

# Gulf of Mexico Alliance

Environmental Awareness Campaign



Stormwater Communications, Inc.

## Final Research Brief & Strategy Workbook



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA  
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# INTRODUCTION

## Background

The Gulf of Mexico is the ninth largest body of water in the world. It accounts for half the wetlands in the United States and teems with sea life, ranging from killer whales to unexplored deepwater corals living thousands of feet below the surface. With some 3,400 miles of shoreline stretching from Cape Sable, Florida to the tip of the Yucatan peninsula, the Gulf is bordered by Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas to the north, Mexico to the west, and the island of Cuba to the southeast.

In 2004, recognizing the Gulf of Mexico's great regional significance, Florida Governor Jeb Bush called for the governors of the five Gulf states to expand support for the creation of a healthy Gulf of Mexico environment. Bush's call-to-action led to the formation of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA), which now includes Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, and Mexico.

With increased support from the federal government and growing partnerships among member states, Gulf communities, and interested organizations, GOMA is becoming a model of regional and international collaboration.

The Alliance serves as a clearinghouse, sharing science, expertise, and resources to promote sustained protection of the Gulf. To advance its mission, GOMA has identified six priority issues that have a significant impact on Gulf health:

- ❑ Water Quality for Healthy Beaches and Shellfish Beds
- ❑ Wetland and Coastal Conservation and Restoration
- ❑ Environmental Education
- ❑ Identification and Characterization of Gulf Habitats
- ❑ Reducing Nutrient Inputs to Coastal Ecosystems

- ❑ Coastal Community Resiliency

There are two priorities for the current funding cycle in environmental education: reduction in the nutrient loading associated with residential fertilizer use and development of a Gulf-wide public awareness and branding campaign.

To address these needs, GOMA and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) have commissioned the University of South Florida's Center for Social Marketing at the College of Public Health (CSM) to develop a marketing plan. This plan will guide the development of a brand strategy and marketing initiatives to enhance GOMA's position among partner groups and communities and encourage reduction in nutrient loading throughout the Gulf states.

Working with GOMA representatives and DISL, the Center for Social Marketing has selected key target audiences for this program: *Opinion Leaders and Policy Makers* (elected/appointed officials and environmental advocates); *Key informants* (broadcast and print media/professionals/journalists, GOMA members, the Gulf of Mexico Program Business Council, environmental scientists); and the *general public* living in communities near the Gulf.

## **Project Goals**

CSM is working with GOMA to achieve the following goals:

- ❑ Support GOMA and the environmental education objectives of the Governors' Action Plan
- ❑ Provide recommendations for reducing nutrient discharge behaviors
- ❑ Craft a marketing plan to guide GOMA's efforts to reduce nutrient loading caused by residential fertilizer use, and develop a brand platform and brand management strategy to reposition GOMA among Alliance members, partners and the general public as a "top of mind" resource for matters related to Gulf health
- ❑ Gather preliminary conceptual information on coastal resiliency
- ❑ Provide a strategic framework for the development of a Gulf-wide public awareness campaign

## **About this Workbook**

This document summarizes key research findings needed to create a marketing plan to guide GOMA's efforts to: (1) reduce nutrient loading from residents' use of fertilizer, and (2) develop a brand platform and brand management strategy to reposition GOMA as a "top of mind" resource for matters related to Gulf health among Alliance members, partners and the general public. It is organized into two chapters. The first examines residents' fertilizer use and summarizes information needed to develop a marketing plan to reduce nutrient loading. The second chapter focuses on the general audience's views of the Gulf of Mexico and summarizes information needed to develop a brand for GOMA and its projects.

The information reported here is based on the following data sources:

- ❑ A review of the literature
- ❑ Ten focus group interviews with 74 residents living in GOMA member states
- ❑ Fifty-eight 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
- ❑ A web-based survey of 754 consumers living in the five GOMA member states

# CHAPTER ONE: FERTILIZER USE

This chapter is organized into four sections that correspond with key components of the marketing plan:

- ❑ Audience Segmentation
- ❑ Product and Price Strategy
- ❑ Placement Strategy
- ❑ Promotion Strategy

## Section I: Audience Segmentation

Social marketers try to understand everything they can about their consumers—the people they hope to reach. In this section, we outline the general demographic characteristics of residents living in GOMA member states, their awareness of Gulf -related problems, their current fertilizer practices, and their willingness to adopt recommended behaviors: *restrict fertilizer use to specific months or seasons of the year* and *limit the amount of fertilizer they use*. To help develop the marketing plan, we also examine priority audience groups, assessing their willingness to change, current landscaping practices, and environmental attitudes and knowledge.

### General Characteristics of Resident Sample

Residents who participated in the online panel survey represent equal proportions of males (50%) and females (50%). As seen in the Table 1, the sample is diverse in ethnicity, age, and marital status.

**Table 1. Sample Characteristics**

Category	Percentage (%)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Caucasian/White	68
African American/Black	18
Hispanic/Latino	10
Asian or Pacific Islander	2
Native American or Alaskan native	1
Mixed racial background	2
Other race	<.5
<b>Age</b>	
18 to 24	11
25 to 34	21
35 to 44	19
45 to 54	19
55 to 64	18
65 and over	13
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single	18
Married	69
Divorced	9
Widowed	2

Other sample characteristics:

- Most respondents have been to the Gulf of Mexico (88%).
- Most respondents own their own homes (82%); 10% rent their homes, and 8% live with a family member.
- All respondents have lawns.
- Half of respondents care for their lawns themselves; 27.5% rely on a spouse or someone else in the home for lawn care, and 22% hire a lawn service or gardener.

#### Current Fertilizer Use

Survey respondents were asked when they fertilize their yards.

**Table 2. Fertilizer Use by Month**

Month	Percentage (%)
January	5
February	5
March	20
April	18
May	10
June	9
July	8
August	7
September	11
October	12
November	7
December	4

- Almost one-third do not fertilize their yards.
- Almost one-fourth are unsure when to fertilize.
- For the rest, spring is the most popular season to fertilize, followed closely by fall.

Willingness to Adopt Protective Behaviors

Survey respondents were asked to rate how likely they would be to adopt two behaviors that would reduce nutrient loading: fertilize the yard only at *specified times of the year*, and fertilize the yard with only a *specific amount of fertilizer*. As seen in Table 3, only small proportions of residents are doing one or the other, leaving sufficient room to demonstrate a campaign effect. Showing a willingness to change their habits, almost half of the residents are likely (4) or very likely (5) to adopt one of the desired behaviors.

**Table 3. Likelihood of Adopting Protective Practices**

Behavior	Not at all likely (1) (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	Very likely (5) (%)	Already do it (%)
Fertilize their yards only at specific times of the year	5	6	21	26	28	8
Fertilize their yards with only a specific amount	5	7	22	27	26	7

**Recommended Priority Segment**

Only small minorities of the sample are currently restricting the times of the year they fertilize or the amount they use. Among the remaining residents, 81% are likely (4) or very likely (5) to do one or the other, showing a willingness to change campaign-related behaviors. Within this group, 19% currently fertilize during the summer months (July–August) but would be likely or very likely to adopt both practices if it would help protect the Gulf of Mexico. Nineteen percent would be likely or very likely to restrict fertilizer use during the summer months, and 21% would limit how much fertilizer they use. We recommend giving these segments of the population the greatest priority in GOMA’s efforts to reduce nutrient loading by promoting environmentally friendly fertilizer use.

**Table 4. Likelihood Would Adopt Protective Practices by Current Practices**

	Fertilize During Appropriate Times of Year Only	Fertilize During Inappropriate Times of Year
Likely to fertilize at specific times of year	81%	19%
Likely to fertilize with specific amount	79%	21%
Likely to adopt both practices	81%	19%

## **Audience Segmentation Work Session**

Task: Decide which subgroups of the residential population should get the greatest priority in planning GOMA's efforts to reduce inappropriate fertilizer use.

- Which subgroups would have the greatest impact on nutrient loading?
- Which subgroups are most likely to adopt recommended practices?

## Section II. Product and Pricing Strategy

An essential ingredient of a successful marketing plan is giving consumers the benefits they value most at a price they can afford. Two components of the plan are designed to achieve this goal: The *product strategy* specifies the benefits that will make limiting fertilizer use attractive to residents, while the *pricing strategy* determines how barriers or costs should be lowered to make these practices acceptable. In this section, we summarize research that examines a variety of factors that influence residents’ willingness to limit fertilizer use.

### Factors that Influence Landscaping Decisions

Respondents were asked to rate the factors they use to determine how to care for their lawn.

**Table 5. Factors that Determine How to Care for Lawn/Landscaping**

Factor	Not at All Important	Extremely Important	Rank Order
How the yard will look—its overall appearance	1.5%	40%	1
The impact on property values	3%	35%	2
How much it will cost	3%	33%	3
How difficult it will be to keep up	4%	24%	4
The impact on local water sources	6%	23%	5
How long it will take to do	6%	20%	6
The impact on local water sources	19%	12.5%	7
Rules of my homeowners association*	15%	12. %	8
What neighbors will think	14%	11%	9
The amount of fertilizer it will require	9.5%	10.5%	10

\*Based on reduced sample size (i.e., only those who live in a community with a homeowners association)

- ❑ When deciding how to care for their lawns, the largest proportion of residents (40%) consider how it will make their lawns look—its’ overall appearance.
- ❑ Other factors that influence significant proportions of residents are: the impact it will have on their property values (35%) and monetary costs (30%).

