

Interview Summary Form**Interview Details**

Interviewee Names:	<u>Scott Metzger</u>	Date:	<u>10/19/10</u>	Time:	<u>2:00pm</u>
Interviewee Title:	<u>Clean Harbors</u>	Interviewee Job Location:	<u>Mobile, LA</u>		
Interviewer Name(s):	<u>David Moore, Larry Dietrick, Brian House, Bruce Johnson, Barbara Parker, John Tarpley</u>	Interview Location:	<u>In person</u>		

Interview Summary**Discuss your role during this incident and how it evolved?**

- Early on, during the first days of the event, we were asked by MSRC and USCG to deploy resources. We were asked to move Strike Team assets from across county and move them to the GOM. We trucked it in to wherever the DRAT team indicated the equipment was needed the most.
- We also move NRC and MSRC equipment as well as dispersants (from the east and west coast).
- We had 4000 people working, both our own personnel and subcontractors. 380 were our personnel. The vast majority of the 4k were local people hired from local resources to pick up tarballs.

Do you remember whether MSRC or USCG called you first?

- I don't know. It was the same day that MSRC and USCG called us. We delivered to a variety of places: Venice, the air station in Mobile (these were USCG assets to be airlifted somewhere else), etc.

What was your role once you transported these assets?

- Once we got the assets staged there, our role was done.
- As days progressed, our first tasking was through MSRC. It was to stage resources along the AL coast. The first day we were hired, we began bringing resources into AL. Some of those resources we brought on speculation. So on our own behalf, we brought in a lot of stuff. Most companies like us, we move stuff on speculation. We are a for-profit company, so if our equipment is not on the ground, it can't be used or put to work. A lot of companies bring in resources ahead of the curve. As we were bringing in a lot of equipment, we were given more tasking in the Daulphin Island and Bayou La Batre areas. Eventually, we did shoreline protection, deployed boom, skimming in near shore, etc.
- In Pascagoula, MS, we brought in more and more equipment and personnel. We were training personnel on behalf of BP by request. All of these taskings were being worked through MSRC. I am not sure when O'Brien's group came in, but in July, we started getting separate taskings from MSRC and O'Brien's.
- We received daily calls from USCG. We flew some rope mop skimmers into theater from PR. USCG also asked us to bring absorbent snare. After moving that equipment into Cocodrie, LA, we did a lot of booming operations, and then as days continued for MSRC and NRC, we were tasked with inbound vessel decontamination. We also did decon for ships entering Mobile bay. These were mainly non-response vessels though we did decon some vessels affiliated with the response.

At the height of the response, can you give us a sense of the number of people you had working the incident?

- About 4k workers. This included onshore beach cleaners, both offshore and near shore skimming operations and boom deployment. We did minimal work offshore. We had maybe 20 people working offshore supporting NRC operations. We didn't have any working in recovery operations offshore. The total number of boats working across all zones was ~320. This ranged from 20-21 foot vessels to 75 foot craft. We still have some vessels working off the LA shoreline. We deployed about 200,000 feet of mostly 18 inch containment boom.
- We had three 30 foot skimmers for near shore skimming, but there was not a lot of inshore oil. It was mainly tar mats that you don't skim. We had a lot of brush skimmers. We brought in a bunch of assets from a lot of manufacturers. We had some from Finland that we purchased early on. Everyday we were getting calls from every USCG sector asking

what still have in their respective AOR. There were some companies that emptied their inventory and sent everything to the GOM. We realized that we have responsibilities in the sectors we are based out of. So we made sure we had plenty in the parking lot. We bought a lot of boom early, and a lot of it is going back to our offices else where.

Did the initial lower than actual quantity of oil being released affect your response posture in any way? Did this initial figure, which was subsequently revised much higher, impact you?

- We took anything we heard related to volume with a grain of salt. We got word that there was a lot of oil through the spill contract grapevine. We heard a lot through word of mouth. You have to understand, a lot of contractors work for each other. A lot of smaller companies want to get hired on, so there is a lot of networking and informal conversations.

Do you remember the initial request you got from MSRC?

- It was bring everything you have. On April 27th we got the call. We have a standard relationship with MSRC as a MSRC Spill Team Area Responders (STARs) contractor. MSRC has databases that show everything we have. We were told to "bring everything you have." But I wasn't going to bring everything because I have other responsibilities. So it was more like "bring a lot."

