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**Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Environmental Awareness Campaign**

Social Marketing Plan



**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA
CENTER FOR SOCIAL MARKETING
COLLEGE OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

August 2009

Produced for the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

**Funding for this project supplied in part by the Environmental Protection Agency
Gulf of Mexico Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Northern Gulf Institute**



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About This Plan

Please Note: This is a Draft of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Social Marketing Plan. It has been vetted by administrative and managerial Alliance members and is still under review.

The purpose of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Social Marketing Plan is to:

1. Guide the development and implementation of a Gulf of Mexico Alliance (Alliance) program to reduce nutrient loading caused by residential fertilizer use
2. Describe the Alliance brand and brand management strategy
3. Provide a framework for the development and implementation of a Gulf-wide public awareness campaign

The recommendations in this Plan are based on results from a review of the literature, ten focus group interviews with 74 residents living in Alliance member states, 58 key informant interviews with policy makers, opinion leaders, environmental advocates, environmental scientists, Gulf of Mexico Alliance members, Business Council members, homeowners association board members, and media representatives, and a web-based survey of 754 consumers living in the five Alliance member states.

In addition, representatives of the Alliance membership, management team and administration, partner organizations (including federal agency partners), environmental scientists and advocates, and the project staff conducted a two-day strategy session.

The Plan includes the following components:

- ❑ A summary of the project
- ❑ The brand strategy
- ❑ A description of the priority population for the residential fertilizer use marketing plan (the priority population is the group most likely to adopt the desired behaviors and advance the goal of reducing residential fertilizer use)
- ❑ Recommendations for how to influence the priority population, based on each component of the marketing mix, or *4 Ps*

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- Product Strategy: guidelines for making the desired behaviors appealing to the priority population
 - Pricing Strategy: guidelines for lowering barriers to the desired behaviors
 - Placement Strategy: guidelines describing the program partnerships that will help disseminate program information and reinforce the proposed fertilizer practices
 - Promotional Strategy: guidelines describing ways of developing messages, selecting information channels, and developing other activities to promote the proposed fertilizer practices
- Public Awareness Campaign Implementation Outline

Each section describes the strategic approach, lists specific recommendations compiled from the strategy sessions, and reports research findings.

The compiled recommendations are not prioritized. They represent a consolidation of the central ideas generated during the strategy session.

This Plan provides information and a planning approach for the Environmental Education Priority Team’s objective—to “conduct a public awareness campaign”—and the Nutrient Reduction Priority Team’s objective—to “implement nutrient reduction activities.” This project is intended as a pilot program for the Alliance. It can serve as a model for how other priority issues teams can develop initiatives to support the Alliance’s mission to improve the health of the Gulf.

Background

The Gulf of Mexico is the ninth largest water body in the world, accounting for half the wetlands in the United States. The Gulf has approximately 3,400 miles of shoreline and is bordered by Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas to the north, Mexico to the west, and the island of Cuba to the southeast.

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In 2004, the Gulf states governors expanded their support for creating a healthy Gulf of Mexico environment. This led to the formation of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (Alliance) which includes Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

The Alliance has identified six priority issues that have a significant impact on Gulf health:

- Water Quality for Healthy Beaches and Seafood**
- Habitat Conservation and Restoration**
- Ecosystems Integration and Assessment**
- Reducing Nutrient Impacts to Coastal Ecosystems**
- Coastal Community Resilience**
- Environmental Education**

This environmental education initiative addresses two Alliance goals:

- Reduction in nutrient loading associated with residential fertilizer use
- Development of a Gulf-wide public awareness and branding campaign

The Alliance and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) commissioned the University of South Florida's Center for Social Marketing at the College of Public Health (CSM) to develop a marketing plan to accomplish these goals.

Brand

An organization's brand is the essence of what it is and what it stands for. A brand represents the stated and implied agreements or promises between an organization and its constituents.

