

**Gulf of Mexico Alliance
Environmental Education Network
Steering Committee**

Wednesday, November 12, 2008

Steering Committee Attendance

LaKeshia Robertson, EPA Gulf of Mexico Program
Phillip Hinesley, ADCNR Coastal Section
Amy King, proxy for Phillip Hinesley ADCNR Coastal Section
Tabitha Stadler, Rookery Bay NERR
Tara Schultz, Texas State Aquarium
Ericka McCauley, Galveston Bay Estuary Program
Sharon Walker, JL Scott MEC
Alison Hammer, proxy for Ann Weaver NOAA
Chris Simoniello, GCOOS Education and Outreach Council

Others

Robin Schoessel, Florida Alliance Educator Rookery Bay NERR
Diane Austin, University of Arizona
Rafael Calderon, The Nature Conservancy

Current Homework

EEC to pursue suggestions to fill Steering Committee vacancies.
EEC to continue to address conference ideas.
EEC will offer a webinar or similar method of input on the draft action plan in 2009.

Acronyms

AMT = Alliance Management Team
ACT = Alliance Coordination Team
ADCNR = Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
EOC = Education and Outreach Council
EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
GCOOS = Gulf of Mexico Ocean Observing System
GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance
EEN = Environmental Education Network
EEC = Environmental Education Coordinator
LADEQ = Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
NERR = National Estuarine Research Reserve
NOAA = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
PITs = Priority Issue Teams

Agenda General Notes

1. Changes in the EEN Steering Committee

a. The EEC noted the change in Steering Committee Membership and additional information that had been decided at the August 2008 GOMA “All Hands” meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas. New members included:

Sharon Hodge with the Northern Gulf Institute
Chris Simoniello with the Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System
Linda Broussard for the USGS National Wetlands Research Center
Ericka McCauley, Texas co-lead, Galveston Bay Estuary Program

b. The organizational structure of the EEN was reviewed following changes which occurred in August 2008. The EEC request proxies from State Leads in the event they could not participate in an activity. It was noted that if someone worked or had a heavy affiliation with a federal agency that they would not be a proxy. Chris Simoniello was chosen for Sharon Walker’s Mississippi lead backup.

Two ad hoc positions were open. The EEC explained that was an opportunity for people to continue or get off the committee should they choose. This allows for new involvement and prevention of burnout in the committee. If people want to transition out that is okay. It was also requested to take the ‘chair’ statement off the chart. Suggestions for the two vacant slots included:

John Bowie requesting a representative from the Business Council
Mississippi Power’s Flinda Hill, Gulf of Mexico Program CAC
The Nature Conservancy - Rafael Calderon
Someone from the NERR nonprofit
Someone from the Tampa Bay Science Alliance Group
Someone from the Audubon Aquarium

[Update: Flinda Hill and Rafael Calderon accepted](#)

The EEC reminded everyone that beginning January 5, 2009 a quarterly EEN information call would be held. There was a short discussion on possible material to include. Suggestions was to look for ways to approach the call that could include common issues, education programs with overlap, training opportunities. Looking for themes could be useful as well as noting fields trips, professional training, K-12 sessions, and funding opportunities.

c. The EEC noted that there would be a new day and call time for the monthly conference calls. Based on conflicts and the response of the survey, the new call time and day would be the second Tuesday of the month at 10am CST.

d. Future business meetings and conferences – the GCOOS Education and Outreach Council had requested holding its meeting jointly with the EEN again. There was a suggestion to hold a yearly business meeting of the EEN in conjunction with the regular GOMA “All Hands” meeting that was planned for July 2009 in Mobile, Alabama. A second workshop/conference type meeting was recommended to be held in May.

This activity would build around the tentatively planned Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary

Program UUP program. This activity is going to happen anyway so it was suggested to expand that activity. Some prefer to just do a business meeting. The conference would not be for the Steering Committee level people but others not currently that engaged in GOMA and who want to learn about the topics at the conference. It would also serve as a good networking opportunity. It was suggested that people needed to see more information and an agenda would be helpful.

There was a side bar discussion associated with the GCOOS meeting discussion. The GCOOS EOC needed to meet earlier than the GOMA "All Hands" meeting planned for July 2009. Sharon Walker has funding from the Gulf of Mexico Program and GCOOS totaling \$73,000 for rotating kiosks for each of the Gulf Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCs). Based on the time frame of the grant, a content meeting would need to be held with the GCOOS EOC before July to meet the condition of the grants. More information was requested as CELC members on the call did not know about this program. The kiosks would represent each of the GOMA issues. They were hoping for additional funding to supply a kiosk to the Veracruz Aquarium in Mexico.

