



Building Partnerships for a Healthier Gulf

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EPA SEEKS GULF GUARDIAN AWARD NOMINEES!

Gulf of Mexico Alliance partners and friends should take note that nominations for the 2013 Gulf Guardian Awards are being accepted now through **March 8, 2013!**

Awards are given in the following categories:

*Business & Industry
Environmental Justice/Cultural
Diversity
Civic/Non-Profit Partnerships*



Alliance and Gulf Universities Work Together for the Health of the Gulf

Storms, hazardous spills, climate changes, algal blooms, industrial development and coastal population growth threaten the sustained health of Gulf ecosystems. In answer to these widely recognized risks, the Alliance and the Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative (GoMURC) have signed an agreement to work together to support science, management and education activities in the Gulf region. The agreement helps ensure effective spending and the coordination of state, federal and university research on the long-term health of Gulf natural resources, and response to man-made and natural disasters.

GoMURC was formed in 2011 with funding from the University of South Florida Foundation, in part, to help plan region-wide restoration efforts after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and to prepare for future response efforts. The Collaborative unites over 70 Gulf universities from the five States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas on a mission to sustain the long-term health of the Gulf and coastal ecosystems.

[Read more](#)

*Youth Environmental
Education
Individual
Bi-National Partnerships*

To complete a nomination application, go to the Gulf of Mexico Program's web site at www.epa.gov/gmpo.



Photo credit: Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative

**ALLIANCE
MEETINGS**

EIA Team Meeting
December 4-5, 2012
New Orleans, LA

HCRT Steering Committee Meeting
March 18-21, 2013
New Orleans, LA

Gulfwide Monitoring Workshop #2
February 2013
Tallahassee, FL

Coastal Community Resilience Team Meeting
January 31-February 1, 2013
Apalachicola, FL

2013 All Hands Meeting
June 2013
Florida
(date and location TBD)

Contact Laura Bowie for more information:
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**OTHER
REGIONAL MEETINGS**

PRIORITY ISSUE TEAM SUCCESS STORY
Habitat Team Releases Ecosystem Services Report

A study conducted by Harte Research Institute for GOMA's Habitat Conservation & Restoration Team assesses the changing ecosystem services provided by marsh habitat in the Galveston Bay region.

Based on SLAMM modeling, the study shows that the selected habitats (fresh marsh, salt marsh, and swamp) present a steady decline in time under three sea level rise scenarios. Fresh marsh is the habitat that is projected to undergo the biggest changes under all sea level rise scenarios. This trend is due to the fact that fresh marsh is displaced by salt marsh and other habitats and has insufficient time and/or space to migrate landward. The percentages of change for salt marsh and swamp are less prominent, but still significant.

[Download report](#)



GULF STATE HIGHLIGHT
NSF Awards \$1.5M to Study Coastal Resilience in South Louisiana

LSU faculty were recently awarded \$1.5 million from the National Science Foundation to investigate if southern coastal Louisiana has reached the tipping point, becoming too costly to sustain.

This interdisciplinary research project will investigate the sustainability of coastal communities that are especially vulnerable to natural resource loss and natural hazards.

"This is the first study to look at both the environmental factors and the human element," said Nina Lam, LSU professor of environmental science and principle investigator.

[Read more](#)



**Gulf Coast Ecosystem
Restoration Council
Meeting**

December 11, 2012
Mobile, Alabama
Renaissance Riverview
Plaza Hotel
64 South Water Street
Mobile, AL, 36602

Council Meeting
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Open House
11:00 am - 1:00 pm
and
4:00 pm - 7:00 pm

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GoMRI Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference - January 2013



The first annual Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI) Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference is fast approaching. The conference will be held January 21-23, 2013 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Keynote speaker will be Retired Admiral Thad Allen, United States Coast Guard, who is now a Senior Vice President at Booz Allen Hamilton.

Registration is available at
<http://gulfofmexicoconference.org/registration/>.

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.

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.

Recently, a multi-day workshop was held in Davenport, Iowa. Its focus was "Building Science Assessments for State-Level Nutrient Reduction Strategies." Attendees and speakers worked to a) present the process and results of the science assessment work being done in Iowa on nutrient reduction, b) provide a workshop environment for state and regional teams in the Mississippi River Basin to collaborate on developing or advancing the process for their state science assessments, c) offer presentations and posters on additional science resources available to state teams for developing their assessments, and d) discuss current information on additional science questions.

Gulf Coast Restoration

As a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, President Obama issued an executive order to establish the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force (GCERTF) to define ecosystem restoration goals, coordinate government policies, propose additional actions (where necessary), and identify monitoring, assessment, research and restoration gaps. The GCERTF released a Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Strategy in December 2011.

With the passage of the RESTORE Act in July 2012, the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council will oversee restoration efforts funded by 80% of Clean Water Act penalties that will go to the five Gulf States in a complicated formula.

For more information visit (See *The Ocean Conservancy's* [Graphical Distribution of RESTORE Act funds.](#))

www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org. The Restoration Council will hold its first public meeting on December 11, 2012, at the Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel in Mobile, Alabama.



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[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.

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