The three main elements that define a brand are:

- ❑ Brand promise—what we stand for and how we fulfill that promise
- ❑ Brand personality—who we are
- ❑ Brand message—what we are saying and how we are saying it

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The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a diverse assortment of members and stakeholders. The Alliance brand is designed to present an organizational identity that appeals to the shared connection among these different groups while retaining the essential nature of the Alliance’s mission and values. The brand is for those groups which the Alliance wants to attract, but should also reflect the organizational culture and personality of those already engaged with the organization.

The brand and repositioning strategy is based on formative research with these groups, discussions among Alliance members, and information developed during strategy sessions. All organizational outreach, programs, services, messages, and interactions with Alliance constituents should be rooted in this brand strategy, including the public awareness campaign, the residential fertilizer use marketing program, and the brand launch.

The brand strategy is designed to influence all of the Alliance’s constituents.

Brand Strategic Approach

The Alliance’s organizational audience and brand constituency is called ***The Gulf Community***. This term represents the eclectic array of groups sharing the perception that the Gulf is a central, vital force, an encompassing influence that impacts Gulf communities and individuals in every facet of life.

Brand Foundation and Promise

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is an inclusive, moderate, stakeholder-directed organization that protects the Gulf and Gulf states citizens—their families, their futures, their way of life. For members, the Alliance is an organizational structure that focuses on doing rather than planning, and appeals to local needs and issues. It provides balanced stewardship of Gulf resources to protect the financial security and preserve the unique character of Gulf communities.

Brand Dimensions

These are the offers that the Alliance consistently delivers and that can be expected by its constituency within its network of relationships.

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The Alliance

- ❑ Fosters coordination and collaboration among government and NGO entities
- ❑ Promotes health, economic, and social goals related to the Gulf
- ❑ Provides an efficient support and stewardship process for partner organizations
- ❑ Forms a state-oriented collaborative that focuses partner federal agencies on the needs of Gulf states

Brand Message

Brand message is a core message on which communications about the Alliance are based. It is an articulation of the core Alliance values and identity that is clear, easy to remember, and represents the central promise that the Alliance makes to its constituency.

(**Note:** This is a working brand message statement that reflects findings from audience research, ideas generated during strategy sessions, and feedback on earlier drafts of this document from Alliance members. This brand message should be regarded as still in development.)

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance Protects Your “Gulf” Way of Life

Relevant Findings

Gulf states residents feel a strong emotional connection to the Gulf of Mexico. The Gulf conjures ideals of unmatched beauty and tranquility, and is a shared resource that is economically and socially central to all aspects of peoples’ lives.

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is not well known among the general population. However, members and partners are committed to the organization’s mission. They want the Alliance to work to balance the region’s economic needs with environmental health, be inclusive, foster collaboration, maintain local community connections and, most importantly, provide tangible, measurable support for Gulf health.

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Residential Fertilizer Application Practices

Marketing planning relies on a multi-faceted approach to influencing behavior. This is rooted in the concept of the marketing mix, or *4 Ps*. The *4 Ps* describe the variables that constitute a marketing program. Marketing assumes that each of these variables plays an important part in influencing an individual to do what is asked—change a behavior, purchase a product, or use a service.

Each of these sections represents one of the marketing mix components of product, price, place and promotion strategies. They are cooperative parts of the whole approach to influencing residential fertilizer users to restrict the number of fertilizer applications in summer months, and limit the amount of fertilizer they use per application.

This section also reviews key audience information about the group which is most likely to adopt the desired practices of restricting summer fertilizer applications and using only limited amounts. This group is sometimes referred to as the priority population.

The priority population is the group that should receive the greatest attention in the marketing program. However, implementation of the plan is likely to influence other groups as well. Selecting a main focus for this part of the marketing plan is not intended to exclude other groups from the program. Selecting a priority audience simply allows the Alliance to focus resources and attention on the group that is likely to be most responsive.

These activities are part of the more comprehensive planning and implementation activities contained in the Governors' Action Plan and managed by the Nutrient Priority Team.

