GOMA FWG
9.25.14

Participants:
Steve Emmett-Mattox
Steve Sempier
Todd Davison
Ann Weaver
Becky Allee
Marian Hanisko
Bill O'Bierne
Chris Pease
Duane Armstrong
Heidi Stiller
John Tirpak
Kristin Ransom
Patric Harper
Stefanie S
Cheryl Brodnax
Camille Destafney
Amber Moore
Alan Lewitus
Chuck Wilson
Laura Bowie
Heather Young
Scott Wilson
Bill Bartush
Kristen Laursen
Julien Lartigue
Megan Gibney
Kim Albins
Chris Sinigalliano

Agenda

1. GOMA update from Laura Bowie

- Recently conducted survey on what GOMA should focus on. Nearing end of AP2. Looling at priorities for AP3. Some things will change a bit. May be forming new PITS. Tackling same things but in a different way. May align focus areas teams are tackling a bit differently. AMT meets in November. After November, you may see some changes. We will likely announce it November.

- AMT meeting last month gave approval to move forward with an ad hoc research funders forum. Laura is working on this with LaDon Swann and Alyssa Dausman. Will pull funders

together to talk about aligning to work together rather than competing. Looking to start in 2015.

2. Coastal Blue Carbon (Ariana, Amber, Steve)

- What is it?
    - Black Carbon is created by use and production of fossil fuels. Green Carbon is stored by terrestrial biota. Blue carbon is stored in marine environments. Coastal blue carbon is stored in salt marsh, mangroves, sea grasses, etc.
    - Coastal ecosystems sequester and store greater than 10x greater amount of carbon than forested systems (tropical forests, boreal forests, temperate forests).
    - Coastal carbon stored in soil and biota is much more than that of forests. Majority of carbon storage of coastal systems is in soils, which tells us it's old.
    - This is important b/c we are losing coastal ecosystems, particularly salt marsh in Gulf. When we lose these systems, the stored carbon becomes a source of carbon emissions.
    - End game is coastal conservation. We are talking about carbon as a policy tool and way to get there.
- What is NOAA doing?
    - On the policy front, CWA, NRDA, and CZMA were examined to see if coastal blue carbon could be included. Determined it's not included now, but it could be and no new regs are needed to do it. Incorporating carbon services into these policies could lead to more habitat conservation.
    - Blue carbon is gaining interest internationally. NOAA participates in UNFCCC workshop on blue carbon. Also NOAA is lead in working with Canada and Mexico on CEC grant.
    - 2 science projects in Gulf are funded. One in Mexico and the second spans US and Mexico
    - NOAA also supported GEF Blue Forest ecosystem services projects and is on the steering committee for those projects. Projects are in 5 countries.
    - If you protect carbon in natural systems you protect other assets too like habitat for species, recreation, storm and erosion protection.
    - Lots of policy interest in GI and living shorelines. Blue carbon enhances coastal resilience among other things.
- Restore America's Estuaries Role

- RAE's Coastal Blue Carbon Initiative includes carbon markets, blue carbon science, education and capacity building and demonstration projects. NOAA's office of Habitat Conservation is a major partner in all of this work.
- Voluntary market = orgs that sponsor offsets of carbon footprints
- Drafted first tidal wetland and seagrass GHG offset methodology. Moving through approval but ready for use at this point.
- Methodology is global in scope and covers tidal restoration. Provides accounting for all major greenhouse gases.
- On science side, did a study with NOAA's Office of Habitat Conservation. Wanted to look at an estuary and answer what are carbon sequestration benefits. Started with Snohomish estuary. Approach uses GIS and land use change layers. Took soil carbon samples, too. Bottom line is that fully restoring wetlands over 100 years yielded 9 million tons of carbon benefits. There's a strong case to be made for restoring areas just for carbon benefits. Will continue with Tampa Bay Estuary next.
- On education side, doing all we can to spread word about blue carbon. Rec'd funds from NERRs Science Collaborative to develop full-day workshop for scientists and managers and opportunities blue carbon presents.
- Opportunities in Gulf of Mexico:
    - Will bring estuary study to Tampa Bay and a workshop, too.
    - Can do more outreach in the Gulf region
    - Would be good to explore science questions like what happens to carbon in wetland soils when wetlands drown? Also, look at fate of eroded soil organic carbon.
    - Now ready for pilot projects . Maybe connect with RESTORE and other opportunities.

- Questions:
    - Can you give this presentation to other groups?
        - Yes. Happy to!
    - Do you think a carbon market established before major restoration is underway in Gulf?
        - There's a voluntary carbon market now. Secondly, the CA compliance market doesn't have rules in place yet but they are moving in that direction. Voluntary market is ready to go.

3. Sea Grant/GOMRI Collaborative – Steve Sempier

- Sea Grant is a university based program. 33 programs across country typically funded by NOAA and states. Programs are increasingly looking for other sources of funding though, and this GOMRI Collaborative project is the largest regional projects funded by private funds.
- Sea Grant programs focus on research, education, and extension.
- There are 4 SG programs across Gulf working together regionally. Service-oriented
- GOMRI is a 10 year investment in oils pill science. Over 170 million is already allocated. Funds for science are not part of NRDA or RESTORE. Managed by research board. Rita Caldwell is head.
- GOMRI invests in 5 different themes: physical distribution of oil, chemical degradation, environmental impacts on habitats and organisms, technology developments, and public health and socioeconomic impacts.
- W/in 5 theme areas, GOMRI invests funds to do research.
- With all the research coming out, GOMRI has invested in outreach, too. Over 375 peer-reviewed publications so far. GOMRI is heavily invested in peer-review process. Our outreach activities will share peer-reviewed results.
- GOMRI asked SG to use the SG network to share oil spill science research with other SG programs, too.
- Specific TAs for the oil spill outreach effort include elected officials, EMs, NGOs, fishers, NRMs, ports and harbors, tourism, and universities. Will utilize SG network to reach these audiences.
- This outreach program includes 4 specialists focused on science coming out of GOMRI and complementary science coming from other sources, too. Initial 2 year investment. Focus is on 2-way transfer of info (delivery through bulletins and seminars but also IDing audience needs so we can better develop products to meet those needs and so GOMRI can incorporate too). Other component is evaluation so the program effectiveness can be assessed.
- Chris Hale (Corpus Christi), Emily Douglas (Baton Rouge), Larissa Graham (Mobile), Monica Wilson (St. Pete) are the 4 specialists. Each is working with specific target audiences and focused on a GOMRI theme area.
- Collaborative Opportunities
    - Provide expert input on oil spill topics and needs; participate in workshops and provide suggestions about where to share info; maybe review bulletins, too.

- Can serve FWG with oil spill science findings
- Utilize this model or similar ones for other oil spill related activities.