- Only 12.5% consider the impact on the Gulf of Mexico when determining how to care for their lawns.

Attitudes and Opinions that Influence Residents’ Environmental Practices

Survey respondents were asked for their opinions on a range of subjects—fertilizer use, the Gulf of Mexico, and environmental protection—that are known to influence environmental behaviors. Not surprisingly, responses to most of these questions are highly correlated and collectively represent single factors. Table 6 shows the individual questions that are grouped together to form these factors.

**Table 6. Environmental Attitude and Knowledge Factors**

Factors	Questions
Personal Connection to the Gulf of Mexico Alpha = 0.92	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ My livelihood depends on the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ The Gulf of Mexico is an important part of my community</li> <li>□ I feel strongly about preserving the environment</li> <li>□ The health of the Gulf of Mexico interests me</li> <li>□ I know what to do to protect the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ I would volunteer for local activities designed to improve the health of the Gulf</li> <li>□ Everyone’s actions on land affect the health of the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ I can help protect the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ The local economy depends on a healthy Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ Putting too much fertilizer on my yard hurts the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ Fertilizing my yard at the wrong time of the year hurts the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ Feeling a personal connection to the Gulf would motivate me to protect it</li> <li>□ Receiving more information on how to protect the Gulf would motivate me to protect it</li> <li>□ Thinking of my grandchild’s future would motivate me to protect the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ Protecting the Gulf of Mexico would enhance the local economy</li> <li>□ The way I landscape my yard has a direct effect on the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li>□ All USA citizens are responsible for protection of the Gulf of Mexico</li> </ul>
Social Pressure Alpha = 0.798	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Keeping my lawn attractive is important to me</li> <li>□ I care what my neighbors think of my property</li> <li>□ How the yard will look, its overall appearance, is an important factor in deciding how to landscape or care for my yard</li> <li>□ The impact on property value is an important factor in deciding how to landscape or care for my yard</li> </ul>

Factors	Questions
Political Action Alpha = 0.713	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Willing to write or call local legislators or policymakers to ask for their support of environmentally friendly policies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Willing to vote for legislators or policymakers who support environmentally friendly policies</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Willing to support local ordinances that regulate littering and polluting</li> </ul>
Product Costs Alpha = 0.638	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How much it will cost is an important factor in deciding how to landscape or care for yard</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How long it will take is an important factor in deciding how to landscape or care for my yard</li> </ul>
Lack of Fertilizer Knowledge Alpha = 0.694	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing fertilizer is very confusing</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I find it very difficult to determine how much fertilizer to put on my lawn</li> </ul>
Protecting the Gulf Alpha = 0.784	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The health of the Gulf depends on location (don't understand this one)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It's my responsibility to protect the health of the Gulf of Mexico</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> We should protect the Gulf of Mexico for future generations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Being personally affected by pollution in the Gulf would motivate me to protect it</li> </ul>
Protective Action Alpha = 0.659	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> It's important to keep fertilizer off hard surfaces like sidewalks, driveways and streets</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The impact on local water sources is an important factor in deciding how to landscape or care for my yard</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The impact on the Gulf of Mexico is an important factor in deciding how to landscape or care for my yard</li> </ul>
Influencers Alpha = 0.545	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I feel pressure from my neighbors or homeowners association to keep my lawn attractive</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am often influenced by my friends and family</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> I am a lot like my neighbors</li> </ul>

## Factors that Influence Residents' Willingness to Fertilize Only at Specified Times of the Year

### *Reasons Given for Deciding When to Fertilize*

- The largest group of respondents (40%) indicated they wait for a specific time of year to fertilize.
- The second largest proportion of respondents selected condition of the lawn to determine when to fertilize their lawn (23%)

### *Environmental Attitudes and Other Factors*

Five factors are significantly associated with people's willingness to restrict fertilizer use to *specific times* of the year.

- Residents who feel a strong *personal connection* to the Gulf of Mexico are nearly seven times more likely to be willing to fertilize only at specified times of the year than those who do not feel that connection.
- Residents who feel *social pressure to maintain their lawns* are over three times more likely to be willing to fertilize their yards only at specified times of the year than those who do not feel social pressure.
- Respondents are 97% less likely to restrict fertilizing to specific seasons if they have *a lawn service* determine how much fertilizer to use.
- Those who feel *higher levels of social pressure* are almost 50% less likely to fertilize at specified times than those who do not feel such pressure.
- Males are almost three times more likely than females to express willingness to fertilize at specific times only.

### *People Most Willing to Restrict Times They Fertilize*

To understand the interaction among the large number of variables considered in this study, a second regression approach (CHAID) was used to identify segments of the population containing large proportions of people willing to restrict fertilizer use to specific times of the year.

- The most responsive segment, with everyone willing to adopt this practice, consists of residents who:
  - have a strong personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico

- do not divide the fertilizer bag evenly on their yard when they fertilize
  - discard the bag after use
  - consider “How difficult it will be to keep up” as an important or extremely important factor in their lawn maintenance decisions
- In another responsive segment, 90% are willing to fertilize only at specified times.

This group includes people who:

- do not divide the fertilizer bag evenly on their yard and discard the bag
- have a relatively weaker personal connection to the Gulf
- are female

Fertilize only at a specified time of year

Category	%
Yes	82.76
No	17.24
Total	100



Personal connection to the Gulf

Personal connection to the Gulf

<=3.4118	
Category	%
Yes	82.39
No	17.61
Total	32.25

<=3.4118	
Category	%
Yes	98.36
No	1.64
Total	37.12

<=3.0588	
Category	%
Yes	46.43
No	53.57
Total	11.36

>3.0588	
Category	%
Yes	74.71
No	25.26
Total	19.27

What is your gender

How difficult is it to keep up

Male		Female	
Category	%	Category	%
Yes	76.14	Yes	90.14
No	23.86	No	9.86
Total	17.85	Total	14.40

<=3		>3	
Category	%	Category	%
Yes	94.92	Yes	100
No	5.08	No	0
Total	11.97	Total	25.15

## Factors that Influence Residents' Willingness to Fertilize with a Specific Amount

### *Reasons Given for Deciding How Much Fertilizer to Use*

Respondents were asked to describe how they determined the amount of fertilizer to use on their lawns.

- The most common methods reported for deciding how much fertilizer to use are: (1) read instructions on the bag (51%), and (2) rely on the lawn service or landscaper (22.5%).
- Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they understand the directions on fertilizer labels (68%).
- Relatively few respondents agreed or strongly agreed (13%) that it was difficult to determine how much fertilizer to put on their lawns.
- Relatively few respondents agreed or strongly agreed (19%) that purchasing fertilizer can be very confusing.

### *Environmental Attitudes and Other Factors*

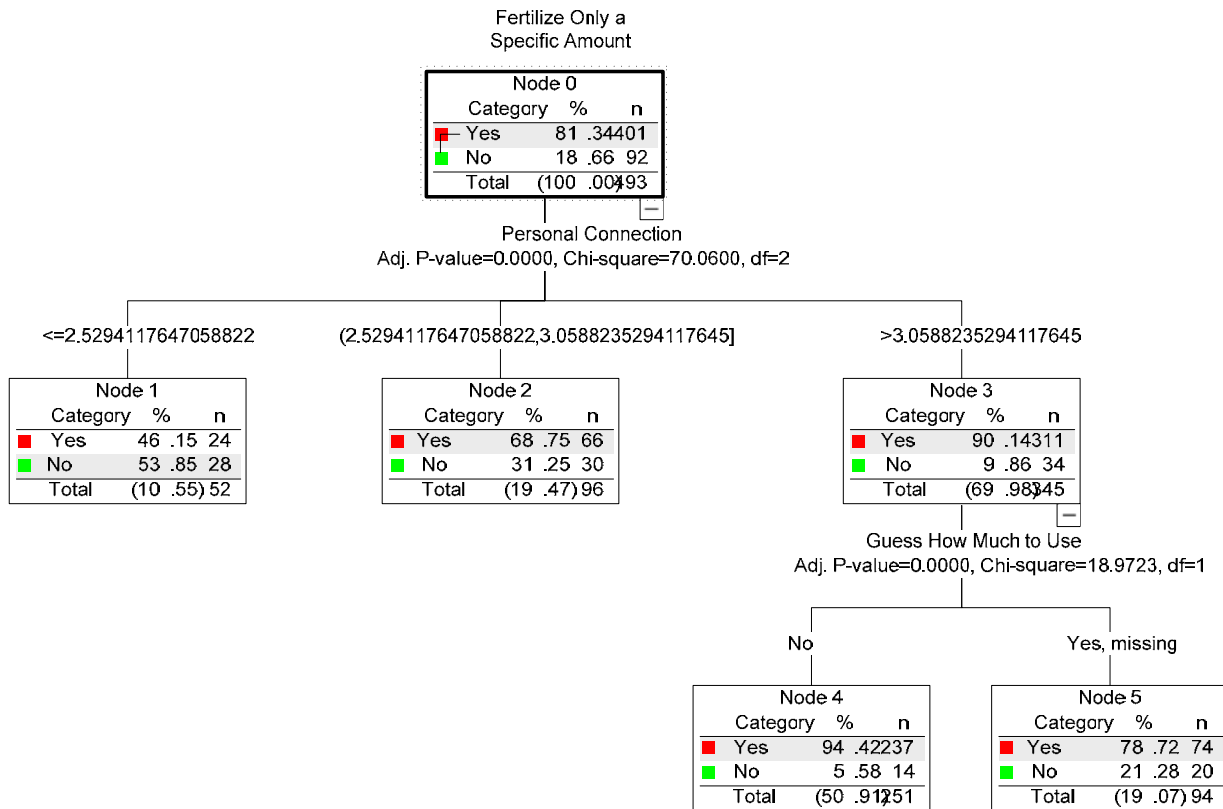
Similar attitudinal factors increase the likelihood that people will be willing to *limit the amount* of fertilizer they use on their yards.

