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*Building Partnerships for a Healthier Gulf*

## Volume VI GOMA E-NEWS 3rd Quarter 2012



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### ALLIANCE MEETINGS

#### Joint AMT/ACT MEETING

September 4-5, 2012  
Pensacola, Florida

Contact Laura Bowie  
for more information:

## GOMA Announces Inaugural Business Council

In response to large economic indicators, the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) is pleased to announce the inaugural members of the newly-formed GOMA Business Advisory Council. The Gulf Coast region's economy is highly intertwined with its natural resource base, including oil and gas deposits, commercial and recreational fisheries, and waterways for ports and waterborne commerce. In fact, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the five states of the Gulf of Mexico Coast Region was almost 2.4 trillion dollars in 2009, representing 17% of the nation's GDP (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2011).

The purpose of the GOMA Business Advisory Council is to ensure industry-sector participation and advisement in regional environmental initiatives. The Council will provide a fundamental connection between policy and applied management decisions. Members include [Read more](#)



Photo by Jeanne Allen, EPA Gulf of Mexico Program

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## PARTNER EVENTS

### 2012 Restore America's Estuaries Conference

October 20-24, 2012  
Tampa, Florida

### Bays and Bayous Symposium 2012

November 14-15, 2012  
Biloxi, Mississippi

For more information on these  
and other upcoming events log  
onto  
[www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org](http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org).

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## EPA Awards \$2M in STAR Grants for Gulf of Mexico Issues

The STAR research grants are to strengthen public health and ecosystem protection efforts from oil spill contaminants in the Gulf. Four university groups, including partnerships with Gulf state universities, have been selected to work collaboratively with affected communities to identify significant risks posed by oil spills to human health and the environment, obtain their input in the design of research to help the communities address these challenges, and provide technical assistance to them so that they can use the research results. Some of the communities in which the researchers will be working include Cocodrie, Grand Isle, Delacroix, Belle Chase, Lafitte and Golden Meadow-Leeville in Louisiana as well as Mobile, Alabama. [Read more](#)



### GoMRI UPDATE

## GoMRI Awards More Grants

The Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI) announced that it has approved funding for 19 new grants that will support studies of the effects of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the Gulf of Mexico as part of the RFP II program. Roughly \$20 million will be awarded to these researchers over the next three years. RFP II is a continuation of RFP I (awarded in 2011) for individuals or small groups of researchers.

The GoMRI has now awarded more than \$130 million of the \$500 million that BP committed to independent research into the effects of the tragic Deepwater Horizon oil spill on the Gulf of Mexico. [Read more](#)



Also, don't forget: GoMRI will be hosting an Oil Spill & Ecosystem Science Conference in January 2013 in New Orleans! Registration will open soon at [www.gulfresearchinitiative.org](http://www.gulfresearchinitiative.org).

### REGIONAL INITIATIVE UPDATES

## Hypoxia Task Force

The Mississippi River Gulf of Mexico Watershed Nutrient Task Force (a.k.a., Hypoxia Task Force) consists of five federal agencies and 12 state and tribal agencies within the Mississippi/Atchafalaya River Basin. It was established in 1997 to reduce and control hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.

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## Alliance Engagement

Several members of the Hypoxia Task Force are also actively engaged with the Alliance and work to ensure that common Alliance and Task Force goals, such as development and implementation of state nutrient reduction strategies, are prioritized and opportunities for leveraging are realized.

The next Hypoxia Task Force meeting will be held in Iowa in September 2012 and will be a joint meeting with the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture. Also at that meeting, state chairmanship will be transferred from Mississippi to Louisiana.

## Gulf Coast Restoration

As a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, President Obama commissioned Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, to develop recommendations for full restoration of the Gulf Coast. As a result of the report, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (GCERTF) was established through Executive Order and tasked with defining ecosystem restoration goals, coordinating government policies, proposing additional actions (where necessary), and identifying monitoring, assessment, research and restoration gaps.

The GCERTF is currently preparing a Gulf Restoration Implementation Plan to follow the Gulf Restoration Strategy that was finalized and presented last December. With the passage of the RESTORE Act in July 2012, the GCERTF is expected to play an active role in the transition to restoration implementation.

## Coastal & Marine Spatial Planning

Coastal & Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP) is a regionally-based planning process for analyzing current and anticipated uses of coastal and marine areas. Executive Order 13547 established a National Ocean Policy and created an interagency National Ocean Council (NOC) tasked with developing actions to address issues challenging our oceans and coastal areas, including CMSP.

### Alliance Engagement

The Alliance was pleased that the new NOC director, Deerin Babb-Brott, was able to join the All Hands meeting in Corpus Christi. At the Alliance Management Team (AMT) meeting held prior to the Opening Plenary, Mr. Babb-Brott informed the AMT that the NOC will work with the Gulf States to develop a Regional Planning Body for the Gulf and will visit with individual state governments if necessary.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a non-profit organization with a mission to enhance the ecological and economic health of the region through six basic priority issues: improving water quality, increasing habitat conservation and restoration, evaluating ecosystems, reducing nutrient impacts, enhancing coastal resilience and promoting environmental education.

Please visit [www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org](http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org) for more information about the Alliance.