Priority Population

Social marketers try to understand everything they can about the people they hope to influence. Typically, they give greatest priority in marketing plans to one or more groups with the following characteristics: willingness to change, manageable size, and the potential to serve as role models who can influence other, possibly resistant, residents in their communities.

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Recommendation

Nineteen percent of the Gulf states population would be likely or very likely to restrict fertilizer use during the summer months. Twenty-one percent would limit how much fertilizer they use. These are the behaviors that produce better residential fertilizer application practices. These two population segments share similar demographic characteristics and a readiness to comply. We recommend giving this audience, called *Ready to Act*, the highest priority in program planning. Program efforts, materials, and a significant component of brand management should be directed first and foremost to this group.

Those who are willing to adopt both target behaviors (restrict fertilizer use during summer months and limit how much fertilizer they use) generally share the following characteristics:

- ❑ They own their homes.
- ❑ They care for their own lawns (although some use a lawn service or have someone else in the home do it).
- ❑ They are ethnically diverse, with Caucasians constituting the largest group (56%).
- ❑ They are more likely to be 25-64 years of age.
- ❑ Half of them live in communities that have regulations about lawn care, but almost none of their communities regulate or manage fertilizer use.
- ❑ Most have at least some college education.
- ❑ Income varies, but the largest percentage (30%) makes \$100,000 or more per year.
- ❑ Nearly three-fourths are married.

Audience Profile of Ready to Act

A vivid profile of typical members in the priority population can help guide program design. The following profile draws on data from the survey for this project, key informant discussions with representatives of pilot communities and other informed Gulf specialists, and findings from the qualitative data.

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The Ready Family

The Readys are long time residents of the Gulf states region. They are emotionally bonded with the Gulf of Mexico and the heritage of their state. They have invested a lifetime in fulfilling careers, raising their family, and becoming contributing members of their community. They own their home, live in an association or deed-restricted community, have completed at least some college, and have achieved financial comfort. They are in middle to late middle age and are not retired.

They work in their yard, but not obsessively, and feel a connection with the natural environment, particularly the Gulf. This connection with the Gulf and a desire to protect it motivates them to be environmentally friendly. If offered the right incentives and information, they will change their household and yard care practices.

Mr. Ready does most of the yard work, but Mrs. Ready influences how the yard looks and how it is cared for. During periods when they used a lawn service, they relied on the maintenance team to make decisions about landscaping care and fertilizer. Now that they do it themselves, they see how easy it is to follow the directions on fertilizer bags, but they still sometimes fertilize during the summer months and use the entire bag once it's opened.

Most of their life's dreams have come true. Their fondest wishes are for their children and grandchildren to have the same great family life and feel the same joy they have experienced living in the Gulf region.

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Strategic Approach

- ❑ Give greatest priority to this group of residential fertilizer users in planning the initial phase of the program.
- ❑ Test draft concepts and messages with members of the *Ready to Act* group in pilot sites, and with program partners.
- ❑ Test drafts of campaign ideas and materials with non-members of the priority population and program partners to ensure they have regional appeal and do not have a negative impact on those outside the priority segment.
- ❑ Test all materials with potential gatekeepers (community members who may influence whether materials are acceptable and used) such as Home Owners Associations (HOA) officers and policy makers.
- ❑ Forty percent of residents use landscapers. Landscapers who work in highly manicured communities may be valuable partners for the program. (The Placement Strategy section discusses the use of landscapers as program partners. Additional research may be needed to determine appropriate ways to establish partnerships with this group.)

Product and Pricing Strategy

A successful marketing program gives people the benefits they value most while lowering the barriers to acquiring those benefits. Two components of the plan address this goal: the *product strategy* specifies the benefits that will make limiting fertilizer use attractive to residents, and the *pricing strategy* determines how to make these practices acceptable.

In some circumstances, cost may entail paying for a tangible commodity. In others, however, the exchange may consist of what the consumer must give up (e.g., time, comfort, ease of use, social approval) to adopt the desired behaviors. The goal is to create a situation in which the priority population and other groups can successfully and comfortably restrict fertilizer use in summer months and limit the amount of fertilizer they use.

