



**GULF OF MEXICO UNIVERSITY RESEARCH
COLLABORATIVE**
(www.gomurc.org)

2012 PROGRESS REPORT

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PURPOSE:

Research university consortia from the five U.S. Gulf of Mexico States came together in 2010 to form the Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative (GOMURC), a unified voice for academia and science-based decisions affecting the Gulf States, Gulf coastal and ocean ecosystems, and its nationally important natural resources. While the Gulf States long ago realized that there is strength in numbers by forming state-wide university consortia, a similar regional alliance also makes sense considering the nature of ecosystem-wide stressors such as hurricanes, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill (DHOS), and climate change.

Universities provide the research and education capabilities required for an ecosystem approach to managing Gulf natural resources. Just as ecosystem stressors cross geopolitical boundaries, so must efforts to understand, mitigate and restore impacted resources. After the DHOS disaster, universities were among the first responders to assess damages, monitor impacts, and determine the nature and fate of spill event materials. There was minimal coordination between these investigator, program and institution-driven efforts, and early results sometimes conflicted with industry and government results. Universities train the work-force of tomorrow that must deal with mounting stress

and economic hardships, and there is no greater learning tool than engaging students in crisis response through hands-on experiences.

In early 2011, the leaders of university research consortia in Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formally establishing the Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative (GOMURC), pledging to communicate, advocate, and inform the nation about science and education efforts needed to address Gulf issues. The MOU mandates annual progress reports be prepared by the end of each Calendar year, which includes strategic objectives and organization for the report year, highlighted accomplishments, and priority objectives for the coming year. These reports are posted on-line at <http://gomurc.usf.edu/news-events.asp>.

2012 STRATEGY

VISION AND MISSION

As described in original Memorandum of Understanding that established the Gulf of Mexico University Research Collaborative (GOMURC) (available on-line at <http://www3.research.usf.edu/grc/docs/mou.pdf>), signed by the members' in November 2010, GOMURC's collective *vision and mission* included:

GOMURC "is established by agreement of its Principal Members [identified below under Organization] for the purpose of supporting and enhancing the Gulf of Mexico's coastal marine science, oceanography and related management programs through education, research, and public outreach. The Collaborative supports and facilitates the activities of educators, scientists, and agencies responding to state, regional, national, and international issues."

ORGANIZATION

GOMURC's organization includes staff, a Member Board, and Gulf research universities (Figure 1). GOMURC has five Principal Members representing the Gulf States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. The objective is for the Principal Member in each Gulf State to be a representative or consortium, representing the university-based marine

science organizations within such Gulf State, encompassing a total of 77 institutions (Appendix A), which host over 120 marine science, policy and socio-economic programs that work on Gulf ecosystem issues. Principal Member consortia as of December 2012 include:

1. The Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium (AMESC)
2. The Florida Institute of Oceanography (FIO)
3. The Louisiana University Gulf Research Consortium (LUGRC)
4. The Mississippi Research Consortium (MRC)
5. The Texas Research Consortium (TRC).

