

Coastal Community Resilience

Resiliency Challenges And How the Gulf Alliance Can Help

(Several paragraphs to be added later - This is probably where we will explain the history of the group, unless the AMT wants to put that in the overall introductory material.)

The creation of the Coastal Community Resilience Team was initiated out of a desire by The Regional Restoration and Conservation Team to meet a recognized need for additional expertise to address resilience issues stated in the first Governor's Action Plan. The newly formed team has approximately 100 members from a variety of disciplines representing all five states. At the time of conception two main goals were identified for the group: 1) To share and collaborate on lessons and experiences, and 2) To begin the cross-state dialog about how to move from response to resilience. Since the teams inception the Resilience Team has defined resilience as the capacity of human and natural/physical systems to adapt to and recover from change. Focus areas within the definition include culture and heritage, ecological systems, economics, insurance, and smart growth.

A couple additional ideas to incorporate in this intro text:

- Different States and communities have different levels of awareness and experience with coastal hazards, as well as different capacities, so efforts will need to be tailored to different areas.
- In addition to episodic coastal hazards such as hurricanes, Gulf communities need to be thinking about resilience in the face of climate change, and sea level rise in particular.

Long-Term Partnership Goal

Coordinate and enhance efforts of local, State, Federal, Academia, business and non-profit partners to assist coastal communities and ecosystems in the Gulf of Mexico region in becoming more resilient in structure and function.

Action Leads:

Contributors and Collaborations: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Northern Gulf Institute, The Nature Conservancy, MS/AL Sea Grant, NOAA, EPA...Coastal Training Program,

R-1: Increase understanding of risks associated with living, working, and doing business, plus the planning framework that stimulates development along the Gulf of Mexico, so that coastal residents can plan strong and resilient communities and businesses.

Action: (Paragraph explaining overall activity)

Increase the scientific understanding of the implications and risks of where you build and how you build and put forth new improvements in building and flood plan use for sustainable community development.

Why Do This? (Paragraph explaining need/drivers)

Increased understanding of risks should prompt residents, businesses, local governments, and community organizations to adopt risk-wise behaviors and hazard mitigation measures. Greater scientific understanding of the connections between planning decisions and an area's vulnerability or resilience will help to support implementation of identified mechanisms for increasing communities' resilience. Ultimately communities and businesses need to understand the risks they face if they are to take actions to minimize risk and increase resilience.

5-Year Outcomes:

- The spatial reference framework in the Gulf of Mexico will be enhanced, allowing more accurate tracking of subsidence and sea level rise, as well as accurate modeling of storm surge and inundation.
- The installation of new Continuously Operating Reference Stations (CORS) network, a network of permanently mounted Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers used to provide critical information about the structure of the land/water interface and how that interface changes over time, local relative sea level rise can be measured, coastal inundation models can be improved, and mitigation and adaptations strategies can be based on more sound science.
- (These are just two examples of the type of outcomes we might list.)

Action Blueprint and Commitments: 2009-2012

1. Enhance the vertical accuracy, geographic distribution, and real-time availability of the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) by building out the

National CORS Network and supporting repeat observations of gravity and the passive survey control network throughout the Gulf coast.

2. Establish connections between the NSRS and all local tidal datums.
3. Support the development of a coast-wide vertical datum transformation tool to enable integration of topographic and bathymetric surveys and enhancement of hydrodynamic models
4. Document the current policy framework guiding coastal development in Gulf States, and research drivers and incentives that encourage and/or enable sustainable and hazard resilient development, considering economic, policy, and social factors.
5. **Some members have expressed interest in adding something about climate change, perhaps with a focus on sea level rise.**

R-2: Increase the sharing of resilience-related information across States, sectors (public, private, non-profit, academia), and individual communities.

Action: (Paragraph explaining overall activity)

To facilitate the interpretation and application of on-going or completed survey results resulting in a more vibrant use of communication between working groups and the public.

Why Do This? (Paragraph explaining need/drivers)

The two facilitated community engagement workshops held by the resiliency workgroup and found that most local and state leaders needed an increased way of sharing resiliency related information. Ex the Extreme Weather Information Sheet, the booklet "the first 72 is on you",

5-Year Outcomes:

- Gulf of Mexico residents and decision-makers will have access to a wide variety of resilience-related information via an online clearinghouse.

Action Blueprint and Commitments: 2009-2012

1. Compile resiliency-related data, projects, tools, and policies from across the Gulf of Mexico region, and make this information available via an online Gulf of Mexico Resiliency Clearinghouse.
2. Identify local, State, Federal, private, non-profit, and academic efforts, and develop a mechanism for sharing this information (e.g. an atlas or directory of partners, policies, and tools in each of the five Gulf States.)
3. Using workshops and other communication mechanisms, improve coordination and communication between coastal emergency managers, floodplain managers,

natural resource managers, and county officials to foster and integrate pro-active resiliency and mitigation measures.

4. Develop information products to share the results of the policy and incentives research listed under R-1.

R-3: Enable coastal communities to choose locally appropriate paths to resilience and sustainability through a variety of outreach and engagement tools.

Action: Engage coastal communities through a variety of mechanisms such as workshops, charrettes, websites, videos, and factsheets, and work with the Education Team to get the resiliency message out via a variety of partners such as Public Broadcasting Stations and EarthGauge. Culture and heritage, smart growth, resilience of ecological systems, and insurance will be key focus areas for outreach and engagement efforts.

Why Do This? (Paragraph explaining need/drivers)

The workshops would begin to improve coordination and communication of coastal emergency managers, floodplain managers, coastal resource managers, planners and municipal officials to integrate pro-active resiliency and mitigation measures to aid on-going resiliency efforts in coastal communities. It would also increase awareness of the responsibilities of individuals involved in emergency response at local, state, and federal levels.

5-Year Outcomes:

- Gulf of Mexico communities will have access to a resiliency index tool that will allow them to self-assess their community's resilience and identify both vulnerabilities and strengths.

Action Blueprint and Commitments: 2009-2012

1. Develop a resiliency index that can be used as a vehicle to introduce and promote the concept of resilience to local governments and communities.
2. Pilot the index with Gulf communities and prepare a final version based on feedback.
3. Hold an ongoing series of workshops across the Gulf region, providing cities, counties and parishes with helpful tools to make their communities more resilient.
4. Develop and support projects to document the culture and heritage of traditional coastal communities in the Gulf region, with a focus on documenting traditional uses of coastal resources to demonstrate the connections between healthy ecosystems and healthy communities (sense of place.)
5. Conduct and support research on attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs related to resilience and "risk-wise" behaviors to inform outreach and engagement efforts.