

The Role of Partnerships between Scientists and Journalists in the BP Oil Spill

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3:30 PM

*Pfendler Hall,
Deans Auditorium*
Reception Following

How BIG was the BP Oil Spill? Getting the Truth

In mid-May, NPR first reported that the government was grossly underestimating the size of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. NPR Science Correspondent Richard Harris broke that story by working closely with scientists in academia, including Professor Steve Wereley at Purdue University. Richard will recount how he got onto that story, how his reporting unfolded, and how the partnership between journalist and scientists ended up affecting the U.S. government's approach to what we now recognize as an environmental impact of historic proportions.

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Richard Harris, NPR News
Science Correspondent

Winner, 2010 AAAS Kavli Science Journalism Award

Award-winning journalist Richard Harris reports on science issues for NPR's newsmagazines Morning Edition, All Things Considered, and Weekend Edition.

Harris, who joined NPR in 1986, has traveled to the ends of the earth for NPR. His reports have originated from Timbuktu, the South Pole, the Galapagos Islands, Beijing during the SARS epidemic, the center of Greenland, the Amazon rain forest and the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro.

In 2010, Harris' reporting uncovered that the blown-out BP oil well in the Gulf of Mexico was spewing out far more oil than asserted in the official estimates. He covered the United Nations climate negotiations, starting with the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, followed by Kyoto in 1997 and Copenhagen in 2009. Harris was a major contributor to NPR's award-winning 2007-2008 "Climate Connections" series.

Before joining NPR, Harris was a science writer for the San Francisco Examiner. From 1981 to 1983, Harris was a staff writer at The Tri-Valley Herald in Livermore, California, covering science, technology, and health issues. Under the auspices of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Harris spent the summer of 1980 as a Mass Media Science Fellow reporting on science issues for The Washington Star, in Washington, D.C.

A California native, Harris was valedictorian of his graduating class at the University of California at Santa Cruz in 1980. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology, with highest honors.



For additional information, please visit www.purdue.edu/dls
or contact Cindy Ream, 765-494-015