

**Gulf of Mexico Governors' Alliance
State Management Team and Federal Integrated Committee on Science and
Resource Management Integration Meeting**

August 24, 2007
Biloxi, Mississippi

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Gulf of Mexico Alliance's state management teams met with representatives of the Integrated Committee on Science and Resource Management Integration (ICOSRMI) on August 24, 2007, in Biloxi, Mississippi. The meeting's objectives were to discuss the Alliance's accomplishments and to explore avenues for strengthening state-federal cooperation to achieve the Alliance's current and future goals. The meeting was also attended by members of the Alliance's federal workgroup and representatives of various stakeholder groups in the Gulf region.

All participants agreed that the success of the state-led and federally-supported Gulf of Mexico Alliance shows that the Gulf region is meeting tremendous challenges and has emerged as a model for the nation. Ninety percent of the specific actions articulated in the *Governors' Action Plan for Healthy and Resilient Coasts* have either been initiated or accomplished in the 18 months since the Action Plan was released in March 2006. The Alliance's successes demonstrate the need for a long-term blueprint for the Alliance and a plan for bringing more resources to address a broader suite of issues in the region.

The state agency representatives reported that the Alliance has been an essential vehicle for enhancing communication within and among state and federal agencies working on the Gulf's most important issues. States also emphasized the importance of having support for the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and Gulf of Mexico issues in federal agency budgets. They invited the federal agencies to participate in meetings with the Office of Management and Budget to discuss the importance of continued state-federal collaboration to make progress on mutual goals.

Federal agencies voiced their continued support for the Alliance. For example, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced a new initiative at Stennis Space Center to support the Alliance. Several suggestions were made about ways in which Gulf States could engage federal agencies. For example, enhanced participation by state fish and wildlife agencies would make stronger, more direct ties to the bureaus within the Department of the Interior.

It was acknowledged that more dialogue was necessary in order to understand how the Alliance's goals align with those of different federal agencies. It was also suggested that state and federal agencies should collaborate on how they report the tangible results of their efforts in ways that would garner sustained support at both the state and federal levels.

It was suggested that the Alliance should develop another 3-5 year plan of specific actions that could be tracked and documented. In addition to the current priority issue areas, the following suggestions were offered by various participants for the Alliance to consider in its next phase of activity:

- Marine transportation in the Gulf plays an ever-growing role in the national economy.
- Gulf States and their federal partners should find ways to engage the agricultural community throughout the Mississippi River basin on nutrient reduction strategies.
- Substantive engagement of the private sector will be critical to long-term success.
- More needs to be done to engage local governments on issues of coastal development.
- State and federal agencies should continue to find ways to enhance their scientific and information sharing efforts.