

Todd Davison welcomed group.

Participants:

GOMA

Laura Bowie

EPA

John Bowie

Jerry Boos

Jeanie Allen

Jerry Binninger

Diane Altsman

BOEM

Melanie Damour

FWS

Linda Walker

Patric Harper

USGS

Larry Handley

Kate Spear

NPS

Cherry Green

Anna Toline

NASA

Ted Mason

NOAA

Todd Davison

Kim Albins

Sally Palmer

Alan Lewitus

Kristen Laursen

Chris Sinigalliano

Marian Hanisko

Julien Lartigue

Heidi Stiller

Heather Young

Amy Clark

Christa Rabenold

G.P. Schmahl

Ann Weaver

Todd asked Laura Bowie for an update on GOMA.

Laura Bowie:

The PIT teams are preparing proposals for projects that will complete the last 5% of the actions committed to in GOMA Action Plan 2. The proposals will be reviewed and hope the awards will be announced by end of the year. GOMA will continue looking for funding sources to fund the proposals that were not selected. All of the projects being proposed

There is a Marine Planning Meeting scheduled on Nov 14 in Biloxi. There will be presentations from state agencies regarding their CMSP and/or CZM programs as well as discussions about how our federal partners and the regional data portal can support these efforts. Several of our Business Advisory Council members will be there to participate in the discussion and provide their perspectives also.

Planning for the "Rigs to Reefs" meeting is under way for January or February.

January 26-29 the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative conference will be held in Mobile. For more information visit <http://gulfofmexicoconference.org/>

March 24-27 The State of the Gulf Summit 2014 is partnering with the GOMA annual meeting at the Houston OMNI Hotel. For more information visit: <http://sgmsummit.org/>

Sally Palmer:

Manager of the Mission Aransas National Estuarine Research Reserve

MA NERR is part of a national system of 28 reserves. It is located in on the south central Texas coast.

There are 4 other reserves in the Gulf of Mexico, Rookery Bay, Apalachicola, Weeks Bay and Grand Bay.

The purpose of the national program to conduct long term research and study changes in coastal areas.

Each reserve has a state partner, ours is the UT Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas.

Five are managed by universities. The University provide the staff and NOAA funds the programs and operations.

The marine science institute is the ideal partner, the mission is the same, to research marine systems, provide education and public outreach. We have a large reserve (we are Texas!) with very diverse habitats. It's fairly pristine, the majority of the surrounding land mass is graze land, so not overly developed. We rely on partners to assist with management and conservation, we meet to ensure we are meeting their needs and issues that are going on.

This reserve was designated in 2006 and we have just finished most of our buildings.

Fennesy ranch is an inland lake in the water shed. Owning that provides a unique opportunity to study how up watershed activities affect estuarine health. Manmade wetland helps us educate about the importance of wetlands.

Some programmatic information:

Education:

New building Gold LEED status

Educate about the importance of estuaries economically and for the ecology

UT Architecture designed and built new seating and viewing area

NERR leveraged 2,751,390.00 to conduct partners work and meet everyone's needs

Research and monitoring

- All 28 reserves have system wide monitoring looking at water quality trends across the country.
- High quality spatial and temporal data
- Data sets have helped set fresh water inflow standards.
- We can monitor sea grass beds, nutrients fluctuations and climate change
- We provide community education, K-12 school groups, general public and large army of volunteers
- Science on a sphere for general public
- Animated 8' sphere projects data sets to demonstrate
- Citizen scientists program
- Would not be able to collect all the data we need without them

Stewardship

- Promote public appreciation and support for stewardship of coastal resources, reduce and ecyle
- Land protection and restoration
- We have the ranch to practice our techniques for restoration and share up to date infor on what is working
- Rehabilitation of animal birds reptile and small mammals
- Research projects that target species protection like the terrapin exclusion crab traps
- Sentinel site for relative sea level rise, SETs
- Bio monitoring transects for monitoring for change sea grass emergent marsh and mangroves

Coastal training program,

- targeted for professionals who are making decisions about coastal resources
- Host many training events to assist them in making decisions
- Training is developed and offered based on what the decision makers identify as needed
- Monitoring the training and demonstrating they are using the knowledge they gain

Lately focused on RESTORE Act, poised to be the biggest opportunity we have seen

Heather Young – Other proposed in the Gulf

Sally – To date formal request, but Louisiana has expressed interest. The state of HI is in the process so it will be next. We would love to see them start the project it's a big hole

Kim Albins, Gulf of Mexico Coordinator for the Marine Debris Program

The official definition of marine debris is “any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes.” It is not oil, pesticides or plant material. Debris is manmade and tangible

Land based sources and ocean based sources

The program was established in 2005 so that the global ocean and its coasts, users, and inhabitants are free from the impacts of marine debris. It is a small staff of 16 that partner with others to work toward the vision. It was reauthorized in 2012. I am the regional coordinator for the Gulf.

The way we approach the problem is research, removal, response, prevention, outreach and education.

Prevention is where we would like to be so outreach and communication is really important. We provide annual funding opportunities. We fund school activities and fishing for energy projects. One project put bins at fishing ports that convert debris to energy.

Removal is accomplished using community based grants and projects that remove thousands of tons of debris.

Research so that we can keep a handle on the issue. We work with academic and NOAA partners to determine quantities, economic impacts, and effects of the debris. Plastic is a huge component so we are looking at the chemicals that attach to the debris. And we want to know what the value of a clean beach is.

Response is a big part of what we do, to respond to natural disasters that create marine debris.

We have many projects in the Gulf. The Gulf has both chronic and acute debris issues. There are many associated problems, economic costs, vessel damage and navigational hazards. It causes harm to wildlife in the form of entanglement and ingestion.

You can reduce the amount of waste you produce, use reusable items whenever possible and if you need plastics, recycle them when you are finished with them.