- Residents who feel a *strong personal connection* to the Gulf of Mexico are almost five times more likely than those who do not to be willing to restrict the amount of fertilizer they use on their yards.
- Residents who report higher levels of *social pressure* to care for their lawns are over twice as likely as those who do not feel this pressure to be willing to fertilize their yards only with a specific amount.
- Residents are 66% less likely to restrict the amount of fertilizer they apply to their yards if they use *package directions* instead of a salesperson's advice to determine the amount they should fertilize.
- African American respondents are 83% less likely than white respondents to be willing to use a specific amount of fertilizer on their yards.

- Respondents who rely on someone else in the house to care for their lawns are six times more likely than those who care for the lawn themselves to be willing to limit the amount of fertilizer they use.

*People Most Willing to Limit the Amount Used*

When interaction effects are examined to identify segments most likely to limit the amount of fertilizer they use, the largest segment of residents willing to adopt this practice are those who feel a strong personal connection to the Gulf and do not guess when determining the amount of fertilizer to apply. Among residents with these characteristics, 94% are also willing to fertilize at specified times only.



## Understanding People with a Personal Connection to the Gulf

Qualitative and survey results underscore the effect people's personal connections to the Gulf of Mexico have on their environmental practices. Many focus group participants grew up near the Gulf, or at least have lived in the area for many years, and hold fond memories of fishing with friends and relatives, family outings, and general good times. Participants report that people who protect the Gulf have a vested interest in their local environment, take pride in their home communities, and often make a living from the Gulf.

In light of the impact a personal connection to the Gulf has on survey respondents' willingness to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors, regression analyses were conducted to gain a better understanding of the characteristics associated with high personal connection scores. Results reveal six factors that significantly increase the likelihood that people will have a strong personal connection to the Gulf.

- ❑ People with high scores on social pressure to care for their lawns are two and a half times more likely than those with low scores to feel a personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico.
- ❑ Residents who report high levels of peer or homeowners association influence are 1.8 times more likely to feel a personal connection to the Gulf.
- ❑ Residents who say they have a basic understanding of environmental science are almost two and a half times more likely than those who do not to feel a personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico.
- ❑ Residents who agree or strongly agree that they are environmentalists are over twice as likely to feel a personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico.
- ❑ Respondents who agree or strongly agree that communities within 50 miles of the Gulf of Mexico are responsible for its protection are one and a half times more likely to feel a personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico than those who do not agree with this statement.

- Respondents who are concerned or very concerned about habitat destruction are one and a half times more likely than those who are not to feel a personal connection to the Gulf of Mexico.

### Understanding Social Pressure

Many focus group participants are proud of how their neighborhoods look and are committed to maintaining attractive lawns. Residents' answers to questions about this and related items (e.g., concern about neighbors' opinions and the overall appearance of their landscaping) were combined into a "social pressure" factor. Examination of personal characteristics and attitudinal factors that influence residents' scores on the social pressure factor revealed three predictors.

- Respondents who live in a community with rules and regulations are 64% less likely to feel high levels of social pressure to maintain their lawn.
- African American respondents are 82% less likely to feel high levels of social pressure to maintain their lawn.
- Respondents who are voluntarily out of the work force are almost three times more likely than those who are employed full-time to feel high levels of social pressure to maintain their lawn.

### **Product and Pricing Work Session**

Task: Create an exchange that offers residents benefits they value at a price they can afford.

- What benefits should we promise?
- How can we reinforce the advantages of limited fertilizer use over unrestricted use?
- How can we address the barriers to adopting this protective behavior?

- What can be done to motivate landscapers and lawn service personnel to restrict fertilizer use?
  
- What can be done to modify the directions on fertilizer packages to promote limited use?
  
- How can residents be encouraged to rely on personal instruction from sales staff or others with expertise in fertilizer use?
  
- How can residents be equipped to resist pressure from neighbors and their homeowners associations? (This could be confusing—with the exception of the finding on page 15 that those who feel “higher levels” of pressure are half as likely to fertilize at specified times, social pressure seems to promote timely and limited fertilizer use , , ,)

### Section III. Placement Strategy

Place refers to the people, organizations, and circumstances that can reinforce residents' decisions to change their lawn care habits. Survey respondents were asked to rate how much they trust a variety of potential program partners who would be promoting proper fertilizer use.

**Table 7. Potential Program Partners**

Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is NOT TRUST AT ALL and 5 is ABSOLUTELY TRUST, rate how much you would trust each of the following about proper fertilizer use for your lawn?

Entity	Not trust at all (1) (%)	2 (%)	3 (%)	4 (%)	Absolute trust (5) (%)
Someone like me	4	8.1	40	33	15.1
County extension office	7.6	11	34	31	17.5
University or community college	5.2	6.9	36	38	14.1
Gulf of Mexico Alliance	13.7	17	48	17	4.6
Local government	13.9	19	44	20	3.2
Homeowners association	17.4	22	44	14	2.7
A big box store (e.g., Home Depot, Lowe's)	4.9	11	41	35	9.3
A local garden shop	2	4.2	28	50	15.9
Landscaper who cares for your yard (if indicated earlier they used one)	0.6	6	18	46	29.3
The governor of your state	17.4	19	40	19	4.9
The federal government	16.7	20	42	18	3.1

- ❑ Among all residents the most trusted sources are the county extension offices and local garden shops.
- ❑ Universities and community colleges are also trusted by many residents, and rated poorly by relatively few.
- ❑ People who use landscapers or lawn maintenance services place a great deal of trust in them to determine how to fertilize.
- ❑ Females are more likely than males to trust GOMA, their homeowners association, big box stores, and local garden shops.

- ❑ As age increases, the proportion of respondents who absolutely trust the county extension office increases.
- ❑ Eighteen to 24 year olds are more likely than other age group to trust the local government, local garden shops, and their homeowners association.
- ❑ Forty-five to 54 year olds are more likely than all other age groups to trust a big box store.
- ❑ White respondents are more likely than all other groups to absolutely trust their county extension offices.
- ❑ African American respondents are more likely than all other groups to absolutely trust a big box store and a local garden shop.
- ❑ Hispanic respondents are more likely than all other groups to absolutely trust the governor of their state.
- ❑ Those with less than a high school education are more likely than all other education levels to absolutely trust “someone like me.”
- ❑ Those with a high school diploma or GED are more likely than all other education levels to absolutely trust a big box store.
- ❑ Respondents making less than \$25,000 per year are more likely than all other income levels to absolutely trust the Gulf of Mexico Alliance.
- ❑ Retired respondents are more likely than all other groups to absolutely trust their county extension offices.

## **Placement Strategy Work Session**

Task: Identify spokespersons and program partners to participate in GOMA's program to reduce residential fertilizer use.

- Which organizations and people should be used as spokespersons?

- How can we recruit and maintain their support?

## Section IV. Promotional Strategy

The promotional strategy includes a variety of activities for educating and motivating residents to change the way they use fertilizer. Residents who participated in the qualitative research phase recommended a number of actions to reduce nutrient loading. These included a variety of educational activities, political advocacy, and changes in homeowners association rules. Each of these was explored on the consumer panel survey.

### Educational Activities

Focus group participants report that lack of awareness, lack of perceived responsibility for Gulf health, and lack of appropriate education on the subject are the most significant barriers to protecting the Gulf of Mexico. According to participants, awareness of environmental issues helps us understand that individual actions matter, that there is a cause and effect associated with our behavior. Participants say that awareness can be raised by education.

To further explore their recommendations, respondents were asked to describe how willing they would be to participate in various activities designed to promote the use of environmentally friendly landscaping methods.

**Table 8. Likelihood of Participating in Educational Activities**

	Very Unwilling (%)	Very Willing (%)
Attend a fertilizer education expo	17	11
Talk to a salesperson about proper fertilizer use	9	20
Visit a website about proper fertilizer use	3	33
Attend a neighborhood program	10	17
Read a brochure	4	33

- ❑ To learn more about fertilizer use, residents are most willing to visit a website or read a brochure. The high percentage selecting a website may reflect the methodology of the survey, which was taken online.
- ❑ More than half express some willingness to talk with a salesperson.