Do you have a separate BOA with USCG?

- Yes, USCG was activating us for bringing in strike team assets. We have a BOA to move their gear into theater.

Would a mandatory equipment inventory help?

- The strides made in the RII database in the last 6 months have really helped. Unfortunately, it is not a real-time database, which might have been useful. We as contractors need due dates to either voluntarily (or be required to) make updates to the RII X number of times a year. I recommend quarterly. It doesn't have to be mandatory.
- During the Area Committee meetings we attended elsewhere during the event, there was a lot of discussion about state assets being added to the response organization. We had a lot of calls early on during the response that talked about, for example, what Sector NNE could bring to the party.
- We need to have a database that includes all private, state and federal assets-we have to have it.
- The problem the RRI had was, as things were deployed, there was no quick easy way to pull those assets off to show they were not available to respond anymore. Four weeks into the DWH event, we received direction from USCG on how to show in the RII what was in use in the DWH response operations. That was tough for us to do, because don't have enough people trained to work in the database. I have worked with the RII, but there is a need to have people trained to make adjustments to RII.

Where were you physically located during the incident?

- In the Mobile ICP. I was getting deployments straight from the Operations Section. Early on, requests were not going thru the proper chain. They were not going through logistics. But that got fixed pretty quick.

Where you aware of deployment decisions being made based on ACPs?

- I was involved in what should go where. I was making sure we had enough to put out in the field and that our people had the resources they needed.

Did you receive orders to protect a certain ESA? Were you given schematics of where boom should be deployed?

- Yes. For example, Dauphin Island. Every morning, we got the tasking of day written up on map. We were not handed booming strategies, just a map with a line across inlet. We knew from that map that we needed to boom an inlet. So what we handed to the crews was a map with hand drawings on it. Boat crews then had to report back on number of boom feet and anchors they placed.

Can you clarify which people were with your people at Dauphin Island?

- U.S. Environmental Services, O'Brien's and BP were there. USES had to deploy zone managers. We knew a lot of the players already. All of them were in the field at the staging area or branch.

Were you involved in any near shore recovery efforts? Or were you mainly involved in booming?

- We received a few calls for more than just tar balls. A lot of that was supposed to be done by the VOO boats. As reports came in from an over-flight, we would activate our 30 foot skimmer. But by the time it got there 2 hours later, the oil would have moved. We got calls every day to intercept oil.

Talk about the political overlay. Can you comment on how this impacted boom, for example?

- Everyday. It comes down to, "who yelled the loudest." It was certainly true then, and is still true today. A lot of local government folks and on up to Governor, whoever demanded loudly, they got what they wanted.

Do you know of assets that were diverted because of pressures that came from totally outside of the response organization?

- Not totally, but there were changes to our marching orders because "he" said "do that."
- I can't recall a specific example, but I know assets were moved because of what we conceived to be political pressure. For example, we had to boom inlets to bays where there were expensive homes.

In your own mind, did you ever question the tasks given to you to execute?

- This gets into what is more important: environmental sensitive areas versus economic sensitive areas? I understand this balance from my history in the industry. My role wasn't to 2nd guess decisions and question why we were booming this inlet before that inlet. Those decisions were made in planning and pushed to field. Once I heard about it, those tasking were already done.

Can you talk about the VOO program? Did you have any involvement? Can you comment on whether you think it had a positive or negative impact?

- Many times, it made sense. Many times, we were asked to man VOO boats so that if they found oil, there were trained personnel on the ships to deal with oil they found. But we would only board these vessels if they had insurance and been inspected. Since we didn't know anything about operators, we were nervous putting our people on these VOOs. We were nervous because, for example, three people got sick from CO poisoning after being transported on a VOO vessel. We didn't manage VOO vessels, so we had a lot of questions: How sturdy is it? Is there a drug screening for the operator? Are the people on board physically fit to do job?
- In terms of demob and pulling boom up, VOOs worked well pulling clean boom. There were also a help deploying some boom, because you can put a lot of boom on shrimp boat and then have responders worry about other things.

Who was controlling the VOO program?

- It was controlled from a whole separate arm in the command that dealt with only VOOs. It was done out of the Mobile ICP for our AOR. They were being directed from the Mobile ICP. Many times, they were in the wrong place.