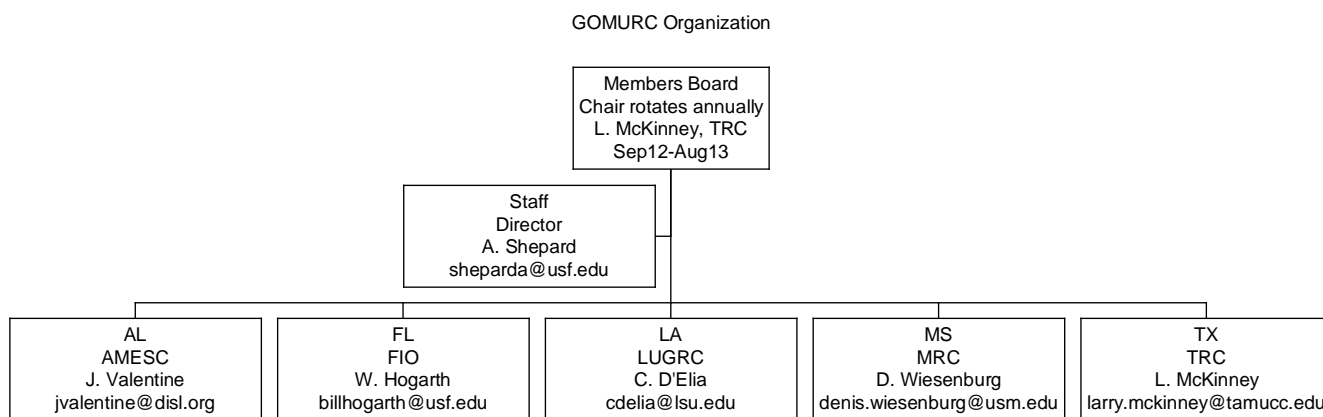


Figure 1. GOMURC 2012-13 Organization; member institutions listed in Appendix A.

As shown in Figure 1 and defined in the GOMURC By-laws (<http://www.marine.usf.edu/gomurc/docs/Bylaws-1-12-12.pdf>), the GOMURC Board includes a representative from each Member consortium. A Board Chair from one of the Principal Members is assigned based on a rotational schedule prescribed in the By-laws and duties include: preside over Board meetings; call Board meetings at least two times each calendar year; call for other meetings as needed or when requested by two other Principal Members; and oversee the GOMURC Director in carrying out the Director's annual work plan. The Board Chair serves for a one year term. Chair duties in 2011-12 were split between FIO, LUGRC, and Texas (Harte Research Institute) (latter to serve through July

2013). Each Principal member can designate up to 3 alternates to serve as voting Board members at meetings in their absence (one per meeting).

GOMURC day-to-day operations are administered by a Director (termed coordinator in original MOU, but revised by the Board in December 2011). Funding for the Director position and other ancillary expenses was provided by support from the University of South Florida, via the USF Foundation, in 2011-2012. The current Director, Mr. Andrew Shepard has 35 years of experience in ocean program management and research activities covering ecosystems from New England to the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico. He is located at and supported by the Florida Institute of Oceanography in St. Petersburg, FL. The Director may also coordinate and convene ad hoc advisory teams, comprised of representatives from GOMURC member universities and other outside expertise as required, to address development of specific regional initiatives.

2012 OBJECTIVES

As defined in the MOU, GOMURC program objectives for 2012 included:

1. **Serve as a university-based, multi-state research organization to respond to disasters** that endanger the Gulf of Mexico's marine life, seabed, water column, surface, shoreline, and communities dependent upon these valued ecosystem components. The disaster that provided the impetus for the creation of the [GOMURC] was the BP Deepwater Horizon oil well blow-out and resulting oil spill in 2010, and the short-term and long-term response to that disaster is a significant, but not exclusive, mission of the [GOMURC]. The [GOMURC] will respond to other incidents, and engage in other related and unrelated activities consistent with the missions described above, as may be determined by its members.
2. **Develop and promote research initiatives**, and provide and coordinate infrastructure and personnel for marine research initiatives within the Gulf of Mexico that expand opportunities for [GOMURC] members.
3. **Support, lead, and participate in conferences and other opportunities** to provide educational opportunities related to the [GOMURC] mission, for the marine science community and the general public.

4. **Seek opportunities to collectively advocate** to, and partner with local, state and federal organizations and authorities in opportunities that advance the mission of the [GOMURC]. As an example, without excluding other opportunities, the [GOMURC] will seek collaboration opportunities with the Gulf of Mexico Alliance and its partner organizations.
5. **Support and facilitate the programs of scientists, educators, and students** at institutions represented by the Principal Members. Among other activities, this support may include the following:
 - a. Promote inter-institutional oceanography and its related sciences within the Gulf States and on a national and international basis; with an important emphasis on the Gulf of Mexico.
 - b. Enhance the quality and scope of cooperative Gulf State educational and research programs.
 - c. Provide a forum within the Gulf States' marine science community, which can identify regional scientific and educational concerns, strategies, and expertise to encourage development of effective programs and policies addressing marine issues.

