn "Joseph" Cao in attendance



Recent Policy Efforts

Recommendations to the Oil Spill Commission

- Address government inadequacies in sediment, soil, water, and fish sampling.
- Provide information on acute health effects from dispersants and provide ongoing health care for coastal communities impacted.
- Address community concerns of BP waste being disposed in EJ communities.
- Provide transitional career training to fishers impacted by oil disaster.
- Review protocol of worker safety and include citizen participation. Ensure protocol to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is enforced at all work sites.
- Ensure public access to areas affected by the oil disaster.



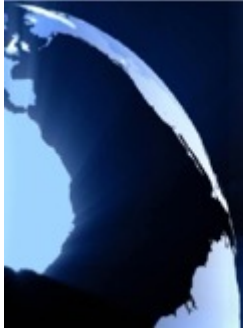
What Has Been Done

- Participated in the development of a health survey for hazardous waste clean up workers produced by the NIEHS.
- Presently participating in the NIEHS Gulf Study Scientific Advisory and Community Advisory Boards



Conclusion

- Hurricane Katrina and the BP Oil Spill raised a new set of questions related to equity that demand rigorous analysis, prudent planning and courageous political leadership.
- At stake are the lives and futures of our most vulnerable communities.



Learn More

*Join the Workforce of
Deep South Center
for Environmental
Justice*

Two Must Reads

RAISE THE RAINBOW RECLAIM, REBUILD, AND RE-ITALIZE NEW ORLEANS AND THE GULF COAST ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

Struggles to Reclaim, Rebuild, and Re-italize New Orleans and the Gulf Coast



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