How was your AOR divided?

- Everything was sub-divided. It changed over time. As taskings changed, they needed tighter control over shoreline. It was important that everyone identified the same areas in the same way everyday.

You have obviously participated in many exercises. Do you feel that they prepared you for this event?

- I do. I have an understanding of how it is supposed to work. Full scale exercises are good, but TTX and deployment exercises are useful too. For a lot of us that do a lot of them, it isn't foreign. Our staff is ICS trained to 300-400 levels. But there were a lot of people that didn't know what ICS stood for. When we pulled a lot of people in, we trained them to 100 so at least they knew what a 213 meant. We pulled in a lot of people from different parts of our company.

Do you have any recommendations for future exercise to make them better?

- I think the SONS drill we did in Maine was good. I don't think any of us thought we would be doing a real SONS a few months later. Most TTXs are pretty good. They pull in the right mix of USCG, industry and other team members (e.g., FWS, Tribal, etc.). One thing in exercises we never addressed was VOOs and volunteers. Post-Cosco Busan, any incident results in a lot of volunteers coming forward. We need more work on that. We also gloss over in exercise media

releases, the JIC, and Public Affairs in general. We let the RP in the drill pick anyone to play in those roles. I think that aspect needs to be exercised a lot more, because when things go wrong, you can quickly get a black eye.

Did you do any just-in-time training on site?

- Yes. Training was a complicated and ever changing factor. We would always start with the 40 hour HAZWOPER (or the 8 hour refresher), conduct a physical, background check, complete the I-9, and do a drug screening. If the applicants had all of this, then they can work for us. On this spill, training changed a lot over time and it changed with the taskings. In some cases, they needed 24 hour HAZWOPER training for certain things like walking the beach. Then, they required that the people only had a 4-hour training. Because we were concerned about the safety implications, we asked for an email to back the decision-making for lessening the training requirements. Eventually, it went back up to be required to do 24 hour HAZWOPER. So the evolution was 40-24-4-24 hours of training. A lot of people were hired that physically shouldn't be out there. And a lot of the people were hired that didn't want to be out there. For the longest time, we hired people to be on standby and put them in staging areas to wait for work. We did this because we needed to have a work force available once oil was spotted. But when tasking came, and folks would have to go to work, a lot wanted to stay in the staging area on standby.

Did you have a rotation system in place for your people?

- This is something we tried, especially in MS, to have an "A" and "B" team. It got tricky to manage. One thing, since there are only 7 days in a week (i.e., not an even number of days), there was an ever changing schedule each day. First time around, one team would be on for 3 days and off for 4 days. And then it would rotate the following week. But then we still needed people who knew what to do and to manage all of these workers. If we put them in the same rotation, we ended up losing stuff in the rotation, because different teams do different things if not managed by the same management team. All of our beach walkers were thinking about paychecks. If one team only worked 4 hours because of bad weather, crew rotation became a big issue.

Do you have any thoughts about how to respond better the next time?

- In regards to beach cleaning, for example, you want the right piece of equipment. But you still need people out there because if there is drift wood, etc. and the machine runs it over, it messes up the machine. Also, machines always leave stuff behind. If the public sees any oil left behind, they get mad.
- If we ever have a spill of this size again, there won't be enough trained people to respond. But no one wants to keep the labor force necessary to respond trained and ready to go. It isn't feasible. We need a better process and training on how to deal with volunteers and how to better manage those people. We almost need HR people on the beach.

Do you think some mechanism needs to be put into place, either through new ACP language or through drills, to help OSROs coming into the affected region from somewhere else in the country?

- We are a little bit different. We have offices everywhere and we normally rely heavily on own local people. I have local people that talk and sound the same. We rely on local staff knowledge to break down some of the inherent barriers. A lot of companies don't have a presence in the gulf that would come down and try and get hired by one of the bigger companies or they might to get hired on by a smaller company. We need to continue to standardize the terms, methods, and requirements for setting up and deploying boom. We should do it in Maine the same way we do it in CA.

You mentioned you cascaded people in. Were these people double counted with other companies?

- All of the OSROs are competitors. We would sit down collectively because none of us had enough to cover the taskings ourselves. All of the OSROs were working together so it really became like one company. There was plenty of work to go around. But eventually, that changed. Once the spill in Michigan happened, people started acting more like competitors again.