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Strategic Approach

Emphasize the benefits and other motivators for limiting fertilizer use and amounts, especially during the summer months.

- ❑ Emphasize that using less fertilizer at the right time of year is easier, cheaper, saves time, and preserves a healthy Gulf for future generations
- ❑ Show that homeowners will still have a yard they can be proud of
- ❑ Reinforce the personal connection to the Gulf
- ❑ Counteract the fear that the appearance of lawns and landscaping will suffer and lead to a decline in property values
- ❑ Provide in-store (big box stores, garden shops, etc.) opportunities for consumers to talk with fertilizer experts and Master Gardeners
- ❑ Identify demonstration yards in neighborhoods to show that properly fertilized lawns retain their beauty

Relevant Findings

Residents are more likely to resist recommended fertilizer use guidelines because they are concerned about

- ❑ How it will make their lawns look (40%)
- ❑ The impact on property values (35%)
- ❑ How much it will cost (33%)

Willingness to restrict fertilizer use to specific times of the year and to limit the amount of fertilizer they use on their yards is strongest among resident who

- ❑ Feel a strong personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico
- ❑ Feel social pressure to maintain their lawns
- ❑ Have a lawn service determine fertilizer use

Place

In this project, place refers to the *people and circumstances which can reinforce the adoption of recommended behaviors.*

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Strategic Approach

Residents value advice from a variety of trusted sources—county extension agents, local garden shops, and landscapers (for those who use them).

Enlist these sources as program partners who can serve as community educators, teaching residents how to fertilize appropriately while still protecting their landscapes and lawns.

Specific Recommendations

Potential Partners:

- Recruit landscapers as program partners, especially those who work in highly manicured communities.
- Recruit Cooperative Extension Services to help educate the public about proper fertilizer use.
 - The Extension Service’s Master Gardeners are especially well equipped for this purpose. They can distribute Alliance program materials and conduct neighborhood workshops and other continuing education activities.
 - Locations recommended for Master Gardeners to deliver seminars for residents:
 - Homeowners association meetings
 - Home Depot, Lowes, and other big box stores
 - Nurseries and florists
 - Community centers and clubs
 - Neighborhood workshops
 - Botanical gardens
- Partner with a variety of organizations to distribute program information and sponsor seminars, including:
 - Faith-based organizations
 - Non-governmental organizations (NGOs such as the Audubon Society, Sierra Club, etc.)
 - Homeowners associations
 - Chambers of Commerce

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- City, county, and state governments
 - Hotel chains
 - Departments of environmental quality
 - Watershed programs in Alliance member states
 - Coastal Environmental Learning Centers (CELCs) in each state
 - Clean waters act non-point source programs
 - K-12 educational systems
- Distribute information and sponsor activities at other regional or local events with environmental or homeowner themes:
- Home and garden shows
 - May Day and Earth Day events
 - Boat shows
 - Arbor Day events

Relevant Findings

- These are trusted information sources:
- County extension services
 - Local garden shops
 - Universities and community colleges
 - Lawn maintenance services

Promotion

The promotional strategy includes guidelines for designing effective messages, selecting appropriate information channels, and identifying activities that promote Gulf-friendly fertilizer practices.

Strategic Approach

Promotional activities, supported by scientific evidence, should reassure residents that their fertilizer practices and other behaviors can improve the Gulf's health.

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Messages should emphasize feelings of personal connection to the Gulf. Three themes associated with residents' strong ties to the Gulf are:

- ❑ Health—a healthy Gulf is a safe and healthy place for kids to play
- ❑ Economic well being—the Gulf is a key source of energy and transportation (freight and agriculture) and enhances property values
- ❑ Quality of life—a healthy Gulf enhances every citizen's quality of life

Use these themes to reinforce the desired fertilizer practices in promotional and educational activities.