- i. Program underserved workshop that was scheduled for the end of May. This program would bring people together for activities other than the normal business session and may not be for Steering Committee members but others that might be interested in GOMA and networking.
- ii. Liaisons - Also discussed at the August meeting was the need to better connect to the other PITs. The idea of liaisons was brought back again for another try. Some individuals had already been identified to participate. To date, liaisons include:
 - Tracie Sempier – Community Coastal Resiliency
 - Richard Gonzales - Nutrients
 - Chris Simoniello – EIS
 - Kris Shipman – Water Quality
 - Drew Puffer – Habitat and Restoration

LaKeshia Robinson offered to help with PIT list and their coordination.

2. Update on Action Plan II

- a. The latest status of the EEN draft actions for the second GOMA plan were in the next stage of revision. Input had been received in August and additional comments were being addressed. This draft would be sent to the AMT who would then forward it to the professional writer. Each PIT would be allowed four pages in the plan. The second action plan would also be addressed in tiers. Tier one would be the official, glossy policy document similar to the first printed action plan. Tier two would contain all the technical aspects and details discussed within the priority issue teams. Tier three would include a commitments matrix of organizations which would address the different actions. Any public review would involve all priority issue team materials, not just education ones.

b. Public input was being sought separately in each of the five U.S. Gulf states. The state of Florida was holding four public meetings at the original GOMA community meeting locations for December. These were being coordinated through the Rookery Bay NERR Alliance Educators and draft materials were available for anyone that wanted to use them. Alabama was discussing holding a public meeting in January which would involve local public outreach people, technical interagency staff, and coastal resource managers association with the CZM program. There was no additional information concerning any of the other states. It was up to the individual state to decide how to do the input – either by meeting or online solicitation.

The Galveston Bay Estuary Program was available to help solicit input for Texas. It was advised that the State Leads talk with the new Texas AMT leads to find out if anything was being planned. There was some discussion that the draft action plan could be on a website. Tara Schultz and Ericka McCauley would be following up with this for Texas.

In addition to individual state public input periods, the EEN will need to address organizational commitments to the action items within the plan. Most educators cannot attend a meeting in early 2009. It was suggested to offer a webinar or similar in February.

3. Priority Issue Team Updates – for the next call, the liaisons will begin reporting, as necessary, pertinent information from the other priority issue teams.
4. State Reports – on the next EEN call the group will begin to give reports from their state. These should be activities relevant to GOMA that are occurring locally in environmental education. There was a request to have a list to know which state is up first for preparation. All states are to give a brief update on the call.
5. Issue for the Alliance Management Team – everyone would like to see any public comment or feedback to know that we are on target with the actions we've outlined.
6. Other information - The DISL will be releasing a Request for Proposals (RFP) in January 2009. This is a result of the NOAA Coastal Services Center which DISL received in 2008. The EEC requested help in writing the RFP as well as reviewing the applications. Those who review the materials would not be able to apply or have conflicts of interest with any of the applicants. Steering Committee volunteers include: Tabitha Stadler on the writing team and Ericka McCauley, Phillip Hinesley, and LaKeshia Robertson on the review team. Two additional people from outside the region will be solicited to help review the grants. Lee Yokel will not be part of the review team.

There was a question concerning indirect costs ratio. The EEC was not sure how they were going to handle this and it would be discussed. A suggestion was made to do a pre-proposal request and then cull the responses from those for full proposals. It was also noted that the proposal should be simple and not too lengthy. A recommendation was made to contact Steve Perry with the Legacy Program in Alabama to review how they conduct their grant program.

7. Next call – new day and time Tuesday, December 9, 2008 10AM CST.

Draft Agenda

Call-In Number 866-299-3188
Code 228-688-1172#

1. Roll Call
2. Changes in the EEN Steering Committee
 - a. New Members
 - b. Structure Update
 - c. Future call time
 - d. Future business meetings and conferences
3. Update on Action Plan II
 - a. Status
 - b. Public Input
4. Priority Issue Team Updates (as necessary)
5. Working Group Updates (as necessary)
6. State Reports
7. Issue for the Alliance Management Team
8. Announcements and Other Discussion
9. Next call