

FWG Notes – 11.29.12

Todd welcomed group and did a roll call by agency. Those present were:

<p>EPA John Bowie Jerry Boos Jerry Benninger Jan Kurtz Diane Altsman</p> <p>NASA Duane Armstrong Ted Mason Nancy Searby Ted Mason</p> <p>DOD USACE Susan Rees David Baman</p> <p>Navy Barbara Howe</p>	<p>DOI FWS Linda Kelsey Patric Harper</p> <p>NPS Cherry Green</p> <p>BOEM Pat Roscigno</p> <p>USGS Alyssa Dausman Scott Wilson Kate Spear Larry Handley</p>	<p>NOAA Todd Davison Julie Bosch Charlie Henry Rusty Swaford Heidi Stiller Marian Hanisko Laurie Rounds Amy Clark Ann Weaver</p> <p>GOMA Phil Bass Laura Bowie</p>
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Teresa Christopher (DOC) – RESTORE update

The Council is made up of representatives from the following agencies: DOA, Army, Commerce, Homeland Security, EPA, and DOI plus the five Gulf States. Although the Secretaries of these agencies are appointed to the Council, there is a senior level executive committee. Those folks include:

- Harris Sherman (Agriculture)
- Joellen Darcy (DOD – ACOE)
- Ken Kaposis (EPA)
- Mary Landry (DHS – Coast Guard)
- Rachel Jacobson (DOI – Fish, Wildlife and Parks)
- Teresa and Justin who staff Secretary Blank

*(Please forgive any misspellings)

DOC will chair Council. It feels it is uniquely situated because Commerce coordinates economic and environmental restoration efforts. This effort brings everyone together (e.g., NOAA, EDA, Minority Bus Development Administration, etc.).

GC Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (GCERTF or TF) and Council differences:

- DOJ, DOT and the ACOE for DOD were also on TF. They are supporting the effort without membership status. The council is working out what status these departments will have; “observer” or something else. All want to support effort.

- Break-down of the RESTORE Act
 - 35% divided evenly by states
 - 30% to Council
 - 30% to states to implement strategic plans approved by Council and consistent with the comprehensive plan
 - 2.5% GC Ecosystem Restoration Science Program established in NOAA
 - 2.5% Centers of Excellence
- Key dates:
 - December 11 – 1st public council meeting in Mobile. Will include executive session and public meeting to inform public that council is established and go over basics of act and associated activities and talk about path forward to get to comp plan
 - January 2nd
 - Treasury must establish a trust fund
 - Public comment expected in near term
 - Council must propose a comprehensive plan
 - Still in early stages but envision draft by March/April timeframe.
 - Statute lays out what's in the proposed plan vs. draft
 - Must base on findings from GCERTF
 - NOAA and FWS must establish science and monitoring program
 - Want to insure public input in all products.
 - July 5 – initial proposed comp plan is released
 - July 6 – dates when states can submit state plans
 - Beyond July the Council office will be up and running.
 - Still lots of uncertainty with settlement. DOC sees us as being in a start-up phase where we get Council up and running and answer questions and communicate basic info to public. Public listening sessions will ramp up in the next couple of months. Comp plan development is beginning and are still looking at staff needs.
 - Transition phase will look at releasing draft comp plan for input and establishing a more permanent office in region with key positions in place. This will happen in Jan/April timeframe.
 - Institutional phase will focus on revising comp plan and fulfilling requirements of the statute.
 - Comp plan will release in July with an initial list of projects. Can begin reviewing state plans and will move to institutional permanent phase
- December 11th meeting has not been announced yet. Public notice will go out tomorrow. Meeting will be from 11-7 at River View Hotel in Mobile. For those in area, encourage attendance.
- Questions:
 - Jan Kurtz: Insight into what workgroups are forming?
 - Comprehensive Plan work group has met once. It's on hold until Exec Team has discussion about priorities. Envision this group to be broader and more robust, to get input from Federal partners and states.
 - Envision that comp plan group will be broader and more robust to make sure input is from all expertise in federal and state families.
 - Public Engagement working group is focused on stakeholder

- Regulatory Obstacles working group - Looking to keep projects from getting hung-up in regulatory process (and how to work-around) so that we are efficient and get results on the ground.
- Todd: Have done lots of work on relations with Mexico looking at Gulf as entire ecosystem. Any discussion about international partnerships?
 - There has not been. Still grappling with gaps in statute and fundamental questions. Good question though.
- Tchristopher@doc.gov. Happy to answer questions after the call.