- ❑ Residents are least willing to attend a fertilizer educational expo. Whereas this activity was not popular with survey respondents, focus group participants recommended the use of incentives, like native plants, to attract people to expos or other educational events.
- ❑ The likelihood of participating in various education activities varies by gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, employment, state of residence, marital status, and whether respondents resided in a community with rules governing fertilizer use.

These findings are statistically significant:

- ❑ Females (25%) are more likely than males (15%) to report being very willing to talk to a salesperson about fertilizer use.
- ❑ Females (22.5%) are more likely than males (11%) to report being very willing to attend a neighborhood program about environmentally friendly lawn care.
- ❑ Females (38%) are more likely than males (28%) to report being very willing to read a brochure about fertilizer use.
- ❑ Eighteen to 24 year olds and 45 to 54 year olds are more likely than all other groups to be very willing to talk to a salesperson about fertilizer use.
- ❑ Respondents with an advanced degree or a high school education/GED are more likely than all other groups to report being very willing to attend a fertilizer expo.
- ❑ College graduates are more likely than all other groups to report being very willing to attend a neighborhood program.
- ❑ Respondents making \$25,000 to \$50,000 are more likely than all other groups to report being very willing to talk to a salesperson about fertilizer use.

### Homeowners Association Policy Changes

In focus group discussions, homeowners association representatives report numerous ways in which their residents can help protect the health of the Gulf. However, survey results suggest that HOA policy changes and educational activities may not be a productive avenue to pursue.

- ❑ Most respondents (69%) do not live in a community with a homeowners association that has rules about lawn maintenance.

- Among those who do, the vast majority (92%) report that their homeowners association does not determine how often their yard is fertilized.
- Approximately one-third of the residents in these communities report that it would be somewhat to very difficult to change their homeowners association rules about fertilizer use (33%).

**Political action**

Category	%
Yes	56.32
No	43.68
Total	100

Personal Connection

<b>&lt;=2.9412</b>		<b>(2.9412, 3.3529)</b>		<b>(3.3530, 4.0588)</b>		<b>=&gt;4.0589</b>	
Category	%	Category	%	Category	%	Category	%
Yes	15.52	Yes	44.59	Yes	79.46	Yes	94.87
No	84.48	No	55.41	No	20.54	No	5.13
Total	30.53	Total	19.47	Total	29.47	Total	20.53

Concern with fish kills

<b>&lt;=3</b>		<b>&gt;3</b>	
Category	%	Category	%
Yes	3.23	Yes	29.63
No	96.77	No	70.37
Total	16.32	Total	14.21

## Promotional Work Session

Task: Identify information sources and promotional activities for GOMA's program to reduce residential fertilizer use.

- How can we optimize information distribution using:
  - Online media
  - Print media
  - Electronic media
  - Informal communications networks
  - Other advertising
  - Educational institutions/events
  
- What other promotional activities should be used to promote proper fertilizer use?

## **CHAPTER TWO: BRAND PLATFORM**

This chapter has seven sections that cover the brand platform and other key elements in a public awareness campaign.

- ❑ A Brief Overview of Branding
- ❑ Consumer views of GOMA and the Gulf of Mexico
- ❑ The Competitive Environment: Issues and Organizations that Compete with GOMA for the Consumer's Attention
- ❑ Internal Audiences
- ❑ Logo/Brand Mark
- ❑ Media Channels
- ❑ Spokespersons

Each section addresses areas that will guide the development of the brand platform, positioning statement and public awareness campaign plan.

### **Section I: Brand Overview**

An organization's brand is the essence of what it is and what it stands for. A brand represents the fulfillment of the stated and implied agreements or promises between an organization and its customers or 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
- ❑ All GOMA's programs, services, messages, and interactions with its constituents are rooted in this brand identity.

This information from the qualitative and quantitative data will be included in the brand development work:

- ❑ Audience Descriptors
- ❑ Organizations that Protect the Gulf

- ❑ Perceptions of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance
- ❑ Beliefs to Reinforce about the Gulf
- ❑ Benefits of Affiliation with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance

## **Section II: Consumer Views of the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico Alliance**

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance encompasses a diverse assortment of members, audience groups, and stakeholders. This means that a brand platform must provide a sustaining connection among these different groups. These groups' views of the Gulf of Mexico help guide the development of the brand platform. Their experiences, points of view, and emotional attachments regarding the Gulf provide seeds for growing the positioning and brand approach.

### What We Know About All Audience Groups

Across all audience segments, the Gulf of Mexico elicits a strong emotional connection. Feelings of *strong personal connections* to the Gulf are the product of past experiences as well as current and future aspirations. The Gulf conjures ideals of unmatched beauty and tranquility, a shared resource that is economically and socially central to all aspects of peoples' lives.

All audience segments recognize the economic significance of the Gulf, noting that it is, in many cases, the lifeblood of surrounding communities. They are also acutely aware of the precarious state of the Gulf, recognizing that it is in serious danger of becoming an irreversibly damaged resource.

The Gulf of Mexico is seen as:

- ❑ A beloved natural resource
- ❑ An ever present beauty and natural wonder which provides comfort
- ❑ A vital element in community life
- ❑ An economic force that drives much of the commerce and enterprise in the region
- ❑ An all-encompassing force
- ❑ The central component of the heritage and culture of associated communities
- ❑ The dominant influence in the lives of the peoples in the region

In the residents’ survey, a word pair item was used to assess overall views of the Gulf of Mexico. Respondents selected the word from each pair that best described the Gulf. Respondents associate the Gulf with tranquility, unpredictability, fun, health (i.e., the health of the Gulf), and pollution. Most respondents understand the importance of the Gulf of Mexico and view it as vulnerable.

**Table 9. Words Used to Describe the Gulf of Mexico**

Word	Percent of Respondents (%)	Word	Percent of Respondents (%)
Stressful	31	Tranquil	69
Unpredictable	70	Predictable	30
Boring	16	Fun	84
Stormy	49	Calm	51
Unhealthy	44	Healthy	56
Polluted	52	Clean	48
Unimportant	5	Important	95
Vulnerable	65	Resilient	35

### Target Audience Work Session

Task: Identify and describe shared characteristics of GOMA’s constituent groups.

- Describe the common denominators that bond the various constituent groups—environmental community, GOMA members and affiliates, residents, and community stakeholders—into a homogenous target audience.
  
- Give a name to this target audience.

### **Section III. The Competitive Environment**

Audience perceptions of the Gulf of Mexico Alliance are central to building the GOMA brand. This information is essential in helping GOMA differentiate itself from competing organizations and interests in a way that enhances its *position* among constituent groups.

#### What We Know About All Audience Groups

While GOMA is virtually unknown among residents of the Gulf states, many environmental advocates and environmental scientists are familiar with GOMA, and roughly half of them know enough about GOMA to discuss their perceptions of the organization. Among these two audience segments, perceptions about GOMA are mixed.

All participants were supportive of the idea of an alliance that brings a diverse array of stakeholders to the table around Gulf issues. However, many questioned whether it would be possible for GOMA to meet its goals. Policy makers are familiar with GOMA's efforts and see it as a valuable platform for change they support. Policy makers say GOMA has strong leadership but lacks a clear mission statement and brand recognition.

Other important findings:

- ❑ Among the general population, there is little awareness of GOMA (90% have not heard of GOMA).
- ❑ GOMA members understand and are committed to GOMA's mission.
- ❑ Love of the Gulf influenced the career choices of scientists/policymakers/advocates.
- ❑ Constituents want a balance between economic needs and environmental health.
- ❑ Successful stewardship organizations are inclusive and multifaceted.
- ❑ Organizations that foster collaboration are central to the health of the Gulf.
- ❑ Local community participation is highly valued.
- ❑ Constituents want GOMA to produce tangible, measurable products and services.
- ❑ Constituents want to feel they have contributed to Gulf health.
- ❑ Lack of funding is a significant concern.
- ❑ A more proactive promotion of the GOMA mission is desired.

## **Positioning Work Session**

Task: In broad terms, describe unique characteristics, services, offers, and products that fit constituents' interests, reflect GOMA's capacity and mission, and differentiate GOMA from other organizations and potential areas of interest.

- What/who is the competition?
  - Competing Organizations
  - Competing Issues
  - Competing Interests/Demands
- What do constituent groups value that could differentiate GOMA from its competition?

GOMA's brand is its promise, more than a logo or a slogan. The brand seeks to express a feeling and an experience—the intangible essence that reflects Gulf heritage and culture and exemplifies the essential GOMA promise.

- What is the intrinsic agreement between GOMA and its constituents?
  - “GOMA will...(complete the statement)”
- How can GOMA assure ‘Promise Delivery’?
  - What will it do?
  - How will it do it?
  - Who will participate in the promise delivery?
  - How will GOMA know it is delivering on the promise?

## **Section IV: Internal Audiences**

Internal audiences are equally important to brand management and delivery of the promise. Organizational identity and mission must be a shared agreement among those with responsibility for managing the brand. They must believe GOMA's brand approach will allow them to fulfill their respective personal goals. This section addresses variables that affect securing support for brand management and brand maintenance from GOMA affiliates and stakeholders.