2012 PROGRESS

Appendix B is a complete list of tasks accomplished and deliverables produced by program objective for CY2012. Highlighted outcomes include:

- RESTORE Act passed in July 2012; GOMURC Board dedicated considerable effort to advocacy and providing related information to constituents.
- Report from April 2012 marine restoration workshop co-hosted by Ocean Conservancy, GOMURC and FIO used by Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council in providing its offshore fisheries restoration priorities to RESTORE Gulf Restoration Council.
- GOMURC Board actively engaged in development of RESTORE Act programs in partnership with State and Federal agencies, with emphasis on defining priorities, integration of various programs (sections 1603, 1604 and 1605) and inclusion of universities in planning and implementation.

- New funding acquired to support GOMURC activities as far out as Dec. 2017, including continued support from USF Foundation, and new grants from the Harte Support Foundation and Walton Family Foundation.
- Mexico universities developed MOU for Consorcio de Instituciones de Investigacion Marina del Golf de Mexico (CiiMar-GoM) similar to GOMURC MOU and seek to develop GOMURC/CiiMar MOU.

2013 STRATEGY

As presented in the GOMURC Strategic Plan for 2012-2013 (on-line at <http://www.marine.usf.edu/gomurc/docs/StrategicPlan-1-10-12.pdf>), **GOMURC's vision** is *the Gulf of Mexico will be understood scientifically and used economically in a way that ensures sustainability of its natural capital.*

GOMURC's mission is to collaborate as a multi-state, university-based, research consortium in order to promote scientific knowledge, workforce development, and public understanding that informs and guides natural resource management decisions at state, regional, national and international levels.

Strategic goals and objectives for CY2012-2013 that serve this vision and mission include:

1. **ADVOCATE:**
 - a. **Track legislation:** Track, review, advocate and share state and federal legislation that impacts Gulf science and education
 - b. **Build capacity:** Increase funding for Gulf universities science and education capabilities through regional initiatives.
2. **COORDINATE:**
 - a. **Collaborate on regional initiatives:** Develop and implement regional initiatives related to Gulf science and education, partnering with universities, NGOs, consortia, programs and agencies across the region.
 - b. **Promote outreach:** Support outreach activities that promote university research results, and public literacy regarding Gulf marine and coastal ecosystem issues.

- c. Sustain organization: communicate with GOMURC members and sustain program elements.

Milestones for 2013 address these objectives and will be used to evaluate GOMURC performance (Table 1).

Table 1. Proposed milestones for 2013 by goals and objectives as listed in text.

Goal/ obj	Milestones
1a	Track and promote legislation with potential to improve GOM ecosystem health and build GOMURC members' capabilities; e.g., implementation of RESTORE Act/DHOS settlement
1b	Communicate and advocate for GOMURC members' capabilities with Federal and State constituents, e.g., Congress, federal programs, NGOs; e.g., develop on-line dbase of GOMURC assets with Gulfbase.org.
1b	Provide and participate in forums involving Gulf States' marine science community, e.g., to identify regional scientific and educational concerns, strategies, and promote university expertise needed to develop effective programs and policies addressing marine issues; venues TBD, e.g., AAAS, AGU, ASLO
1b	Find new support required to sustain GOMURC activities beyond 2013; sponsors TBD
2a	Coordinate activities with GOM regional alliances; e.g., Gulf Restoration Council public hearings, GOMA all hands meeting, and GOMRI Science Conference in 2013
2a	Promote Gulf region inter-institutional, inter-disciplinary oceanography and coastal sciences initiatives, with national and international partners; e.g., directed meetings and communications that promote integration of RESTORE programs
2a	Develop new research and education partnerships that leverage and grow GOMURC members' capabilities and programs; e.g., collaborate with NOAA on RESTORE sec.1604 science program and Gulf Integrated Ecosystem Assessment working group; e.g., finish and publish when possible white papers on Gulf Ecosystems Economic Value, Ecosystem approach to Gulf Fisheries, and Gulf-wide Observing and Monitoring Program
2a	Promote international partnerships that serve the GOMURC mission; e.g., attend GOM LME meetings and develop and sign Mexico CiiMar MOU
2b	Maintain GOMURC electronic network and contact list for sharing news and opportunities; develop quarterly newsletter for distribution to all Members
2b	Develop disaster response roadmap that defines how GOMURC members engage in response efforts to typical events (e.g., spills, storms, blooms), and share their assets and expertise
2b	Serve as a reliable, unbiased source of knowledge and understanding regarding GOM issues and events, especially for decision and policy-makers.
2b	Promote ocean literacy through partnerships with GOM K-12 education programs (TBD)
2b	Provide insight to media partners regarding GOM issues and events (TBD)
2c	Assess collaborators needs for GOMURC services using new on-line survey
2c	Utilize GOMURC social network to inform members during disasters and response efforts
2c	Sustain Members Board activities (meetings/notes)
2c	Evaluate and report GOMURC performance through annual progress reports and Two-Year Summary Report

