

## **GOMA FWG Call Notes**

**3.20.14**

### **Participants:**

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### **Agenda:**

#### **Update from Tracie S.**

- PIT meetings are coming up May 19-21. Please register! It's in Mobile, AL this year. Go to GOMA homepage to register.
- 6 new projects (funded by the AMT) are starting now. Each PIT has a new project underway.
- Had a Marine Planning meeting in February in Biloxi with reps from state, feds, university, tribes, NGOs. Feds discussed how to support planning. Action item from the federal meeting is a federal catalog of data and tools to support marine planning. If you can contribute, contact Russ Beard.

#### **Jamie Rhome – Update on Storm Surge Communication**

- This represents the biggest change in nation's storm surge program in decades.
- Jamie is in charge of storm surge program at NHC (among other duties)

- The surge team includes Ethan Gibney (on loan from CSC). NOS has contributed much to this effort. This isn't just an NHC or NWS endeavor.
- NHC provides accurate real-time storm surge forecasts; supports coastal community preparedness and resiliency; and increases awareness through outreach and education.
- Evacuation zones are derived from storm surge zones/models/threats. NHC does risk modeling that's turned to local, state emergency managers to help derive those evac zones. Jamie helps to facilitate and lead the establishment of these zones. Also in the off-season NHC does lots of outreach across the globe.
- Changes are w/in the vision of NOAA/NWS:
  - Improve storm surge guidance/make models better
  - Transition from deterministic (putting all eggs in 1 basket) to probabilistic (accounts for forecast uncertainty) approaches.
  - Inundation products include info about depth of water above land (rather than vertical datums)
  - Products communicate actionable info!
- Other components of NOAA are helping with this effort by engaging users to understand what's working and what isn't. We asked people if they understand storm surge, and the overwhelming answer was no. It shows that we have to begin a comprehensive effort to inform people of the risks.
  - Next we asked if current products meet needs. Again, the answer was no.
  - What new products do we need to produce? We learned that graphic depending how far inland water can go as well as a warning.
- Utilized product prototyping and are now in experimental products phase and getting customer feedback.
- CSC is helping with marketing and outreach. Need a good outreach strategy/campaign.
- Customer engagement efforts were comprehensive.
- As an agency, we learned we needed to use plain language. Our terms were too technical. The language has been overhauled to make it understandable. We are bringing an inundation graphic on-line in 2014 (experimental). Watch/warning system will come in 2015.
  - These are distinct projects and products. One is a graphical illustration. The other is a warning.
- The inundation graphic has been tested with users, and the experimental process will include public viewing and comment period. It will be used for tropical systems initially but lays groundwork for extratropical and winter storms later. The initial experimental phase will only include tropical systems.
- One challenge with current products is that they don't allow EMs to overlay data on maps they use to make decisions. The new product will allow this. Ramifications on decision-making are large.
- What goes into the mapping product?
  - It's driven by SLOSH (Psurge 2.0) The upgraded version includes tide. Includes 10% exceedence, which means only 10% of time will values be exceeded. It's a reasonable planning scenario – not worst case.
  - Uses latest SLOSH bases
  - CSC is building a high res topography data set.
- What happens in 2015? The storm surge warning....
  - We have a hurricane and tropical storm warning already based off of wind threats.

- Largest losses of life in hurricanes are attributed to storm surge. We evacuate based on storm surge so makes sense to have a storm surge warning
- This will be a collaborative process with WFOs and NWS. Need to come up with process that enables NWS to be consistent across offices. Also allows us to incorporate expertise from local offices and NHC.
- This lays foundation to be expanded to extratropical storms/winter storms
- Take-aways
  - Inundation graphic will be available **experimentally** in 2014. You will see a dynamic graphic but you won't be able to get shapefiles and underlying maps during this experimental phase. Once the product emerges and becomes operational, then the extra services will be provided.
  - Based on Psurge 2.0 to produce graphic.
  - Marketing/outreach efforts are underway.