## What We Know

### *Policy Makers*

- ❑ Policy makers view the Gulf of Mexico through an emotional and economic lens. The Gulf is idealized as representing freedom, spirituality, and connectedness. Policy makers are keenly aware of the Gulf’s valuable economic resources—oil production, maritime transportation, fisheries, tourism, and other assets that affect the country’s economy and citizens’ livelihoods. They fear that this unique asset has a diminished ability to sustain human and natural assaults.
- ❑ Policy makers want greater collaboration between industry and science and recommend that all stakeholders be brought to the table to develop protective measures. Stakeholders include developers, community representatives, policy makers, environmental agencies, researchers, and educators.
- ❑ GOMA-affiliated policy makers see the Gulf as a vulnerable resource and focus on threats like hypoxia, which is caused by nutrient loading. They see protecting the Gulf as protecting their collective economic interests. GOMA policy members believe the problems that face the Gulf must be tackled with an integrative approach.

### *Environmental Advocates*

- ❑ Environmental advocates believe society is focused on the “bottom line,” and that overpopulation, offshore drilling, overfishing, and excessive/inappropriate fertilizer use by organizations are the major threats to the health of the Gulf of Mexico.
- ❑ Advocates recommend educational programs that include hands-on experiences and promote a sense of connectedness with the Gulf of Mexico.
- ❑ They believe a focus on benefits to future generations will motivate people to adopt protective behaviors for the Gulf.
- ❑ Environmental advocates perceive GOMA as a valuable source of information. However, they regard current information dissemination as inadequate to reach all interested parties. Advocates familiar with the organization believe GOMA has lost momentum in its efforts to make a difference.
- ❑ Advocates believe a comprehensive, multichannel communication approach is optimal for delivering information about Gulf of Mexico issues.

### *Environmental Scientists*

- ❑ Environmental scientists disagree on actions they believe are needed to improve the health of the Gulf. Among those noted are: support for better enforcement of and education about protective ordinances; promotion of the use of native plants; improved public education about Gulf of Mexico issues; and more research on ways to improve the health of the Gulf.
- ❑ Environmental scientists have varying levels of knowledge and differing perceptions of GOMA. Those who are more familiar with GOMA report positive associations with the Alliance. Most scientists favor the inclusive and eclectic composition of the organization and applaud GOMA's ability to collaborate across the Gulf states.

### *Business Council*

- ❑ Business Council members have strong positive feelings toward the Gulf, citing the Gulf as “probably the most important body of water anywhere near our United States.”
- ❑ The economic benefits of sound environmental practices provide many reasons to protect the Gulf. For example, investing in innovative solutions and reducing energy consumption can reduce noncompliance fines and emission fees. Self interest in the form of protecting the natural resources necessary to industry success is a strong incentive to Gulf stewardship.
- ❑ Council members believe the strength of the Alliance is the support of the five state governors' offices and the cooperative nature of the Alliance.
- ❑ Members think GOMA needs a stronger financial support system and administrative structure. They also believe GOMA suffers from politically unstable circumstances, with the interest and attention the organization gets dependent on changing political administrations.

## **Internal Branding Work Session**

Task: Identify ways to make GOMA a brand-driven organization.

- ❑ How will these groups be prepared to build and maintain GOMA's brand equity?  
How do these activities match their interests?

- GOMA Administrative Team
- State Leaders
- Federal Workgroups
- Priority Issue Team Leads
- EPA
- NOAA
- Other Stakeholders

## **Section V: Logo/The Brand Mark**

This section addresses findings from the consumer survey about logo and tagline options. It also provides an overview of qualitative findings from the first phase of formative research and results from the online panel survey testing.

### What We Know

The current Gulf of Mexico Alliance logo fails to transmit GOMA’s mission and objectives effectively. Participants link the logo with everything from a Mexican tourism alliance to a transportation alliance. For others, the logo has little or no meaning.

Among the most common recommendations from the qualitative study to improve the GOMA logo are:

- ❑ Reduce the size of the word “Mexico” in the logo and emphasize the word “Gulf”
- ❑ Incorporate a map in the logo that highlights the Gulf states region
- ❑ Include a slogan that highlights GOMA’s mission statement or goals
- ❑ Use an iconic Gulf symbol such as a dolphin or other animal

Three new logo concepts were tested during the online panel survey.





Words associated with each of these logos are in Table 10. The graphic with the shield consistently received the highest ratings.

**Table 10. Words Associated with Each of the Tested Logos**

	Graphic with Birds (%)	Graphic with Text Only (%)	Graphic with Shield (%)
Stable	37	16	47
Innovative	30	10	60
Cautious	23	48	29
Looking out for my best interests	32	6	61
Respected by environmentalists	38	5	57
Trustworthy	35	8	57
Relevant	34	8	58
Professional	35	10.5	54

When asked which of the logos they favored, most respondents selected the graphic with the shield (61.5%).

Three taglines also were tested in the online consumer survey:

- Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations
- Protection, Awareness, Stewardship
- Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home

Word association responses for each tagline:

- The top five words associated with Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations are:
  - positive (50%), hopeful (45%), concerned (42%), optimistic (40%), and beneficial (31%)
- The top five words associated with Protection, Awareness, Stewardship are:
  - professional (35%), positive (35%), concerned (34%), impersonal (26%), and relevant (25%)

- The top six words(two tied for fifth) associated with Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home are:
  - personable (40%), concerned (40%), friendly (33%), positive (33%), relevant (29%), and effective (29%)

Residents were asked to select the tagline they preferred.

- Only a small proportion (15%) selected Protection, Awareness, Stewardship.
- Remaining respondents equally favored Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations (42%) and Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home (43%).

Respondents were also asked “What this tagline tells you about GOMA?” for each of the phrases.

- Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations gave the clearest indication that GOMA is an environmental group working to assure a healthy future for the Gulf and for children of the region (40.3%). It also had the lowest “negative feeling” score (11.2%).
- Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home helped respondents feel a sense of personal responsibility and connection to the Gulf (52.9%), but did not produce high awareness that GOMA is an organization dedicated to protecting the Gulf (7.1%).
- Protection, Awareness, Stewardship, according to a significant percentage of respondents, suggested an organization with an environmental orientation and Gulf support mission (52.1% combined), but it also produced the highest negative response. Fourteen percent of respondents thought the message was negative and too pushy, and 16.4% said it was vague and difficult to understand.

Respondents were then asked to match each tagline to the logo they felt best represented the tagline. They most often matched all three taglines to the shield. Slightly more than half (51%) suggested Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations corresponded to the graphic with the shield. More respondents (41%) matched Protection, Awareness, Stewardship to the shield graphic than to the other two logos. The largest proportion of respondents (53%) matched Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home to the graphic with the shield.

## **Logo Work Session (Break Out)**

Task: Identify elements of the logo and tagline that communicate effectively with GOMA members and other constituents. Identify information needed to build GOMA's brand platform.

Strategy participants will break into small groups to further assess responsiveness to the logo and tagline.

- ❑ Which elements of each logo appeal to you most?
- ❑ Which tagline do you like best?
- ❑ How would you combine logo elements and a tagline to appeal to colleagues in your field/audience group?

The final step in the brand platform is to consolidate the previous work into a concise framework by melding the audience's point of view with GOMA's core values. The questions to guide this exercise are:

- ❑ What is GOMA's main purpose?
- ❑ What functional benefits does GOMA offer?
- ❑ What emotional benefits do constituents gain in a relationship with GOMA?
- ❑ What do GOMA's constituents value in life?
- ❑ One statement—GOMA's mantra?

## **Section VI: Media/Communication Channels**

This section addresses the types of communication channels that will help deliver brand awareness messages and reach residents with information on appropriate fertilizer use.

### What We Know

#### *Educational Activities*

In the qualitative phase of the study, audience segments reported that one of the most effective ways to promote behavior change starts with raising the environmental awareness of children. They believe that children are highly impressionable and highly motivated to adopt new behaviors when their interest and imaginations are sparked. In addition, participants believe children have the ability to influence their parents' behavior

In the survey, respondents were asked how likely they would be to interact with different types of media or organizations to get more information about how to protect the Gulf of Mexico. Consistent with the survey methodology (an online panel), the most popular means of obtaining information is a website. Other popular means of obtaining information include reading a newspaper, watching a television show, or visiting a local aquarium. Respondents are least likely to join a local environmental organization or contact a national environmental organization.

**Table 11. Likelihood of Interacting with Different Types of Media or Organizations**

Action	Very Unlikely (%)	Very Likely (%)
Watch a television show	7	26
Read a newspaper	6	31
Listen to a radio special	15	13.5
Go to a website	6	36
Contact the county extension office	23	6
Visit a local aquarium	9	27
Contact a local university/school	20	7
Look up information at a local library	23	8
Join a local environmental organization	25	5
Contact a national environmental organization	25	5

There are relationships between the specific activities listed in Table 11 and gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, employment, state of residence, and whether respondents reside in a community with rules about fertilizer use. The following findings were statistically significant:

- ❑ Males (25%) were more likely than females (21%) to report that they were very unlikely to contact the county extension office.
- ❑ Twenty-five to 34 year olds were more likely than all other age groups to be very likely to visit a local aquarium.
- ❑ Respondents who selected the “other” racial category were more likely than all other groups to report being very likely to look up information at a local library.