Primary information channels recommended for promoting Gulf-friendly fertilizer practices include:

- ❑ Websites
- ❑ Printed literature

Other promotional activities are needed to reinforce core messages in multiple settings, provide more complete distribution of messages throughout communities, and emphasize the importance of appropriate fertilizer use.

These promotional activities include:

- ❑ Delivering information about the program in K-12 educational systems
- ❑ Using a multi-channel media campaign to increase the likelihood that people will see messages about the program
- ❑ Developing a speakers bureau to make presentations about appropriate fertilizer use
- ❑ Including information on when to fertilize in a variety of public communication channels such as local weather reports, local publications, and the *Farmer's Almanac*

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Specific Recommendations

- ❑ Develop a Friend of the Gulf fertilizer information page on the Alliance website; distribute the page through partner organizations' websites
- ❑ Use partner organizations as distribution channels for all educational and promotional activities (see abbreviated partner list previously listed under website support)
- ❑ Develop a standard webinar on proper fertilizer use for distribution to partner organizations
- ❑ Develop a residential Friends of the Gulf kit with information about Gulf health, fertilizer use, and the Gulf's impact on our health and economic well being
- ❑ Develop a multi-purpose outreach kit on the fertilizer program and distribute to partner organizations and media outlets throughout the region
- ❑ Build an Alliance consumer education network website
- ❑ Develop and implement a media campaign in the Alliance states; partner with fertilizer companies
- ❑ Develop social media promotional and educational networks (Facebook, blogs, text blasts)

Relevant Findings

- ❑ Residents are most willing to visit a website or read print literature.
- ❑ More than half express some willingness to talk with a salesperson.
- ❑ Residents are least willing to attend a fertilizer educational expo.

Public Awareness Campaign Implementation Guide

This section contains two primary parts: the Residential Fertilizer Use Reduction Marketing Program (RFRP) and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance Public Awareness Campaign (APAC). The program activities and materials for both initiatives should have consistent messages, themes, and creative elements and be embedded in the brand strategy.

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RFRP focuses on ways of influencing residential fertilizer users to restrict fertilizer use during summer months and limit how much fertilizer is used.

APAC is a broad campaign to introduce the Alliance brand and repositioning effort and target the full complement of Alliance constituents, referred to as the *Gulf Community*. The APAC structure and components consist of information from a literature review, research findings, recommendations from strategy sessions, and general guidelines common to this type of campaign.

These guidelines provide direction for implementation. However, assignment of priorities may depend on factors that are unknown at this time or on policy decisions of the Alliance leadership team and other members. Some components of the Guide will be implemented at the Alliance level throughout the region, while others may be implemented by state members. Factors that may influence prioritization include: capacity to initiate new programs, internal support, readiness to take on specific elements of the plan, financial resources, circumstances specific to state member groups, and competing demands from other programs and Alliance needs.

When making decisions about implementation activities, here are some questions to consider: Who is the responsible party for oversight? What funds are needed? What other support is needed? What is the timeline for implementation? What activity site(s) will be used?

Brand

Leadership Team Brand Training

Audience: Alliance Management Team, Priority Issue Team Leads, Priority Issue Coordinators, and representatives from key partner organizations

Deliverables: Training and Orientation Program, Training and Orientation Work Book, Brand Managers' Kit (Alliance Logo—hard copy and digital file, Brand Handbook, sample campaign collateral materials, digital files of collateral campaign materials, web/computer-based information, duplicates of electronic outreach/public awareness media, and production and brand use guidelines and standards)

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Description: Alliance leaders will participate in a brand orientation. Brand orientation and training lays the foundation for all brand launch and repositioning activities. Leadership buy-in, a thorough understanding of the brand, and a shared approach to brand management are the goals of this session.

