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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Over 1,200 Coastal Scientists and Managers Engage During Virtual Gulf of Mexico Conference

Hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance, the virtual event emphasized connections between restoration, scientific research, and coastal management as a preview to the in-person event in April 2022.

OCEAN SPRINGS, Mississippi, April 14, 2021 – Today, over 1,200 coastal scientists, managers, and professionals from federal and state agencies, academia, non-profits, and industry came together for a virtual event launching the new Gulf of Mexico Conference (GoMCon). The Gulf of Mexico Alliance hosted this event in partnership with the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative and Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies.

GoMCon combines the annual Gulf of Mexico Alliance All Hands Meeting, the annual Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill and Ecosystem Science Conference, and the triannual State of the Gulf Summit. Bringing these three meetings together in a combined conference emphasizes the important intersections between restoration, scientific research and management of the coastal environment and economy.

Dr. Jack E. Davis, author of the Pulitzer Prize winning novel, "The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea," kicked off the event with a keynote address. "People who have lived beside the Gulf have a profound awareness of their love for it," he said. "I want Americans to understand the Gulf is a living and giving sea."

Following the keynote by Davis, three groups of panelists explored restoration and scientific advances since the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. They also considered emerging regional challenges including sea-level rise, harmful algal blooms, coastal hydrology, and fisheries management.

The regional experts on these topics were:

- Greg Gandy, Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority
- Buck Sutter, Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration (RESTORE) Council
- Michael Sharp, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Gulf Benefit Fund
- Rachel Sweeney, NOAA Fisheries
- Monty Graham, Florida Institute of Oceanography
- David Yoskowitz, TAMU-CC Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
- Renee Collini, Mississippi State University and Mississippi-Alabama-Florida Sea Grant
- Megan LaPeyre, U.S. Geological Survey
- Steven Murawski, University of South Florida – College of Marine Science

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- Scott Hagen, LSU Center for Coastal Resiliency
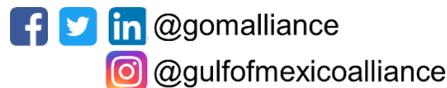- Brian Dzwonkowsi, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

"The Gulf of Mexico Conference will be the premier event for Gulf-focused restoration science, coastal management, and collaboration. We are excited to launch the conference with this virtual preview and look forward to hosting our colleagues in person next year," said Laura Bowie, executive director for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.

The 2022 GoMCon will take place in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on April 25-28. The Alliance will announce session topics and a call for abstracts this August. Scientists, resource managers, and coastal stakeholders are encouraged to visit the conference website for more information. Sign up for the Alliance newsletter and follow @gomalliance on Facebook and Twitter to stay up to date on concurrent sessions, opportunities to submit abstracts, and other conference announcements in the months ahead.

This event was hosted by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and sponsored by the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, NOAA RESTORE Science Program, Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies, National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine Gulf Research Program, Gulf of Mexico Ocean Observing System, Equinor, Stantec, Hess, Shell, and RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence for Louisiana and Florida.

About the Gulf of Mexico Alliance The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a regional partnership focused on enhancing the environmental and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico through increased collaboration. Led by the five Gulf states, our network includes over 150 participating organizations from state and Federal agencies, Tribal governments, communities, academia, non-governmental organizations, and industry. Priority issues addressed by the Alliance include coastal community resilience; data and monitoring; education; habitat; water resources; wildlife and fisheries; and marine debris.

www.gulfofmexicoalliance.org

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For more information about the Gulf of Mexico Conference, contact Devany Tyler (devany.tyler@gomxa.org).

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