



Building Partnerships for a Healthier Gulf

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Coastal America Donates Underwater Cameras

Thanks to a generous gift from the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership of Coastal America, the Alliance now has two SeaViewer underwater video recording systems. The cameras are the "Sea-Drop" color systems complete with a monitor and 150 feet of cable.



[Read more...](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON NGO PARTNERS

Harte Research Institute



Reaching as far back as the beginning of the Alliance itself, **Harte Research Institute (HRI)** has been one of the founding partners, dedicated to an aligned vision of an ecologically and economically sustainable Gulf of Mexico region. Fundamental to their success is fostering a shared sense of ownership on the broadest base possible. The Alliance has benefited greatly from the expertise and support of HRI, whether its related to projects or policy.

Alliance co-chair, Dr. Bill Walker recently said, "HRI's leadership has bolstered the ability of the Alliance to be in position to affect change in the Gulf region. HRI is an invaluable partner to us."

Led by executive director, Dr. Larry McKinney, and his staff of endowed chair persons, research associates and students, HRI is an advocate for many of the same priority issues as the Alliance. HRI has coordinated the Alliance's EIA team since 2007; has served on the Alliance Management Team; and is now providing data management support services for the Alliance's GRI effort. These partnerships have produced many successes such as **GecoServ** - a database of ecosystem services valuation studies designed to assist resource managers in valuation of critical habitat; **Ecowatch** - an online group of services providing a variety of ways to search for and visualize data; and a **Status and Trends Report** - a report providing essential information for oil spill assessments.

In addition, HRI has been instrumental in guiding regional discussions regarding CMSP, and more recently, oil spill restoration. As the host of the up-coming **State of the Gulf Summit**, HRI has developed an all-star panel of experts that will focus on regional issues such as these. The leadership of HRI on these, and other issues, is greatly appreciated by the Alliance.

For more information about HRI, log onto <http://www.harteresearchinstitute.org/>.

ACTION PLAN SUCCESS STORY

Nutrient Toolbox is Now Online

A recent addition to the GOMA website is the Nutrient Reduction Decision Support Toolbox. The Toolbox originated from the Alliance's Nutrient Reduction priority issue team and its initiative to reduce the size of the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico as well as occurrences of hypoxic events across coastal and estuarine waters. The program is intended for use by state and local agencies and other organizations interested in reducing nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and other pollutants in an effort to reduce Gulf hypoxia.



To use the Toolbox, visit: <http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/toolbox/toolbox.html>.

ACTION PLAN SUCCESS STORY

Report Compares U.S. and Mexican Conservation Strategies

Recently completed, the report "*Comparing Mexican & United States Legal & Institutional Frameworks*" assesses and compares the Mexican and United States laws, policies, and institutions that directly or indirectly support Gulf of Mexico habitat conservation and restoration. The report was prepared by the Environmental Law Institute (ELI) and the Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA) for the Alliance's HCRT.



To download a copy of the report, visit: <http://www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org/community/pubs.html>

ACTION PLAN SUCCESS STORY

GecoServ - A Valuable New Tool for Resource Managers

GecoServ is an inventory of ecosystems services valuation studies relevant to the Gulf region developed for the Alliance's EIA team by HRI. The GecoServ inventory allows for the distribution and sharing of information about ecosystem services values, identified gaps that need to be filled, and provides background information for future ecosystem services studies.

More information is available at www.gecoserv.org.



REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning

A National CMSP Workshop was held in Washington, D.C. in June 2011. A summary of the workshop has just been made available and is found by visiting: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/oceans/cmssp-workshop>.

Alliance Engagement

Dr. Bill Walker represents the Gulf on the National Ocean Council's Governance Coordinating Committee (GCC). The GCC is currently drafting a model Charter for the Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs), allowing for as much flexibility as possible. Gulf states should be considering membership of the Gulf RPB, including voting and non-voting representatives. Once the Gulf RPB is established, a customized CMS Plan will be developed for the region.

More information regarding the CMSP process can be found at www.cmssp.noaa.gov.

Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force

The Task Force recently released its preliminary strategy for long term ecosystem restoration. The strategy was the first effort of its kind to be developed with the involvement of parties throughout the region. Comments regarding the strategy were received by the Task Force until October 26, 2011. The Task Force is expected to preview the final strategy at the **State of the Gulf Summit** in December.

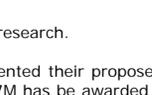
Alliance Engagement

The Alliance was quite pleased to note that the goals of the preliminary strategy are in complete alignment with many of the Alliance's priority issues. For this reason, the Alliance is in an excellent position to significantly contribute to the successful implementation of the strategy although no formal plan has been developed.

More information can be found at www.epa.gov/gulfcoasttaskforce.

GRI UPDATE

Research Board Holds First Annual Meeting



The first annual meeting of the Research Board was held October 19-21, 2011 in New Orleans. All of the Year 1 researchers presented summaries of their research.

In addition, new consortia for RFP I presented their proposed research for Years 2-4. Approximately \$37M has been awarded for research to be conducted in Years 2-4 as a result of RFP I. The winning consortia for RFP I are led by the following institutions:

- University of South Florida
- University of Miami
- Florida State University
- Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium
- Tulane University
- University of Mississippi
- National Institutes of Health
- University of Texas
- Texas A&M

RFP II is scheduled to be released in November. RFP II is intended for individual researchers or small groups.

Welcome New Alliance Partners

Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership
scottr@southeastaquatics.net

ALLIANCE MEETINGS

Mid-year AMT Meeting:
December 5, 2011
(at the State of the Gulf Summit)
Houston, Texas
Please RSVP to [Laura Bowie](mailto:Laura.Bowie)

Mid-year ACT and PIT meetings:
February 13-16, 2012
Biloxi, Mississippi

PARTNER EVENTS

State of the Gulf Summit II:
December 4-8, 2011
Houston, Texas
Registration:
<http://www.sgmsummit.org/>

2012 Restore America's Estuaries Conference
October 20-24, 2012
Tampa, Florida

For more information on these and other upcoming events log onto www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org.

Priority Issue Team Contacts

Water Quality
Steve Wolfe
(850) 245-2102
steven.wolfe@dep.state.fl.us

Habitat Conservation & Restoration
Ryan Fikes
(361) 882-3939
ryan@gulfmex.org

Ecosystems Integration & Assessment
Seneca Holland
(361) 825-2082
seneca.holland@tamucc.edu

Nutrients & Nutrient Reduction
Ann Porter
(601) 961-5394
ann_porter@deq.state.ms.us

Coastal Community Resilience
Rhonda Price
(228) 523-4150
rhonda.price@dmr.ms.gov

Environmental Education
Lee Yokel
(251) 861-2141 x7507
lyokel@disf.org

For more information visit www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org



Staff Contacts

Acting Director
Phil Bass
228-523-4014
Phil.Bass@gomxa.org

Program Manager
Laura Bowie
228-523-4013
Laura.Bowie@gomxa.org

Business Manager
Connie Ziegler
228-523-4017
Connie.Ziegler@gomxa.org

Physical Address
Gulf of Mexico Alliance
11411 Bayview Avenue
Biloxi, MS 39530

Website
www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org

Join Our Mailing List!

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 for more information about the Alliance.