Responsible Party: Alliance Management Team and Orientation Consultant—TBD

Funds Needed: TBD

Other Support: TDB

Timeline: TBD (prior to all other implementation activities)

Activity Site(s): TBD

Brand Introduction

Audience: Alliance Members

Deliverables: All-Hands Brand Introduction Meeting, Training and Orientation Program, Training and Orientation Work Book, Brand Manager's Kit (Alliance Logo—hard copy and digital file, Brand Handbook, sample campaign collateral materials, digital files of collateral campaign materials, web/computer based information, duplicates of electronic outreach media, and production and brand use guidelines and standards)

Description: The all-hands kickoff event offers guidance on how Alliance members will serve as part of the brand management team, builds organizational brand awareness, instills a sense of shared excitement and mission, and provides a forum in which to acknowledge the important contributions Alliance members and other partners have made to the development of an organizational identity. The brand introduction event includes presentation of the brand platform, the new logo, campaign materials, and a network for support, plus a review of campaign activities and events connected with the brand launch.

Responsible Party: Alliance Management Team

Funds Needed: TBD

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Other Support: Offices of the governors of the Alliance states send governors and/or cabinet level officials to declare support for the effort.

Timeline: TBD (following the leadership training and orientation)

Activity Site(s): TBD

Brand Launch

Audience: Alliance partners, local and state government representatives, the general public, and state, local, and national media

Deliverables: Media event and press conference in each state, media kit with all brand and campaign materials, governors' proclamations, public display materials for each event, press releases for each event

Description: Launch and media events will be held on the same day in each Alliance state. These events should be coordinated across states and share a common structure, materials, and approach. States are encouraged to tailor their events to reflect their culture and heritage while remaining true to the brand strategy. To encourage media coverage, high ranking members of state government should be recruited as lead participants. If at all possible, the office of the governor of each state should issue a proclamation in support of the Alliance and its efforts. The Alliance should select a regional launch coordinator to work with the states on their events.

Responsible Party: Launch Coordinator (TBD), Alliance Management Team, and State Environmental Education Coordinators

Funds Needed: TBD

Other Support: State-level brand introduction should be coordinated with the public awareness campaign, as should the Residential Fertilizer Use Reduction Program's efforts. Governors or their representatives, Alliance members at all levels of the organization, and key partner organizations should attend.

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Timeline: TBD (following brand introduction to Alliance membership)

Activity Site(s): Capital cities or largest media markets of each state

Residential Fertilizer Use Reduction Program

Priority Population

Audience: Residents in Pilot Communities who are *Ready to Act*

Deliverables: Public information and outreach

- ❑ Friend of the Gulf website
- ❑ Residential consumer Friend of the Gulf Kit
- ❑ Friend of the Gulf Master Gardener campaign orientation program
- ❑ Friend of the Gulf educational workshop curriculum
- ❑ Radio advertisements
- ❑ Outdoor advertisements
- ❑ Poster display for placement in partner organization sites
- ❑ Power Point presentation for Master Gardeners with program background and instruction on preferred fertilizer practices

Description: The Cooperative Extension Service is the most widely trusted source of information for lawn care. Master Gardeners are a voice of the extension services and can serve as spokespersons for the RFRP marketing program. Public information and consumer outreach materials should use Master Gardeners as the face of the program.

Build a Friend of the Gulf Master Gardener Sales Team. This team is a low-cost way to sustain the program. An orientation program and an adapted educational workshop will prepare this skilled volunteer group to deliver key information about the program, secure support at the community level, raise community awareness, and deliver consumer education through various partner organizations.

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- ❑ Combine Master Gardener expertise with training on how to use the Alliance marketing plan. Provide Master Gardeners with Residential Consumer Friend of the Gulf Kits that they can use to promote Gulf-friendly fertilizer practices at neighborhood workshops, partner organization events, and other continuing education activities.

The messages in the materials should carry an emotional tone, focusing on Gulf residents' affection for the Gulf, the value they place on an attractive landscape, and their pride in their homes. The materials should acknowledge residents' support for Gulf health and provide information on fertilizer practices that are easier, less expensive and effective at maintaining attractive landscapes.