- ❑ Respondents who were Native American or Alaskan Native were more likely than all other groups to report being very likely to join a local environmental organization.
- ❑ Respondents making less than \$25,000 a year were more likely than all other income levels to report being very likely to watch a television show.
- ❑ Respondents making less than \$25,000 a year were more likely than all other income levels to report being very likely to go to a website.
- ❑ Respondents making less than \$25,000 a year were more likely than all other income levels to report being very likely to contact a university or school.
- ❑ Respondents who were voluntarily not in the local workforce (e.g., raising a family) were more likely than all other groups to report being very willing to go to a local aquarium.
- ❑ Widows were more likely than all other groups to report being very willing to watch a television show.

### *Spokespersons*

The use of a spokesperson to deliver messages and serve as a symbol of a program is an important way to establish credibility with constituents, maintain continuity, and build easy program and brand recognition. This section addresses audience preferences for spokespersons.

In the qualitative data there is a strong preference for local spokespersons. Characteristics and examples of appropriate spokespersons include:

- ❑ Children and parents
- ❑ Local residents who have a stake in the community: neighbors, fishermen, hunters, business owners, religious and other local leaders
- ❑ Local residents who are well educated in the topic area (i.e., local experts)
- ❑ People who have established credibility, trust and respect
- ❑ Politicians with an exceptional track record and high credibility

Survey respondents were asked to describe how credible (i.e., not at all, somewhat, or very credible) they believe the seven organizations in Table 12 would be as sources of information about the Gulf of Mexico.

**Table 12. Credibility of Organizations to Provide Information on the Gulf**

Entity	Not at all credible (%)	Somewhat credible (%)	Very credible (%)
The Federal Government	23	62	15
The Environmental Protection Agency	11	45.5	43.5
The Gulf of Mexico Alliance	6.1	47	47
The Governor of your State	18	60	22
Your County Extension Service	13	56	31
The News Media	36	56	9
Local Colleges or Universities	6	49	44

- ❑ Residents deemed the Gulf of Mexico Alliance the most credible organization, with 47% of residents rating it as very credible and only 6% rating it as not at all credible.
- ❑ The Environmental Protection Agency and local colleges and universities also won ratings of very credible from large percentages of residents.
- ❑ The news media was the least credible source, with 36% describing it as not at all credible and only 9% rating it as very credible.
- ❑ Ratings for governors differ significantly among the states. The governor of Texas had the lowest percentage of respondents rating him as very credible, while Louisiana’s governor has the largest proportion of residents describing him as very credible.

State differences in credibility ratings are also significant for college/university credibility, with colleges/universities in Alabama and Louisiana rated most highly.

Spokesperson credibility ratings also varied significantly by gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, and income.

*Gender*

- ❑ A greater proportion of females (54%) than males (40%) rated the Gulf of Mexico Alliance as very credible.
- ❑ A greater proportion of females (52%) than males (35%) rated the Environmental Protection Agency as very credible.

- ❑ A greater proportion of females (35%) than males (27%) rated the county extension office as very credible.
- ❑ A greater proportion of females (17%) than males (13%) rated the federal government as very credible.
- ❑ A greater proportion of females (9.5%) than males (8%) rated the news media as very credible.

### *Age*

- ❑ As age increased, the proportion of respondents who rated the Environmental Protection Agency as very credible decreased.
- ❑ Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to rate the county extension office as very credible.
- ❑ A greater proportion of respondents between the ages of 45 and 54 rated the news media as very credible than did respondents in all other age ranges.

### *Ethnicity*

- ❑ Greater proportions of nonwhite respondents rated the federal government as very credible than did white respondents.
- ❑ Greater proportions of white and mixed-race respondents rated the county extension office as very credible than did respondents of other races/ethnicity.

### *Education Level*

- ❑ A greater proportion of those with less than a high school education rated their governor as very credible than did all other education levels.
- ❑ A greater proportion of those with less than a high school education rated the news media as very credible than did all other education levels.

### *Income*

- ❑ A smaller proportion of those who earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000 rated their governor as very credible than did all other income groups.

Employment status and residence in a community with rules about fertilizer use were not statistically associated with spokesperson ratings.

### **Media/Communication Channels Work Session**

Task: Identify effective spokespersons and other partners for reaching GOMA's constituents.

- What is the appropriate mix of communication channels to reach the priority audience?
- What other methods can reach the priority audience?
- What spokesperson/organization is most appropriate for the priority audience?
- What spokesperson will be appropriate for the widest range of audience segments?

## **APPENDIX A. METHODOLOGY**

### **Online Panel Methodology**

Results for the qualitative portion of research were obtained through an online panel survey of residents in GOMA's target markets of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Respondents were randomly chosen from an online panel made up of over one million preselected panel members in the five states.

Online panel participants are recruited through telephone, email and mail based on their demographic makeup. Demographic information is obtained through public records (major purchases, voting records, etc.). The overall panel, made up of over 8 million participants, demographically matches the U.S. Census. Once participants are recruited and agree to participate in the research, they provide the panel administrators with detailed demographic and lifestyle information. The administrators use the information to match up sample demographics with research project needs. For this project, a sample of 750 participants who met the U.S. Census estimates of the five states was selected for the survey.

Participants were notified via e-mail of the opportunity to participate in an online survey about lawn maintenance. If they agreed to participate in the study, they were taken to an online version of a 48-question survey instrument designed by members of the project team.

The instrument was programmed for the web during January 6-8, 2009. Responses were collected during January 9-25, 2009. The survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The 750 completed survey responses were delivered to the project team as an SPSS 16.0 file.

### **Data Analysis**

Survey data were entered into SPSS v17, a software program designed for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each item (see Appendix F). Chi-squared tests of independence were used to exam relationships between variables (i.e., frequency counts). Negatively worded items were reverse-coded. Factor analysis with Promax rotation was used to reduce the large number of items into scales. Cronbach's Alpha, a measure of internal consistency reliability, was calculated for each scale. Descriptive statistics were calculated for each scale. Bivariate relationships between scale scores and demographic variables and outcome variables were examined. Binomial logistic regression was used to determine relationships between demographic variables, scales, and other variables and the two dichotomized fertilizer outcome variables (i.e., "Fertilize your yard only at specified times of the year" and "Fertilize your yard with only a specific amount"). Binary logistic regression was used to determine relationships between demographic variables, scales, and other variables and two dichotomized dependent variables (i.e., "Political Action" and "Personal Connection to the Gulf of Mexico"). Finally, Chi-squared automatic interaction detection (CHAID, Answertree) was used to determine segments of the sample who would fertilize their yard only at specified times of the year, fertilize their yard with only a specific amount, feeling a personal connection to the Gulf, and taking political action.

# **APPENDIX B.**

## **GOMA BEHAVIORAL AND BRANDING PANEL SURVEY**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

We are conducting a short public opinion poll to find out how people care for their lawns and feel about the Gulf of Mexico. All of the answers given today will remain anonymous.

Please complete all of the questions appearing on each page. Always scroll down to make sure you have answered all of the questions provided before moving to the next page. When you are ready to move on to the next page, click the "Next" button located in the lower portion of the screen.

### **II. SCREENER**

Let's begin by asking a few questions to see if this survey applies to you.

1. What state do you live in? [terminate if not in Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas]

- |                            |                       |                    |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Alabama [n=150]         | 18. Kentucky          | 35. North Dakota   |
| 2. Alaska                  | 19. Louisiana [n=150] | 36. Ohio           |
| 3. Arizona                 | 20. Maine             | 37. Oklahoma       |
| 4. Arkansas                | 21. Maryland          | 38. Oregon         |
| 5. California              | 22. Massachusetts     | 39. Pennsylvania   |
| 6. Colorado                | 23. Michigan          | 40. Rhode Island   |
| 7. Connecticut             | 24. Minnesota         | 41. South Carolina |
| 8. Delaware                | 25. Mississippi       | 42. South Dakota   |
| 9. District of<br>Columbia | [n=150]               | 43. Tennessee      |
| 10. Florida [n=150]        | 26. Missouri          | 44. Texas [n=150]  |
| 11. Georgia                | 27. Montana           | 45. Utah           |
| 12. Hawaii                 | 28. Nebraska          | 46. Vermont        |
| 13. Idaho                  | 29. Nevada            | 47. Virginia       |
| 14. Illinois               | 30. New Hampshire     | 48. Washington     |
| 15. Indiana                | 31. New Jersey        | 49. West Virginia  |
| 16. Iowa                   | 32. New Mexico        | 50. Wisconsin      |
| 17. Kansas                 | 33. New York          | 51. Wyoming        |
|                            | 34. North Carolina    |                    |