Duane Armstrong – NASA GOM Initiative

- Started in wake of 2005 Katrina/Rita. NASA realized role to help facilitate recovery
- Initiative created in 2007 to help region recover from destruction and fill capacity in region to use assets in disaster preparedness to inform decisions to create resilient communities.
- Intended to partner with NOAA, GOMA and others on these issues
- In 2008-2009 issued RFPs to leverage input on priority issues people needed help with to generate set of projects focused on these issues and providing tools and info.
- Now have 48 projects engaging 200 scientists at value of 19 million \$\$
- Broad distribution. Many map easily to GoMA priorities.
- Projects span northern Gulf with emphasis on coastal issues and boundary b/w land and water
- NASA reorganized and GOM Initiative is now part of capacity-building program. Looking at building societal capacities. Creating teams to provide needed info to decision-makers and public at large.
- Examples of priorities:
 - Water quality: reduce exposure to disease causing pathogens, reduce HABs, improve monitoring of Gulf water resources. Examples of NASA capabilities in this area, NOWCast for vibrio, remote sensing of Enterococci, improve measuring of chlorophyll abundance and distribution.
 - HCRT: conservation, restoration tools to locate critical habitats for restoration and conservation. Examples of NASA capabilities include monitoring seagrass beds, saltwater intrusion and impacts on habitats/marshes, detecting fish habitats, etc.
 - Nutrients: establishing nutrient criteria and manage impacts is important. Work is going on in TX to establish water quality criteria to monitor WQ. Also looking at ag best practices and the ability of farmers to minimize nutrient run-off and HAB predictions around the coast of Florida
 - Resilience: evaluating evacuation routes to determine accessibility, levee studies, etc.
- This is just a quick overview of some of the projects that are going on. There will be a meeting with more detailed info following oil spill research meeting in NOLA January 23-25. Registration will be available soon. If you have questions about projects, checkout this website: Science.ssc.nasa.gov
- Again, goal is to link technical expert knowledge with folks who have needs like resources they need to manage or policies they need to establish. Tools and expertise are used to respond to multiple disasters since 2005 and capabilities have been leveraged to address problems across country and around the world.
- Questions:
 - Todd: About NOLA meeting, is there a website with an agenda?
 - Will post on URL in about a week. Todd can send to group.

- Free of charge
- Linda Kelsey: Can you share the presentation?
 - Todd has it and will attach to meeting notes.

GOMA Updates – Phil Bass

- Continue to try to advance Alliance despite funding difficulties.
- On the last Alliance Management Team conference call, Jerome Zeringue (AMT Chair, LA) referenced a conversation Phil, Laura and he had with Ocean Conservancy. OC is concerned about lack of funds for ROPs. They think ROPs are a good thing and are looking to work with GOMA and others to get funding into NOAA budget and other mechanisms. Zeringue (Zee) expressed Louisiana support for this and will help arrange meetings on the Hill.
- Regarding RESTORE, had call with Paul Sandifer to talk about 2.5 % going towards science and monitoring. Invited Paul to participate in All-Hands meeting next June to promote what NOAA is doing with this piece of RESTORE.
- Some discussion about NOAA FFO. Will submit for this opportunity. Intend to tweak what was submitted last year.
- Discussion about NOC and governance coordinating committee reps. Bill Walker has been Gulf rep. His term expires in March. AMT decided that whomever chairs AMT will also serve as rep to GCC. So in March it will switch to Zee.
- Gulf Research Initiative – Had yearly overview with BP a few weeks ago in Biloxi. Went very well. Structure is working well. BP is talking about building the program to extend past 10 years.
 - Science meeting coming up Jan 21-23 in NOLA. 700+ registration, 500+ abstracts so far.
 - Other efforts are building from this meeting.
 - Data management group is doing a good job and is a model for how to manage an initiative like this and shows how results can be stored and shared with those who are interested.
 - 14 of 19 grant agreements for Phase 2 have been signed so far.
- All-Hands will be in Tampa/St. Pete in June. Stay tuned for a save the date. Share ideas for speakers, themes please let Phil and Laura know.

No December FWG call. Next call is January 31st!