

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Federal Working Group Monthly Informational Call
January 30, 2014

Todd Davison began the call by asking who was on the line. The participants were:

<p>GOMA Laura Bowie</p> <p>EPA Lael Butler John Bowie</p> <p>FEMA Larry Voice Laura Algeo Diane Howe</p> <p>DOA USDA Delmer Samps</p>	<p>Navy Camile Destafney Barbara Howe</p> <p>FWS Chris Pease Patrick Harper</p> <p>USGS Scott Wilson Kate Spear Larry Handley</p> <p>NASA Dwayne Armstrong</p>	<p>NOAA Todd Davison Billy Causey Ann Weaver Becky Allee Dave Brown Heidi Stiller Heather Young Matt Chasse Robin Burns Marian Hanisko Amy Clark Hank Hodde Julien Lartigue</p>
---	--	--

Laura Bowie gave the GOMA Update:

- On February 11, 2014, there will be a Gulf-wide monitoring meeting effort to determine a unified vision for monitoring in the Gulf. Laura is helping Ocean Conservancy pull together who's doing what. Had a meeting in December to tackle this inventory. OC is taking this info and processing it. It was presented at GOMRI this week. **If we haven't contacted you regarding this inventory of Gulf monitoring and you have something to share, please contact Laura Bowie.** Looking for water column, SLR, habitat mapping, etc.
- Meeting reminders:
 - Gulf Summit March 24-26 in Houston. Registration is open.
 - PIT meetings are May 19-21 in Mobile. Hope to have 10-year anniversary recognition.
- Looking for funding to support PIT coordination. Traditional sources no longer exist, so we need to raise money to support coordination. If you have ideas, please share with Laura.

The first presentation was introduced by **Todd Davison**. Three different presenters from FEMA will talk about Flood Insurance Rate Maps. (The presentation is attached to the email for more details).

- **Diane** serves as the Risk Map Outreach Lead. **Larry** oversees coastal studies and **Laura** is senior engineer overseeing Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs) in region 4.
- RiskMap will deliver data to reduce risks to life and property. It's a shift towards more collaboration with communities that are vulnerable to natural hazards. Feel there are a number of possibilities to expand partnership with GOMA and other feds to deliver info to communities across the Gulf Coast to help build resilient communities.
- GOMA Resilience PIT aligns with Risk Map vision.
- Scoping/discovery is initiating projects in communities and expand stakeholder involvement so can get better feel for how project
 - Flood risk review meeting – accomplished through storm surge meeting looking at modeling and having technical discussion about data and where changes are occurring.

- Resilience meeting is an opportunity for GOMA to become involved. We try to incorporate actions and opportunities in local community by sharing data and tools with communities and open dialog with communities to take mitigation actions.
- Open house meeting with local officials once info is released to public
- LimLong – limit of moderate wave action. Wave height of 3 feet or greater – v zone. If less than 3 feet you have an AE zone. FEM A implemented wave height zone for areas of 1.5 feet or higher. No regulations here but IDs opportunities for higher standards. LIMWA isn't depicted on LA maps
- Risk Map Products and Datasets
 - Products include flood risk database, report, changes since last FIRM, flood depth and analysis grids, flood risk assessment, areas of mitigation interest.
 - Additional datasets include wave hazard severity areas. Looks at where wave hazard is high, medium, or low hazard.
 - Coastal risk assessments look at economic impacts where flooding occurs
 - Primary frontal dune erosion areas
 - Increased inundation area – looks at flood levels of 1, 2, or 3 feet higher to see if there were impacts. Also considers SLR.
 - Data sets could be used by GOMA resilience teams
- On-going Coastal Work
 - Mapping coastlines of US
 - See slides for status of Gulf states.
- Opportunities for GOMA
 - FEMA provides an opportunity by being in communities and can feature GOMA products. Could be a link between land use planning and CRS.
 - Can help distribute Homeowner's Handbook, too.
 - Avenue to talk about SLR with communities, too. FEMA can't look at future conditions in FIRMs, but happy to help start conversations to help communities think about future conditions.
 - SLR pilot project with NOAA and others in Pinellas and XX counties in FL.

