

GULF OF MEXICO RESEARCH PLAN

APPENDIX H: Constituent Comments Submitted Via E-Mail



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Top left: Melissa Schneider/Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium

Bottom left: Collier County Sheriff's Office Aviation Bureau

Top right: Texas Sea Grant

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There were several cases where individuals expressed interest in participating in one of the Gulf of Mexico Research Planning workshops but were unable to attend. Some of these individuals provided their research priorities via email. Their input is presented below however information that revealed their identity was removed. This document contains the raw comments from Gulf of Mexico constituents. They remain in this raw form so that meanings are not unintentionally changed. Please keep this in mind when reading this document.

Commenter 1:

Hi Steve:

I do not believe I will be able to attend the Sea Grant Gulf of Mexico Regional Research Plan workshop; however, I would like suggest that funding opportunities be made available for targeted research on the prevention of marine and marine estuary macrofouling utilizing strategies aimed at minimizing environmental impact. Macrofouling is not only an issue affecting marine riggings, platforms and vessel hulls, but also impacts the condition of oyster crops as some species of mussels, for example, also foul oyster beds. Current effective strategies utilizing organometallics, such as tributyl tin, will be banned in the USA in 2008, because they are toxic to both target and non-target organisms and they bioaccumulate. Similar issues are being raised with copper and other heavy metals and few *stand alone* alternatives are in the pipeline. Thus, there is a timely and important need for research opportunities to develop cleaner technology antifouling strategies. Thank you for your consideration.

Commenter 2:

Thank you Steve:

I really appreciate your information and encouragement. This is something we need to work together on. I am particularly interested in the applications aspects (e.g. RP4, 7, 10, 13, 16, 20) and could add some specifics in several of these areas.

Coastal engineering, in particular, applying engineering principles to enhance availability of natural resources, reduce the effects of major storms or other environmental changes; minimize the impact of industrial/shipping activities; and enhance or restore/rehabilitate native ecosystems would be major focus areas. We are currently involved in a \$2M CWWPRA demonstration project, slated to begin in the spring, deploying novel artificial reefs primarily for oyster and related species in S. Louisiana, but applicable across much of the gulf coast.

I am also currently on sabbatical in Mexico and am investigating the role of mangroves in reducing or mitigating storm effects, runoff impacts and other issues, and in particular contemplating the use of mangroves as parts of near-shore and coastal/barrier island/peninsular erosion reduction mechanisms.

A third area of interest is use of plants (coastal or interior) to minimize nitrogen impacts in coastal waters (just finished an EPA 319 project on water quality runoff from sugarcane, and am interested in water quality in interior waters that feed into coastal and estuarine areas).

Commenter 3:

Dear Steve-

One area of research for coastal and marine environments of the Gulf that is imperative to include would be an inventory and assessment of scenic/visual resources. At the present time, there are a number of wind turbine farms being proposed for offshore Texas in addition to high probability of future sites in the neighboring Gulf states. These projects would be expected to have a huge imprint on the stellar scenic quality of the coast. Visual resource quality directly affects tourism demand and economic development. We go to the coast because we want to see the ocean, as well as play in the waters. It is essential for our psychological well being. Unfortunately, much coastal research avoids policy issues or land planning aspects, and overly stresses biological, chemical environmental change, in addition to economic issues such as sustainable fishing, oil drilling, etc. NOAA has had a long record of including scenic resources during the Coastal Zone Management programs in the last thirty years, but increasing there is a lack of concern at the state or regional level on the scenic continuum affecting coastal development.

I would hope that the new research priorities again focus on these scenic resources of the Gulf Coast. With the extensive new development on many previous open space areas of the barrier islands and coastal mainland, the impact on scenic resources is dramatic. Unfortunately, most environmental reviews address scenic issues indirectly with no empirical research. Haphazard coastal development portends dire consequences for hurricane prone areas just as much as the future scenic quality, all of which directly affects tourist demand and economic development. This is an issue of environmental quality.

Commenter 4:

Interested in your invitation to provide input in the planning process and since I am unable to attend but would like to provide it I am writing to you.

It is very interesting to me this meeting since I had contact with [name removed] from NOAA about the unusual stranding on humpback whales in Veracruz, México in April, 2004. One year after these strandings hurricanes came so strong such as Wilma and Katrina that hit Yucatán Península, New Orleans, Florida and Cuba in 2005; and rivers flooding because strong winds from north with heavy rains in recent years (2007) in Tabasco and Chiapas. But a constant denial in my research work at my country and my state resting importance to these association of events and not allowing me to be in government environmental bureaus or universities DO NOT ALLOW me to go, not even to have money for the trip, food and exposure expenses. My only interest is to contact researchers that may have the same hypothesis as I do.

Thanks