APPENDIX A: GOMURC MEMBERS

	GOMURC member consortium	University*
1	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Alabama A & M University
2	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Alabama State University
3	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Athens State University
4	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Auburn University
5	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Auburn University at Montgomery
6	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Birmingham Southern College
7	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Dauphin Island Sea Lab
8	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Huntingdon College
9	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Jacksonville State University
10	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Judson College
11	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Samford University
12	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Spring Hill College
13	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Talladega College
14	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Troy State University
15	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	Tuskegee University
16	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of Alabama
17	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of Alabama at Birmingham
18	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of Alabama at Huntsville
19	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of Mobile
20	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of Montevallo
21	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of North Alabama
22	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of South Alabama
23	Alabama Marine Environmental Sciences Consortium	University of West Alabama
24	Florida Institute of Oceanography*	Eckerd College
25	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida A&M University
26	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida Atlantic University
27	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida Gulf Coast University
28	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida Institute of Technology
29	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida International University
30	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Florida State University
31	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Jacksonville University
32	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium
33	Florida Institute of Oceanography	New College of Florida
34	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Nova Southeastern University
35	Florida Institute of Oceanography	Nova Southeastern University
36	Florida Institute of Oceanography	St. Petersburg College
37	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of Central Florida
38	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of Florida
39	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of Miami
40	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of Miami
41	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of North Florida

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GOMURC member consortium	University*	
42	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of South Florida
43	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of South Florida- St. Petersburg
44	Florida Institute of Oceanography	University of West Florida
45	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Centenary College of Louisiana
46	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Dillard University
47	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Grambling State University
48	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities
49	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana College
50	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana State University at Alexandria
51	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge
52	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana State University at Shreveport
53	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana Tech University
54	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium (LUMCON)
55	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Loyola University
56	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	McNeese State University
57	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Nicholls State University
58	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Northwestern State University
59	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Our Lady of Holy Cross College
60	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Southeastern Louisiana University
61	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Southern University and A&M College at Baton Rouge
62	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Southern University at New Orleans
63	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Tulane University
64	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	University of Louisiana - Lafayette
65	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	University of Louisiana at Monroe
66	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	University of New Orleans
67	Louisiana University Gulf Research Collaborative	Xavier University
68	Mississippi Research Consortium	Jackson State University
69	Mississippi Research Consortium	Mississippi State University
70	Mississippi Research Consortium	The University of Southern Mississippi
71	Mississippi Research Consortium	University of Mississippi
72	Texas Research Consortium	Harte Research Institute
73	Texas Research Consortium	Lamar University
74	Texas Research Consortium	Texas A & M University - Corpus Christi
75	Texas Research Consortium	Texas A&M University
76	Texas Research Consortium	Texas A&M University- Galveston
77	Texas Research Consortium	University of Texas- Austin

*- FIO also includes 8 other non-university members.