Responsible Party: TBD

Funds Needed: TBD

Other Support: Media cooperation for production, placement, and free time or space for public service announcements; coordinate with Cooperative Extension Service

Timeline: TBD

Activity Site(s): Appropriate media outlets, partner organizations, area businesses and services where residents and landscape companies seek lawn care information, support, products and supplies

Secondary Audience—Landscaping Companies

(These recommendations are based on a previous study of residential irrigation use in which landscapers were an intended audience group. Additional research may be useful for identifying other ways of working with this group.)

Audience: Landscape company owners, franchisees, and employees

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Deliverables: Landscaper's Friend of the Gulf Educational Handbook, adapted Friend of the Gulf curriculum for landscape companies

Description: Revise and adapt the Extension Service's existing landscaper training materials so that they can serve as a Friend of the Gulf curriculum for teaching landscape service providers how to reduce fertilizer use. Produce Landscaper's Friend of the Gulf Educational Handbook for distribution.

The Handbook Should Include:

- ❑ Overview of the RFRP
- ❑ Facts on the Gulf and the environment
- ❑ Recommended fertilizer practices
- ❑ Contact information for content experts

Support materials:

- ❑ Friend of the Gulf magnet sign for work vehicles
- ❑ Friend of the Gulf hats with program logo for employees

Responsible Party: TBD

Funds Needed: TBD

Other Support: Power Point presentation with program background, content information and instruction on preferred fertilizer practices. Because data was not collected on landscapers, careful testing of program activities is needed to guide development of materials for this group.

Timeline: TBD

Activity Site: Area locations close to communities where companies work

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Alliance Public Awareness Campaign

These campaign materials are commonly used in public service, social marketing, and commercial advertising media campaigns. They provide a multi-channel structure that assures coverage of broad segments of the population as well as the ability to target specific population groups with particular media and channels.

Effective use of these communications channels will require further planning. These media form a suggested framework for a comprehensive campaign, which will take significant resources to implement.

Media Campaign

Audience: Gulf Community (general public and all Alliance constituents as described in the brand strategy)

Deliverables:

- ❑ *Logo*—A new logo will serve as the face of the brand and public awareness campaign while clearly identifying the Alliance to all. It establishes a focal point for campaign activities and is a point of demarcation from previous efforts.
- ❑ *Television Public Service Announcements*—Television public service announcements are typically the most efficient way to reach a large audience. With high numbers of viewers at all times of day, properly scheduled social advertising could reach a large percentage of Alliance constituents.
- ❑ *Radio Public Service Announcement*—Radio is particularly useful for targeting specific audiences. Radio stations often attract clearly defined audience segments. All media markets offer radio stations which appeal to specific ethnic and demographic segments of the community.
- ❑ *Outdoor Advertising*—Outdoor advertising allows specific targeting of neighborhoods and provides campaign continuity. This medium offers effective audience reach at a relatively low cost.

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- ❑ *Media Relations*—Public relations—press conferences, media events, press releases and the like—can generate news coverage that complements purchased advertising or public service placements, and can help establish long term relationships with local media representatives. These efforts should position the Alliance as an organization dedicated to improving the well being of Gulf states communities, and as a source of scientific expertise.

Description: The public awareness campaign for the general population will focus on establishing a brand identity and repositioning the Alliance. The fertilizer use campaign will be tied to the awareness campaign. This demonstrates a key brand element—that the Alliance is actively seeking solutions to problems that threaten the health of the Gulf.

A comprehensive multi-channel campaign will deliver reinforcing information through various media. This will improve distribution of the campaign messages, establish a high profile presence among Gulf communities, and help attract unpaid coverage from local media organizations.

Messages and materials should reflect the brand position of the Alliance—that the Gulf is the economic, emotional and cultural lifeblood of the communities that surround it. Messages should emphasize feelings of personal connection with the Gulf.

Three themes associated with residents' strong ties to the Gulf are:

- ❑ Health—a healthy Gulf is a safe and healthy place for kids to play
- ❑ Economic well being—the Gulf is a key source of energy and transportation (freight and agriculture) and enhances property values
- ❑ Quality of life—a healthy Gulf enhances every citizen's quality of life

Use these themes in connection with campaign activities and messages.