2. **Do you own or rent your home?**

1. Own
2. Rent
3. Live with a family member
4. Refused [THANK AND TERMINATE]

3. **Does your home have a lawn?**

1. Yes
2. No [THANK AND TERMINATE]

4. **Who cares for your lawn?**
  1. I do
  2. Spouse
  3. Someone else in the home
  4. Lawn service/gardener paid by household
  5. Lawn service/gardener paid by others (landlord, apartment manager, maintenance fees etc.) [THANK AND TERMINATE]
  6. No one [THANK AND TERMINATE]
  
5. **Do you consider yourself:**
  1. Caucasian/White (Quota: TX=76; LA=79 ; MS= 73; AL= 72; FL=82 - 382 total)
  2. African American/Black (Quota: TX=18; LA= 48; MS= 56; AL= 40; FL=24 - 186 total)
  3. Hispanic/Latino (Quota: TX=40; LA= 10; MS= 10; AL= 10; FL=30 – 100 total)
  4. Asian or Pacific Islander (Quota: TX=5; LA= 2; MS= 1; AL= 1; FL=3 - 12 total)
  5. Native American or Alaskan native (Quota: TX=1; LA= 1; MS= 1; AL= 1; FL=1 – 5 total)
  6. Mixed racial background (Quota: TX=5; LA= 5; MS= 5; AL= 5; FL=5 - 25 total)
  7. Other race (Quota: TX=5; LA= 5; MS= 5; AL= 5; FL=5 - 25 total)
  8. Decline to answer [THANK AND TERMINATE]
  
6. **Please select your age range:**
  1. 18 to 24 years (Quota: TX=16; LA=16; MS= 16; AL= 14; FL=13 - 75 total)
  2. 25 to 34 years (Quota: TX=32; LA=28; MS= 28; AL= 27; FL=25 – 140 total)
  3. 35 to 44 years (Quota: TX=31; LA=28; MS= 28; AL= 28; FL=28 - 140 total)
  4. 45 to 54 years (Quota: TX=29; LA=30; MS= 30; AL= 30; FL=28 - 145 total)
  5. 55 to 64 years (Quota: TX=21; LA=23; MS= 23; AL= 24; FL=33 - 120 total)
  6. 65 and Over (Quota: TX=22; LA=25; MS= 27; AL= 28; FL=33 - 130 total)
  7. Decline to answer [THANK AND TERMINATE]
  
7. **What is your gender?** (Quota = approximately 50/50 split for each state)
  1. Male (375 total)
  2. Female (375 total)
  3. Decline to answer [THANK AND TERMINATE]
  
8. **Do you live in a community with a home owners association that has rules about lawn maintenance?**
  1. Yes
  2. No [Go to Q11]
  
9. **Does your home owners association determine how often your yard is fertilized?**
  1. Yes
  2. No
  3. Don't Remember

**10. On a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 represents “not at all difficult” and 5 represents “very difficult,” how difficult would it be to get your home owners association to change its rules about fertilizer use?**

1. 1 (not at all difficult)
2. 2
3. 3
4. 4
5. 5 (very difficult)
6. They do not have fertilizer rules

### **III ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR QUESTIONS**

**11. In what month or months, did your lawn service or gardener apply fertilizer to your lawn in 2007?**

**[Check all that apply]**

1. January [Go to Q12]
2. February [Go to Q12]
3. March [Go to Q12]
4. April [Go to Q12]
5. May [Go to Q12]
6. June [Go to Q12]
7. July [Go to Q12]
8. August [Go to Q12]
9. September [Go to Q12]
10. October [Go to Q12]
11. November [Go to Q12]
12. December [Go to Q12]
13. I'm not sure [Go to Q12]
14. Never/Not at all [Go to Q14]

**12. Which of these comes closest to describing how you determine the amount of fertilizer to apply to your lawn? [ROTATE CHOICES]**

1. Ask the salesperson where I bought the fertilizer
2. My lawn service or landscaper determines the amount
3. Ask a friend or neighbor
4. Use directions on the package
5. Guess
6. Fill the container of the equipment I use to spread the fertilizer
7. Divide the bag evenly on my yard and discard the bag
8. Other: [Write in response]

**13. What statement best describes how you determine when to fertilize your lawn? [ROTATE CHOICES]**

1. Condition of the lawn
2. Specific time of year
3. Reminders from an outside source (newspapers, TV, radio, local organizations)
4. People in your neighborhood are fertilizing
5. Your family or friends are fertilizing
6. When I see sales and advertising for fertilizers
7. Other: [Write in response]

**14. Thinking about how you or your gardener/lawn service care for your lawn, please rate on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is STRONGLY AGREE and 1 is STRONGLY DISAGREE, how much you agree with the following statements. [ROTATE CHOICES]**

	<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>RATING</i>
	<i>If answered 1-13 on question 11(answer A to K) Fertilizers</i>	
A	I find it very difficult to determine how much fertilizer to put on my lawn.	
B	Purchasing fertilizer can be very confusing.	
C	As long as my lawn looks good, I don't care about how fertilizer works.	
D	It is impossible to have an attractive lawn without using fertilizers.	
E	It's important to keep fertilizer off of hard-top surfaces like sidewalks, driveways and streets.	
F	I generally understand the directions on fertilizer labels.	
	<i>If answered 14 on question 11(answer G to K) Non Fertilizers</i>	
G	Keeping my lawn attractive is important to me.	
H	I feel pressure from my neighbors or homeowners' association to keep my lawn attractive.	
I	I know many people who treat their lawns with non-chemical pesticides.	
J	I care what my neighbors think of my property.	
K	[if answered YES on Q6] I would support changes to my home owners association rules to reduce the amount of fertilizers used on my lawn.	

**15. On a scale from 1 to 5 where 5 is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT and 1 is NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL, how important are the following factors when deciding how you landscape and care for your lawn? [ROTATE CHOICES]**

	<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>RATING</i>
A	How much it will cost	
B	How difficult it will be to keep up	
C	How the yard will look; its overall appearance	
D	What neighbors will think	
E	The impact on property value	
F	The impact on local water sources	
G	How long it will take to do	
H	The amount of fertilizer it will require	
I	The impact on the Gulf of Mexico	
J	[if answered YES on Q6] Rules of my homeowners' association	

16. Using a scale from 1 to 5 where 5 is ABSOLUTELY TRUST and 1 is NOT TRUST AT ALL, rate how much you would trust each of the following about proper fertilizer use for your lawn? [ROTATE CHOICES]

	<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>RATING</i>
A	Someone like me	
B	County extension office	
C	University or community college	
D	Gulf of Mexico Alliance	
E	Local government	
F	Homeowners' association	
G	A big box store (e.g., Home Depot, Lowes)	
H	A local garden shop	
I	[if answered 4 on Q4] Landscaper who cares for your yard	
J	The Governor of your state	
K	The Federal Government	

17. How willing would you be to participate in each of the following activities on a scale where 1 represents "very unwilling" and 5 represents "very willing." [ROTATE CHOICES]

	<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>RATING</i>
	<i>If answered 1-13 on question 11(answer A to E) Fertilizers</i>	
A	Attend a fertilizer educational expo	
B	Talk to a salesperson about proper fertilizer use	
C	Visit a website about proper fertilizer use	
	<i>If answered 14 on question 11(answer D to E) Non Fertilizers</i>	
D	Attend a neighborhood program that promotes healthy and environmentally friendly yards and landscaping	
E	Read a brochure about environmentally friendly yards and landscaping	

Now we'd like to ask you a few questions about your views of the Gulf of Mexico.

18. Think about the part of the Gulf of Mexico that you are most familiar with. Below is a list of word pairs that can be used to describe the Gulf. From each pair, pick the word that you think best describes the Gulf. [ROTATE CHOICES]

	<i>Word Choice</i>		
A	Stressful	or	Tranquil
B	Unpredictable	or	Predictable
C	Boring	or	Fun
D	Stormy	or	Calm
E	Unhealthy	or	Healthy
F	Polluted	or	Clean
G	Unimportant	or	Important
H	Vulnerable	or	Resilient

**19. Have you been to the Gulf of Mexico (e.g., to the beach)?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't Remember

**20. For each of the following recommended actions, how likely you would be to do it if it was recommended as a way to protect the Gulf. So on a scale form 1 to 5, with 1 representing "NOT AT ALL LIKELY TO DO IT" and 5 representing "VERY LIKELY TO DO IT" how likely would you be to do the following. If you are currently doing the action, please select indicate so: [ROTATE CHOICES]**

	Statement	<i>RATING</i>	Already do it	Unsure/Not applicable
A	Fertilize your yard only at specified times of the year			
B	Fertilize your yard with only a specific amount			
C	Write or call local legislators or policymakers to ask for their support of environmentally friendly policies			
D	Vote for legislators or policymakers that support environmentally friendly policies			
E	Support local ordinances that regulate littering and polluting			
F	Join a local environmental organization			

**21. Please rate each of the following statements below on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is STRONGLY AGREE and 1 is STRONGLY DISAGREE. [ROTATE CHOICES]**

