

GOMA Federal Working Group Call Notes 2.26.15

Participants:

Kristin Ransom - NOAA
Todd Davison - NOAA
Lauren Long – NOAA
G.P. Schmahl – NOAA
Ted Mason – NASA
Julie Bosch – NOAA
Patric Harper – FWS
Chris Pease – FWS
Blair Tirpak – USGS
Amy Clark – NOAA
Laura Bowie – GOMA
John Tirpak – FWS
Kate Spear – USGS
Kristen Laursen – NOAA
Camille Destafney – US Navy
Jeannie Allen – EPA
Lael Butler – EPA
Cheryl Broadnax - NOAA
Robin Burns – NOAA
Matt Chasse - NOAA
Kim Albans – NOAA
Chuck Wilson – GOMRI
Larry Handley - USGS

Agenda:

Laura Bowie – GOMA Updates

- Having a webinar on March 18 @ 10:00 Central
 - Short overview of new teams and old team projects
 - Register for the webinar here:
<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eaiztz31667112db&llr=thgzaleab>

Lauren Long – Coastal Flood Exposure Mapper

- Tool can be accessed on Digital Coast website – data, tools, training, etc.
- Developed to help support community discussions about coastal hazard vulnerabilities
- Shows people, places, resources that are vulnerable to flooding
- The idea for the mapper came about from needs identified during Risk and Vulnerability training
- Different flood exposure maps can be exported and used during meetings to generate conversations
- Looks at Flood Hazards, Societal Exposure, Infrastructure Exposure, and Ecosystem Exposure
- There are animations and explanations for the data layers being show in the mapper
- Information about maps located in Data sources section – includes information on where to get data downloads

- Developed for Non-GIS users
- The mapper provides URL links to maps; you can also print PDF of Map (which includes URL)
- Website includes tips for using maps with communities, including resources, discussion questions, and case studies

Questions/Comments

- There are a number of mappers that exist – are there ways to link to that data through these other efforts (conservation planning atlases, etc.)?
 - There is a link to Map Services, which allows the data to be brought in and used by anything.
 - Will be updating the sets as new data comes out, and map services will get updated as well – makes maintenance for other tools seamless.
 - There are also instructions on the mapper website about how to use map services
- It looks like you are primarily using FEMA floodplain maps for your water levels for inundation. Have you considered using something like the USFWS SPLASH model, which allows you to physically change the inundation line to the level of expected inundation?
 - FEMA data used is the best available as of 2014; mix of Q3 and DFIRM
 - In a viewer like this, it might be difficult to have a dynamic slider that changes the actual data layers displayed, but it's something to look into for the future.
- In terms of resolution, how far down to the parcel level does the viewer go? How would this tool work for project scale view?
 - 1/36000 scale – doesn't go to specific parcels.
 - Data is nationally available – the intent for this tool is that it will initiate conversations about planning for hazards.
 - Want communities to use more local data to do their planning.
 - We also get questions about using the underlying datasets with local data – map services can be mashed up with local data
 - The code for the application is publicly available, and you can use this code to update the viewer however you'd like. Jacques Cousteau NERR is doing this already.

Flower Garden Banks Expansion – G.P. Schmahl

- Part of National Marine Sanctuary Program
- Healthy coral reef community
 - Over 50% coral cover
 - Consistent monitoring since 1980s, very little change
- NMS management plan includes action plan for sanctuary expansion
 - Providing protection to other areas
 - Look specifically at banks nearby Flower garden; potentially 5-12 additional banks
 - Specific representative locations identified from Advisory Council recommendations
- Along continental shelf edge, there are features that have formed between TX and MS delta
 - Areas recognized as biologically productive and sensitive
 - Subject of research and exploration in 70s and 80s
 - Most features have been mapped (bathymetry)
- Deep areas, so new mapping efforts require ROVs
- To prioritize potential expansion areas, looked at resource significance, connectivity (physical and biological), potential or perceived threat, and public/scientific priority

- Priority ranking matrix which led to identified expansion areas
- Boundaries drawn with a consideration for ongoing activities in area
 - No direct impacts from Deepwater; there could be some indirect, but not sure yet
- Treasure excavation in Bright Bank
 - Coral destruction from dynamite used to excavate
 - An example of what can slip through cracks in regulatory regimes – treasure excavation not covered by protective regulations
 - Example of how these areas benefit from comprehensive protection and management by National Marine Sanctuaries program
- Large Vessel Anchoring
 - One of biggest concerns that resulted in Flower Garden Banks being designated
- Connections to Gulf Regional Restoration strategy
 - Specifically calls to “Conserve and protect offshore environments”
 - Ties to strategy – interest in looking at establishment of MPAs as restoration strategy

Questions/Comments

- Is there an opportunity to get closer looks at the banks? Can we get out there?
 - Unfortunately they are hard to get to – commercial outfit with dive trips from Freeport, TX
 - Only a few that are within rec. diving limits, but there are some private charters (Estonia Bank)
- Todd: Interested in overlay of hypoxic zone around banks and any impacts – or are they too deep?
 - We’re concerned about it; the actual zone has not reached as far out to the banks yet, but could if it continues to grow.
 - We do have situations throughout year where fingers of low salinity green water will come over bank.
 - Some research shows nutrient inputs from those events have had impacts (Stetson bank specifically), including significant algal blooms.
 - Monitoring these with satellite imagery