

GOMA Federal Working Group Call Notes

3.26.15

Participants:

Kristin Ransom - NOAA
Todd Davison – NOAA
Michele Laur – USDA NRCS
Kim Winton – USGS
Jim Murphy – US Maritime Administration
Chris Pease – FWS
Amy Clark – NOAA
Kristen Laursen – NOAA
Matt Chasse – NOAA
Patric Harper – FWS
Ted Mason – NASA
G.P. Schmahl – NOAA
Pat Roscigno – BOEM
Linda Walker – FWS
Doug Jacobson – EPA
Julien Lartigue – NOAA
Becky Allee – NOAA
Laura Bowie - GOMA
Henry Hodde – NOAA
Jeanne Allen – EPA
Mary Roundtree – FEMA
Robin Burns – NOAA
Lael Butler – EPA

Agenda:

Laura Bowie – GOMA Updates

- Wanted to say how important our federal partners are to the team to our new and existing teams
- New projects they are working on –
 - Wildlife and Fisheries Team is working with Landscape Conservation Cooperative (LCC) partners to talk about a habitat dependent species catalog for restoration planning
- Resilience Team is working on resilience index projects with the port industry
- Water Resources Team has conducted nutrient pilot projects in Gulf; plans to continue so that every type of Gulf estuary is captured
- Habitat Resources Team is working on projects to evaluate climate change literature and models and provide easy access to information for restoration planners and practitioners
- Please help with projects if you have any information to contribute – the federal partner perspective is needed and valuable

Jim Murphy – Maritime Administration

- Mission is to improve maritime transportation with a focus on infrastructure and labor

- work with ports, Merchant Marines (inland waterways and coastal regions, internationally) and shipyards
- 1 of 10 Gateways across the country which serve as networkers for information and access to MARAD programs
- Role as ship owner
 - Reserve-ready fleet
 - Carry military equipment to support troops
 - More than 45 ready-reserve fleet ships (Beaumont, TX and New Orleans, LA) – ready status with reduced crew, so they can be activated and turned over to military for operations
 - Have been used in humanitarian response to disaster events to deliver medical supplies, used as floating hotels for first responders and port workers, and those working as part of recovery process
 - Environmental research
 - Ballast water treatment systems for invasive species
 - Environmental compliance - Agency complies with all environmental rules that apply to commercial shipowners
 - Maritime Energy Task Force – works on the idea of effective energy usage in marine transportation
 - LNG as marine fuel - save money and significant reduction in emissions
 - Offshore support vessels using LNG as marine fuel; LNG “filling station” being constructed at Port Fourchon
 - Oversee spill prevention and response program
 - Oversight of ships in recycling facilities – making sure that any hazardous materials are properly transported, manifested, documented, and disposed of
 - Participate in International Maritime Organization (IMO) – working on reducing air
- Programs
 - “Strong Ports” program – port development program with a focus on resilience
 - Working on port resilience project with Louisiana Sea Grant
 - Develop a tool that a port director can use BEFORE an incident to plan for incident response – what they need to put in place so they can “bounce back better”
 - America’s Marine Highways – provide grants to start freight services in areas that do not presently have water service; working with transportation planners to include water transportation where applicable
 - Port Readiness – Work with pre-selected commercial ports and the agencies involved in the deployment of military cargo to make sure deployment through commercial ports is conducted effectively
 - Outreach – outreach to federal agencies, commercial sector, state agencies, and local agencies involved in transportation planning; work to identify all stakeholders who have an interest in MARAD activities
 - Emergency report/response
 - MARAD reports on impacts of disaster on marine transportation system
 - Worked with ports to help recover after disasters – special team created after Katrina to work with parishes impacted by hurricane to assist with recovery planning

Questions/Comments

- Can you provide more details about your resilience activities?
- Only MARAD gateway in the Gulf working on resilience
- Planning efforts so that ports know the system before an incident happens, so that the system doesn't add to your issues during recovery
- Are you working on resilient design and location of facilities?
 - Agency hasn't worked directly with designers in all cases;
 - Agency is working to develop reaction to new executive order floodplain rules
 - There are mechanisms for designing facilities to be somewhat resilient – US west coast, there is a design feature to make them earthquake resistant; in Gulf, make them flood resistant
 - Only recently hired civil engineers to discuss design with port engineers
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Michele Laur – USDA Conservation in the Gulf States

- 86% of landscape is privately owned agriculture and forestry landscape – more than 290 million acres
- 1700 staff in 428 field offices to carry out regional approach implemented at local level
- Strategy – Increase investments in the Gulf of Mexico
- Projects on the Ground
 - Migratory Bird Habitat Initiative – rapidly put 40 million in play to create habitat by flooding rice fields for migratory birds to keep them out of areas where traditional habitats were oil impacted
 - Mississippi River Basin Initiative – improve water quality in the Mississippi basin
- Long-Leaf Pine Initiative
- Working Lands for Wildlife – trying to create new habitat environments and restore existing ones
- Gulf of Mexico Initiative
 - Assist agricultural producers with improving water quality, water quantity, developing efficient irrigation systems, redirecting runoff from fields and reusing water
 - Creating filter strips along agricultural lands – also creates habitat
 - Looking for ways to expand effort – commitment of \$50 million, have only spent ~\$ 5 million
 - Utilizes state conservationists and their staff to implement projects on the ground
 - Improvements have already been seen in water quality, quantity, habitat improvement, energy conservation and GHG reductions, sustained agricultural productivity, and increased community awareness on the importance of a watershed approach (upstream and downstream cooperation)
- NRDA Trustee – doing early restoration work (accomplished phases I, II and III for 54 projects)
- RESTORE Act Council member
- NFWF-NRCS agreement
- Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Division – housed in Madison, MS and works closely with NRCS and Secretary of Agriculture office to pull in other sister agencies (including Forest Service) to do work in the Gulf

Questions/Comments

- What criteria are you looking at to select future watersheds for the Gulf of Mexico Initiative?

- Will be adjusting the current criteria used – board meeting with state and regional conservationists to develop new criteria
- More information in a couple of weeks