Were there enough OSROs around the table during this incident?

- No. But it wasn't the size of the incident that was the problem, it was the way we were deployed that was the problem. We had equipment that was staged somewhere and it wasn't allowed to be moved to another state where it was needed.

There appeared to be a lot of resources deployed, but not active fighting the oil. Was this true?

- A skimmer is not just a skimmer. We kept getting requests asking to send skimmers. But a lot of skimmers were useless by time this oil got close to the shore. But it was a skimmer and it counted as a skimmer in their accounting of assets. We got requests saying that it didn't matter that a certain type of skimmer was useless, they had a quota they had to reach (i.e., the CAPT says we have to hit this number). We got these requests from operations or logistics directly.
- We also got more requests that came from USCG sectors around the country. They were asked to help get these resources. When we asked them what type of skimmer they needed, they also said "it doesn't matter." We need to reinforce that appropriate equipment typing is important.

Can you talk about the oil you saw?

- The most successful near shore efforts were from changes made on the ground. Responders realized that instead of using a belt skimmer, they could just get some baskets and scoop this blob from the water. A lot of the recovery of tar balls was done manually. The oil, frankly, looked like "brown puppy shit." That is a technical term. Belt and brush skimmers worked okay. There wasn't a lot of oil.

Talk about the planning process occurring in the ICP. Were the taskings making to the field from the ICP?

- I know they were. When I was able to get out of the command post, the direction I got was from the ICP.

The question of 'Who's in charge' has come up often. We you ever confused about who was in charge?

- No. I don't think for me there was any question of who was ultimately in charge. The ICs did change and likewise the section chiefs also changed. BP was on a 2 week rotation cycle. That is a great thing if you have enough qualified people. But I think 2 weeks is too short on an event this size. It takes too much time to figure out the lay of the land, and by the time you do, it is then time to go. So I think 2 weeks is too short for either the RP, USCG or anyone important to the response.

What type of rotation schedule did your management team follow? What did you do?

- We would give time off on bad weather days and the weekends. We would get people out for 4-5 days. We found it easier to bring in families to the area rather than send them home. We mostly let our people work for 3 weeks before we forced them to take a break.

Why was MSRC in place for so long?

- There was the sense, "if it ain't broken, don't break it." If I were in BP's shoes, I would do it that same way. What they were doing was working, so they decided not to change it.

Any discussion related to the shortage of rope mop units for skimmers?

- For example, the state of RI has 3 skimmers. We could have easily pulled 2 down here. But it was a difficult process related to how they get paid, how the equipment is transported here, etc. There were stumbling blocks that resulted in it never working. EMAC had big issues. Naval Base Newport had assets that could have been useful. But it takes an executive order to move skimmers. It could have happened. But then there is the issue that these are Navy assets-who would operate them?

From your perspective, what went well?

- All of the OSROs working together. There was enough work to go around and everyone worked well together.

From your perspective, what went wrong?

- Hiring locals. We were forced to employ the unemployed. We had a lot of issues. We had problems with fraud. Individuals had taken a legitimate training certificate, photoshopped it, and tried to pass it off as their own. We had issues like this happening all the time. Whether this was done intentionally or not, issues came up and it took away from getting the work done to deal with these issues. We had a lot of people who should not be working. We had local police point of people who weren't allowed to work. It happened a lot. We were forced to hire and accept liability of people you knew weren't able to do the job.

- Difficult when you knew you had people you could pull from all over the country that were trained. The issue of hiring locals came down to the county and parish level. They required that you must be a resident of here or they had to be taken off the job. We had people we had to send home to hire locals not because of per diem or hotel. It was implied by the politicians "I have an unemployment rate of x and it needs to be lower." This happened in every single state. It was an election year everywhere. Eventually, the politicians went a little further. Not only did we have to hire locals, but you need to be a local company. We had to have a local business address. We had 7 offices/operating groups pre-spill, but they were not considered local. We had to send home hundreds of trained people because they were not local. This is for both internal company employees and our subs. We were however, allowed to keep a percentage of non-locals on to provide oversight and management.

Can you discuss how the constant demand for information from outside the ICP impacted response operations being run out of the ICP?

- Everyday it was a time taker. Not just for me, but a whole lot of people to format it. We had to re-sort categories every day practically. We wasted a lot of time putting together reports because some politician wanted to know something.