Responsible Party: TBD

Funds Needed: TBD

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Other Support: TBD

Timeline: TBD

Activity Site(s): Various media markets throughout the Alliance states

Partner Organization Outreach

Audience: Local government, media, local commercial outlets, fertilizer related businesses, environmental groups, policy makers, media representatives, and other local entities to be identified within state and local communities

Deliverables: Community Partners Outreach Kit. This Kit includes a program brief, A CD ROM-Power Point Presentation, information on the Alliance program website, contact information for Alliance staff, testimonials from established Alliance partners, and program and campaign materials.

Description: These activities are intended to secure partnership support from area organizations. This support includes provision of space for community events and educational fairs, media attention, and information distribution. The web page also provides all community partners and the general public with program and campaign information directly from the Alliance information site.

The CD ROM-Power Point program's content is the same as that developed for Master Gardeners. The program brief is a distributable version of the information found in the Power Point and consists of a concise overview of the program, its goals, and specific ways partner organizations can provide support. Selected Alliance coordinators in the member states will use this kit as an outreach tool.

Responsible Party: Alliance Coordinators in Gulf states (TBD)

Funds Needed: TBD

Other Support: TBD

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Timeline: TBD

Activity Site: Multiple communities throughout the Alliance states

Coordination

Marketing and distribution of program activities and materials should be a two-tiered effort which originates with the Alliance Management Team. The AMT provides logistic and technical support, a clearinghouse to distribute materials and answer questions from state coordinators, and continuity oversight for implementation activities. A designated implementation coordinator should perform this function. Coordinators should also be designated in each state.

Factors to consider:

- ❑ Maintenance of website
- ❑ Coordination of trainings and events
- ❑ Program launch and promotion
- ❑ Distribution of materials
- ❑ Outreach to and follow-up technical assistance for partners and collaborators
- ❑ Media placement coordination
- ❑ Media relations maintenance

Implementation of the project could have some negative effects and raise issues for the management of the Alliance that include:

- ❑ How various components of the plan interact
- ❑ Competing demands among staff
- ❑ The most appropriate time to implement activities
- ❑ Potential outcomes (positive and negative) of implementing the activities
- ❑ Resource allocation for implementation

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Assessment and Monitoring

The brand and public awareness campaign should include monitoring and assessment of program activities and influences—what activities are done, how they are received by the intended audiences, and how the campaign influences awareness of the Alliance and its brand value. A monitoring plan can be developed once the campaign elements have been selected and prioritized.

Monitoring and assessment data can be used to guide midcourse adjustments in campaign activities, assure that the Alliance is responsive to the fluctuations that naturally occur over time in communities and markets, and identify new ways to promote the Alliance’s mission and value.

Other Considerations

Concept Testing

Program brand and materials concepts are the starting point for the construction of a cohesive, identifiable, and sustainable public awareness campaign. Prior to campaign development, conceptual approaches should be developed and tested. This process will establish primary message themes, key design approaches, and a creative direction for all materials. Before extensive production work begins, concept testing helps the creative and research teams correctly establish the key message and communication tactics needed to reach the intended audiences. Data from concept testing provides a blueprint to guide writers, designers and artists as they develop materials. Concept testing examines responses to message, tone, design, visual imagery, and linguistic structure and style.

The most important goals of concept testing are to ascertain the key message delivery approach, to establish which approach most successfully establishes rapport with the intended audiences, and to ensure that tactical approaches are consistent with the marketing strategy. This process also helps reveal whether potential messages are offensive or off-target with intended audiences.

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Pretesting

Upon establishing the central message, creative design, and instructional themes, prototypes of materials are prepared for pretesting. At this stage, key elements of the campaign are reviewed. The central objectives during pretesting are to learn whether the key information being delivered is understandable, doable, builds rapport, is on-strategy, and can elicit the desired responses from the intended audience.