### **Cristina Carollo – Update on EIA efforts**

- Cristina coordinates the PIT with Jeanne Allen and Becky Allee.
- Original goal was to create and provide access to habitat maps for priority Gulf habitats.
- Were data centric for a while but team members re-names group to ecosystem and assessments, which is broader.
- Currently working on Master Mapping Plan
  - USACE leads and other partners contribute
  - Goal is produce comp plan to acquire data on physical characteristics of Gulf region. This is important b/c the Gulf is too large for any 1 agency to map. By sharing resources and methods, info can be collected at lower cost.
  - Website created to list requirements for data types.
  - Currently the group is working on federal plans for Gulf mapping. COE is mapping shorelines, too. Want to encourage partners to make this more collaborative. Make sure state reps know about the effort and are willing to share information.
- Second action item is data access and acquisition
  - Allowing access to Gulf-wide data and ecosystem support services to help with management of coastal resources.
  - Note the GOMA Portal ([gomaportal.org](http://gomaportal.org)). This is a data catalog, and state partners have been contributing. No more funding for new data but we are hoping states will continue to contribute. Hope to convert to ISO 115 in coming years.
  - HRI is committed to updating/maintaining the portal.
- Also working on GEMS
  - Provides frame for gathering restoration and conservation data sets. Concentrating on documenting sites and project 'sites.'"
  - Started with Gulf of Mexico Foundation and includes a partnership with EPA GMPO and the 5 states.
  - Includes a framework for recognizing areas that have special ecological significance to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources and/or an area that represents unique habitats.
- NCDDC has been instrumental in supporting the PIT. Data Atlas provides access to data sets that provide baseline info on systems. Planning to add data sets that have value for restoration.
- Another NCDDC contribution is EcoWatch geoportal.

- It's broader than GOMAportal. It is designed to support scientists and decision-makers by providing different ways to search for and visualize data. The EcoWatch Geoportal provides a data management infrastructure that supports data discovery of atmospheric, oceanographic, and terrestrial physical sciences.
- Gulf 360 is another product. It focuses on Gulf states and countries (Mexico and Cuba).
  - Contains ocean currents, oil/gas, transportation, and other data sets.
  - Hoping this will help citizens around Gulf see what connects us (similarities) and differences.
- Living Marine Resources
  - Provide collaboration for LM resource organizations to support mgt of Gulf as a large marine ecosystem. GOMA is in a unique position to coordinate among these groups.
    - GAME web portal is a resource that is available through Florida Fish and Wildlife.
    - Need to keep adding taxa databases, establish data connection link
- GoMexSI
  - Collaboration bw Texas A&M, Corpus Christi and EIA to address questions on taxonomic and spatial scales. Allows you to obtain credible resources on species introduction in GoM ecosystem.
- Emergent Wetlands Status and Trends
  - Providing info to guide management decisions. Gulf wetlands are critical to economy and productivity. Status and Trends reports supports conservation and restoration. USGS is leading this effort.
- Ecological services valuation
  - Determining socioeconomic values of critical ecosystem services in the Gulf region.
  - Have created an inventory of services provided by Gulf resources.
  - Have EPA grant for pilot studies on Mustang Island, Tamp Bay, Galveston Bay
  - Also working on Sea Grant-funded project on ecosystem services to quantify preferences of ecosystem services of marshes, mangroves and oyster reefs. Have developed a survey instrument and received 600 responses from citizens. Second wave of surveys coming soon! Paper will follow.
- Operationalizing Ecosystem Services for Restoration
  - Framework is an adaptive strategy to allow for ES throughout life cycle of restoration project.
  - Practitioners can create link bw/ ES and human well-being.
  - Also developing decision-support tool.
  - Working with Exxon on offshore ecosystem services, and had a workshop to discuss further.
    - Produced ecosystem services of the ocean videos
- New project funded by AMT is Living Shoreline Suite Suitability Modeling for Mobile Bay

**Next Call April 24<sup>th</sup>!**