

2016-2017 Strategy

VISION

Gulf of Mexico understood scientifically and used economically in ways that ensure sustainability of natural and human capital.

Contents

VISION	1
NEED.....	1
ORGANIZATION	2
MISSION	3
STATEMENT.....	3
GOALS.....	3
OBJECTIVES.....	3

NEED

Ecosystem goods and services of the Gulf of Mexico are critically important to the economy and quality of life of the people who live along its coasts and to the nation. Immediately following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (DHOS) event in 2010, the Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, led a task force that produced the report, [*America’s Gulf Coast: A Long-term Recovery Plan following the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill*](#), which noted that “*the Gulf of Mexico is a natural resource of vital importance which provides immeasurable benefits and services to citizens throughout the United States.*” and “***America needs a healthy and resilient Gulf Coast, one that can support the diverse economies, communities, and cultures of the region.***”

Gulf of Mexico ecosystems are threatened by an array of natural and human-induced stressors, not just abrupt events like spills and severe storms. As the Mabus report further noted, “*the spill has exacerbated the effects of a multitude of storms and years of environmental decline.*” These stressors impact Gulf resources at a variety of time and space scales. Mesoscale (10s to 1000s of km) events and impacts include, for example: low oxygen “dead zone” off the MS River delta and similar annual events in Gulf estuaries; Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) increasing in size and frequency; ocean acidification due to increasing carbon dioxide in the air and seas that will drastically impact ocean species with shells and skeletons; rising sea level inundating coastal habitats, and exposing communities to even greater risk from storms and floods; human

population growth in coastal regions that increases stress factors; for example, development, pollutants, loss of natural areas, hardening of shorelines, and extraction of natural resources. Any event with potential to impact Gulf resources must be understood and assessed against this tapestry of stressors; knowledge built on a strong foundation of science-based information.

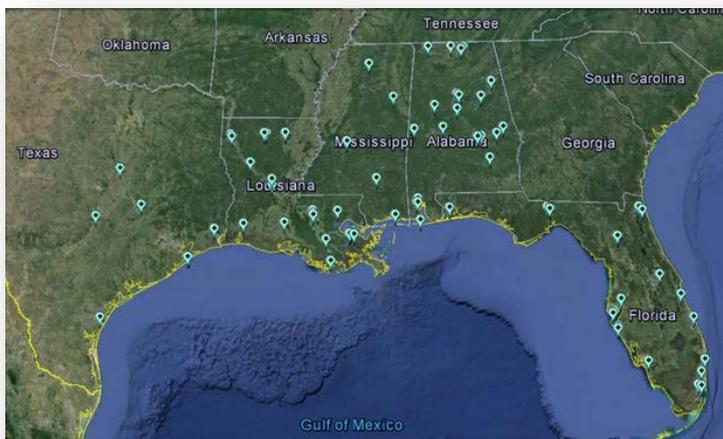
Universities are the science warehouses and research engines required for an ecosystem approach to managing Gulf resources. Ecosystem stressors cross State and Federal boundaries and so must efforts to mitigate and restore. After the DHOS disaster, universities were among the first responders to determine where spill event materials were going and to monitor impacts. There was, however, minimal coordination between these investigator, program and institution-driven efforts, and early results sometimes conflicted with governmental proclamations. Universities also train the work-force of tomorrow that must deal with mounting ecosystem stress and economic hardships. GOMURC founders recognized these needs and sought to promote greater Gulf-wide coordination and engagement.

ORGANIZATION

GOMURC is a team of university-based consortia across all five coastal states in the Gulf representing 80 universities and research institutions, and over 120 marine science-related programs. Consortia directors from the five Gulf States confirmed their commitment to work together by execution of a GOMURC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) established in 2011, and endorsed annually. These consortia include:

1. The Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium.
2. The Florida Institute of Oceanography.
3. The Louisiana University Marine Consortium
4. The Mississippi Research Consortium.
5. The Texas Research Consortium.

GOMURC's office is currently located on the campus of the University of South Florida's College of Marine Science in St. Petersburg, FL, and logistic support is provided by the Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO). Governance is further described in the GOMURC Bylaws (on the GOMURC web site at www.gomurc.org).



GOMURC represents five Gulf state consortia, which include 80 member institutions as of Dec. 2015.

MISSION

STATEMENT

GOMURC is a multi-state university-based research consortia collaborating to promote scientific knowledge, workforce development, and understanding that informs natural resource management decisions at state, regional, national and international levels.

GOALS

- 1) Science for Recovery and Sustainability- we work to ensure Gulf ecosystem restoration and resource management are based on the best-available science information and practices;
- 2) One Gulf Network- we engage scientists, engineers and educators from across all bordering Gulf nations; and
- 3) Next Generation- we educate and train the experts required to handle the science and engineering needs for future generations.

OBJECTIVES

Goal	Objective
G1 = engage members in spill response and restoration	Coordinate activities to support science-based restoration programs and integrated information management.
	Advocate for ecosystem and project-level monitoring and observing program.
	Advocate for engagement of members in restoration programs.
G2 = develop new initiatives	Develop new regional initiatives
	Establish and serve agreements with regional partners including international alliances
G3 = network	Coordinate communications among members
	Coordinate activities to convey GOMURC priorities to decision/policy-makers

Annual action plans (work plans) are produced each year that lay out tasks and deliverables for these mission objectives (e.g., [2016 GOMURC work plan](#)).