

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

Tuesday, December 9, 2008

Steering Committee Attendance

John Dindo
Phillip Hinesley
Chris Simoniello
Dianne Lindstedt
Ericka McCauley
Sharon Hodge
Rafael Calderon
LaKeshia Robertson
Alison Hammer

Priority Issue Team Liaisons

Kris Shipman – Water Quality
Richard Gonzales – Nutrients
Chris Simoniello – EIA
Drew Puffer - Conservation
Tracie Sempier – Resilience

Others

Sheri Fields – National Park Service

Acronyms

AMT = Alliance Management Team
ACT = Alliance Coordination Team
ADCNR = Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
COOS = Coastal Ocean Observing System
EPA = Environmental Protection Agency
GCOOS = Gulf of Mexico Coastal Ocean Observing System
GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance
HRI = Heart Research Institute
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. Roll Call - During the previous call it was noted that two additional spaces needed to be filled on the Steering Committee. Recommendations were made and two people accepted. These were

Flinda Hill with Mississippi Power representing a business interest and Rafael Calderon with The Nature Conservancy representing non-profits.

2. Update on Action Plan II

a. Status - The EEC reported that the environmental education draft had been submitted again and this version had been forwarded to the professional writer. Each PIT is allowed four pages in the next glossy plan.

b. Public Input – The following information was known regarding the public input period and method for the current draft plan.

i. Alabama would be conducting its meeting on the January 8, 2009. This would involve the local public outreach task force, technical interagency committee, and other area environmental management professionals.

Update: Alabama and Mississippi are now tentatively, jointly conducting public input via Survey Monkey with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium.

ii. Florida was in the process of holding public meetings in four locations throughout the state. Two meetings had been postponed for January. They were using community listservs to get the message out as well as targeting specific individuals for comment.

iii. The status of the other states was not known.

3. Priority Issue Team Updates

a. Water quality – Steven Wolfe is the Coordinator. The current focus is the strategic plan with matrix that involves four workgroups: pathogens, HABs, mercury, and monitoring. Their chapter is very specific toward science.

b. Nutrients – They are also addressing the current draft plan. They hope to increase nutrient monitoring and have collaboration with other projects like phytoplankton monitoring network. They may pilot outreach in agricultural industry. Texas is looking to include agriculture in the fourth year of science courses; opportunity to reach K-12 here; maybe statewide with FFA or 4-H.

- Hypoxia is their critical issue for them; educate everyone in upper 31 states
- Increase community management using ecosystem approach – gulf wide to nutrient methodology collection for uniformity

c. Resilience – Meeting with Resilience Team scheduled for January 6-8, 2009; will bring up education topic with them again. Issues include sea level rise, healthy sea; and hazards. The Nature Conservancy is moving with a sea level rise model for implementation with six components two of which are communication and environmental education

d. EIA – Team submitted their draft chapter this week. They have a small technical subcommittee meeting for PHINS – not for public consumption but resource managers. They are interested in partnering and Dave Palendro might could be a liaison. They are interested in assessing habitat, long and short term trends, and using web based portal to

communicate. There is an open call for review for of the portal on GOMA site under PHINS – put in comments there.

e. Habitat – They don't report much in their actions regarding education. One action may tie in well. They are working on partnership development and engaging relevant stakeholders. Push still to engage them in habitat conservation and restoration; international partnerships underway too; coordinating with international partners with all Gulf States;

f. Discussion regarding liaison updates – Most felt needed to keep updates in relation to other elements of GOMA. Important to focus on point to identify ways or reasons to communicate among groups. Makes for more efficient communication efficient use of environmental education.

The consensus was that this was a helpful activity. Liaisons could update the EEN every other month. Our role could be to help translate information. Thought needs to go in upfront when translating information. Working with education team helps to package elements that save them time. Talk together before to far along.

4. Working Group Updates

a. Website – NGI has hired two web people so pages will soon be developed. Steering Committee will be asked to help with content in the future. Richard Gonzales volunteered text and photos for site.

b. Public Awareness – The Qualitative Brief of the focus groups and interviews was complete. The next step would be the Quantitative Data for the online survey. That was anticipated to launch in January 2009.

5. State Reports

a. Alabama – DISL has a large Discovery Hall Program that infuses GOMA issues into curriculum. As material comes from the groups it can be translated right away into marine curriculum. Sea grant asked for a longitudinal survey to see what kind of retention there is. DISL will survey for users not only for year they come, but also again two years after they come to class to see retention and at what level. This will target middle and high school students. In 2009 they will get surveyed then next grade surveyed again 2010; want to find out how long this sticks with them; what is making a difference.

?? ScieSCN – launched video conferencing with certain schools through Tampa Aquarium (turtles and dolphins) try to re-enforce other things they are doing with previous groups ??

b. Florida – There was a proposal with FL COOS in Tampa Bay focus with an education focus. Call for a partner with a submittal deadline of January 15, 2009. GCOOS is launching brand new web portal before end of year.

c. Louisiana – The Coastal Roots program received a B-WET grant for water quality activities to expand and integrate with coastal restoration. Program is expanding to

Mississippi. It could be used as a model gulf wide. They also conducted Ocean Commotion for Gulf and the Wonders of Wetlands. Ocean commotion involves pre- and post testing and incorporated several questions regarding Gulf of Mexico to get a feel 4th through 8th grade students if they know any basics on ocean literacy as it pertains to the Gulf. They hope to get attitudes on LA coastal and Gulf.

d. Mississippi – No report

e. Texas – State of Bay Symposium scheduled for January 2009. They are also interested in a social marketing campaign for Galveston Bay. Their focus is looking at each of different issues for habitat and water quality. They are working on a solicitation right now.

6. Issue for the Alliance Management Team – None.

7. Announcements and Other Discussion

A lot of upcoming workshops:

- a. COOS needs for recreational boaters fishers divers
- b. NPS – Gonzales partnership, very interested
- c. GCOOS GPS workshop for teachers – April 23.24 at HRI
- d. GCOOS GPS workshop April 30 May 1 – DISL middle to high school teachers; any educators working with public audiences; 30-35 participants for each, \$200 stipend; will cover meals and accommodation, need to do travel

8. Next call – Tuesday January 13, 2009 10AM

Draft Agenda

1. Roll Call
2. Update on Action Plan II
 - a. Status
 - b. Public Input
 - c. Steering Committee Membership Update
3. Priority Issue Team Updates
 - Water quality
 - Nutrients
 - Resiliency
 - Habitat
 - Ecosystem Assessment
4. Working Group Updates

5. State Reports
 - Alabama
 - Florida
 - Louisiana
 - Mississippi
 - Texas
6. Issue for the Alliance Management Team
7. Announcements and Other Discussion
8. Next call