	<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>RATING</i>
A	My livelihood depends on the Gulf of Mexico.	
B	The Gulf of Mexico is an important part of my community	
C	I feel strongly about preserving the environment	
D	I have a basic understanding of environmental science	
E	The health of the Gulf of Mexico interests me	
F	I know what to do to protect the Gulf of Mexico	
G	The Gulf of Mexico is healthy.	
H	The health of the Gulf of Mexico depends on location.	
I	I'm unaware of the health of the Gulf of Mexico.	
J	Trying to encourage policy makers (e.g., representatives, Governors) to protect the health of the Gulf would be a waste of my time.	
K	I would volunteer for local activities (e.g., beach clean-up) designed to improve the health of the Gulf of Mexico.	
L	Everyone's actions on land affect the health of the Gulf of Mexico.	
M	I can help protect the Gulf of Mexico	
N	The Gulf of Mexico is so large that it can absorb pollution	
O	It's my responsibility to protect the health of the Gulf of Mexico.	
P	We should protect the Gulf of Mexico for future generations	

22. Please rate each of the following statements below on a scale from 1 to 5, where 5 is STRONGLY AGREE and 1 is STRONGLY DISAGREE. [ROTATE CHOICES]

A	The local economy depends on a healthy Gulf of Mexico	
B	Putting too much fertilizer on my yard hurts the Gulf of Mexico	
C	Fertilizing my yard at the wrong time of year hurts the Gulf of Mexico	
D	Feeling a personal connection to the Gulf would motivate me to protect it.	
E	Receiving more information on how to protect the Gulf would motivate me to protect it.	
F	Receiving economic incentives would motivate me to protect the Gulf of Mexico.	
G	Being personally affected by pollution in the Gulf would motivate me to protect it.	
H	Thinking of my kids or grandkids' future would motivate me to protect the Gulf of Mexico.	
I	Protecting the Gulf of Mexico would enhance the local economy.	
J	The way I landscape my yard has a direct affect on the Gulf of Mexico.	
K	I am an environmentalist.	
L	I am often influenced by my friends and family.	
M	I am a lot like my neighbors.	
N	Communities within 50 miles of the Gulf of Mexico are responsible for its protection.	
O	States bordering the Gulf of Mexico have the most responsibility to protect it.	
P	All USA citizens are responsible for the protection of the Gulf of Mexico.	

23. Below is a list of possible problems associated with the Gulf's health. Rate how concerned you are about each. Please rate each on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 representing "NOT AT ALL CONCERNED" and 5 representing "VERY CONCERNED." If you have never heard of the problem, please indicate that as well. [ROTATE CHOICES]

	Statement	Rating	Never heard of it
A	Habitat destruction		
B	The dead zone		
C	Oil rigs		
D	Fish kills		
E	Red tide		
F	Loss of recreation		

24. Are you aware of environmental groups in your area that are concerned with protecting the Gulf of Mexico?
1. Yes [Please list the environmental groups you are aware of that protects the Gulf of Mexico.]
  2. No
  3. Decline to Answer

25. Are you involved with a local environmental group that is concerned with protecting the Gulf of Mexico?

1. Yes [Please list the local groups you are involved with that protects the Gulf of Mexico.]
2. No
3. Decline to Answer

26. How likely would you be to do each of the following to get more information about how to protect the Gulf of Mexico? Please rate how likely you would be using the following scale where 1 represents “VERY UNLIKELY” and 5 represents “VERY LIKELY.” [ROTATE CHOICES]

	<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>RATING</i>
A	I would watch a television show	
B	I would read a newspaper article	
C	I would listen to a radio special	
D	I would go to a web site	
E	I would contact the County Extension Office	
F	I would visit a local aquarium	
G	I would contact a local university/school	
H	I would look up information at a local library	
I	I would join a local environmental organization	
J	I would contact a national environmental organization	

**IV BRANDING QUESTIONS**

27. The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is a partnership of the states of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, with the goal of significantly increasing regional collaboration to enhance the ecological and economic health of the Gulf of Mexico.

Have you ever heard of “The Gulf of Mexico Alliance” before today?

1. Yes
2. No

28. What do you think of when you hear the phrase “Coastal Resiliency”? [Open ended]

## **Tagline Testing**

Below are three taglines that are being considered by the Gulf of Mexico Alliance. For each tagline, please check the top five words that you associate with the statement.

### **29. *The Gulf of Mexico Alliance: Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations***

[Adjectives Randomized]

Advanced	Friendly	Optimistic
Appropriate	Gloomy	Personable
Beneficial	Helpful	Pessimistic
Blah	High-class	Pleasant
Classy	Honest	Positive
Concerned	Hopeful	Professional
Dated	Impersonal	Relevant
Dishonest	Innovative	Superior
Edgy	Modern	Trustworthy
Effective	Negative	Untrustworthy
Experienced	Old-fashioned	Upscale

### **30. *The Gulf of Mexico Alliance: Protection, Awareness, Stewardship***

[Adjectives Randomized]

Advanced	Friendly	Optimistic
Appropriate	Gloomy	Personable
Beneficial	Helpful	Pessimistic
Blah	High-class	Pleasant
Classy	Honest	Positive
Concerned	Hopeful	Professional
Dated	Impersonal	Relevant
Dishonest	Innovative	Superior
Edgy	Modern	Trustworthy
Effective	Negative	Untrustworthy
Experienced	Old-fashioned	Upscale

### **31. *The Gulf of Mexico Alliance: Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home***

[Adjectives Randomized]

Advanced	Friendly	Optimistic
Appropriate	Gloomy	Personable
Beneficial	Helpful	Pessimistic
Blah	High-class	Pleasant
Classy	Honest	Positive
Concerned	Hopeful	Professional
Dated	Impersonal	Relevant
Dishonest	Innovative	Superior
Edgy	Modern	Trustworthy
Effective	Negative	Untrustworthy
Experienced	Old-fashioned	Upscale

32. What does this tagline tell you about the Gulf of Mexico Alliance? “Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations”  
[Write out answer]
33. What does this tagline tell you about the Gulf of Mexico Alliance? “Protection, Awareness, Stewardship”  
[Write out answer]
34. What does this tagline tell you about the Gulf of Mexico Alliance? “Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home”  
[Write out answer]
35. Which tagline is your favorite for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance?
1. Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations
  2. Protection, Awareness, Stewardship
  3. Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home

**Logo Testing**

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance is considering three different logos for the organization:



*Logo 1*



*Logo 2*






*Logo 3*



36. Below are a variety of words or phrases. Choose the logo that best reflects the meaning or each word or phrase.

[Logos will be randomized for each respondent]

	<i>Words or phrases</i>			
<b>A</b>	<b>Stable</b>			
<b>B</b>	<b>Innovative</b>			
<b>C</b>	<b>Cautious</b>			
<b>D</b>	<b>Looking out for my best interest</b>			
<b>E</b>	<b>Respected by environmentalists</b>			
<b>F</b>	<b>Trustworthy</b>			
<b>G</b>	<b>Relevant</b>			
<b>H</b>	<b>Professional</b>			

37. Below are the taglines you saw earlier. Choose the logo that you feel best matches each of the taglines:

	Taglines			
A	Preserving Your Gulf for Future Generations			
B	Protection, Awareness, Stewardship			
C	Your Gulf, Your Life, Your Home			

38. Which logo is your favorite for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance? [Logos will be randomized for each respondent]

A	
B	
C	

39. What do you like most about the logo you chose? [Open-ended]

40. Below is a list of entities that may be sources of information about protecting the Gulf of Mexico. Please rate how credible you believe each source is when thinking about the Gulf of Mexico.

#	Entity	Not at all credible	Somewhat Credible	Very credible
A	The Federal Government			
B	The Environmental Protection Agency			
C	The Gulf of Mexico Alliance			
D	The Governor of your state			
E	Your County Extension Service			
F	The News Media			
G	Local Colleges or Universities			

## **Demographics**

**41. How far do you live from the Gulf of Mexico?**

1. Less than 20 miles
2. Between 20 and 50 miles
3. Between 50 and 100 miles
4. Over 100 miles
5. I don't know

**42. Do you have any children or grandchildren under the age of 18 who live in your home?**

1. Yes
2. No
3. Decline to answer

**43. How long have you lived in your county?**

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 to 5 years
3. 6 to 10 years
4. 11 to 15 years
5. 16 to 20 years
6. More than 20 years
7. Decline to answer

**44. What is your present employment status?**

1. Employed full-time
2. Employed part-time
3. Voluntarily not in the work force (in school; raising family, etc.)
4. Unemployed but not retired
5. Retired
6. Decline to answer

**45. What is the highest level of education you have reached so far?**

1. Less than high school
2. High school graduate/GED
3. Some college
4. College graduate
5. Advanced degree (Masters/Doctorate)
6. Decline to answer

**46. In what range did your total household income fall during 2007?**

1. Less than \$25,000
2. \$25,001 to \$50,000
3. \$50,001 to \$75,000
4. \$75,001 to \$100,000
5. More than \$100,000
6. Decline to answer

**47. Do you speak Spanish at home?**

1. Yes
2. No

**48. What is your current marital status?**

1. Single
2. Married
3. Divorced
4. Widowed
5. Decline to answer

**Closing statement:** Thank you for helping us with this research. Your answers will be used to help the Gulf of Mexico Alliance provide information to the citizens in your state about various ways to protect and sustain the Gulf of Mexico.