APPENDIX B: 2012 ACTIONS AND DELIVERABLES BY OBJECTIVE

2012 program objectives:

1. Serve as a university-based, multi-state research organization to respond to disasters
2. Develop and promote regional research initiatives
3. Support, lead, and participate in conferences and other opportunities to provide educational opportunities
4. Seek opportunities to collectively advocate to, and partner with local, state and federal organizations and authorities in opportunities that advance the GOMURC mission
5. Support and facilitate the programs of scientists, educators, and students at institutions represented by the Principal Members

Table A1. 2012 GOMURC objectives, milestones, actions and deliverables: Table A2 includes list of deliverables with descriptions; all are available in Dropbox folder /gomurc/docs/ or other folders as noted.

Obj	Milestone	Action	docs
1	Work with COL on BP resolution	responded to COL requests for information; engaged COL staff in two Board meetings	
1	Integrate science into RESTORE programs	Awarded Walton Family Foundation grant in Dec. 2012 with related objectives	33
1	Track status of House and Senate Restore Act Bills;	created summary of Act and settlement programs	11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 29
1	Track status of DHOS settlements	Continuing task until settled; created related spreadsheet/timeline	30
2	Develop paper and related ppt comparing economic value of Gulf vs. investment in understanding Gulf	Draft done; in review by co-authors; oral ppt accepted for GOMRI meeting	
2	Develop value proposition/white paper for Gulf Monitoring/Observing System	draft being prepared by J. Virmani, FIO	
2	Develop white paper for Gulf Fisheries Ecosystem Science Program	draft done; in review by co-authors	
2	promote expansion of USCG/FIO MOU for disaster spill response to other purposes and regions of Gulf	Pending approval of progress of FIO MOU by Board based on FIO report	27
2	Maintain GOMURC Strategic Action Plan	updated for 2013	10
3	Collaborate with Ocean Conservancy on Marine Restoration workshop and produce report for stakeholders	Workshop in April 2012; final report in Oct.	32
4	Meet with GOMA; develop MOA	wrote and signed	8
4	Meet with GCERTF	met twice with TF staff	
4	Support GOMRI annual meeting; serve on meeting working group	Dir. on annual meeting Exec. Comm; 6 student attendees supported by Members; oral ppt on Gulf ecosystem value	
4	educate and work with regional partners-- GOM LME	attended Spring LME meeting; S. Wolfe attended Fall meeting and gave ppt on GOMURC; new Mexico university MOU based on GOMURC MOU	6

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Obj	Milestone	Action	docs
4	educate and work with regional partners-- NOAA Regional Planning team	Dir. on Gulf IEA planning team (Indicators team)	4
5	Meet with Consortia Boards, if applicable, for Gulf States; give overview of GOMURC	met with LA, FL in 2012; MS and AL meeting cancelled twice	
5	Develop capabilities and curriculum ideas for virtual (distance learning enabled) classroom	developed concepts for fisheries management e-learning course and live classrooms from sea; latter was enacted in partnership with GOMRI/C-IMAGE on FIO vessels	9, 22
5	Promote regional knowledge of Member consortia operations and technology capabilities (vessels, labs, undersea assets, observing systems)	On-line inventory pending receipt of support from WFF; draft proposal for new Web products (live shows and vessel tracker) to promote research vessels	14, 22
5	Utilize social media for sharing news with GOMURC partners	maintained GOMURC Google news group (blog) with multiple entries per week; weekly email briefings sent to Board	
5	Develop promotional materials and presentational for wide distribution to stakeholders describing GOMURC goals and priorities	several presentations given to public meetings	1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 12, 15, 20, 23
5	Maintain GOMURC MOU, GOMURC By-laws, GOMURC Communications Plan, and contacts list	posted in Dropbox	7, 13, 34, 35
5	Develop and post annual reports	links at http://gomurc.usf.edu/about.asp	5
5	Maintain Director position work plans	updated quarterly	26, 31
5	organize and report on Board meetings	hosted monthly meetings throughout 2012	/gomurc/ meeting notes/

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Table A2. Documents (deliverables) located in Dropbox /gomurc/docs.