Region 6

- Doing flood insurance studies for Texas Coast
- Projects in various stages. Some prelim maps are issued. Targeting resilience meetings for summer and early fall. This is an area where FEMA would like to partner, especially partners who can help steer conversation away from flood insurance.
- Some counties are not preliminary yet. These counties have levees.
- Several maps will be released this summer. We put maps out for counties but areas behind non-accredited levees are not updated with new data until later. Have several new studies (Guadalupe River, Colorado River, etc.). When we do this, area gets note saying that the risk behind the study will be further analyzed since the levee is not certified.
- Have pilots along TX coast working with COE and room for partners here. Communities need to communicate risk to citizens.
- Pilot projects (3 in TX, 5 in LA) nationally, FEMA is doing 25 pilots. Location depends on local sponsors for collecting data.
- We've reached out to John Jacob and Tracie Sempier in the past and we need to circle back with them.

Q/A

HY: You have pilots in Nueces, Victoria, Brezoria. Have you done studies in other counties are these 3 the first?

FEMA: This requires lots of data on levees. TX pilots we are waiting for local partners to complete local data. Where we are in the process depends on where partners are in developing data for levee. We are also working in Louisiana. If you have an interest in participating in this process, let Larry know.

Thank you Diane Larry and Laura, it's been very informative and we will share your contact information with the group for more follow up questions. Next we have **Billy Causey** with the National Marine Sanctuary Program to tell us what this program is doing in the Gulf.

National Marine Sanctuary Program (presentation attached)

- NMS is part of the National Ocean Service. There are 14 sites around the nation. We manage more area under water than all national parks combined.
- Currently have 2 NMS in Gulf (Flower Garden Banks and Florida Keys)
- FGB
 - Northernmost reef in US. Located about 100 miles from the coast.
 - Water depth ranges from 17 to 152 meters.
 - Home to lots of marine life
 - Among healthiest reefs. BOEM has been helping to monitor reefs.
 - Finished management plan in 2012. It's made of individual action plans. Still working on sanctuary expansion component.
 - Learning more about the science of the reefs and realizing that we need to protect more. There are a number of unprotected coral communities.
 - Boundary selection criteria (oil/gas, BOEM's regs, seafloor topo, shipping fairways, etc.)
 - See slides for recommended expansion areas.
- Florida Keys Sanctuary
 - Designated in 1990.
 - Runs from off coast of Miami around Dry Tortugas and around to Everglades National Park. Overlap 4 NWRs and 6 aquatic preserves.
 - Managed through co-trustee agreement with state of FL
 - Multiple use program (recreational and commercial). It's important to balance uses with how we protect it.
 - Fish and invert diversity is higher in the Keys than other areas.
 - 7.5 million" visitor days" in the sanctuary. There are lots of challenges with this. Lots of vessels and vessel groundings, run-off, no single point of entry to the sanctuary.
 - Programs to protect the sanctuary
 - Team Ocean
 - Blue Star – for business community. Voluntary program. Can work with local dive shops (for example) and other tourism businesses to help interpret importance of the resources. By meeting certain criteria and interpreting importance of the reef and diving etiquette. We do annual reviews to make sure they meet criteria. They do get a mention on the website for participating in the program.
 - Do regulate some fishing practices and vessels, diving, etc.
 - To manage this complex area, we've established a marine zoning plan.

- Emphasize sanctuary preservation areas. 60-75% of diving throughout the year takes place in these high use areas.
 - Also set aside ecological reserves. These are no take areas focused on protecting full range of habitats that make up the reef system.
 - Work with Wildlife Mgt Areas too
 - Work with stakeholder groups and these give us credibility locally.
 - Going through marine zoning and regulatory review process (2012-2016). Process has been engaging. Have had some bumps, too. You don't put maps out too soon. Any map you do put out can be mis-interpreted.
 - Please go to floridakeys.noaa.gov for more info.
- How are NMS connected to other areas?
 - Loop current is important in moving water through the region.
 - We are connected to other areas. For example, we've had new corals emerge in Flower Garden Banks. We know from whale shark movement that there's connectivity. This is an example of "critter connectivity."
 - So much of this continent drains into GOM. Eventually all of this makes it's way past and through the Florida Keys.
 - Keys are connected to South Florida and Caribbean.
- Looking to the Future
 - Creating a network of special ocean places to strengthen economy, ecology, etc. of GOM
 - Working with other countries (e.g., Mexico, Cuba) to help us have a complete ecosystem approach.

Thank you all, the next meeting on February 20. I will be sending information about that meeting soon.