Doc #	Filename	Description
1	2011GOMURC_1_page_overview_and_contacts.pdf	2011 1-page overview of GOMURC
2	gomurc_2011_brochure.pdf	2011 GOMURC brochure
3	gomurc_2011_poster.pdf	2011 GOMURC poster for Gulf Summit
4	GOMURC_summary_ppt-NOAA_RCT-2-6-12.ppt	presentation to NOAA Gulf regional planning team
5	GOMURC_2011_ANNUAL_REPORT-2-6-12.pdf	GOMURC 2011 Annual Report
6	GOMURC-GOM LME SC mtg-3-14-12.ppt	presentation to GOM LME steering committee
7	gomurc_contacts-3-15-12.xls	GOMURC contacts list
8	gomurc-goma-mou-082612	GOMURC/GOMA MOU
9	Fisheries Management Dist Learning-050212.doc	draft plan for distance learning course on fisheries science
10	GOMURC Strategic Action Plan-5-4-12.doc	GOMURC Strategic Plan for 2011-2012
11	MAP-21 conferees-0511012.doc	Congressional conferees for HR4348enr transportation bill with RESTORE Act subtitle
12	GOMURC_summary_ppt-goma mtg-5-8-12.pdf	presentation to GOMA annual all-hands meeting
13	GOMURC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN-052112.doc	GOMURC Communications Plan for 2011-2012
14	GulfBase Ocean Asset Inventory-060412.ppt	slides summarizing proposed ocean asset inventory, partnership with GulfBase.org
15	gomurc_poster-LAstateofcoast-060612.pdf	GOMURC poster at 2012 LA State of coast meeting
16	cbo report on hr4348conference.pdf	Congressional Budget Office summary of HR4348enr offsets
17	BILLS-112hr4348enr-bookmarked.pdf	RESTORE Act subtitle F (bookmarked) extracted from Highway Bill HR4348enr
18	Guide_to_RESTORE_Act-virmani.pdf	Summary of RESTORE Act prepared for FIO Council
19	RESTORE_Act_FlowChart (July_12).ppt	Summary slide of RESTORE Act funding by programs/sections
20	gomurc_logo.tif	high-rez version of GOMURC logo
21	sen_nelson_colloquy-071012.doc	Sen. Nelson, FL, colloquy to Senate on RESTORE Act including intent for FIO to serve as Center of Excellence
22	ocean_tracker_explorer_proposal-072412.pdf	Proposal to GOMRI for support of research vessel tracking and live events from sea from FIO vessels
23	GOMURCppt-blank-052112.ppt	blank template for GOMURC presentations
24	RESTORE ACT-synopsis of centers of excellence-070612.doc	Summary of RESTORE Act Centers of Excellence language
25	GOMURC- 2014-2017 budget request-8-6-12.doc	Proposal for GOMURC role in RESTORE Act programs
26	gomurc_dir_work_plan-2011.xls	GOMURC director 2011 annual work plan
27	USCG_FIO_MOU_FINAL.pdf	MOU between FIO and USCG District 7 for oil spill response
28	Gulf_Fisheries_Management_Council_Aug20_Hogarth-fin.pptx	Hogarth presentation to GMFMC fisheries restoration
29	GOMURC-restore act-8-8-12.pdf	Summary of RESTORE Act as signed by President on Jul 6, 2012
30	dhos_settlements-120412.pptx	Summary of oil spill settlements (updated as needed)
31	gomurc_dir_work_plan-2012to2013.xls	summary of GOMURC director 2012-13 annual work plans
32	Marine Restoration Workshop Report 10.17.12 (FINAL).pdf	April 2012 Marine Restoration workshop report
33	USF-WFF Signed Agreement.pdf	Grant award from Walton Family Foundation for GOMURC
34	Final Signed GOMURC MOU 112210.docx	GOMURC original MOU
35	GOMURC Bylaws-12-19-11.docx	GOMURC By-laws